

THE MIDSOUTH POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Volume 3, 1999

The Midsouth Political Science Review
is copyrighted by
The Arkansas Political Science Association

**FRESHMAN CLASS:
NORMS AND ATTITUDES OF THE "NEW REPRESENTATIVES"**

James R. Simmons
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Abstract

This study compares and contrasts the self-professed orientations of the incoming class of freshman representatives of the 104th Congress with the views of representatives in the old 103rd Congress. It will examine the way in which representatives responded to a series of ten basic questions in a survey instrument that was written by me and administered by four student congressional aids as an internship project (see the attached questionnaire in the Appendix). These findings will attempt to identify what, if anything, was truly ideologically, normatively or attitudinally distinctive about the newly elected and mostly Republican freshman representatives produced by the 1994 mid-term election. The study will also show the continuity and change in the responses given to our questions as compared with the findings from earlier studies in the literature that asked the same or similar questions.

Introduction

Much has been written about the class of freshman Republican representatives elected in 1994. Having come to office under the banner of the ten-point "Contract with America" much was expected of the "New Representatives." The public and the media seemed to expect that the surprising election results would substantially change the way Washington did business. Certainly, the 73 newly elected Republicans saw themselves as highly distinctive in comparison with the minority Democrats or even the more politically experienced representatives of their own party. Perspectives on this group ranged from the sympathetic view that they were committed non-politicians on a mission of change to the criticism by some pundits that portrayed them as extremist, naive and divisive.

Congressional analysts have attributed a great deal to a large incoming class of freshman at critical historical points in past legislative sessions. The success of a President's policy agenda is said to have less to do with the impression made by his popular mandate on sitting legislators than it does on the character of the shift in the composition of Congress in terms of the number of switched-seat members his election produces (Weinbaum and Judd 1970, Brady and Lynn 1973). Thus the most successful Chief Executives are those who carried with them into office a large, committed freshman class as Franklin Roosevelt did in 1936 and Lyndon Johnson did in 1964. Mid-term congressional elections, on the other hand, have been viewed as a corrective or "negative-mandate" that restores the balance in many of the marginal congressional districts where legislators were elected on the president's coattails (Hinkley 1967).

The findings from the two recently conducted surveys should shed some light on the actual distinctiveness of the GOP freshmen in terms of their self-identified attitudes, norms and values. These findings should reveal the most salient and controversial issues separating contemporary representatives. They will also expose both the dynamism and continuity in the evolving political atmosphere in Congress. Finally, these new surveys will allow a reexamination of several generalizations based on classic studies based on congressional surveys that are now decades old. In short, the response to this questionnaire may serve as a complex blueprint that confirms some conventional wisdom, alters professional perceptions and anticipates upcoming legislative venues.

Specifically, this study asks what distinguished the Republican newcomers produced by the 1994 mid-term election from the representatives of their own party and the Democratic members of the previous Congress, most of whom had served for more than one term. It also examines the attitudes, policy positions and value orientations of these new House members in an attempt to explain their impressive partisan unity on key roll-call votes, their loyalty to the party's leadership, their willingness to exploit unorthodox legislative procedural tactics and their commitment to various institutional reforms within the Congress (Hurley and Kerr 1997, Sinclair 1997).

Methods and Approach

In the Fall of 1993, a determination was made to undertake a survey of the U.S. Congress which would be implemented by my congressional interns. We immediately began preliminary work on the first of two survey projects that produced the data for this paper. A survey instrument was developed with four basic questions drawn from several seminal studies of legislative behavior as well as six questions suggested by the literature on Congress, university colleagues and the participating student interns (Appendix I). A final question with four parts was asked in order to gain the necessary social, political and demographic information. Eight of the eleven questions used a ten-point rather than the more normal five-point Likert scale in order to detect any truly polarizing questions.

Although the literature suggests that surveying congressional opinion is highly questionable given the normally low response rate, we decided that hand delivery of the survey instrument and multiple follow-ups along with several different cover letters and individual visits to congressional offices might improve the response rate. The idea of surveying Senators was abandoned early in the first round because of the negligible response (just four respondents). These same procedures were followed in the second survey but this effort was limited to freshman representatives. We limited the target group to newly elected members in the second round because of the negative reactions that our aggressive survey techniques sometimes produced in the first effort. All four interns indicated that they were quickly identified by congressional aides as the "survey people." Such animosity indicated that a study of the full 104th Congress would prove fruitless.

The first round of the survey was hand delivered on eight separate occasions in the spring of 1994 and the second five times during the Spring of 1995. On each occasion a new cover letter asked for some response by the representative. These efforts produced 182 completed questionnaires for the 433 House members of the 103rd Congress and 30 for the 86 Freshman members in the 104th. The response rate was thus 42.1 percent in our first survey and 33.7 percent in our second (four new Democrats also completed questionnaires). Roughly one-fourth of the representatives surveyed in each case informed us in various ways that their "office policy" was not to respond to surveys. The lower response rate in the second survey might plausibly be accounted for by the reduced number of follow-ups, the variable effort

demonstrated by my interns or the unique character of the target group of representatives in the last survey. It might also reflect the heavier workload and rapid pace of the highly charged 104th Congress.

Analysis of the cases in this study indicates no obvious selection bias since the frequencies for age, gender, party and region in the samples in both surveys roughly approximate the respective demographics for the whole populations in every category (see Appendix II). We did not find any clear pattern for explaining which lawmakers responded, nor was any consistent answer offered by those representatives who would not fill out the form (Koplein and VandeHei 1994). Informal discussions with office staff reassured us that congressmen were answering the questionnaire and not their employees (Brock 1995, Hildebrandt 1995). The numerous open-ended written comments on the returned forms and the oral criticisms elicited by the survey and its questions also seemed to suggest that most of our respondents took their task seriously.

Survey Results

The results may seem disappointing for observers expecting to find highly polarized positions and behavior in Congress. Although the comparative statistics that follow indicate clear partisan differences on a number of important questions, they also show that lawmakers shared many views and were close to the center of the spectrum on most questions. The analysis that follows just scratches the surface of the data produced by calculations of the mean response by members of Congress to the 58 specific points to the eleven basic questions in each of the two surveys (see Table I).

Nevertheless, these findings do illustrate the major lines of partisan cleavage in the House during the years under investigation and indicate several issues on which the newly elected representatives of 1994 were distinctive. In fact, there were twenty five cases in which the mean response of House Democrats varied a full point from that of Republicans in the first Congress examined and twenty-four cases in which the responses of the G.O.P. Freshman chosen in the following mid-term election showed at least a one point variance from the answers of Republicans who held positions in the 103rd Congress.

Table 1. Partisanship and Issue Response

Comparative Statistics: Mean Ratings					
	103rd Congress		104th Congress		
	Democrats	Republicans		GOP Freshman	
Representation					
1) Voting	2.8	2.7		2.6	
Issue Importance					
1) Civil Rights	5.2	3.1	*	3.8	
2) Defense	5.2	5.7		5.4	
3) Foreign Policy	5.4	5.6		5.4	
4) Education	6.8	5.9		6.5	
5) Taxation	6.1	7.2	*	8.6	*
6) Environment	5.9	4.8	*	4.9	
7) Health	9.1	8.8		6.6	*
8) Budget	7.5	8.2		9.0	
9) Other	-	-		-	
10) Crime	8.5	8.8		7.6	
11) Welfare	7.2	7.8		8.4	
Effective Lobbying					
1) Testifying	6.2	5.7		6.5	
2) Direct Contact	7.8	7.8		8.2	
3) Bribery	0.2	0.2		0.0	
4) Grass Roots	7.6	7.3		7.3	
5) Contributions	5.1	3.8	*	5.7	*
6) Media Efforts	6.3	6.0		6.4	

Significant Change

1) Women	7.3	5.0	*	4.9	
2) Minorities	7.3	5.0	*	5.1	
3) Clinton	8.4	7.0	*	5.5	*
4) Scandals	6.3	6.7		7.5	
5) Reform	4.9	4.7		5.9	*
6) Term Limits	3.8	4.1		5.8	*

Orientation

1) Party Loyalty	5.0	4.9		6.3	*
2) Interest Groups	5.3	4.2	*	5.3	*
3) President	5.2	2.2	*	1.3	

Institutional Relations

1) Mass Public	3.8	3.8		6.5	*
2) Home District	6.1	6.9		7.7	
3) Electric Media	4.5	4.9		6.5	*
4) Party Leaders	5.8	5.5		7.5	*
5) Interest Groups	5.4	5.0		5.6	
6) Fed Agencies	5.7	4.6	*	4.1	

Reform Efforts

1) Public Finance	6.7	5.6	*	4.9	
2) End Seniority	4.1	5.2	*	7.7	*
3) Term Limits	2.1	4.9	*	7.0	*
4) Ethics Code	6.7	6.2		8.0	*
5) Party Discipline	6.0	4.9	*	7.8	*
6) Ombudsman	5.5	4.4	*	6.2	*

Value System

1) Ideology	2.8	3.7	*	3.8	
-------------	-----	-----	---	-----	--

Freshman Class: Norms and Attitudes of the "New Representatives"

Government Stance

1) Evangelism	4.5	4.7		5.0	
2) Affirmative Act	7.2	5.2	*	3.7	*
3) Comp Worth	7.0	4.7	*	2.2	*
4) Art Expression	7.2	6.2	*	5.1	*
5) Coll Bargaining	6.3	4.5	*	3.7	
6) Secularism	5.0	4.2		2.7	*
7) Gay Rights	6.0	5.6		1.9	*
8) Creationism	4.1	4.5		4.9	
9) Womens Rights	7.6	5.8	*	3.5	*

Education Goals

1) Vouchers	2.2	7.0	*	6.6	
2) Creation Science	1.3	2.6	*	3.8	*
3) National Tests	5.7	5.5		3.5	*
4) Family Values	3.1	6.1	*	5.5	
5) Parental Influence	3.0	5.9	*	6.0	

N = (96) (82) (26)

* = significance (+/- 1.0) D vs. R R vs. NR

Note: 182 of the 433 House members (two vacancies) in the 103rd Congress responded to the first survey. There was one Independent respondent and another three respondents who did not answer many of the demographic questions in this sample. 28 of the 86 Freshman elected in 1994 responded to the second survey (26 of the 73 new Republicans and 4 of the 13 new Democrats).

Survey Implementation: First - March 27 to May 15, 1994.
Second - March 10 to May 11, 1995.

Critical Political Issues:

There were few substantial partisan differences in the way representatives viewed the importance of the issues facing Congress. Health, crime and welfare followed by education and taxation were generally seen as the most critical legislative issues among the eleven options provided. Partisanship showed up only in the greater weight that Democrats gave to civil rights and the environment and Republicans gave to taxation. The "other" option provided by the questionnaire was rarely used (just 18 cases in round one and only 3 in the second survey — with no consistent pattern) but the few respondents who used it gave their self-selected issue a rating in the six to eight range in either of the rounds.

The freshman Republicans were even more concerned over taxes than their GOP colleagues had been in the previous Congress. Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that the health care issue, although still important, had substantially declined while welfare gained in significance for the newcomers of '94. And, despite the heated fiscal battles that would ensue during the 1995 congressional session, the new Republicans gave the budget only a marginally higher priority than their opposition colleagues in the 103rd Congress had. They were, however, more distinctive in the high ranking they gave to both social welfare and the budget in contrast with the Democrats of that congress.

Legislative Voting Behavior:

There were also substantial areas of agreement in the way representatives responded to the questions dealing with what motivated their voting behavior. Most respondents claimed that their concept of representation emphasized either their own preferences (Trustee) or the nature of the issue (Politico) with an overwhelming majority of 77 percent preferring the latter role. Just 3 percent of the representatives in the first survey claimed that they followed constituent opinion when voting on bills (Bound Delegate) and none claimed this relationship with their own district's electorate in the second (see Table II). The tiny number of "instructed delegates" in the sample might be attributed, at least in part, to the questionnaire's wording which forced respondents to say that they "always" voted according to constituent opinion in their districts.

Both of the sets of representatives surveyed proved to be less responsive to opinion "back home" than has been indicated by earlier research (Davidson et al, 1969). While some of this variation may be accounted for by the question, the greater insularity of the members of the 103rd Congress may be a product of the growing prominence of party leadership in the "postreform" Congress and safety of incumbency (Rohde 1991). Although both this study and the earlier data suggest that over seven out of ten House members acknowledge some obligation to act on their constituent's expressed preferences, these current findings indicate a significant decline in support for constituency based voting. And, unlike the older study, following the dictates of constituent opinion was particularly weak among the Republicans especially those in our second survey who felt more strongly committed to their own values, issue positions or ideology than the members of the previous congress from either party.

Table 2. Representative's Role Orientation

	103rd:			104th:
	Democrats	Republicans	Independent	GOP Freshman
Constituent Opinion	3.7%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Own Position	23.2	18.8	100.0	38.4
Variable	73.1	79.1	0.0	61.6
N =	(82)	(96)	(1)	(26)

The number of trustees among the freshman is surprising since the conventional wisdom suggests that members elected from marginal, highly competitive districts should be particularly sensitive to constituency opinion (Sullivan and Uslaner 1978). As illogical as the unresponsive role may seem, the independence of republican newcomers may make sense in light of unexpected victories. Many of these congressmen were associated with weak or moribund party organizations. Their willingness to run for public office in unpromising circumstances grew out of their ideological convictions or policy commitments as well as obligations to party leaders, co-workers or local elites. Ideology aside, their most prudent initial strategy would be to demonstrate competence by pushing the issues that they ran on and by acquiring reelection

resources through the stature and assignments that only their party's leadership in Washington can provide.

Interest Group Orientation:

There seemed to be a consensus on what constitutes effective congressional lobbying. Direct contacts and grass roots campaigns were generally seen as the most effective interest group tactics while bribery and other illegal activities were perceived as the least. There was also broad agreement on the positive impact of media public relations efforts and testifying at congressional hearings. The major area of disagreement appeared on the question of what impact campaign contributions had on legislative efforts with the freshmen saying that they are somewhat influential while the Republicans of the 103rd Congress had tended to think they were not. With the exception of their higher average rating for the role of campaign contributions, the responses of these representatives seem to confirm the relative rankings of the perceived effectiveness lobbying techniques found in previous studies (Milbrath 1963, Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

The greatest differences between the Democrats and the two Republican groups appeared on the questions involving their orientations to their party, interest groups and the President. Although both Democratic and Republican representatives indicated neutrality toward party loyalty in the first survey, the newer Republicans expressed a strong allegiance to their party's legislative positions. This finding confirms the conclusion that contacts of junior congressmen are much heavier within their own party than is the case of senior men since newcomers have had less time to develop a wider circle of allegiances and informants (Kingdon 1973). This positive association with their party's leaders may also reflect the efforts of Speaker Gingrich to mobilize prospective candidates under the banner of his Contract before the election as well as his subsequent rewards to these new members once elected in the form of choice committee assignments and fostering their inclusion in inner-party circles during debates over the Republican congressional agenda.

On the other hand, the freshman Republicans were closer to the Democrats in their relative neutrality toward group interests while the Republicans in the first survey leaned toward a negative orientation on the question of group facilitation. Once again Kingdon's analysis seems relevant here since junior Republicans would have had less time to interact with lobbyists and

develop the more negative reactions to them expressed by their more senior counterparts. The difference might also reflect the dissatisfaction of experienced Republicans who had watched organized interests give the bulk of their campaign contributions to the Democrats over the decades when that party held the majority in Congress. The freshman GOP members shared neither the lengthy contacts with interest group boosters nor this campaign finance history with their senior colleagues.

Nevertheless, the greatest partisan clash involved the question of presidential support. Democrats averaged neutrality on this question while both sets of Republicans were highly adversely disposed to the idea that support for the President's positions on legislation usually promotes the public interest. Liberal congressman undermined the president's support since their agenda was more traditional one than that of the "New Democrat" in the White House. The negative reaction of both sets of Republicans is predictable in a system of divided government when a member of the opposition party holds the office of President. On the other hand, the extremity of Republican disdain for Clinton expressed by the low scores gives a strong indication of the depth of hostility that produced two separate government shutdowns and an unsuccessful impeachment bid.

Significant Changes:

It was not surprising to find that Democrats rated the increasing number of women and minority representatives as more important than did Republicans who gave these compositional changes in the House only an average rating. Nor was it unexpected to find that Democratic congressmen also saw more significance in a Democratic administration in the White House. Representatives of both parties gave less weight to scandals and saw little significance in either the congressional pay raise and reform or state term limits efforts. This bipartisan indifference to reform and bad publicity may explain why House Democrats were unable to enact congressional campaign legislation or structural changes favorable to their party while they still had a majority. In this regard, it is significant that liberalism mattered more than party when explaining support for reform (VandeHei 1994).

The incoming Republicans, however, were much more distinctive in their response to the topic of what changes had influenced congressional behavior than the Republicans of the previous Congress. For example, the '94 GOP

respondents were almost indifferent to the impact of a President of the other party. This finding, combined with the higher ratings they gave to both party loyalty and their party's leadership on other topics, suggests that the newcomers hoped for a congressional agenda that would not be dominated by Bill Clinton. Furthermore, although political scandals were seen as significant in the 103rd Congress, they were especially salient for this freshman class. Moreover, state term limits efforts, the pay raise and campaign reform were only rated as important by the Republican newcomers. Thus it should have come as no surprise that issues of reform and legislative governance became more prominent during the 104th Congress.

Institutional Relations:

Despite polls showing public cynicism, distrust and dissatisfaction with Congress, this expected perception did not show up in either survey. Respondents simply did not share the widespread view that there has been a significant breakdown in civility and cooperative relations between Congress and many of the social and political institutions in its environment. Representatives in the first round did say that they were aware of the fact that their relations with the mass public had deteriorated but the Republican newcomers thought that they had a solid relationship with the electorate. Congress members generally indicated that they felt that their relationship with their own districts had gotten better. Furthermore, they expressed no recognition of any adverse change in relations with other key institutions ranging from interest groups to the electronic media.

The freshmen surprisingly claimed positive institutional relations nearly across the board with especially high marks for their association with their party's leadership and their home district. This finding may indicate that the new legislators were unable to assess how relations had changed because they had so newly arrived on the scene. It may also reflect the optimism of first-termers who hadn't yet been jaded by negative personal experiences. The only exception in this optimistic perspective was their negative perception of their relationship with the various agencies of the federal government. Perhaps this perception reflects the anti-bureaucracy orientation that the newer Republicans brought with them to Washington as well as their perception that with the Contract they had been given an electoral mandate to roll back government regulation (Gillespie and Schellhas 1994).

Congressional Reform Efforts:

The survey questions related to the various efforts to reform Congress did seem to differentiate representatives. In the 103rd Congress there were clear partisan differences on every proposal for institutional reform except the congressional ethical code. Democrats favored reform measures such as public campaign finance, an ombudsman and greater party discipline while opposing term limits and ending the seniority system. The Republicans of the 103rd Congress, on the other hand, were largely indifferent to nearly all of these reformist ideas. The only major reformation effort they favored beyond their positive response to the ethics option was the modest approval rating they gave to government provision of campaign money.

The Republican class of '94, on the other hand, had a clearly pronounced change agenda. They were not only more enthusiastic than the previous congress had been over the prospects for an ethics code but they broke ranks with their predecessors on every other reform measure. Not unexpectedly, they were clearly distinctive in comparison with the other Republican congress members in their advocacy for ending seniority, imposing term limits and enhancing party discipline. They actually rated party discipline higher than the Democrats had. The freshmen even liked the idea of creating an ombudsman to perform the constituent service functions (although it is difficult to be completely certain since roughly 20 percent of all the respondents in both surveys either left this line blank or wrote in a question mark indicating they were unfamiliar with this particular reform). Only public campaign finance produced a mid-point response.

Freshman support for party loyalty and other reforms that undermine the seniority system seem inconsistent. This may simply reflect an attitude common to all incoming members who expect that hard work and loyalty should quickly overcome the privileges acquired by their seniors. It might have been interesting to test this hypothesis by comparing these freshmen with those from the 103rd Congress but there was no way to do that with this anonymous survey instrument. Still, this seeming contradiction might not apply in the 104th Congress because the Republican leadership acted as if it had little investment in maintaining the seniority norm. In fact, Newt Gingrich dispensed with several senior Republicans who were in line for chairmanships on key committees for more junior members who were more consistent party loyalists. Indeed, organizational innovation, majority-party discipline and resur-

gent leadership seem entirely characteristic of recent congresses (Davidson 1992).

Government's Function:

The widespread view that sees the recently elected Republicans as right-wing extremists is not borne out when examining their self-proclaimed placement on the ideological continuum (see Table III). Although partisan differences on political values clearly exist, all representatives professed views that tended to cluster close to the center of the political spectrum. The Democrats are clearly a congressional party of moderation and the Republicans are indeed conservative but not far right. Contrary to expectations, the GOP freshmen were only marginally more extreme in their self-professed conservative ideology when compared with the Republicans surveyed in the previous congress. Although more of the newcomers were willing to stake out a position on the far right of the spectrum, nearly half claimed only a conservative self-identification and there were also slightly more moderates among them as well. In any case, the data hardly allow for a designation of the freshman as a class of zealots.

Table 3. Ideological Orientation

	103rd:			104th:
	Democrats	Republicans	Independent	GOP Freshman
Left	4.3%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Liberal	35.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Moderate	43.6	35.4	0.0	38.4
Conservative	16.0	63.4	0.0	46.2
Right	0.0	1.2	0.0	15.4
Other	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
N =	(94)	(82)	(1)	(26)

Greater contrasts did appear when our focus shifted from the representative's overall belief system to specific questions about his or her orientation to identified groups, social issues and questions about conventional morality. As might have been expected the Democratic representatives

indicated they favored a positive government agenda by taking a relatively promotional stance toward issues or groups associated with liberalism ranging from affirmative action to women's rights. Republicans in the first survey were either less encouraging, neutral or slightly discouraging in their view of the appropriate government stance on these topics. The freshman Republicans, on the other hand, are highly distinctive in their more hostile stance on nearly all these questions. They responded in a highly negative way to topics ranging from gay rights and secularism to collective bargaining and comparable worth. Furthermore, they also expressed their greater social conservatism by the neutrality with respect to their preferred government stance toward evangelism, creationism and artistic expression.

Educational Goals:

There was also partisan conflict over federal education policy on issues like school choice and parental involvement in classroom curricular decisions. Democrats opposed all of the educational reforms except national testing while Republicans favored everything but the change to a more biblically oriented curriculum. These findings don't show the congressional Democrats to be opponents of educational change nor do they portray Republicans as reformists since all of the proposed reform questions used in the survey had been proposals initiated by former President Reagan. Many of them have also been endorsed by President Clinton. The Democratic educational agenda is undoubtedly suggested by the previous responses to question nine involving the preferred stance of public institutions toward collective bargaining and artistic expression.

Because these questions provide the foundation for the national conservative educational agenda, the new representatives predictably responded much like other Republicans. Even here, however, the newcomers broke ranks on one issue with their opposition to national testing, perhaps indicating their preference for standards established by state legislatures or school district boards and for local control of public schools. Nevertheless, the freshman were not more supportive of either school vouchers or parental influence. The only evidence of any greater newcomer adherence to efforts to promote conventional morality and religious values in the schools might be found in their less negative evaluation of "Creation Science." These minor differences on educational issues may have produced little intraparty cleavage because House

Republicans simply did not make it a priority in their efforts to restore the "American Dream" (Moore 1995).

Summary and Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate at least as much continuity as there is change resulting from the election of the "Class of 1994." Although the GOP freshmen stand out in terms of their enthusiasm for reform and their greater adherence to certain aspects of the conservative social agenda, in most other ways they resemble the Republicans of the 103rd Congress. Both sets of Republicans share many basic priorities or at least they took proximate stands on over half of the multiple questions that provided the basis for this study. When they did seem to differ, it was generally in terms of degree rather than in kind since the range of divergence between Republicans was greater than two scale points on only eight questions. Thus, while the newcomers have contributed to the growing conservatism and consistency within the congressional Republican Party, they are not marked extremists compared with other congressmen in terms their overall perspectives on values, representation, issue importance and goals.

It is primarily on the issues of institutional change, social relations and the appropriate government stance toward specific subjects like gay rights and religious belief that truly distinguishes those recently elected. Although not as extreme as their popular image, the freshmen were more conservative on issues such as religiosity, conventional morality and family values. The strength of these views is reinforced by their commitment to their own positions over those indicated by opinion in their home districts. Moreover, their markedly positive orientation to most reform efforts as well as their more optimistic view of their relations with various non-governmental political actors seems to indicate that the newer Republicans did indeed see themselves as change agents with a popular mandate. This activist orientation seems entirely consistent with the confrontational sentiments of a Republican congressional leadership which had itself emerged from another large class of conservative House freshman in 1978. (Rohde 1991).

The absence a more dramatic cleavage between "new" and "old" Republicans may not be all that surprising. Many of the newcomers came from vacant seats or Republican strongholds in the Midwest and West (Kapitan 1994). The views of the new ones from the South may roughly reflect the values held

by the conservative Democrats who previously held those seats. One might also expect less disagreement between Republicans given the pledge made by over 300 of the party's candidate's in the 1994 mid-term election who signed the Contract with America. Thus, most of the GOP newcomers were mainstream candidates who won in open or competitive districts while the few extremists found in the second survey are most likely amateur ideologues who unexpectedly upset established Democratic incumbents (Fowler 1996). Rather than representing a new breed, the newcomer's role orientation and more consistent conservatism simply continues the secular trend toward greater ideological homogeneity and partisanship in both the congressional parties that extends back at least to at least the late 1970s (Dodd and Oppenheimer 1997).

At least as important as their differences and commonalities with other Republicans on specific questions is the fact that the election of the class of 1994 made the Republicans the majority party in Congress. It is this majority status and not the "hard" conservatism of the newcomers on the issues that made it possible for their congressional party to accomplish things that many of the other more established Republicans had desired all along. These prospects were clearly enhanced by the greater willingness of the "new representatives" to be party loyalists and to enthusiastically support legislative crusades aimed at organizational innovations that might accelerate passage of their agenda. On the other hand, these policy opportunities may well be undercut if their freshman enthusiasm wanes as the newcomers adjust to life in the House and when some of the more vulnerable or extremist junior representatives lose their re-election bids.

References

- Brady, D. (1988) *Critical Elections and Congressional Policy Making*, Stanford Univ.
- _____. and N. Lynn. (1973) "Switched-Seat Districts," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, XVII (3), August.
- Brock, W. (1995) *Internship in Government*, unpublished paper.
- Cassata, D. (1994) "Freshman Class Boasts Resumes to Back Up 'Outsider' Image," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 12, Sup. 9-12.
- Clausen, A. (1973) *How Congressmen Decide*, St. Martins.
- Cunningham, K. (1993) "With a Democrat in the White House, Partisanship Hits a New High," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. December 18.
- Davidson, R., D. Kovenock and M. O'Leary (1966) *Congress in Crisis*, Wadsworth.
- _____. (1969) *The Role of the Congressman*, Pegasus.
- _____. (1992) *The Postreform Congress*, St. Martins.
- Dexter, L. (1969) *How Organizations are Represented in Washington*, Bobbs-Merrill.
- Dodd, L. and B. Oppenheimer (ed.) (1997) *Congress Reconsidered*. CQ.
- Duncan, P. (1993) *Politics in America 1994*, CQ.
- Fenno, R. (1971) "The Freshman Congressman," in *Congressional Behavior*, N. Polsby ed., Random House.
- Fowler, L. (1996) "Who Runs for Congress?," PS, Vol. XXIX No. 3, September.
- Gimpel, J. (1996) *Legislating the Revolution*, St. Martin's.
- Gillespie, E. and B. Schellhas (1994) *Contract With America*, Times Books.
- Gugliotta, G. (1996) "The Second Time Around," *The Washington Post*, April 8-14.
- Hinckley, B. (1967) "Interpreting House Midterm Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* LXI (3), September.
- Hildebrandt, K. (1995) *Unsuccessful, but not a Failure*, unpublished paper.
- Hurley, P. and B. Kerr (1997) "The Partisanship of New Members in the 103rd and 104th Houses," *Social Science Quarterly*, 78 (4) December.
- Kapitan, D. (1994) "Incumbents Call It Quits At Record Clip," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. February 19.

Freshman Class: Norms and Attitudes of the "New Representatives"

- Kingdon, J. (1973) *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*, Harper & Row.
- Koplien, C. and J. VandeHei (1994) *Tales from the Crypt*, unpublished paper.
- Lowi, T. (1995) *The End of the Republican Era*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Milbrath, L. (1963) *The Washington Lobbyists*, Rand McNally.
- Miller, W. and D. Stokes (1963) "Constituency Influence in Congress," *American Political Science Review*, 57.
- Matthews, D. (1959) "Folkways of the U.S. Senate," *American Political Science Review* 53
- Moore, S.. (1995) *Restoring The American Dream*, Times Books.
- Ornstein, N., T. Mann and M. Malbin (1995) *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1995-1996*, CQ
- Parker, G. (1985) *Studies of Congress*, CQ.
- Poole, K. and S. Daniels (1985) "Ideology, Party and Voting in the U.S. Congress," *American Political Science Review*, 79.
- Rieselbach, L (1995) *Congressional Politics*, Westview Press.
- Rohde, D. (1991) *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* Univ. Chicago.
- Roman, N. (1995) "Republican Freshman a Potent Force," *The Washington Times*, February 13.
- Schlozman, K. and J. Tierney (1986) *Organized Interests and American Democracy*, Harper & Row.
- Schaffer, W. (1980) *Party and Ideology in the U.S. Congress*, Univ. Press of America.
- Sinclair, B. (1992) "The Emergence of Strong Leadership in the 1980s House of Representatives," *Journal of Politics*, 54 (3) August.
- _____. (1997) *Unorthodox Lawmaking* CQ.
- Sullivan, J. and E. Uslander (1978) "Congressional Behavior and Electoral Marginality," *American Journal of Political Science* 22 (3) August.
- VandeHei, J (1994) *103rd Congress' Views on Congressional Reform*, unpublished paper.
- Weinbaum, M. and D. Judd (1970) "In Search of a Mandated Congress," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* XIV (2), May.
- Wilcox, C. (1995) *The Latest American Revolution*. St. Martin's Press.

Appendix I.

Congressional Questionnaire

Please take some of your valuable time to answer the following questionnaire. These ten survey questions have been selected to provide an understanding of some of the classic questions about congressional behavior. Congressional interns sponsored by the Political Science Department of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh will deliver the questionnaire and pick it up once you have completed it.

1. Which of the following statements best describes that way you vote on most issues? (choose one)

- a. I always vote according to constituent opinion in my district even if I disagree with it.
- b. I normally vote for my own position based upon my experience, knowledge or party.
- c. My vote on any given policy varies depending upon the specific set of circumstances.

2. Rate the importance of the following issues in congress during this session.

(0=none to 10=high)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Civil Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Taxation | <input type="checkbox"/> i. Other
(Issue? _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Defense | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Environment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Foreign Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Health | <input type="checkbox"/> j. Crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Education | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Budget | <input type="checkbox"/> k. Welfare |

Freshman Class: Norms and Attitudes of the "New Representatives"

3. How effective are the following types of interest group lobbying in congress?

(0=counterproductive to 10=highly influential)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. testifying at committee hearings | <input type="checkbox"/> d. organizing grass roots pressures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. information and personal contacts | <input type="checkbox"/> e. providing campaign contributions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. bribery and other illegal tactics | <input type="checkbox"/> f. use of publicity and media efforts |

4. Rate the importance of the following changes on congressional behavior.

(0=none to 10=high)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. more women in the congress | <input type="checkbox"/> d. attention given scandals and ethics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. more minorities in congress | <input type="checkbox"/> e. the pay raise and campaign reform |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. a Democrat in the Executive | <input type="checkbox"/> f. state efforts to impose term limits |

5. To what extent do the following statements reflect your own views?

(0=not at all to 10=exactly)

- a. I am loyal to my political party and unswervingly support most of its policy positions in the Congress.
- b. My role toward interest groups is to help to facilitate them in achieving their legitimate interests.
- c. The public interest is best advanced by support for the President on most of key votes before Congress.

6. How have relations in terms of cooperation, civility and trust with the various political participants listed below changed during your stay in congress?

(0=severely declined to 10=dramatically improved)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. the mass public | <input type="checkbox"/> d. party leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. my home district | <input type="checkbox"/> e. interest groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. electronic media | <input type="checkbox"/> f. federal agencies |

7. Rate the following reform efforts aimed at improving congressional performance.

(0= extremely negative to 10=extremely positive)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. public campaign finance | <input type="checkbox"/> d. a congressional code of ethics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. end the seniority system | <input type="checkbox"/> e. leadership and party discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. congressional term limits | <input type="checkbox"/> f. constituent service ombudsman |

8. How would you identify your own political value system? (choose one)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Left | <input type="checkbox"/> c. Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Right |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Liberal | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Other
(_____) |

Freshman Class: Norms and Attitudes of the "New Representatives"

9. What stance should public libraries, schools, universities and other federally supported institutions take toward the topics listed below?

(0=actively discourage, 5=neutral, 10=actively promote)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Religious Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Secular Humanism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Affirmative Action | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Gay Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Comparable Worth | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Creation Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Artistic Expression | <input type="checkbox"/> i. Women's Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. Collective Bargaining | |

10. Should congress take action to promote the following national educational goals?

(0=never to 10=extreme)

- a. A voucher system that allowed parents a choice of the school to send their children.
- b. Curricular changes that require teaching of both evolution and biblical creationism.
- c. National testing to determine the quality of students, schools, materials and teachers.
- d. Efforts toward family values such as conventional morality, abstinence and prayer.
- e. Greater parental influence over the scientific and literary curriculum used in schools.

11. Describe your own personal profile. (choose one)

- a. Gender: Male Female
- b. Party: Republican Democrat Independent
- c. Region: West Midwest South East
- d. Age: under 30 30-39 40-49
- 50-59 60+

Appendix II.

Demographics	<u>103rd Congress</u>		<u>104th Freshman</u>	
	Sample	Actual	Sample	Actual
Gender (% Female)	8.9	11.0	13.3	12.8
Party (% Republican)	45.0	40.6	86.7	84.9
Region (% Western)	25.7	24.8	30.8	31.4
Age (Average Years)	51.0	51.7	45.3	44.4
Ideology (Values/ACU)	3.2	43.0	3.7	78.0

Sample Survey Letter

Dear Representative

Three months ago my congressional interns delivered to you a questionnaire dealing with the behavior of Congress. These are important theoretical questions in the Political Science field that will allow substantial revision of generalizations about the Legislative Branch that are based on studies that are now decades old. As an elected legislator, you are in a unique position to help provide students and faculty with an insider's understanding of how the legislative process works. The response to my previous mailing and the efforts of my interns, however, has fallen just a few responses short of publishable or statistically significant results.

I am writing you a second time in an effort to encourage you to join your many colleagues who have returned the completed form. I fully understand that you are overworked in your political responsibilities, that you get numerous similar requests that press on your time and that many offices such as your own have adopted a policy of not responding to any questionnaires. I can appreciate this reluctance to expend precious effort since I myself fill out on average three or four surveys a semester in addition to my own professional duties. Thus, I can only hope that the educational significance of this survey may cause you to reconsider your earlier decision not to respond.

Freshman Class: Norms and Attitudes of the "New Representatives"

As I said in the previous letter, you are absolutely guaranteed anonymity. If there are any questions in the survey that you don't feel comfortable with, just ignore them and complete the questions that you do think you can answer. I would even be interested in your open-ended reactions to either the individual questions or the survey instrument generally. You can have copies of the publications that will be based on this research by indicating your interest on the questionnaire or call me about the study before its findings are published [(414) 424-7165 or (414) 233-1936].

I value your understanding of congressional operations greatly. Please share them with the students and scholars in Political Science. My interns will soon be leaving their staff positions so that this will be my last chance at asking for your help. Consequently, I am enclosing a business reply envelope for your convenience. I can only hope that this final plea will ultimately make the difference in producing enough respondents to make this potentially important study meaningful. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,