The 2014 Congressional Primaries: Who Ran and Why

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INTRODUCTION

THE PRIMARIES PROJECT

Congressional primaries are the stepchild of election studies. They take place over the course of eight to nine months each election year. Most are barely covered by the press unless a long-term or scandal-ridden incumbent is defeated. Since that rarely happens, congressional primaries tend to be ignored. In recent years, this situation has gotten worse as the number of reporters who cover state and local government and politics has declined.[2] The 2010 midterm elections illustrated how important the obscure world of congressional primaries is to American politics. In those primaries, Tea Party candidates emerged to challenge more mainstream Republican incumbents. Enough of them were ultimately successful that the balance of power within the Republican majority in Congress shifted, and we have been coping with a much more polarized political system ever since.

Not only are most congressional primaries ignored by political reporters, they are also ignored by scholars. Unlike high-visibility elections such as presidential primaries and presidential elections, no one conducts exit polls on congressional primaries. And their tiny electorates make polling exceedingly costly after the fact because of the high cost of actually finding voters. In addition,

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2 Several years ago, the *American Journalism Review* conducted its fifth census of newspaper reporters covering state government and found a 32 percent decrease from just six years ago. ["Statehouse exodus," by Jennifer Dorroh, American Journalism Review, April/May 2009.] And those trends are only expected to get worse. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the number of people employed as reporters, correspondents and broadcast news analysts to decline 13 percent between 2012 and 2022. [Bureau of Labor Statistics accessed at: http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Media-and-Communication/Reporters-correspondents-and-broadcast-news-analysts.htm#tab-6]

the fact that these primaries do not take place on the same day around the country means that the variables that impact elections are extremely difficult to analyze, varying dramatically from state to state.

Nonetheless, primaries are the key to understanding modern American politics since they set up the choices Americans are asked to make in the fall elections every two years. The fact that Congress has very few competitive districts—a result of gerrymandering and *The Big Sort*, the title of a very important book on American demographics— means that if you want to understand, let alone predict, the direction of American politics, it is imperative that you understand what goes on in primaries. While the actual number of challenges to incumbents has been and remains small, these challenges are increasingly ideologically motivated.[3] In addition, as congressional scholars have known for many years, beginning with the ground-breaking book *Homestyle,* by Richard Fenno, individual members of Congress pay particular attention to their primary electorates and primary electorates often shape and limit a Congressperson's actions even absent the threat of an actual primary challenge.

In establishing *The Primaries Project,* we had in mind a broader agenda: we wanted to understand the dynamics within each political party and their impact on policy regardless of winners and losers. Thus, we started out in March of 2014 reviewing every person in the United States who successfully filed to run in a congressional primary of a major party and who filed a committee with the Federal Election Commission. These rules guaranteed inclusion of many more primary contestants than had ever been looked at before, while ruling out those who were so marginal that they could not even accomplish the basics of ballot access and FEC filing. Incumbents were included, as well as non-incumbents. Each state's list of candidates was found using that state's Secretary of State website and looking at their list of primary candidates. Candidates who had submitted paperwork but had withdrawn prior to the primary election were not included in the database.

This system resulted in total of 1,662 candidates for the House and the Senate: 719 Democrats, 896 Republicans, and 47 candidates who ran as third parties in the "open" primary systems in California and Washington and Alaska's DLI Primary.[4] There were 1,443 candidates, including incumbents, running for the House and 219 running for the Senate. Then, using a system of coding described in the Appendix, we set out to look at every candidate's campaign website and to code every candidate according to basic demographic information, their self-identified placement within their political party, their positions on various political issues, and their margins of victories. The candidate coding occurred within a month prior to the election. Party categories were assigned within one week of the election so as to capture any final endorsements, press releases, or changes to positioning and/or strategy. We have created the first ever comprehensive look at candidates in congressional primaries.

We would be the first ones to admit that our methodology is probably not perfect—coding is an inherently difficult process, but we did our best to establish objective standards that could be replicated.[5] In addition, the absence of information about voters in primaries does limit our overall understanding of the primary process. Nonetheless, as in all first-of-its-kind research, we hope our project will inspire others to improve upon it in the future. The following is an overview of our findings. We have divided our data into the following categories:

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3 See *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*, by Robert G. Boatright

4 Louisiana is excluded from the data. This is because in Louisiana a congressional primary election is not held. The election for candidates seeking federal office is the general election scheduled for 11/04/14, with a runoff (if necessary) scheduled for 12/06/14.

5 Each candidate went through at least two rounds of coding. Additionally, candidate websites were saved for future reference. For more details, see Appendix.

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1. Who runs in congressional primaries?

2. What are the internal divisions within each party?

3. What are the candidates talking about? And what are they *not* talking about?

4. What's happening to the margins of victory for this year's winners compared to margins in the past?

5. Where does the campaign money come from?

WHO RUNS IN CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARIES?

The first and most simple answer to the following question is that not many people run in congressional primaries. From year to year, many incumbents run without any opposition at all. As Chart #1 indicates, in the last ten years (six election cycles), less than half of all incumbent members of the House of Representatives faced a primary challenge. The overall number of incumbents facing challenges rose starting in 2010 and has been higher in the two most recent elections. As is evident from the breakdown by political party, while challengers have been getting more frequent, this growth seems to have been driven by challengers on the Republican side. We cannot draw too many conclusions from the high number of challenges in 2012. This is because it was the first election after decennial redistricting. Incumbents often face challenges in those elections especially when their districts change, or they are meshed into a district with another incumbent.

Chart 1: House Incumbents Facing Primary Challengers
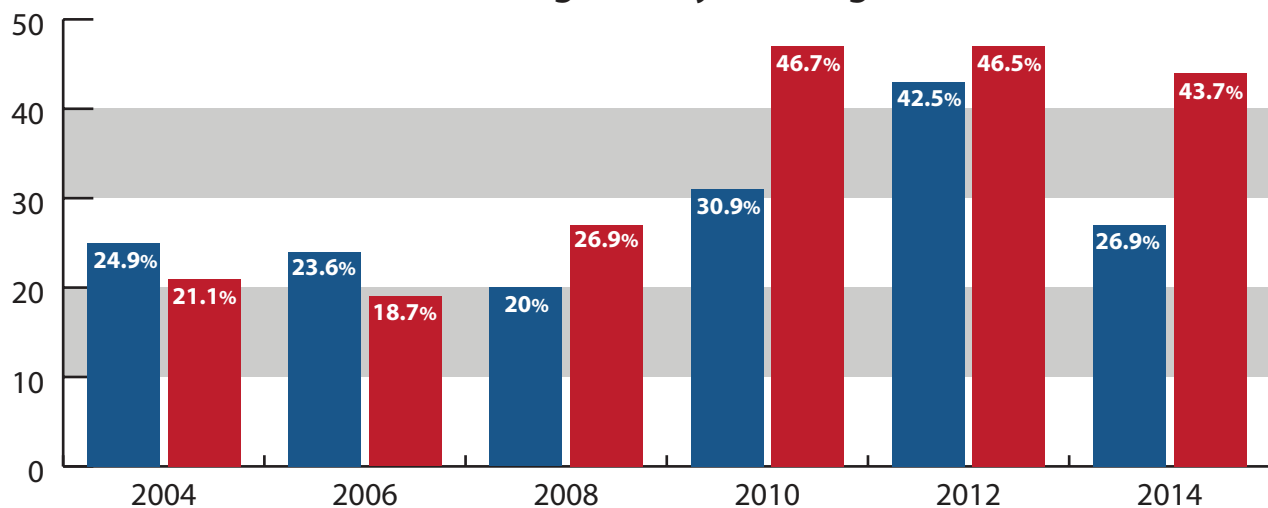
Data excludes California in 2012, 2014; Washington, 2008-2014; Louisiana; and Vermont in 2004. See Appendix for details.

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
# incumbents facing primary challengers	22.9%	21%	23%	37.1%	44.9%	36.6%
Democrats	24.9%	23.6%	20%	30.9%	42.5%	26.9%
Republicans	21.1%	18.7%	26.9%	46.7%	46.5%	43.7%

The second generic observation is that in spite of some recent increases in attention paid to primaries—mostly the result of Tea Party activism—the incumbency advantage is, and remains, an established fact in American politics. Incumbents do not lose primaries and they do not lose general elections. As Table #1 indicates, only a handful of incumbents have lost primaries in recent years. For reasons explained above, 2012 remains an aberration.

Table 1: Number of House Incumbents Who Lost a Primary Race

	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Candidates	**2**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**13**	**4**
	D: 2 R: 0	D: 1 R: 1	D: 1 R: 3	D: 2 R: 2	D: 7 R: 6	D: 1 R: 3

Note: Table includes Cynthia McKinney (D), Bob Inglis (R), and Ralph Hall (R), who lost in runoffs.

There are many reasons for the incumbency advantage, many of which have been explored in the political science literature.[6] From the large cash advantages that incumbents manage to accrue, to the many favors (big and small) they can do for constituents during their tenure in office, to the the ability to scare-off challengers, incumbents have inherent advantages in both primaries and in general elections. In addition, they generally have or develop talent for staying close to the ground and understanding where their core voters and general election voters are going. In primaries, this latter advantage may be the most underrated aspect of the incumbency advantage. The biggest upset of the 2014 season was the defeat of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, who had much more money and many more opportunities to do favors than his underfunded and unknown challenger. And yet, Cantor seems to have missed the mood of his primary voters.

Nonetheless, as our survey shows, over a thousand brave souls entered the 2014 congressional primaries against all odds. As Table #2 indicates, there were more Republican entrants (non-incumbents) than Democrats.

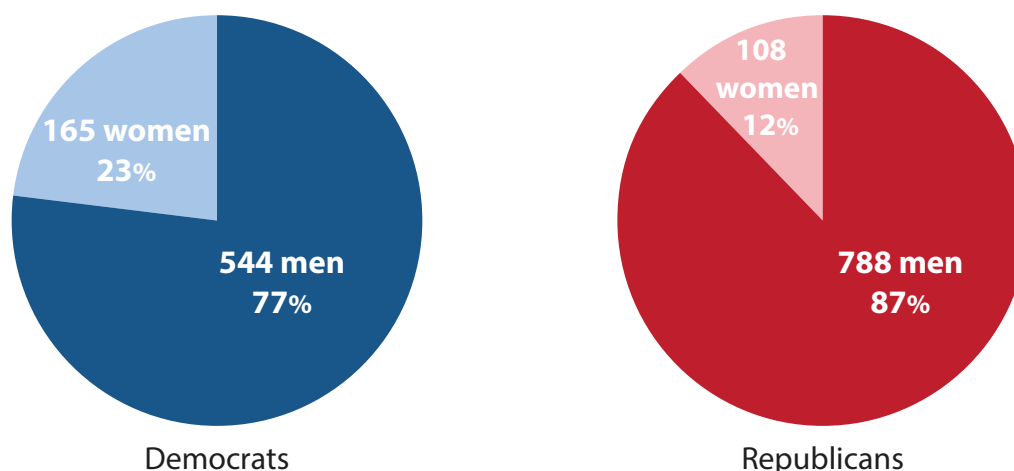## Table 2: Number of Incumbents vs. Non-Incumbents by Party

	Incumbents	Non-Incumbents	Ratio NI:I
House			
Republicans	205	550	2.7:1
Democrats	182	464	2.5:1
Senate			
Republicans	12	129	10.7:1
Democrats	15	58	3.8:1

Note: this table excludes third-party candidates. See Appendix for details.

In addition, most of these candidates were men. Moreover, consistent with the overall gender gap between the two parties, Democrats had more female candidates (both in raw numbers and as a percentage of candidates)

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6   See for example: Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning, "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections," The Journal of Politics 68:1 (Feb 2006), 75-88.
Levitt, Steven D. and Catherine D. Wolfram, "Decomposing the Sources of Incumbency Advantage in the U.S. House," Legislative Studies Quarterly, 22:1 (Feb 1997), 45-60.
Gelman, Andrew and Gary King, "Estimating Incumbency Advantage without Bias," American Journal of Political Science, 34:4 (Nov 1990), 1142-1164.
Ansolabehere, Stephen, John Mark Hansen, Shigeo Hirano, and James M. Snyder Jr., "The Incumbency Advantage in U.S. Primary Elections," Electoral Studies, 26:3 (Sep 2007), 660-668.
Carson, Jamie L., Erik Engstrom, Jason M. Roberts, "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress," American Political Science Review, 101:2 (May 2007), 289-301.
Hirano, Shigeo, James M. Snyder Jr., Stephen Ansolabehere, and John Mark Hansen, "Primary Elections and Partisan Polarization in the U.S. Congress," Quarterly Journal of Political Science, 5:2 (2010), 169-191.
Hall, Andrew B., "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?," Forthcoming in American Political Science Review (2014).
Zaller, John, "Politicians as Prize Fighters: Electoral Selection and Incumbency Advantage," ch 6 in John G. Geer (ed.), Politicans and party Politics (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998).

Chart 2: Gender Breakdown of Candidates for the House and Senate

Democrats

Republicans

running than did the Republicans, as can be seen in Chart #2. In spite of the small number of female candidates running, they actually did quite well. Among Republicans, 53.85 percent of women candidates won their primaries; among Democrats, 69.74 percent of female won their primaries. Although it is worth noting that much of this success is due to female incumbents.

As for other demographic variables, here is what we know: not all candidates included extensive biographical information on their websites, so there are only certain characteristics we can report. Not surprisingly, people who run for Congress are a fairly well-educated group, and there is not much difference between the two parties. Looking at Table #3, we see of those who mentioned their education level, 94 percent of candidates have a college degree or more. The two parties are also pretty evenly matched when it came to the number of lawyers running for office.

Table 3: Highest Education Level of Candidates for House and Senate

Highest Education Level	Number of Candidates	Percent of Candidates
High School	30	2.41 %
Associate's Degree	9	0.72 %
Some College	28	2.25 %
College	534	42.82 %
Master's Degree	222	17.80 %
J.D.	299	23.98 %
M.D./D.M.	52	4.17 %
Ph.D.	66	5.29 %
Other	7	0.56 %

Note: This chart excludes those candidates with missing values, see Appendix for details.

In addition, as Table #4 shows, the vast majority of candidates who list their marital status are married; candidates who are divorced or single often do not report on marital status. And in Chart #3, we see the number of candidates who served in the military. Even though Democrats set out to recruit veterans, a somewhat greater proportion of

Table 4: Marital Status of Candidates for House and Senate

Marital status	Number of candidates	Percent of candidates
Married	953	93.16%
Single	26	2.54%
Divorced	20	1.96%
Widowed	16	1.56%
Engaged	2	0.20%
Same-Sex Partner	6	0.59%

Note: This chart excludes those candidates with missing values, see Appendix for details.

Chart 3: House and Senate Candidates Who Served in the Military - by Party

104 military
14.5%

615 non-military
85.5%

Democrats

199 military
22.2%

697 non-military
77.8%
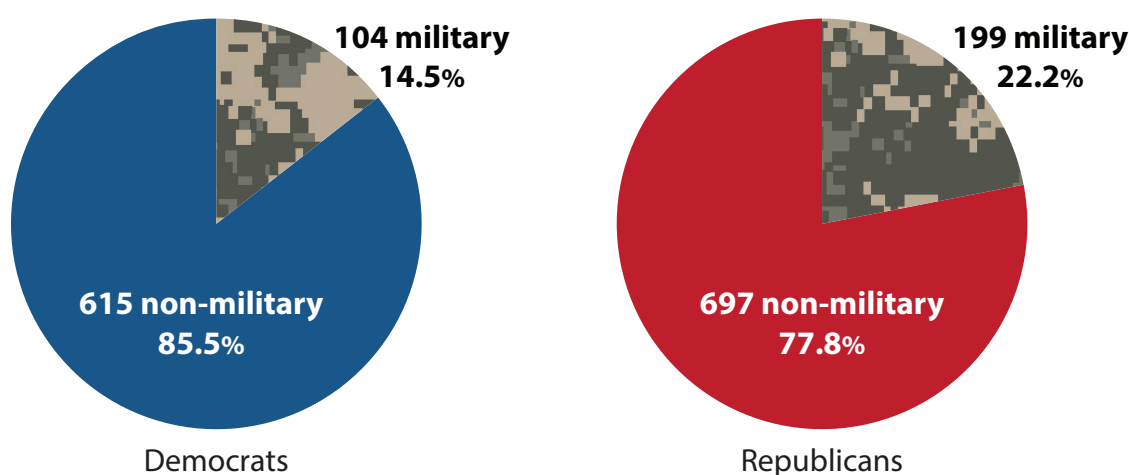
Republicans

Note: "Non-military" includes candidates who did not mention or had no information about military service on their websites.

Republican candidates had served in the military than Democratic candidates. Relative to the entire population (which is either 12.7 percent veterans or 8.9 percent veterans[7]), a slightly higher percentage of candidates (18.6 percent overall) for Congress indicated military service.

Not surprisingly, the universe of people running in House and Senate primaries overall reflects the status quo in the leadership structure of the United States. Most of the candidates are well-educated men, and a slightly higher proportion of candidates are veterans than is found in the general population.

WHAT ARE THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN EACH PARTY?

One reason to study congressional primaries as we did, and as we hope others will continue to do, is to learn something about the internal divisions within each party. Experience in American politics shows that simply under-standing the divisions *between* the parties is insufficient. What often matters in the disposition of a given issue are the divisions *within* a party. For instance, in 1997 President Bill Clinton found himself unable to overcome the anti-trade faction within his party when he lost his bid to enact fast-track legislation, in spite of the fact that he

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7   Either Census – American Community Survey: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview. xhtml?src=bkmk or Gallup: http://www.gallup.com/poll/158729/men-women-veterans.aspx both from 2012.

was wholly supportive it and had won past trade battles, most notably NAFTA, earlier in his presidency. And in 2007, Republican President George W. Bush found that he was unable to overcome the anti-immigration reform sentiment within his own party, in spite of his own commitment to the issue.[8]

As Daniel DiSalvo writes in his book *Engines of Change: Party Factions in American Politics, 1868-2010*: "Given the public's limited political knowledge, factions retain a good deal of room to maneuver in order to shape their party's brand and convert their views into public policy, even if factions' views are well to the left or right of centrist voters....It is factions that often undertake synchronized action to refine the party, forcing the more dispersed and amorphous elements to respond."[9] In the American political system, factions have a variety of points of entry into the system, but the most powerful tends to be the primary system. Because primaries are the only elections for federal offices in the American system that do not occur simultaneously across the country on one day, they exist in relative obscurity and turnout is low—making them the ideal place for factions within a party to try and move the larger entity.[10]

Given the importance of factions to understanding policy outcomes in the American system, we looked at how our congressional candidates described themselves in terms of the most common factions within their parties. Looking at the candidates' websites, our coders assigned each of the Republicans one of four categories: Business/Establishment, Tea Party, Conservative, or Libertarian. Democrats were coded as one of three categories: Progressive/Populist, Establishment, or Moderate/"Blue Dog." In the rare cases of candidates with limited information (e.g. no website) or unclear positions, candidates were coded as Other.[11]

The process for party category assignment followed four steps. First, websites were scanned for any explicit identification (e.g. "Moderate for Congress" or "Doe, a moderate Democrat"). However, given the potential crossover between some of these categories, preference was always given to the narrower category. For example, if someone's slogan was "Conservative for Congress" but there were also identifiers aligning the candidate with the Tea Party, the Tea Party category outranked Conservative. Additionally, someone who self-identified as a Libertarian also outranked Conservative Republican. On the Democrat side, both Progressive/Populist Democrat and Moderate Democrat received priority in coding over the Establishment Democrat label.

Second, caucus memberships were included – incumbents who are or were in the Progressive Caucus,[12] (former) Populist Caucus,[13] (former) Tea Party Caucus,[14] and Moderate Dems Working Group[15] were assigned the corresponding category. Additionally, for candidates in New York, (where candidates can run on two party lines at once) any third-party ballot listings were also taken into consideration: those on the Working Family Party line were categorized as Progressive/Populist, those on the Conservative Party line were Conservative Republicans

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8   See, Elaine C. Kamarck, *How Change Happens – Or Doesn't, The Politics of American Public Policy*, (Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2013)

9   (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012) Pages 7 & 22.

10   See Elaine C. Kamarck, "Increasing Turnout in Congressional Primaries," (Washington D.C., Brookings, July 16, 2014)

11   Third-party candidates were coded as "Not Applicable."

12   "Caucus Members," Congressional Progressive Caucus, http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov/caucus-members/

13   "23 Members of Congress from Across America Jon to Establish Populist Caucus," Congressman Bruce Braley (IA-1), 2/12/2009, http://braley.house.gov/press-release/23-members-congress-across-america-join-establish-populist-caucus

14   Shannon Travis, "Who is the Tea Party Caucus in the House?," CNN, 7/29/11, http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/07/29/who-is-the-tea-party-caucus-in-the-house/

15   "'Moderate Dems Working Group' Organized In Senate," CNN, 3/18/2009, http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2009/03/18/moderate-dems-working-group-organized-in-senate/

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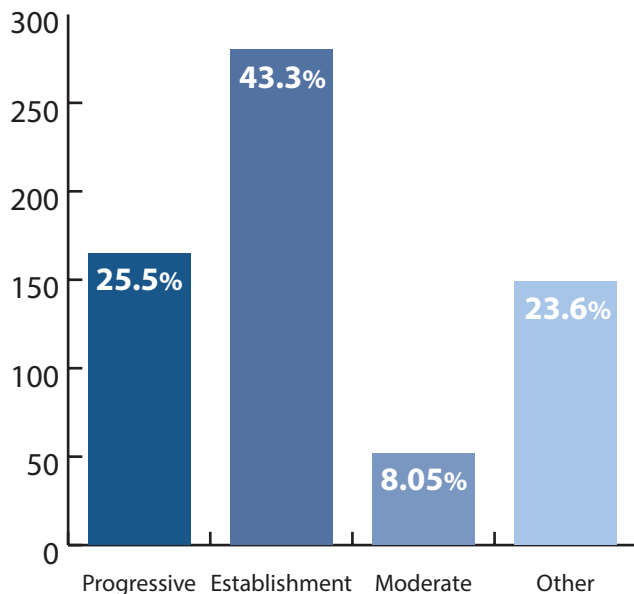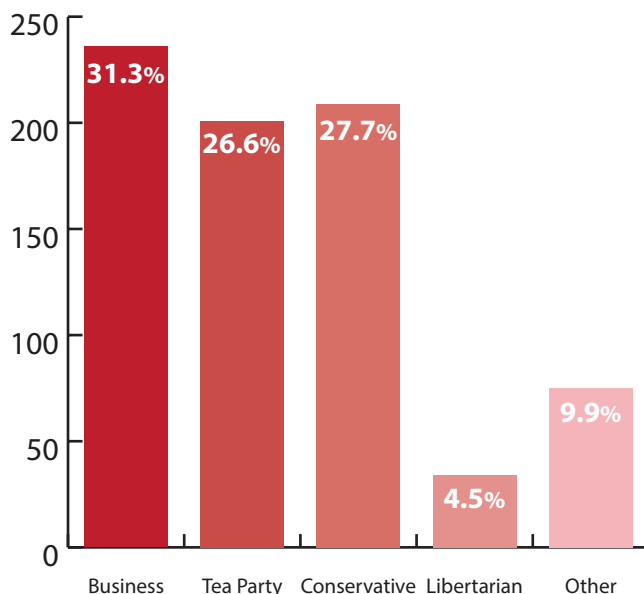## Chart 4: Party Category Breakdowns for Democratic House Candidates

Chart 5: Party Category Breakdowns for Republican House Candidates

(unless there was a Tea Party indication), and those on the Libertarian Party line were Libertarian Republicans.[16] As above, the narrower category outranked any overlap.

Third, any endorsements listed on the candidate's website contributed to the party category. For example, any Republican endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was a Business/Establishment Republican, Tea Party Express was a Tea Party Republican, and any Democrat endorsed by MoveOn.org was a Progressive/Populist. In the case of endorsements from a number of groups across categories, context was taken into consideration (e.g. if the Chamber endorsement was listed on the homepage, etc.). Again, the narrower category prioritized any overlap with wider categories.

Fourth, in the rare case of no express identification, no caucus memberships, and no endorsements, candidates were coded according to their issues pages. For example, if a candidate supported "abolishing the fed" and was "pro-marijuana legalization," he or she was coded as a Libertarian Republican. If the party category was not particularly clear, the individual was marked as Other. Additionally, candidates without websites were also cat-egorized as Other, for obvious reasons. Unlike the above rules, if a candidate was coded using his or her issues, the wider category (e.g. Conservative Republican) was preferred over the narrower category (e.g. Tea Party Republican).

Charts #4 and #5 show the breakdown of factions within each political party. As has been widely reported, while the Democrats had a pretty sleepy primary season, the Republican Party is in an intense internal battle for the soul of the party.

More than a quarter of all House candidates running in Republican primaries were identified with the Tea Party and, slightly more, 31 percent were identified as Business/Establishment candidates. Another large category, however, was the "Conservative Republican" label, which included self-identified "conservative" candidates running to the right of the Business/Establishment category. For the purposes of predicting legislative behavior, most Tea Party Republicans can likely be collapsed into this broader "conservative" label.

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16   The NY third-party listings were available on the "Candidate Petition List," available through the NY Secretary of State's Office at http://www.elections.ny.gov:8080/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=whofiled (only the candidates with valid status were coded).

There is a regional character to the Republican factional breakdown, with 52.24 percent of Tea Party candidates coming from the South and 21.89 percent coming from the West. On the Democratic side, Progressive Democrats were slightly more prevalent in the Northeast and West (29.7 percent and 27.9 percent) and only slightly less common in the South and Midwest (20.6 percent and 21.8 percent). Interestingly, of the 52 Moderate Democrats, only 2 were from the Northeast, and the rest evenly spread across the country.

On the Democratic side where almost no attention has been paid to internal divisions and where, in fact, the internal divisions are not nearly as dramatic, a quarter of all the House candidates identified themselves as more to the left of the party than not and very few called themselves "moderates." But the overall impression of the Democratic Party as less internally divided bears out in the large number of candidates who simply could not be identified ideologically—the "other" category.

Of course, the big question is how did these factions perform? Among Democrats, Progressives won as frequently as did Establishment Democrats. And Moderate Democrats did somewhat better than both categories, although there were very few of them—as can be seen in Table #5.

Table 5: Outcomes Across Party Categories for House Candidates

Democrats	Loss	Win
Progressive	53 (32.1%)	112 (67.9%)
Establishment	92 (32.9%)	118 (67.1%)
Moderate	15 (28.8%)	37 (71.2%)

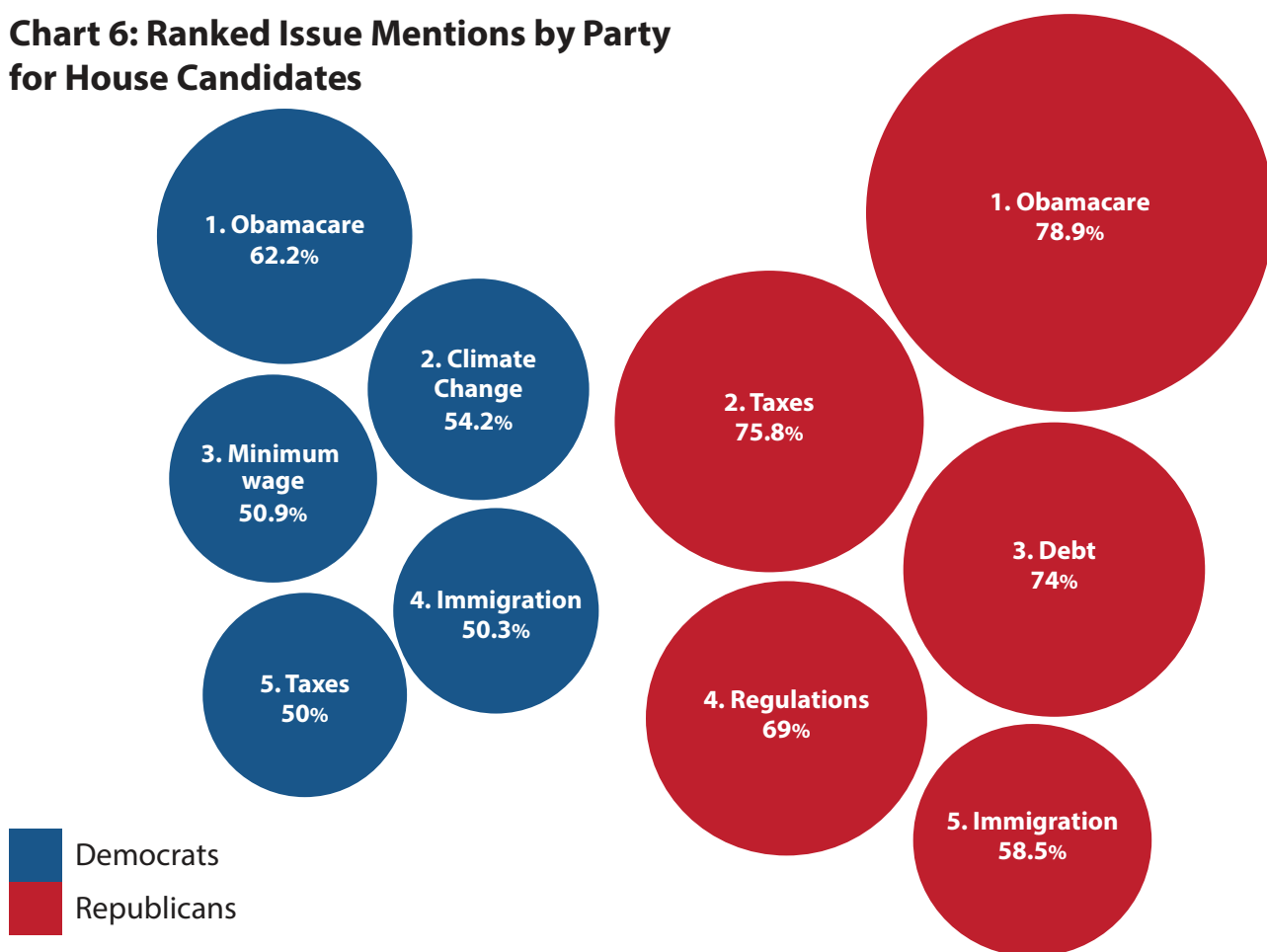| Republicans	Loss	Win
Business Establishment	82 (34.7%)	154 (65.3%)
Tea Party	100 (49.8%)	101 (50.2%)
Conservative	106 (50.7%)	103 (49.3%)
Libertarian	23 (67.6%)	11 (32.4%)

Among Republicans, the Business/Establishment candidates outperformed both the Tea Party and the Conservative Republicans, winning 65 percent of their races in contrast to the Tea Party candidates who won 50 percent of their races and the Conservatives who won 49 percent of their races. Although there were not many Libertarian candidates, the ones that did run fared poorly, winning only 32 percent of their races.

Thus, the conventional wisdom, that the Tea Party did not have a very good season, is borne out by these numbers. Of course this claim is relative – winning half of the races is not a bad track record for an insurgent faction that is only five years old. Moreover, the Business/Establishment wins were accomplished by an unprecedented coalition of business groups pouring large amounts of money into many of these races. The question remains: what does this mean for policy? As we transition from elections to governing what can we expect from the party factions on a variety of issues?

WHAT ARE THE CANDIDATES TALKING ABOUT? AND WHAT ARE THEY NOT TALKING ABOUT?

The reason to study primaries is to get a sense of the factional divisions within each party, and what they may mean as individual issues play out. In this section we begin by looking at what the candidates talked about in 2014. Chart #6 shows the top five most mentioned issues in our database for House candidates by party. At least in the primaries, there is no doubt that the dominant issue was President Obama's health care reforms. Nearly 80 percent of Republicans and 62.5 percent of Democrats took positions on the Affordable Care Act—and, as we shall see, they took diametrically opposed positions. After health care, candidates in both parties talked about taxes and immigration the most. But Republicans didn't spend much time on the minimum wage or on climate change, and Democrats didn't spend much time talking about the national debt or regulations.

Chart 6: Ranked Issue Mentions by Party for House Candidates

Democrats:
1. Obamacare 62.2%
2. Climate Change 54.2%
3. Minimum wage 50.9%
4. Immigration 50.3%
5. Taxes 50%

Republicans:
1. Obamacare 78.9%
2. Taxes 75.8%
3. Debt 74%
4. Regulations 69%
5. Immigration 58.5%

■ Democrats
■ Republicans

However, It is worth mentioning that despite popular narratives focusing on the intra-party conflict within the GOP, there is significant uniformity with regard to which issues are addressed by candidates. Of the 14 issues mentioned, the entire universe of Republican House candidates mentions four of them nearly 70 percent of the time. On the Democrat side, only *one issue*—Obamacare—is mentioned more than 60 percent of the time. This finding suggests the GOP remains unified with regard to candidate issue campaigns, notwithstanding the fact that more Republicans are running than Democrats in the 2014 primaries.

Chart #6 is important for what's on it and what is not. First of all, we can predict from it the members of Congress who come to Washington in January of 2015 will have strong opinions on health care and immigration. The fact they were discussed during the primary season may constrain their ability to compromise on those issues. Second is the obverse, there may be more room for maneuver on some issues that did not have such high saliency in the election season.

When deciding which issues to analyze in our database, we turned to the most discussed issues at that point in time. However, we were surprised to find that despite a lot of ink coming out of Washington on the issues of NSA data collection, the Benghazi tragedy, and the Keystone XL Pipeline, most primary candidates stayed away from these topics. Only 24 percent mentioned the NSA, 23 percent mentioned Keystone, and only 16 percent mentioned Benghazi. If we filter out incumbents, only 17.5 percent mentioned the NSA, 11.7 percent mentioned Keystone, and a meager 6 percent brought up Benghazi. Despite the obsession with these issues inside the Beltway, this cycle's primary candidates clearly felt that these issues would fail to resonate with primary voters.
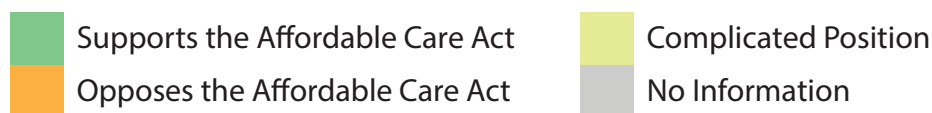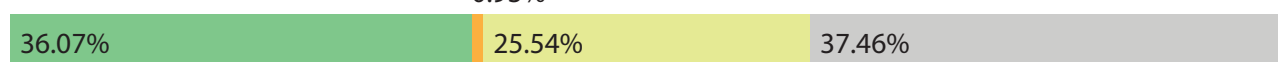
We now turn our attention to some of the specific issues we followed during the primaries: first and foremost is health care, the main issue discussed frequently by candidates in both parties. We coded candidates as supporting the Affordable Care Act if they lauded the bill or its effects. We coded candidates advocating to repeal or fully replace the Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare") as opposing it. Candidates with "Complicated Positions" included those that forwarded moderated positions (i.e. the Act needs to be fixed or simply delayed), as well as those with positions outside the scope of the question (e.g. advocating for single-payer health care). Finally, if the candidate did not mention President Obama's health reforms they were coded as "No Information."

Chart 7: Positions on Obamacare by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

0.13% 5.03%

| 73.77% | 21.06% |

Democrats

0.93%

| 36.07% | 25.54% | 37.46% |

- Supports the Affordable Care Act
- Opposes the Affordable Care Act
- Complicated Position
- No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. See Appendix for details.

The first, not surprising finding from Chart #7 is that Republican House primary candidates favored repeal of Obamacare in large numbers–73.8 percent. The positioning of Republican primary candidates for the House is quite consistent with the position of the current House of Representatives which has voted more than fifty times to repeal "Obamacare." These data offer little hope for a more moderate Congress–at least on this issue.

On the Democratic side, the results were not as clear-cut. Thirty-seven percent of House Democratic primary candidates failed to mention the Affordable Care Act at all, and a quarter of those offered a nuanced position – usually along the lines of improving the Act or reforming it. For instance, take Ann Callis, Democratic nominee for

Table 6: Breakdown of Obamacare Issue Positions by Democratic House Candidates

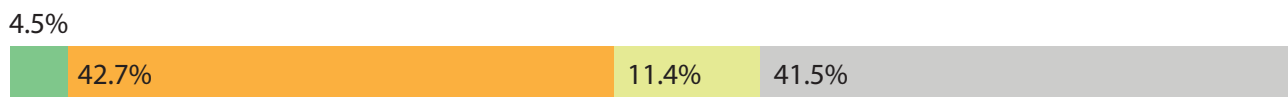|	Supports the Affordable Care Act	Opposes the Affordable Care Act	Complicated position	No information
Democrats				
Progressive	48.5%	0.0%	30.9%	20.6%
Establishment	43.6%	0.36%	26.43%	29.64%
Moderate	25%	1.92%	40.38%	32.69%

Illinois' 13th congressional district. Compared to other Democratic candidates, Callis has a more complex position on the ACA. Her primary campaign website said that she supports "reforms that fix and improve the Affordable Care Act." She goes on to say, if elected, she will "work to preserve sections of the law that ensure no one can ever be denied coverage for a pre- condition, keep the cost of prescription drugs low and that children can remain on their parents' coverage until the age of 26." Note she has chosen the popular pieces of the law and that there is no mention of the controversial individual mandate.

As Table #6 indicates, there is a fair degree of internal consistency within each party on the issue of health care. Progressive and Establishment Democrats are more supportive than Moderate Democrats—but the number of Moderate Democrats is small. In addition, there are a fair number of Democrats in each category offering a more nuanced position. On the Republican side, there is great unanimity across factions with practically no one supporting a more nuanced position. While Democrats appear somewhat open to reforming the ACA, Republican intransigence to the act has not dissipated with time—judging from the primary season it appears as strong as ever.
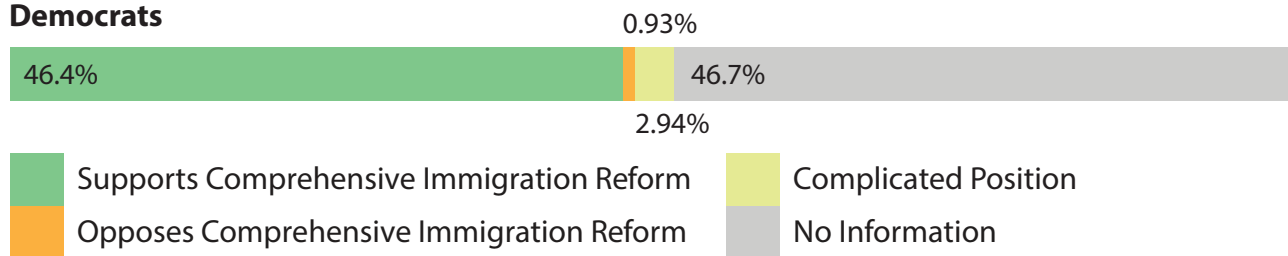
Immigration reform was the other hot button issue in the 2014 primary season, with most candidates in both parties taking positions on the issue. Chart #8 shows the breakdown of positions on immigration reform by party. We coded candidates as supporting immigration reform if they indicated favoring "comprehensive immigration reform," including those candidates advocating for a pathway to citizenship. "Opposes Comprehensive Immigration Reform" were those candidates who argued for "no amnesty," or *exclusively* for securing the border. The third

Chart 8: Positions on Immigration Reform by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

4.5%

42.7%	11.4%	41.5%

Democrats

0.93%

46.4%	46.7%

2.94%

- Supports Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- Opposes Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- Complicated Position
- No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. For more information on how candidates' positions were coded, please see Appendix for details.

category included individuals with more "complicated" positions (e.g. one candidate was in favor of a pathway to citizenship but argued against amnesty), and the final group were candidates who offered no position we could discern.

On the Republican side, twice as many candidates stayed away from the immigration issue compared to the health care issue. But of those who did express an opinion, there was great unanimity with fully 42 percent of all candidates opposing immigration reform. Among Democrats, the findings were even more lopsided with nearly everyone who expressed a position in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. Looking within the parties as we do in Table #7, Business/Establishment Republicans, Conservatives and Libertarians were all willing to offer a more nuanced view of immigration reform than were Tea Party Republicans who were almost uniformly opposed. That should offer a sliver of hope to those in favor of immigration reform despite the fact that, as Table #8 illustrates, winners were also more strongly opposed to reform than losers.

Table 7: Breakdown of Immigration Issue Positions by Republican House Candidates

Republicans	Supports Comprehensive Immigration Reform	Opposes Comprehensive Immigration Reform	Complicated Position	No Information
Business Establishment	7.6%	31.8%	11.4%	49.2%
Tea Party	4%	64.2%	8.96%	22.9%
Conservative	2.39%	46.4%	14.4%	36.8%
Libertarian	2.9%	38.2%	20.6%	28.2%

Table 8: Breakdown of Outcomes by Immigration Position for Republican House Candidates
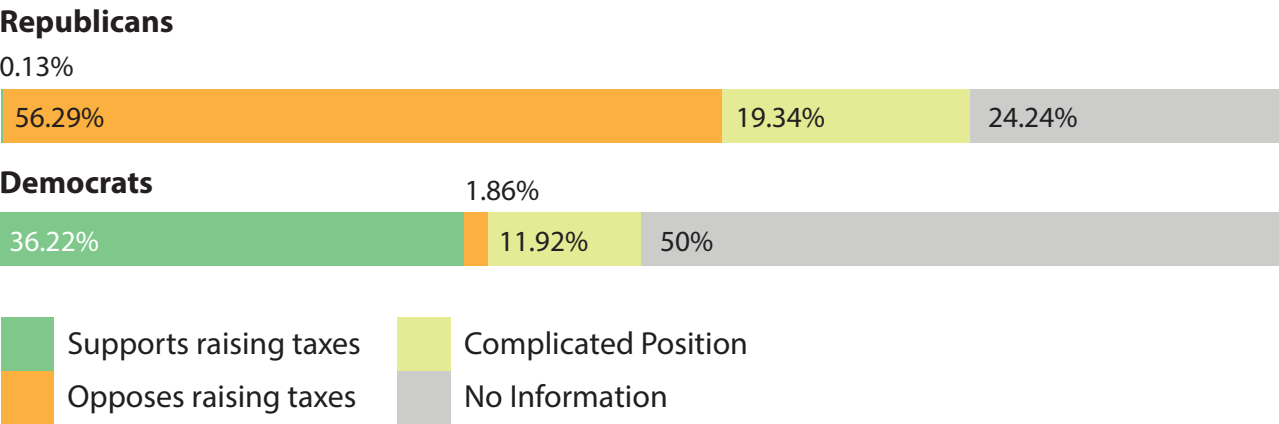
	Supports Comprehensive Immigration Reform	Opposes Comprehensive Immigration Reform	Complicated Position	No Information
Lost	18 (4.93%)	146 (40%)	36 (9.86%)	165 (45.21%)
Won	16 (4.1%)	176 (45.13%)	50 (12.82%)	148 (37.95%)

Findings on health care and immigration reform reflect the status quo in the Congress. Republican incumbents are heavily opposed to immigration reform (56.59 percent) while Democratic incumbents are heavily in favor (78.57 percent). Among all Democrats, the winners are even more strongly in favor of immigration reform than the losers.

These numbers don't offer much hope to those who would like to see immigration reform passed in the new Congress. But, as with health care, where some Democrats appear to be open to a more nuanced position; on immigration the business/establishment faction of the party could, in some future Congress, provide an opening that would lead to passage of a reform bill.

The final issue that is featured in the "top 5" of both major parties is Tax Reform. In an attempt to fit this complex issue into our four-part response, the question looks at both tax rates on wealthy individuals, as well as corporate tax rates. "Supports Raising Taxes" included those candidates that expressly support raising tax rates on wealthy individuals and/or corporations. Candidates who were coded as "Opposes Raising Taxes" included those individuals that want to *cut* tax rates for individuals and/or corporations. Candidates who had "Complicated Positions" supported simplification of the tax code or other tax reforms (including FairTax or FlatTax). Candidates that did not remark on tax policies were coded as "No Information."

Chart 9: Positions on Taxes by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

0.13%

56.29%	19.34%	24.24%

Democrats

1.86%

36.22%	11.92%	50%

- 🟩 Supports raising taxes
- 🟧 Opposes raising taxes
- 🟨 Complicated Position
- ⬜ No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. For more information on how candidates' positions were coded, please see Appendix for details.

As we can see in Chart #9, Republicans talk about this issue to a greater degree than Democrats. Nearly three in four Republicans provide some perspective on taxes, whereas only one in two Democrats do the same. However, among those who commented on taxes, about one quarter in each party holds complicated positions (23.8 percent of Democrats and 25.5 percent of Republicans of those taking a stance on tax policy held complicated positions). This diversity of complicated opinions undoubtedly mirrors the complexity of the issue at hand. For example, Sean Seibert, a Republican running in Texas. Seibert argues, "Our current tax system is over-complicated and favors a few. I believe that the system needs to be overhauled, and replaced with a simpler and fairer tax system." Sebeirt was thereby categorized as holding a complicated position.

Table 9: Breakdown of Tax Positions by Democrat House Candidates

	Supports Raising Taxes	Opposes Raising Taxes	Complicated Position	No Information
Democrats				
Progressive	60.61%	1.82%	10.30%	27.27%
Establishment	39.64%	1.07%	12.86%	46.43%
Moderate	23.08%	5.77%	25%	46.15%

When broken down, Table #9 shows that Progressive Democrats are driving the dialogue on raising tax rates for wealthy individuals and corporations. What is the common alternative for Establishment Democrats? To simply not remark at all. Among Moderate Democrats, however, only one-quarter fall into the "raise taxes" camp, whereas

Table 10: Breakdown of Tax Positions by Republican House Candidates

Republicans	Supports Raising Taxes	Opposes Raising Taxes	Complicated Position	No Information
Business Establishment	0%	60.59%	16.10%	23.31%
Tea Party	0%	68.66%	20.40%	10.95%
Conservative	0.48%	54.07%	24.40%	21.05%
Libertarian	0%	64.71%	20.59%	14.71%

another quarter take a more complex position. This should be unsurprising, considering Moderate Democrats are often defined in colloquial terms as being fiscally conservative Democrats.

Looking at the Republicans in Table #10, there is not nearly as much variation when compared to the Democrats. Across all four party labels, over 54 percent agree with lowering tax rates in each category and under a quarter are categorized as having a more complicated position. Apart from the one Conservative Republican candidate who favors raising tax rates, the Republicans are in lockstep, with 75 percent of all Republican House candidates mentioning this issue, as they continue to advocate for lowering rates or reforming the tax code.

Climate change and raising the minimum wage rounded out the Democrats top five most-mentioned issues. Turning first to climate change, the supporting group represented candidates who favored climate change mitigation as well as EPA regulations dealing with climate change. Those coded as opposing were those candidates who opposed EPA "overregulation" (as well as the rare climate change denier). Candidates that offered complex positions on this issue were coded as such, and the "No Information" code continued to represent those who did not mention this issue. As Chart #10 suggests, this is a wholly Democrat issue, with three-in-five Republicans remaining mute.
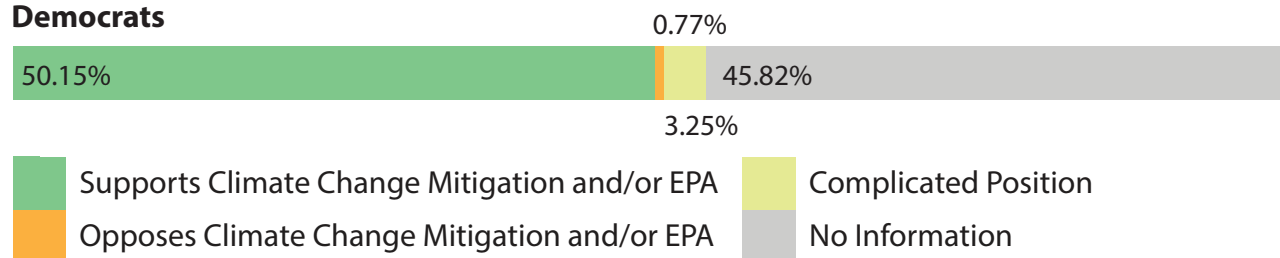
However, breaking down the climate change positions, it becomes again increasingly clear that the Progressive Democrats are driving this issue (with nearly 71 percent supporting and 0 percent opposed). However, the Progressives

Chart 10: Positions on Climate Change by Party — House Candidates
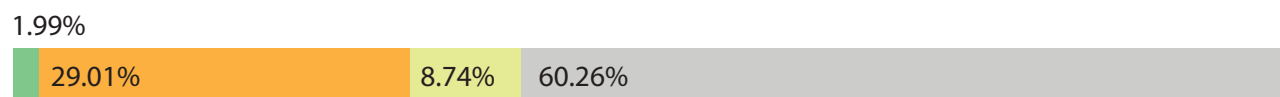
Republicans

1.99%

29.01%	8.74%	60.26%

Democrats

0.77%

50.15%		45.82%

3.25%

- ■ Supports Climate Change Mitigation and/or EPA
- ■ Opposes Climate Change Mitigation and/or EPA
- ■ Complicated Position
- ■ No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. For more information on how candidates' positions were coded, please see Appendix for details.

are driving the issue merely by virtue of mentioning it. Establishment Democrats and Moderate Democrats do not necessarily disagree with the Progressive Democrats, but they are more likely to remain silent on this issue.

Table 11: Breakdown of Climate Change Positions by Democratic House Candidates

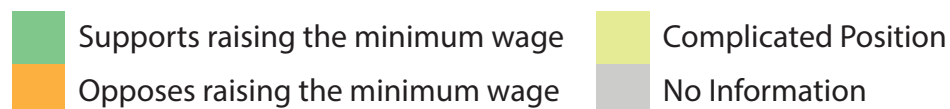| Democrats	Supports Climate Change Mitigation and/or EPA Regulations	Opposes Climate Change Mitigation and/or EPA Regulations	Complicated Position	No Information
Progressive	70.91%	0%	3.03%	26.06%
Establishment	58.57%	1.07%	3.57%	36.79%
Moderate	36.54%	1.92%	3.85%	57.69%

To round out the Democrats' top five issues, we turn to the minimum wage. This issue was undoubtedly driven by Democrats–over 50 percent supported the minimum wage increase (and zero House Democrat candidates were opposed to such increases). Republicans simply remained quiet on this issue, with 93 percent not mentioning it at all. In fact, the Republican opposition to the minimum wage increase was driven by incumbents, who, because they were in office were forced to issue a greater number of position statements.

Chart 11: Positions on Minimum Wage by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

0.66%

| 4.7% | 93.91% |

0.66%

Democrats

0.46%

| 50.46% | 49.07% |

- 🟩 Supports raising the minimum wage
- 🟧 Opposes raising the minimum wage
- 🟨 Complicated Position
- ⬜ No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. See Appendix for details.

Table 12: Breakdown of Minimum Wage Positions by Democrat House Candidates

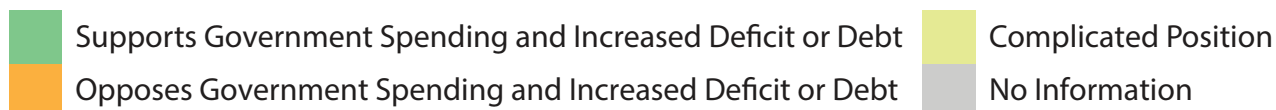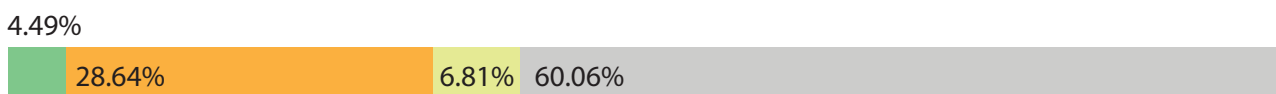| Democrats	Supports Minimum Wage Increase	Opposes Minimum Wage Increase	Complicated Position	No Information
Progressive	75.76%	0%	0.61%	23.64%
Establishment	55.36%	0%	0%	44.29%
Moderate	38.46%	0%	0%	61.54%

The remaining top five issues for Republicans were the debt and small business regulations. Turning first to debt, candidates who support government spending and increased deficits or debt were coded as supporting. Those opposing were candidates who oppose government spending and increases to the national debt and deficit. Candidates with unclear or complicated positions were coded as having a "Complicated Position," and candidates who did not comment on either the debt or the deficit were coded as having "No Information." The scope of this question did *not* look at the issue of raising the debt ceiling. As Chart #12 shows, this issue was commanded by Republicans, with 73 percent of Republicans supporting cuts to the deficit and/or debt. Of the Democrats who took positions, many agreed to support deficit and/or debt reduction; however, only about 40 percent commented on this issue. Looking at Republicans more closely, there was not much variation across party categories. The GOP message on debt is loud and clear.

Chart 12: Positions on Debt by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

0.66%

| 73.77% | 25.96% |

Democrats

4.49%

| 28.64% | 6.81% | 60.06% |

- Supports Government Spending and Increased Deficit or Debt
- Opposes Government Spending and Increased Deficit or Debt
- Complicated Position
- No Information

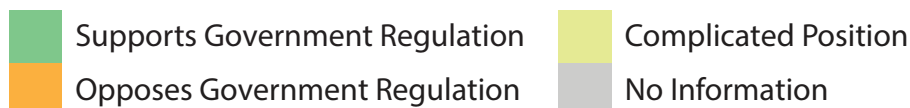Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. See Appendix for details.

Turning next to small business regulations, Republican factions were in accord once again. In our definition, those supporting government regulation favored sensible regulations on small businesses, those coded as opposing favored relieving small businesses of "burdensome" regulations. Candidates with complicated positions and those remaining silent were coded as such. While only 20 percent of Democrats issued positions, 68 percent of Republican candidates not only took a position, but agreed with one another that government should cut regulatory red tape.

Chart 13: Positions on Regulations by Party — House Candidates

Republicans

0.26%   0.66%

| 68.08% | 30.9% |

Democrats

5.42%

| 7.89% | 6.04% | | 80.65% |

- Supports Government Regulation
- Opposes Government Regulation
- Complicated Position
- No Information

Note: Table excludes third-party candidates. See Appendix for details.

Table 13: Breakdown of Regulations Positions by Republican House Candidates

	Supports Government Regulation	Opposes Government Regulation	Complicated Position	No Information
Republicans				
Business Establishment	0%	70.76%	0.85%	28.39%
Tea Party	0%	81.59%	0%	18.41%
Conservative	0%	69.86%	0%	30.14%
Libertarian	2.94%	70.59%	5.88%	20.59%

A closer look at the intra-party factions in Table #13 reveals that Tea Party Republicans focused on this issue the most, followed by Business/Establishment Republicans.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE MARGINS OF VICTORY FOR THIS YEAR'S WINNERS COMPARED TO MARGINS IN THE PAST?

Back in 1978, Brookings political scientist Thomas Mann published a study of Congress titled *Unsafe at Any Margin*. While most of the book dealt with the importance of local versus national issues and trends in congressional elections, Mann also pointed out an important feature of the congressional brain that remains true today. While many view the overwhelming majority of congressional seats as "safe" seats (and certainly years of election studies bears that out) incumbents themselves tend not to view their "safe" seats as invulnerable and, because of this belief, behave as if they are vulnerable.

This brings us to the importance of margins. Almost every member of Congress is well attuned to his or her margin of victory in the primary as well as in the general election. And thus changes in the margins—even if they occur

Chart 14: Average Margin of Victory for House Primary Incumbents Over Time
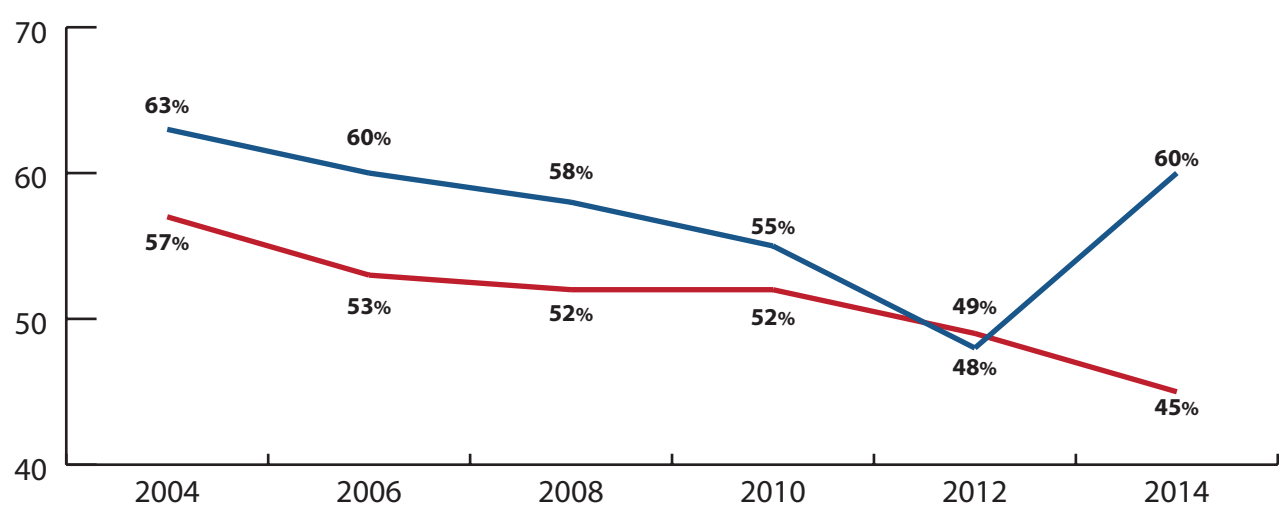
Note: The margin of victory is the size of the incumbent's victory over the next-highest vote getter. For example, the 60% margin of victory in 2004 reflects that, on average, incumbents won their primaries with 80% of the vote in races with only one challenger. See Appendix for details.

without changes in party control or in the proportion of incumbent victories—will have enormous consequences for individual members of Congress and will shape their legislative behavior. In this section of the paper, we look at what has been happening to incumbents' margin of victory in the past decade.

Chart #14 tells a slightly different story about margins for each political party. On the Democratic side, margins of victory have been shrinking over the past decade, reaching a 10-year trough at 48 percent in 2012. This cycle, however, the margins have bounced back to where they were a decade ago, with the incumbent winning by 60 percent. On the Republican side, margins have been shrinking and have continued to do so for the past six electoral cycles. In 2014, contested-Republican incumbents have reached their decade-low of 45 percent margins of victory.

The shrinking Republican margins go a long way towards explaining why to many observers, the Republican Establishment, in spite of their victories over the Tea Party, has adopted many of the issue positions of the Tea Party. For those who are hoping for a decrease in polarization in the coming Congress shrinking margins are not good news. As incumbents in safe Republican districts become more vulnerable in primaries, they are likely to become more attuned to the factional disputes within their party, as well as to try and pre-empt primary challenges by moving in the direction of the faction – in this instance the Tea Party.

WHERE DOES THE CAMPAIGN MONEY COME FROM?

In order to study where the money came from in the 2014 primary cycle, we partnered with the Campaign Finance Institute which built an enormous and comprehensive database. In addition to this paper, we are publishing companion papers by Michael Malbin and Robert Boatright of CFI.[17]

Some highlights from comparative analysis of the FEC's records of all independent expenditures through September 15, 2012 and 2014 show the following:

The share of independent spending by conservative non-party organizations decreased as a percentage of all independent spending through September 15. This was true both for spending reported as having been for the primaries and for the general election. CFI subdivided conservative organizations into categories as one way to talk about relative strength in the primaries. (They calculated organizations that spent $100,000 or more, which represent about 95 percent of total spending.) Organizations associated with being "anti-establishment"—Tea Party organizations, the Club for Growth, and others who want the party to become more conservative—were responsible for 59 percent of all conservative independent spending in 2012. In 2014, they were responsible for 37 percent. Organizations normally thought of as being part of the party "establishment" increased from 35 percent to 55 percent, much of this driven by spending on the part of the Chamber of Commerce. Organizations of moderate Republicans went from zero to 4 percent. In absolute dollars, the anti-establishment Republicans spent less money in 2014 than 2012, while the establishment groups more than doubled their spending.

Much of the action during the primaries involved evanescent organizations that exist for one election only. Of the 281 organizations spending money in 2012 and 2014, only 49 were active in both elections. This year, incumbents and their allies seem to have learned how to stimulate these single-race organizations to get moving. Mobilizing

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17   Michael J. Malbin, "Independent Spending in the Congressional Primaries of 2014." forthcoming, September 30, 2014. Washington DC: Campaign Finance Institute.

financial allies is a powerful weapon that incumbents have learned how to use in the wake of *Citizens United* to counter the power of anti-incumbent insurgents.

As Rob Boatright will point out in a second paper to be published by CFI, the Democrats did not face intra-party ideological primaries this year.[18] As a result, the financial balance sheets show that Democrats and their allies have been able to spend their early money trying to define their opponents for the general election. This is important for Democrats, who will be helped if the election is perceived by the public to involve local and candidate-focused choices rather than a national referendum on the president.

CONCLUSION

When we set out to study the 2014 primaries, we hoped to gain insights into the future of both major political parties. And we did. Unfortunately, the future is likely to look very much like the past. On the key issues candidates discussed, political polarization is alive and well. As indicated, there are some slivers of hope for a more robust discussion of health care on the Democratic side and of immigration on the Republican side – but we should not overemphasize these conclusions. The fact is that on the two big issues of the 2014 primaries, the political parties are as polarized as ever. Though there was some variation when comparing intra-party factions on some issues, the fact remains that cross-party analyses remain stark. Not only do the major parties hold opposing views but, in many cases, Democrats and Republicans are not even talking about the same issues.

However, the reality of political polarization did not surprise us as much as did the absence of so many national issues from the primaries. As Walter Shapiro and Jill Lawrence point out in a companion paper in this series, it is almost as if there were no wars and no international conflicts happening in 2014. Of course, that may change as we move into the fall election and the news forces candidates to discuss issues, for instance, like terror. But given how important primaries are to creating the choices before us in the fall elections, the absence of so many issues from the conversations of these candidates cannot help but make us worry that our democracy is not as robust as it should be.

This paper provides the first comprehensive look at the universe of primary candidates in a midterm election. We hope that more research like this will take place – continuing to analyze candidates, issues, campaign finance, and electoral outcomes – to provide the clearest view possible of the state of our parties and our politics. Continuing this research agenda in future cycles is fundamental to perceiving trends and this paper attempts to be the first step in inaugurating more issues-oriented and faction-conscious reviews of our electoral choices. Additionally, we hope to remind citizens to remain engaged, for it is in the primaries where our elections truly begin.

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18   Robert G. Boatright, "The 2014 Congressional Primaries in Context." Working Paper, September 30, 2014. Washington DC: Campaign Finance Institute.

A) DELIMITING THE DATABASE

The Primaries Project Database of Candidates (henceforth, "the database") studies all of the Democrat and Republican candidates running for House and Senate seats during the 2014 election cycle. The Senate seats analyzed include the Class 2 seats scheduled for this cycle as well as the special Senate elections in Hawaii (Class 3), Oklahoma (Class 3), and South Carolina (Class 3). The House seats will naturally include the three special elections that will be decided on General Election date: New Jersey's 1st, North Carolina's 12th, and Virginia 7th districts.[1] (The database does not include other special House elections prior to November 2014.) The database covers all of the primary elections from March 4th (Texas) to September 9th (Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island).

The database aimed to code exclusively Democrat and Republican candidates. However, considering primary elections vary across state lines quite drastically, the database coded *all* of the House candidates running in Washington and California due to their nonpartisan blanket primary systems. Additionally, Libertarian and Alaska Independence party candidates run on the same ballot as Democrats in Alaska, and were also included in the database. Though Louisiana nominates candidates using a similar system, it was excluded from the database considering their "primaries" process coincides with their general election. Thus, the database includes House and Senate primary candidates for 49 of 50 states.

Each state's list of candidates was found using the state's Secretary of State website, and looking at their "List of Primary Candidates." Candidates who had submitted paperwork but had withdrawn prior to the primary election were not included in the database.

Though most states decide major party nominees on primary election day, the state of Virginia predominately uses a convention-style system. In the districts that held conventions (e.g. VA-6 R), all declared candidates on convention websites were coded into the database. In the districts that held elections (e.g. VA-8 D), all candidates listed on the Virginia Secretary of State website were coded into the database.

Additionally, Colorado and Connecticut hold "assemblies" and "conventions," respectively, determining the candidates that will be listed on the primary election ballot. The candidates who did not pass the delegate threshold or petition standards during the precursory stage were not coded into the database. (For example, if a declared candidate in Connecticut did not receive at least 15% of the support at the convention, he or she would neither appear on the August ballot nor in the database.)

With regard to the coding timetable, the first round of candidate coding occurred within a month prior to the election. Party categories were then assigned within one week of the election (so as to capture any final endorsements, press releases, or changes to strategy). Also, a final check of Secretary of State websites as well as candidate websites occurred during this time. Following the election, a second round of candidate coding (which covered the issues portion of the database) double-checked codes against either live websites or saved versions as of 24 hours before the election. (In the rare case of coding changes, the saved versions were employed rather than the live websites.)

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1 Overlapping candidates across special and general elections in the same district were only counted once.

Additionally, considering that many incumbent campaign sites often redirect to their corresponding governing websites, both campaign and governing websites were open for analysis. However, the database did *not* analyze vote histories or third-party hosted content listed on governing websites.

B) PARTY CATEGORY

Republicans were assigned one of four categories: Business/Establishment, Tea Party, Conservative, or Libertarian. Democrats were coded as one of three categories: Progressive/Populist, Establishment, or Moderate/"Blue Dog." In the rare cases of candidates with limited information (e.g. no website) or unclear positions, candidates were coded simply as Other.

The logic for party category assignment followed four steps. First, websites were scanned for any explicit identification (e.g. "Moderate for Congress" or "Doe, a moderate Democrat"). However, given the potential crossover between some of these categories, preference was always afforded to the narrower of the two. For example, if someone's slogan was "Conservative for Congress" but there were also identifiers aligning the candidate with the Tea Party, the Tea Party category outranked Conservative Republican. Additionally, Libertarian Republican also outranked Conservative Republican. On the Democrat side, both Progressive/Populist Democrat and Moderate Democrat received priority over the Establishment Democrat label.

Second, caucus memberships were included – incumbents who are or were in the Progressive Caucus,[2] (former) Populist Caucus,[3] (former) Tea Party Caucus,[4] and Moderate Dems Working Group[5] were categorized to their corresponding category. Additionally, for candidates in New York, any potential third party ballot listings were taken into consideration as well: those on the Working Family Party line were categorized as Progressive/Populist, those on the Conservative Party line were Conservative (unless there was a Tea Party indication), and those on the Libertarian Party line were Libertarian.[6] As above, the narrower category outranked any overlap.

Third, any endorsements listed on the website also contributed to the party category. For example, any Republican endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was a Business/Establishment Republican and Tea Party Express was a Tea Party Republican. To provide another example, any Democrat endorsed by MoveOn was a Progressive/Populist. In the case of endorsements from a number of groups across categories, context was taken into consideration (e.g. if the Chamber endorsement was listed on the homepage, etc.). Again, the narrower category prioritized any overlap with wider categories.

Fourth, in the rare case of no express identification, no caucus memberships, and no endorsements, candidates were coded according to their issues pages. For example, if a candidate supported "abolishing the fed" and was

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2 "Caucus Members," Congressional Progressive Caucus, http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov/caucus-members/

3 "23 Members of Congress from Across America Jon to Establish Populist Caucus," Congressman Bruce Braley (IA-1), 2/12/2009, http://braley.house.gov/press-release/23-members-congress-across-america-join-establish-populist-caucus

4 Shannon Travis, "Who is the Tea Party Caucus in the House?," CNN, 7/29/11, http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/07/29/who-is-the-tea-party-caucus-in-the-house/

5 "'Moderate Dems Working Group' Organized In Senate," CNN, 3/18/2009, http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2009/03/18/moderate-dems-working-group-organized-in-senate/

6 The NY third party listings were available on the "Candidate Petition List," available through the NY Secretary of State's Office at http://www.elections.ny.gov:8080/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=whofiled (only the candidates with valid status were coded).

"pro-marijuana legalization," he or she was coded as a Libertarian Republican. If the party category was not particularly clear, the individual was marked as Other. Unlike the above rules, if a candidate was coded using his or her issues, the wider category (e.g. Conservative Republican) was preferred over the narrower category (e.g. Tea Party Republican).

Lastly, it is important to note that comment sections were not analyzed, so as to focus exclusively on campaign-produced content. Additionally, in the case of reused websites (i.e. the websites of incumbents running for reelection or perennial candidates), past content was included in the analysis so long as the website was updated at some point during the 2014 election cycle.

C) DEMOGRAPHIC NOTES

The following demographic information was also taken from campaign websites: gender, marital status, military service, and highest level of education. All of the demographic input was taken from candidates' introductory pages (e.g. "Meet Joe" or "About Joe"). Information for incumbents was supplemented with public data.

Additionally, the following variables were also taken from these pages: Experience in Elected Office, Previously Run for Congress, and Incumbency Status.

D) ISSUES NOTES

The issues section scanned candidate "platform," "issues," "press releases," and "endorsement" pages on 14 different positions. Candidates were coded into one of four categories: support, oppose, complicated position, and no information. In all cases 4's represent "No information."

1) Immigration Reform. 1's indicated those candidates favoring "comprehensive immigration reform," including those advocating for a pathway to citizenship. 2's were those candidates who argued for "no amnesty," or *exclusively* for securing the border. 3's were those individuals with more "complicated" positions (e.g. one candidate was in favor of a pathway to citizenship but argued against amnesty).

2) Affordable Care Act. 1's were those candidates supporting the Affordable Care Act as is, and lauded the bill or its effects. 2's were those candidates advocating to repeal or fully replace the Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare"). 3's included those that forwarded moderated positions (i.e. the Act needs to be fixed or simply delayed) as well as those with positions outside the scope of the question (e.g. advocating for single-payer health care or a public option).

3) Benghazi. 1's were those candidates that had indicated the aftermath of the tragedy at Benghazi has been inappropriate and that recent investigative efforts have been unnecessary. 2's were those candidates that support the investigation into the Benghazi tragedy and also those candidates suggesting a possible White House cover-up. 3's were simply those individuals that had mentioned Benghazi or Ambassador Christopher Stevens but neglected to take a position regarding an investigation.

4) Taxes. 1's are those candidates that support raising taxes on wealthy individuals or businesses (note: the priority in this code was on individuals, e.g. "the wealthy should pay their fair share"). 2's were those candidates that had

opposed raising taxes and/or believed tax rates should be cut (without making the caveat "for the middle class" or something similar). 3's were those individuals that supported FairTax, FlatTax, or *only* advocated for simplifying or reforming the tax code.

5) Minimum Wage. 1's are those candidates that support raising the minimum wage (whether it is tied to inflation, at $10.10, or higher). 2's are those candidates opposed to minimum wage increases. 3's are those candidates mentioning the minimum wage debate but neglecting to take a clear side.

6) Gun Control. 1's are those candidates that support increased efforts at gun control (including advocating for background checks). 2's are those opposed to gun control efforts or mention that the Second Amendment should remain uninfringed. 2's also included "National Rifle Association" endorsed candidates. 3's are those candidates with complicated or unclear positions.

7) Abortion. 1's are those candidates advocating for a woman's right to choose (i.e. pro-choice candidates). 1's also included candidates endorsed by "EMILY's List." 2's are those candidates advocating for the right to life effort (i.e. pro-life candidates). 2's also included candidates endorsed by the national or local "Right to Life" groups. 3's are those candidates are those with complicated positions, including candidates mentioning exceptions (like in the case of rape, incest, health of the mother etc.).

8) EPA. 1's are those candidates mentioning the dangers of climate change, favoring climate change mitigation, supporting variations of a carbon tax, supporting "cap-and-trade," and favoring EPA regulations, particularly those aimed towards climate change efforts. 2's are those candidates opposed to EPA overreach and those candidates doubting the authenticity of the claims of climate change. 3's are those individuals with complicated or unclear positions.

9) NSA Surveillance. 1's are those candidates in favor of current NSA surveillance policies. 2's are those candidates opposing NSA overreach, advocating for Edward Snowden disclosures, or supporting "liberty" or "privacy" with regard to "big brother" or the "infringement of the Fourth Amendment." 3's are those candidates mentioning the NSA or Edward Snowden but neglecting to take a clear position.

10) Same-Sex Marriage. 1's are those candidates in favor of same-sex marriage, or advocating for equality on all LGBT issues. 2's are those candidates supporting "traditional marriage" or relevant "pro-family" positions. 3's are those candidates that want to leave the issue to the states, and also includes those candidates opposed to LGBT discrimination but fail to mention or indicate marriage or "equal rights."

11) Deficit/Debt Reduction. 1's are those candidates that support increased government spending that raises the debt and/or deficit. 2's are those candidates that support reducing the deficit and/or reducing the national debt. 3's are those candidates that had mentioned the deficit or debt, but neglected to provide a 1 or 2 position. This question did *not* include any mentions of the debt ceiling debates, though such conversations were often paired a clear position on the debt.

12) Keystone XL Pipeline. 1's are those candidates that support building and finishing the Keystone XL Pipeline. 2's are those candidates that are opposed to finishing the Keystone XL Pipeline. 3's are those individuals that acknowledge the pipeline without providing a definitive position. 3's also included individuals that made their

position contingent on other factors, such as pending environmental reports (note: this position was most common for incumbents).

13) Government Regulation on Business. 1's are those candidates supporting business regulations, both safety and economic regulations. 2's are those candidates in favor of "cutting regulations," "cutting the red tape," and variations of this theme (e.g. "it's to time to cut job-killing regulations"). 3's are those individuals that mentioned business regulations but did not indicate support or opposition. This question did *not* analyze regulations to the financial industry (i.e. "Wall Street regulations") or EPA regulations (considering this question was closely related to #8 above).

14) Defense Spending. 1's are those candidates that support cuts in defense spending. 2's are those candidates that oppose cuts to defense spending and favor a "strong military" with appropriate resources. Additionally, those opposed to sequester cuts to the defense budget were also marked as 2's. 3's are those candidates supporting complicated or unclear positions.

It is important to note that not all 1's are "liberal" positions and not all 2's are "conservative" positions. Additionally, like above, comments sections were not included as part of the coding; however, content from previous election cycles still on websites *was* included in the analysis.

E) ELECTORAL RESULTS

There are six variables listed in the electoral results section. The first grouping looks at each primary race: Win/Loss/Runoff Status of the candidate, the percent of the vote, and the vote count. All results were taken from state Secretaries of State websites' "Election Results" section. In the case that the secretaries did not yet list their "official results," then "unofficial results" or "election night results" were used instead. The second grouping looks at each runoff race: Win/Loss status, the percent of the vote, and the vote count. Results were taken from the same sources noted above. It is recommended that these electoral results be replaced with data published by the Federal Election Commission expected later this year.

F) DISTRICT INFORMATION

There are seven variables that reflect district-level characteristics.

The first pair of variables are the Cook Partisan Voting Index and Romney Margin (from 2012), imported from the most recent *The Cook Political Report*.[7] The second pair of information has to do with the Affordable Care Act implementation at the state-level, looking at each state's decision regarding state Medicaid expansion and health insurance exchanges. This data was imported from the *Kaiser Family Foundation*.[8] The next piece produces a dummy variable of whether the district is within a "coal state." A "coal state" is defined as producing greater than 1% of the total U.S. Coal Production in 2013, with data imported from the *National Mining Association*.[9] The

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7 http://cookpolitical.com/file/2013-04-47.pdf
8 http://kff.org/health-reform/state-indicator/state-decisions-for-creating-health-insurance-exchanges-and-expanding-medicaid/
9 http://www.nma.org/pdf/c_production_state_rank.pdf

final pair of variables identified the district's location in terms of U.S. Census geographical breakdowns, first by region and then by division.[10]

G) MARGINS DATA

Tangential to the database, a separate database of incumbent electoral results was created. For the years 2004-2012, this data was imported from the Federal Elections Commission.[11] It was then supplemented with the 2014 data gathered in the Primaries Database described above. This margins database looked at how house incumbents in major parties fared through primaries and runoffs. Regional parties affiliated with major parties (e.g. Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party) were folded into the major parties. Additionally, if an independent incumbent had a combined result with a major party, outcomes were folded into the major party's results.

The margins database does not include California (years 2012 and 2014), Louisiana (2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014), Washington (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014), and Vermont (2004).

Additionally, candidate percentages for each election were recalculated as (candidate number of votes)/(reported votes cast for all candidates). The official percentages reported across states were not standardized with regard to write-ins, provisional ballots, and over/under votes. This recalculation allows percentages to be compared across states. In the case of candidate conventions (Utah and Virginia), "*"'s listed by the FEC were treated as missing data in terms of margins, but electoral outcomes in these cases were still reported.

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10   https://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/maps/pdfs/reference/us_regdiv.pdf
11   http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/electionresults.shtml

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