Party of the Purse: The Effect of Legislator Partisanship on Congressional District Funding

Peter T. McLaughlin

The Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center
University of Oklahoma

September 9, 2022

Abstract

Legislators' pursuit of federal funding for their home districts represents a core element of congressional representation. Distributive politics is often characterized as less partisan than other aspects of congressional behavior, but it is unclear how legislator party affiliation affects district spending. I use a regression discontinuity design (RD) that leverages close congressional elections to examine whether Democrats and Republicans in Congress pursue different magnitudes and types of distributive benefits. Focusing on the years following a close congressional election, I find that districts where Republicans narrowly win tend to receive more federal funding than districts where Democrats narrowly win. However, the effect of MC partisanship on district spending is not immediate – a distinguishable effect emerges only when the window of observation is expanded from one congress to two congresses following a close election. Finally, I separate spending by policy area and find that the general Republican funding advantage stems from transportation and agriculture spending.

Introduction

How does the partisan affiliation of a member of Congress (MC) affect the flow of federal funding into their congressional district? The geographic distribution of federal funds has long been a topic of interest to scholars of American political institutions and congressional representation. Canonical theories of congressional behavior predict universal and bipartisan distribution of public resources. Bringing home federally funded projects helps incumbents build a 'personal vote' among constituents (Mayhew 1974; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987), and the institution's structure facilitates distributive politics logrolling and oversized coalitions (Shepsle and Weingast 1981).

However, recent studies show that partisanship influences federal spending patterns. Power over distributive politics runs through party leadership, who use distributive benefits to incentivize party loyalty and win elections (Aldrich and Rohde 2000*b*; Balla, Lawrence, Maltzman and Sigelman 2002; Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015). As such, majority party legislators systematically receive more distributive benefits than minority party legislators (Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2009; Albouy 2013; Curry and Donnelly 2021). Partisanship clearly plays a central role in distributive politics, though it remains unclear whether and how congressional districts' federal funding is impacted by their representatives' partisanship, all else equal.

In this article I investigate three research questions. First, do Democrats and Republicans in Congress secure different magnitudes of distributive benefits? There are reasons to believe MC partisanship influences levels of district funding, but whether a district should expect more federal funding by electing a Democrat or Republican is unclear. Second, if Democrats and Republicans do employ different distributive politics strategies, how long does it take to result in divergent policy outcomes? Whether the policy effect is immediate or takes time to emerge is important from a democratic accountability and retrospective voting perspective. Finally, do Democrats and Republicans in Congress differ in the types of spending they secure? Democrat and Republican elites prioritize a different set of policy

issues, and distributive politics is potentially fertile ground for observing differences in party priorities.

To answer these questions, I gather data on federal spending in congressional districts from FY 1983 to FY 2010 and employ a regression discontinuity design (RD), leveraging close US House elections to investigate the effect of legislator partisanship on district spending. Close election regression discontinuity designs have become an increasingly common method for studying the effects of political affiliation of officeholders on policy outcomes (Leigh 2008; Hill and Jones 2017; Caughey, Xu and Warshaw 2017). I employ this design to determine the effect of legislator partisanship on distributive spending, using district spending as the dependent variable. Additionally, to investigate whether Republicans and Democrats secure different types of spending projects, I subset the spending data by policy area and replicate the analysis on each subset.

I find that legislator partisanship has a slight but meaningful effect on district spending, with Republicans securing more district spending than Democrats. However, this effect takes time to emerge – there is no partisan effect in district spending in the Congress immediately after the election. A distinguishable effect emerges only when the window of observation is expanded from one Congress (two-years) to two Congresses (four-years) following a close election. Thus, it appears that legislator partisanship has a meaningful but delayed effect on the magnitude of district spending.

When separating the analysis by policy area, I find that spending in most policy areas is unaffected by MC partisanship. However, a close Republican win leads to substantially more district spending on transportation and agriculture projects. That Republicans secure more district spending than Democrats on two relatively neutral policy areas, rather than a party owned issue like defense, offers useful insights. Instead of pursuing extra funding for party priorities, close election winners appear to maximize district spending on relatively nonpartisan issues that allow for broad credit claiming opportunities. Swing district MCs of both parties plausibly strive to maximize district spending, and Democrats in safe districts

likely pursue more district spending than Republicans in safe districts. Because a distributive politics-oriented reelection strategy is more beneficial in liberal and moderate districts than conservative districts (Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Crespin and Finocchiaro 2013; Sidman 2019), it follows that Republicans in swing districts secure more transportation and agriculture funding than Democrats in swing districts. Due to higher demand for nonpartisan distributive benefits in safe Democratic seats than safe Republican seats, Republicans who narrowly win elections receive a greater portion of their party's distributive pie.

Congressional Distributive Politics

Legislators' pursuit of federal funding for district projects is a core element of foundational accounts of congressional representation. Early theories of congressional distributive politics emphasized the universal and bipartisan nature of public resource allocation among MCs. Bringing home federally funded projects to the district helps incumbents credit claim and build a personal vote among constituents, meaning all legislators share a desire for distributive benefits (Mayhew 1974; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987; Fiorina and Fiorina 1989). As such, MC see the pursuit of pork barrel projects for their district as a viable strategy for re-election (Ferejohn 1974; Stein and Bickers 1997; Arnold 1990).

Early formal models of congressional organization also predicted oversized winning coalitions and universalism in distributive politics. Based on a "gains from exchange" principle, early formal models emphasized the role of distributive politics as a pillar of congressional organization (Shepsle 1979; Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Ferejohn 1986). Institutional structure, particularly the committee system, channels legislative self-interest by offering MCs access to their preferred distributive benefits (Weingast and Marshall 1988; Adler and Lapinski 1997). Committees facilitate logrolling across policy areas, allowing all MCs to secure electorally valuable pork. These distributive theories of congressional organization made the case that the gains from exchange principle, combined with uncertainty over the compo-

sition of future winning coalitions, leads to universalism and oversized distributive politics coalitions (Shepsle and Weingast 1981). Therefore, whether a congressional district is represented by a Republican or Democrat was not thought to influence the district's level of federal funding.

However, a growing line of distributive politics research show that partisanship influences federal spending patterns. Rather than a system characterized by universalism, majority party legislators consistently receive more distributive benefits than minority party legislators (Balla et al. 2002; Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2009; Albouy 2013; Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015; Curry and Donnelly 2021). These findings fall in line with the expectations of conditional party government (CPG) (Aldrich and Rohde 1997, 2000*a*,*b*) and cartel theory (Cox and McCubbins 2005, 2007), the two major partisan theories of congressional lawmaking. Briefly, CPG and cartel theory emphasize party leaders' power to control the agenda as a key organizing force behind congressional lawmaking. CPG focuses on the conditions that lead to rank-and-file MCs ceding power to party leaders, while cartel theory focuses on the negative agenda control that majority party leaders wield to keep legislation off the floor that would split the party or go against the preferences of the party majority. Regarding distributive politics, the partisan theories of lawmaking argue that distributive power runs through party leaders, who use distributive benefits to reward party loyalists and help party members win elections.

Additionally, partisanship appears to shape the electoral rewards MCs gain by securing federal spending projects. Republican legislators are less likely to electorally benefit from distributive politics than their Democratic counterparts (Alvarez and Saving 1997; Sellers 1997; Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Crespin and Finocchiaro 2013). Further, the partisan nature of distributive politics and elections is enhanced by polarization (Sidman 2019). Distributive benefits are absorbed into the partisan issue landscape during times of polarization and considered a "government spending" issue, thereby turning off Republicans to distributive benefits.

The mechanisms through which MCs can influence spending policy are central to research on congressional distributive politics and underlie theories on the distribution of federal funds to congressional districts. The most commonly theorized and studied method for members to pursue district funding is the annual appropriations process, where Congress sets spending levels and priorities for the federal government. Congressional appropriations offers MCs the opportunity to pursue individual projects in their districts in the form of earmarks (Lee 2003; Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2009). Additionally, party leaders use the appropriations process to broadly exert influence on federal spending (Balla et al. 2002; Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015). But annual appropriations is not the one venue for congressional distributive politics. Lee (2000) shows that federal funding formulas are often a result of congressional dealmaking, which ultimately favors small states in formula funding. Formula funding is often excluded from distributive politics research because it is less variable than appropriations, but it is still amenable to congressional influence. Additionally, while the majority of federal funding is ultimately spent through bureaucratic agencies, MCs use their oversight of the bureaucracy to influence bureaucratic distributive policymaking (Arnold 1980). For instance, Congress modifies bureaucratic decision-making tools, such as benefit-cost analysis calculations, to shape spending outcomes (Mills 2013). Further, individual MCs often communicate directly with agencies in an attempt to influence spending decisions (Mills, Kalaf-Hughes and MacDonald 2016; Neiheisel and Brady 2017; Lowande, Ritchie and Lauterbach 2019). In sum, multiple avenues of influence exist for MCs and party leaders to affect federal spending outcomes.

Much of the distributive research cited above uses data on federal spending to operationalize distributive policy. Bickers and Stein (1996) collected annual federal spending across congressional districts starting in FY1983 from the Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS), and this data set has been extended to FY2010 (Alexander, Berry and Howell 2016; Berry, Burden and Howell 2010). FAADS data offers useful measures of federal spending, though recent research by Hammond and Rosenstiel (2020) cautions scholars

from using this data as an operationalization of congressional appropriations. Hammond and Rosenstiel argue that spending data "conflate competing influences on the budget, are downstream measures of the appropriations that originated them, and induce measurement error, which increases the likelihood of a null result and may produce biased estimates" (Hammond and Rosenstiel 2020, 604). As such, while spending data is well suited for investigating questions on implementation of distributive policy (see Napolio 2021), it is a limited measure of congressional appropriations.

Issue Ownership and Prioritization

Extant research on congressional distributive often uses data aggregated across different policy areas, thereby treating federal spending as one-dimensional. However, spending decisions inherently require trade-offs between different policy areas (Breunig and Busemeyer 2012), and Republicans and Democrats might prioritize different types of spending in their districts. Therefore, partisan differences in distributive politics might be less about maximization and more about prioritization.

A few studies separate spending data into basic categories of spending and find that Democrats and Republicans in the electorate reward legislators for different types of spending. Democrats are more likely to electorally reward legislators for securing standard spending projects, whereas Republicans are more likely to reward legislators for securing contingent liabilities – public underwriting of a private company's financial risk – in their districts (Bickers and Stein 2000; Lazarus and Reilly 2010). Members of Congress are incentivized to prioritize the types of spending that will help them win reelection, and demand for certain forms of spending varies based on partisanship.

Research on party-based issue ownership sheds further light on how MC party might shape the prioritization of different types of district spending. Petrocik's (1996) canonical research put forward the idea that people trust one party over the other to solve problems

on certain policy issues. Recent research clarifies the nature of issue ownership and how it manifests in the policy process. Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch (2012) define issue ownership stemming from parties' long-term prioritization of certain issues as associative issue ownership. They compellingly argue that voters associate certain issues with parties based on how attentive the party has historically been to such issues. Egan (2013) finds evidence of associative issue ownership playing out in policymaking – when in control of government, parties prioritize their owned issues. Further, Fagan (2021) shows that associative issue ownership stems, at least in part, from elite prioritization of issues. Leveraging a comprehensive data set of white papers from party-aligned think tank, Fagan (2021) finds that party elites have distinctive, enduring issue priorities that follow patterns of issue ownership.

The issue prioritization aspect of issue ownership plausibly extends to the nature of distributive politics. Budgetary policy is based on trade-offs, where policymakers must choose between alternative funding priorities (Breunig and Busemeyer 2012). As such, congressional appropriations policymaking offers a potential venue to extend research on partisan issue ownership.

Theoretical Framework

My central theoretical frame is that MCs make strategic distributive policy decisions based on a combination of electoral concerns and policy concerns. Three questions emerged from this frame. First, do Democratic and Republican MCs secure different magnitudes of distributive benefits? In other words, do congressional districts receive more or less district spending based on whether they elect a Democratic or Republican representative?

Some research suggests that legislator partisanship does influence levels of district spending, with Democrats likely to secure more district funding than Republicans. Electoral incentives are at the core of congressional distributive politics (Mayhew 1974), and Democratic MCs are more likely to be electorally awarded for securing traditional spending projects than

Republicans (Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Sidman 2019). Additionally, Republicans are more ideologically opposed to government spending. Fiscally conservative members of Congress may out of the pork-barrel due ideological opposition to government spending (Frisch and Kelly 2015; Bovitz 2002). As such, Democrats secure higher levels of district spending as compared to Republicans.

However, there are also reasons to expect that MC partisanship does not impact overall levels of district spending. A general stance against federal spending does not preclude members from pursuing district spending (Frisch and Kelly 2015). Fiscal conservatives might conclude that if appropriations dollars are going to be spent somewhere, the funds might as well be spent in their home district. Additionally, legislators might lack the requisite influence over spending policy to meaningfully affect policy outcomes. That is, even if Democrats and Republicans take different approaches to distributive politics, it may not result in different policy outcomes. Recent findings suggest that MCs lack the individual agency to affect spending policy. For instance, Mills, Kalaf-Hughes and MacDonald (2016) find that many MCs sent letters to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) attempting to save funding for air traffic control towers in their respective districts, but the FAA based its decisions on its own policy preferences and criteria rather than congressional pressures.

An argument can also be made that, on average, a district will receive more federal spending by electing a Republican. Swing district MCs of both parties plausibly strive to maximize district spending, as swing districts produce legislators who focus on distributive benefits and credit claiming (Grimmer, Westwood and Messing 2014; Ashworth and Mesquita 2006). However, Democrats in safe districts likely pursue distributive benefits more aggressively than Republicans in safe districts, because a distributive politics-oriented reelection strategy is more beneficial in liberal and moderate districts than conservative districts (Alvarez and Saving 1997; Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Crespin and Finocchiaro 2013; Sidman 2019). Distributive benefits flow through parties and party leaders (Balla et al. 2002; Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015; Curry and Donnelly 2021), and there is plausibly more competition

for such benefits in the Democratic caucus. Because safe district Democrats have greater electoral incentives to pursue distributive benefits than safe district Republicans, swing district Democrats are left with a smaller share of their party's distributive spending pie than swing district Republicans.

The second question to emerge from my theoretical frame is aimed at the temporal connection between distributive politics decisions and observable policy outcomes: How long does it take divergent distributive politics strategies to result in divergent policy outcomes? That is, if the answer to the first question is that MC partisanship does impact distributive policy decision-making, when will distinguishable patterns emerge in federal spending outcomes. Appropriations policymaking does not map cleanly onto spending outcomes, and there is a considerable lag between appropriations decisions and actual spending (Hammond and Rosenstiel 2020). Therefore, MC partisanship may not meaningfully impact distributive politics immediately, even if Republicans and Democrats do, in fact, employ different distributive politics strategies.

This question is of considerable theoretical interest. Retrospective voting – where citizens electorally reward or punish incumbents based on observable performance metrics – is a core element of democratic accountability (Ferejohn 1986; Fiorina 1978). Functional retrospective voting requires observable metrics on which voters can base decisions, but party-based differences in policy outcomes are often indistinguishable on the timeline required by elections (Dynes and Holbein 2020). Legislator partisanship may impact spending outcomes, but a substantial lag between appropriations decisions and spending outcomes would present a substantial challenge for retrospective voting.

My third and final question centers on type of district spending rather than magnitude of district spending: Do Democrats and Republicans in Congress differ in the types of spending they secure? The literature on associative issue ownership suggests so. Associative issue ownership stems from the prioritization of certain issues by party elites (Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch 2012; Egan 2013; Fagan 2021). Because distributive politics is inherently shaped

by the prioritization of issues (Breunig and Busemeyer 2012), funding patterns plausibly emerge that follow observed patterns of issue ownership.

Alternatively, there is reason to believe that district spending patterns do not reflect party issue ownership. If the goal of congressional distributive politics is to build a nonpartisan personal vote among thankful constituents (Mayhew 1974; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987), MCs in swing districts likely aim to maximize neutral spending rather than party priorities. If reelection is the primary goal behind distributive politics, district spending patters are unlikely to reflect party issue ownership. Under this line of reasoning, MCs in swing districts plausibly see district spending as a venue for building nonpartisan electoral capital rather than a venue for pursuing party priorities.

Research Design

Extant research examines many determinants of the amount of pork legislators bring home to their district. Studies have focused on committee membership (Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015; Evans 2004; Lee 2003), presidential copartisanship (Berry, Burden and Howell 2010; Christenson, Kriner and Reeves 2017), electoral vulnerability (Lazarus 2009), seniority (Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2009), and ideological proximity to bureaucratic agency leaders (Bertelli and Grose 2009) as possible determinants of distributive policy outcomes. However, no studies have directly examined the effect of legislator partisanship. One reason for the lack of scholarly attention to this topic is the methodological challenge of creating a valid identification strategy. Because Republicans and Democrats tend to represent different districts with different funding needs, a correlation study that compares Democratic and Republican held districts on federal spending is unable to clarify whether MC partisan affiliation affects district funding levels.

To address this methodological challenge, I employ a regression discontinuity design (RD), using close US House elections to establish MC partisanship as a treatment variable. Close

election regression discontinuity designs have become an increasingly common method for studying various components of the US Congress (Lee 2008; Fowler and Hall 2014; Hall 2015; Fouirnaies and Hall 2020). Additionally, close election discontinuity designs have been employed to examine the effects of local and state party control, suggesting the viability of my proposed research design. Pettersson-Lidbom (2008) uses a close election regression discontinuity design to estimate the effects of party control of local governments on economic policy outcomes in Sweden. In research on US states, Leigh (2008), Caughey, Xu and Warshaw (2017), and Dynes and Holbein (2020) use close election regression discontinuity designs to estimate the effect of US state gubernatorial partisanship and state legislative control on a range of policy outcomes, and Hill and Jones (2017) use the same approach to estimate the effect of gubernatorial partisanship on education expenditures. Considering the effectiveness of close election regression discontinuity designs at investigating similar research questions, this approach appears well suited for examining the effect of legislative partisanship on district spending.

I employ a robust local polynomial RD design with mean squared error optimal bandwidths and cluster-robust standard errors.[1] Formally, my regressions take the following form:

$$Y_{ipt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 1(S_{ipt} > 0) + f(S_{ipt}) + \tau_t + \epsilon_{ipt}$$

Where Y_{ipt} represents district spending in a given district i, time period t, and partisan representation p. S_{ipt}, the "running variable," represents Republican vote margin in a general US House election. As the RD treatment variable, a S_{ipt} value of greater than 0 indicates a Republican victory, and value of below 0 indicates a Democratic victory. Because the total amount of federal spending changes on a year-to-year basis, I include year fixed effects – τ_t – in model.

$f(S_{ipt})$ represents the specification of the running variable. I use a data-driven bandwidth

[1] I use the rdrobust package in R to generate RD estimates and standard errors (Cattaneo et al. 2019).

approach and local polynomial estimation with a triangular kernel function for this specification. Local polynomial estimation focuses exclusively on the area around the cutoff value and uses a low-order polynomial approximation of the unknown regression function. Global polynomial RD methods, by using data far from the cutoff, can lead to poor approximation at boundary points and unreliable RD estimators (Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik 2019). Conversely, the local polynomial framework approximates the regression function close to the cutoff. While the local framework leads to a poorer approximation of the full model, it offers a better local approximation for the RD estimator. By focusing only on values close to the cutoff, the local polynomial design is able to employ a low-order polynomial approximation and is less vulnerable to overfitting issues associated with global polynomial RD methods. As such, I use a local polynomial design with a linear approximation of the model on each side of the cutoff, as "the local linear estimator seems to deliver a good trade-off between simplicity, precision, and stability in RD settings" (Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik 2019, 42).

I use a triangular kernel function and mean squared error (MSE) optimized bandwidth for the RD design. The triangular kernel function assigns weights based on distance from the cutoff and is recommended in the RD literature (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik 2014; de la Cuesta and Imai 2016). Given a polynomial order and kernel function, the MSE optimized bandwidth optimizes the bias-variance trade-off (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik 2014). This approach, which is recommended for close election RD designs (de la Cuesta and Imai 2016), uses a data-driven bandwidth selection process, thereby avoiding arbitrariness and generating a point estimator with optimal properties. Finally, I use a robust bias-corrected confidence intervals approach. When used with MSE-optimal bandwidths, this approach produces optimal post estimation, bias-corrected standard errors, and valid inference (Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik 2019).

I use a continuity-based RD framework, thereby taking on the continuity assumption that the only major change at the cutoff point is treatment assignment. In close election

RD designs, the central concern is that sorting occurs around the cutoff point. Caughey and Sekhon (2011) find evidence of such sorting in close US House elections, though Eggers, Fowler, Hainmueller, Hall and Snyder Jr (2015) argue that the evidence of sorting is based on inappropriate tests. Additionally, de la Cuesta and Imai (2016) show that imbalance in pretreatment covariates above and below the cutoff point does not violate the continuity assumption – what matters is that there is no discontinuous jump of the pretreatment covariates at the cutoff point.

To validate the close election RD design in this case, I employ three common RD validity tests (de la Cuesta and Imai 2016; Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik 2019).[2] First, I test the density of the running variable around the cutoff point, and I find that there is no significant difference in the number of observations below and above the cutoff. Second, I analyze whether there is a discontinuity in the number of total votes in the race around the cutoff point – a test recommended by (Skovron and Titiunik 2015). I find that there is not a significant discontinuity at the cutoff point for this variable. Finally, I use placebo cutoffs to test whether there is a treatment effect at not cutoff point values of the running variable. I find no evidence of a treatment effect at placebo cutoffs. Critically, the second and third validity tests are analyzed using the same optimal bandwidth and local polynomial estimation technique as the actual analysis below. In sum, I find no empirical indications that the continuity assumption is violated, providing indirect evidence that my RD design is valid.

Data

I employ the close election regression discontinuity research design to estimate the effect of MC party affiliation on distributive spending, using federal discretionary spending in the district as the dependent variable. The data I use for this variable comes from the Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS), which records federal transfers to domestic bene-

[2]See appendix for validity check results.

ficiaries and tracks federal funding into individual congressional districts over time. Bickers and Stein (1997) originally collected and organized this spending data starting in FY 1984. The FAADS dataset has since been been extended to FY2010 (Alexander, Berry and Howell 2016; Berry, Burden and Howell 2010), resulting in a continuous record of federal spending in congressional districts that covers more than twenty-five years. This data has recently been used for distributive politics research on appropriations committees (Berry and Fowler 2016), congressional delegations (Curry and Donnelly 2021) and presidential particularism (Napolio 2021). The comprehensive nature of FAADS data – all federal agencies are included – and coverage over a long period of time are ideal for examining the effect of legislator partisanship on distributive spending. Similar to previous research using FAADS data (see Berry and Fowler 2016), I exclude spending categories that are generally unassociated with congressional distributive politics – formula grants and entitlements – from the analysis.

However, spending data is limited in what it can say about congressional decision-making around distributive politics. First, there is a lag between policy decisions and spending outlays. Hammond and Rosenstiel (2020) note that "less than three-quarters of all appropriations outlay in the first year" (607). The dependent variable in my research design is district spending after a close election, and such data is likely to both include some spending from appropriations decisions made before the close election and exclude some spending from appropriations decisions made during the period under examination. Additionally, I examine whether incoming Republican and Democratic MCs vary in how much federal funding is spent in their district during their first term in office, but spending data encapsulates many distributive policy decisions that fall outside of Congress. The effects of congressional appropriations decisions and distributive politics efforts might be masked by spending data stemming from other sources, such as bureaucratic policymaking. Thus, my analysis offers a conservative test of the theory that Democrats and Republicans vary in their approach to distributive politics. As such, I employ two additional empirical strategies to elucidate the distributive politics effects of legislator partisanship.

First, I extend the period under observation. Rather than looking only at the district spending during the MCs' first term after a close election, I examine district spending in the two congresses trailing the consequential election. This approach alleviates some of the timing issues associated with FAADS data, as the extended window allows more time for congressional spending decisions to take hold over spending outcomes. The four-year window captures multi-year projects and appropriations that do not outlay immediately, making my research design more likely to pick up on differing partisan approaches to distributive politics. However, extending the window of spending raises additional issues. MCs who only survive one term in office are credited with spending outcomes during their successor's first term, thereby increasing measurement error. Capturing more spending data stemming from an MC's decision-making, therefore, also increases the probability of capturing some spending data that is unrelated to the MC.[3]

Second, I use Hammond and Rosenstiel's (2020) dataset on appropriations instead of spending data. Rather than relying on spending obligation data, Hammond and Rosenstiel gather data directly from appropriations conference reports. This provides a direct measure of congressional appropriations policymaking. Hammond and Rosenstiel demonstrate that their appropriations data is better suited than spending data to answer certain research questions on congressional distributive policymaking. They replicate a portion of a study on the distributive politics effects of appropriations committee membership (Berry and Fowler 2016), substituting the original study's spending data with their appropriations data. Committee membership had no effect on outcomes when using spending data, but Hammond and Rosenstiel report a strong relationship between committee membership and appropriations outcomes.

The takeaway from Hammond and Rosenstiel (2020) is that spending data is an imperfect measure of congressional distributive politics, and measurement error arising from timing issues, missingness, and conflation of congressional appropriations with bureaucratic spending

[3]I dropped observations where redistricting led to a district being redrawn during the four-year period under observation.

increases the likelihood of a null result. Appropriations data offer a better measure for analyses of congressional distributive politics, as such data are not afflicted by such problems. Therefore, I replicate my analysis using Hammond and Rosenstiel's dataset on military construction appropriations from FY 1984 to FY 2010. The downside to this approach is that this dataset is limited to military construction appropriations, a small subset of appropriations policy. Additionally, the targeted nature of this data means that it only captures one mechanism of congressional distributive politics, appropriations policy, and ignores others, such as bureaucratic outreach and alterations to discretionary grant criteria.

Finally, I return to the FAADS dataset to explore whether Republicans and Democrats differ in the types of spending they pursue. FAADS data is categorized by the federal program from which it came, allowing for separate analyses of federal spending in different policy areas. Berry and Fowler (2016) matched FAADS data organized by program to congressional appropriations subcommittees, resulting in a dataset of spending data organized by policy area. By replicating the RDD analysis on spending data in each policy area, I clarify whether Republicans pursue more district funding for Republican-owned issues and Democrats pursue more funding for Democrat-owned issues. Similar to the analyses described above, I include year and district fixed effects in the regressions for district spending in each policy area.

Results

I begin the presentation of results by graphically depicting the regression discontinuity. Figure 1 displays RD results for district spending in the congress following a close election, while Figure 2 displays RD results for district spending in the two congresses following a close election. Both figures were generated using the model specifications described above. The horizontal axis measures Republican vote margin, which acts as the "running variable" in the RD design. The cutoff point is zero, meaning a positive score represents a Republican victory and a negative score represents a Democratic victory. The X-axis ranges were selected by

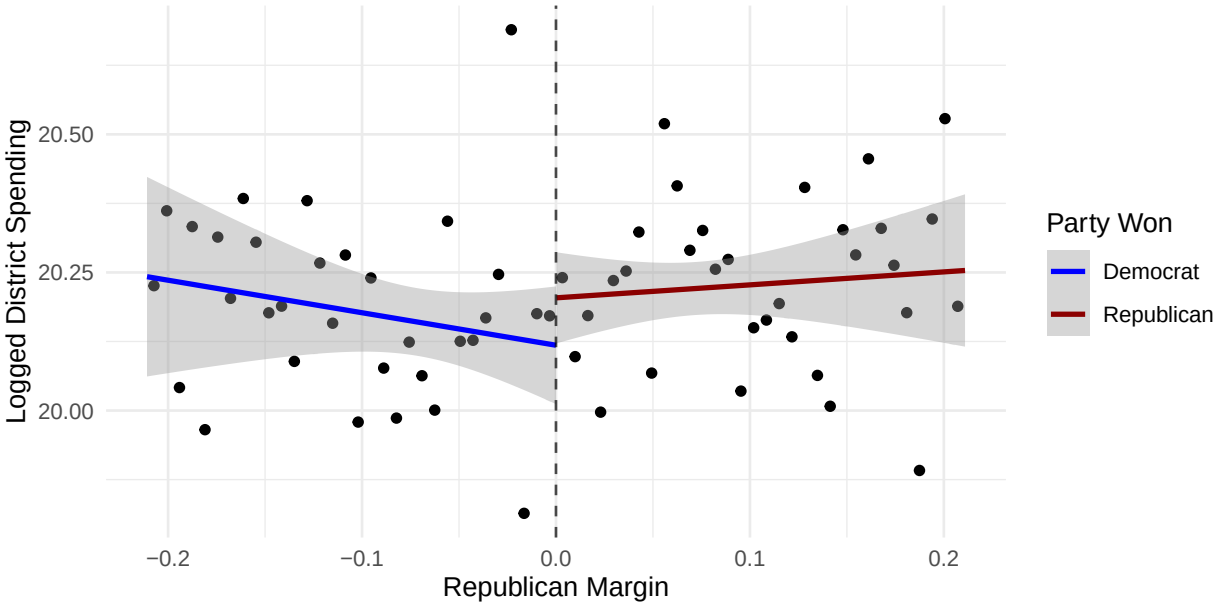

Figure 1: District Spending in the Congress After a Close Election. The lines are fitted local linear regressions with triangular kernel weighting. The dots are means of the dependent variable – logged district spending – at evenly spaced bins.

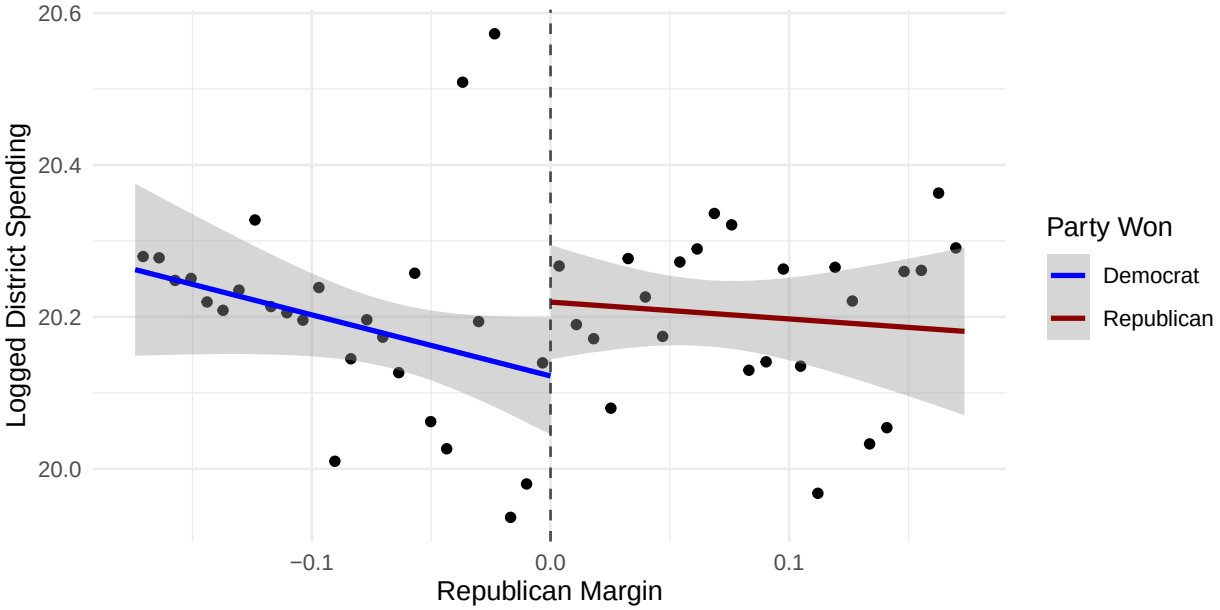

Figure 2: District Spending in the Two Congresses After a Close Election. The lines are fitted local linear regressions with triangular kernel weighting. The dots are means of the dependent variable – logged district spending – at evenly spaced bins.

MSE-optimized bandwidth estimation. Each point represents the average of the dependent variable – logged district spending – at 25 evenly spaced bins on each side of the cutoff

line. The lines on each side of the cutoff point are fitted local linear approximations of the unknown regression function. These regressions include a triangular kernel approach, which weights data according to distance from the cutoff.

Figures 1 and 2 similarly indicate that a close Republican win leads to slightly more district spending than a close Democratic win. The RD estimate of interest is the difference between treatment variable categories at the cutoff point, and the red line is higher at the cutoff point than the blue line in both figures. However, the 95% confidence intervals overlap at the cutoff point in both figures. Additional testing is needed to discern whether the partisan effect on district spending in either figure is significant, but the discontinuity in Figure 2 appears slightly clearer than the discontinuity in Figure 1. That is, the Republican advantage appears to be more distinguishable when the window under observation is expanded to two congresses after a close election.

Table 1 displays results from the close election RD analysis. The first column of Table 1 reports results for spending in the congress immediately after a close election, and the coefficient for a Republican win in a close election is positive. A congressional district is estimated to receive around 13% more federal spending when it elects a Republican as opposed to a Democrat in a close election, but the estimate is not statistically distinct from zero. Therefore, I report that legislator partisanship does not have a statistically significant effect on district spending in the congress immediately preceding a close election.

Table 1: The Effect of Legislator Partisanship on District Spending

	Logged Spending in the Next Congress	Logged Spending in the Next Two Congresses
Effect of a Republican Win	0.128	0.129*
Bias Corrected SE	(0.082)	(0.063)
Robust CI	[-0.033, 0.288]	[0.005, 0.253]
Bandwidth	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal
Kernel	Triangular	Triangular
N	5990	5529
Effective N	1685	1247

* $p < 0.05$

The second column of Table 1 repeats the same RD analysis, but the dependent variable changes from district spending in the first congress following a close House election to district spending in the first two congresses preceding a close House election. The motivation for this analysis is that spending outcomes are downstream of distributive politics decision-making, so the MC party affiliation effect might emerge more clearly in the spending data when a longer window is used to observe spending effects. The coefficient for a Republican win is nearly identical to the first analysis – a district is estimated to receive around 13% more federal spending when it elects a Republican as opposed to a Democrat in a close election. However, the standard error for this analysis in noticeably smaller. As such, I report a statistically significant effect of legislator partisanship on district spending.[4]

The results displayed in Table 1 suggest that MC partisanship does influence overall levels of district funding. All else equal, a congressional district stands to the receive more federal funding when a Republican narrowly wins in the general election. However, MC partisanship does not immediately impact district spending – the effect is indistinguishable from zero in the congress immediately preceding a close election. A distinguishable effect emerges only when the window of observation is expanded from one congress to two congresses following a close election. The lag between appropriations decisions and spending outlays offers a plausible reason for these findings. A substantial amount of funding that an MC secures in the two-years after an election will not arrive in their districts until after the next election. In sum, it takes time for congressional election outcomes to translate into distributive policy outcomes.

Next, I investigate whether Republicans and Democrats secure different types of district spending. Generated from the same RD design as the analysis above, each row of Figure 3 displays the estimate for a Republican win in a close election on district spending in a specific policy area.[5] Because the effect of MC partisanship in the analysis above is clearer when using a two congress (four-year) window as compared to a one congress (two-year)

[4]Results do not change when controls are added for MC incumbency. See Appendix Table A6 for results.
[5]Tabular results of this analysis are presented in the appendix.

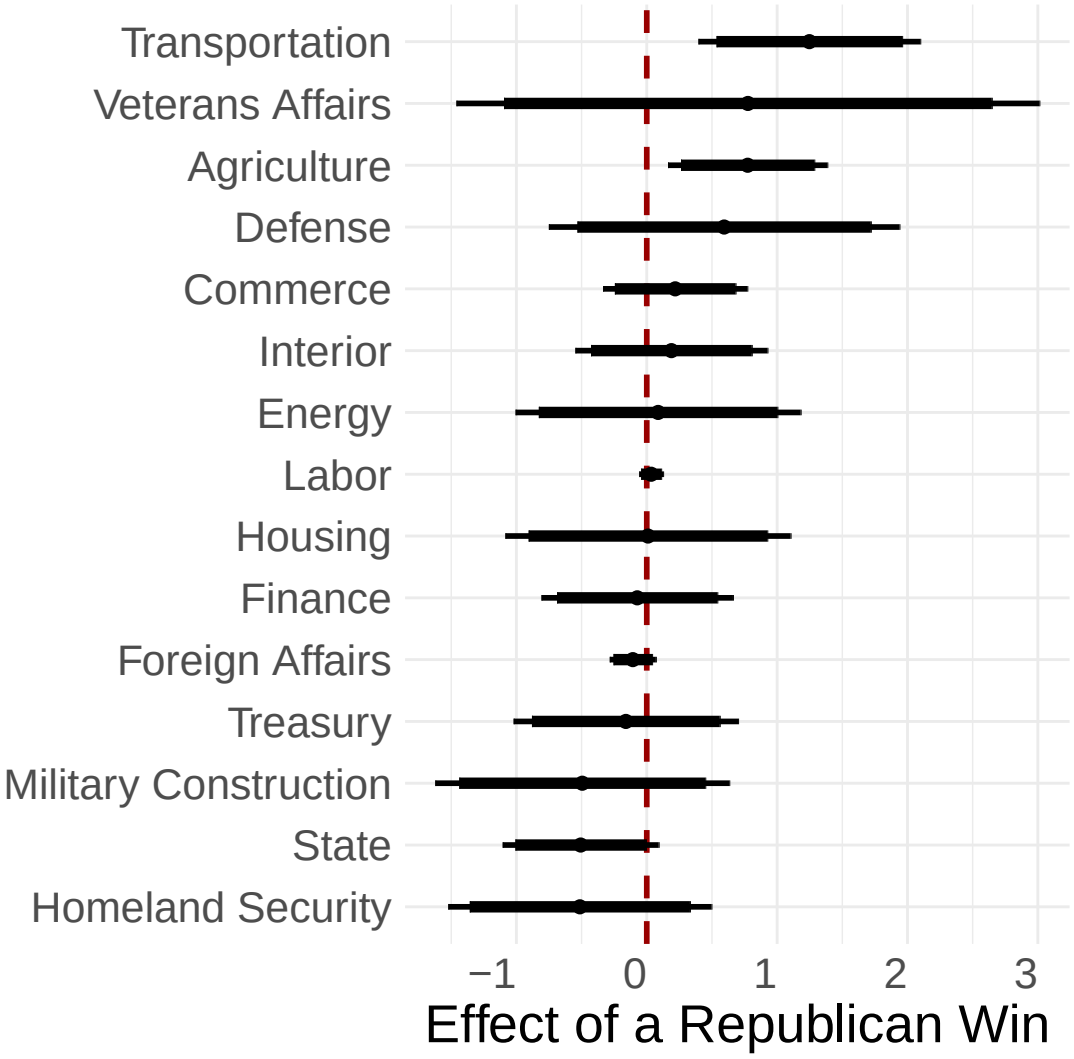

Figure 3: The Effect of MC Partisanship on District Spending by Policy Area. Each line comes from a separate RD estimation. The dots are the RD point estimate. Thicker lines represent 90% confidence intervals, while thinner line represent 95% confidence intervals.

window, I use a four-year window for analysis displayed in Figure 3.[6] MC partisanship appears to have little-to-no effect on most types of district spending. Only two out of the fifteen spending categories reach statistical significance. The results displayed in Figure 3 indicate that spending in most policy areas is unaffected by MC partisanship.[7]

[6]When using a one congress window for spending by policy area, results do not meaningfully change. See the appendix for these results.

[7]Running the same RD analysis on Hammond and Rosenstiel's (2020) military construction appropriations data did not meaningfully change the finding from Figure 3. There was not a significant effect of a close

However, the finding that Republicans secure more district spending than Democrats on transportation and agriculture offers useful insights on MC partisanship and distributive politics. Notably, transportation and agriculture are neutral issues in the eyes of both the public and partisan elites – studies on partisan issue ownership and party-aligned think tank attention both rate transportation and agriculture as relatively neutral policy issues (Egan 2013; Fagan 2021). Therefore, distributive politics do not appear to match patterns of issue ownership.

Rather, these results align with the theoretical reasoning posed above for why Republicans who win close elections might secure more federal spending than Democrats who win close elections. Swing district MCs of both parties plausibly strive to maximize district spending, and safe district Democrats likely pursue district spending more intensely than safe district Republicans. MCs from very conservative districts are less likely to gain electoral capital from distributive benefits (Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Sidman 2019), reducing the incentive to aggressively pursue district spending. Therefore, swing district Republicans get a larger share of their party's distributive pie than swing district Democrats. That Republicans' funding advantage comes from transportation and agriculture spending rather than a party owned issue, such as defense, supports this argument. Transportation and agriculture projects allow for nonpartisan credit claiming opportunities due to their partisan neutrality, making them ideal distributive policy targets for reelection focused MCs. Because a distributive politics-based reelection strategy is more beneficial in the middle and on the left of the political spectrum than on the right, it follows that Republicans in swing districts secure more federal funding than Democrats in swing districts and the funding advantage stems from neutral policy areas like transportation and agriculture.

Republican win on military construction appropriations. See appendix for results.

Conclusion

This article sheds light on the relationship between MC partisanship and distributive benefits, offering critical insights on congressional representation. I leverage a close election regression discontinuity design to investigate how MC partisanship influences the flow of federal funds into confessional districts. I find that Republicans secure more district spending than Democrats following a close election win, but a distinguishable partisan effect only emerges in the spending data when the window of observation is expanded from one congress (two-years) to two congresses (four-years) following a close election. When separating the analysis by policy area, I find that a close Republican win leads to more district spending on transportation and agriculture projects.

These results support the long-held theory of distributive politics as a strategic tool for MC reelection. Rather than secure spending for party-owned issues and party priorities, MCs who win close elections tend to secure similar types of district spending. Legislator partisanship has no effect on district spending in most policy areas. The policy areas where a close Republican win leads to additional funding – transportation and agriculture – plausibly stems from funding availability. Democrats stand to gain more electorally from distributive benefits than Republicans (Alvarez and Saving 1997; Lazarus and Reilly 2010; Crespin and Finocchiaro 2013; Sidman 2019), generating more competition for such benefits in the Democratic caucus. Swing district Republicans also strive to maximize district spending, but MCs from safe Republican seats have less incentive to aggressively pursue district spending. As such, swing district Republicans have greater access to distributive benefits than swing district Democrats, particularly in policy areas that offer ideal credit claiming opportunities.

The analysis presented above provides a first step in investigating the relationship between MC party affiliation and district spending, but this research is far from settled. Next steps should address the data and research design limitations of the above analysis. Spending data is useful due to its coverage over multiple policy areas and a long period of time

but is limited in its ability to capture any singular element of distributive politics, such as congressional appropriations. Two options for improving the measure of district spending are expanding the Hammond and Rosenstiel (2020) appropriations data to additional policy topics and collecting panel data on congressional earmarks. Additionally, my decision to categorize data by appropriations subcommittee follows existing research on congressional distributive politics (Clemens, Crespin and Finocchiaro 2015; Berry and Fowler 2016), but it is likely not the ideal categorization for answering my research question. Re-categorizing the data in a way that follows the issue ownership literature is potentially a better strategy for analysis on spending in specific policy areas. Additionally, the RD design provides a good start at addressing my research question, but it discards a lot of data and leads to imprecise results. A complementary analysis to the RD might use dynamic panel models to exploit within district partisan changes.

References

Adler, E Scott and John S Lapinski. 1997. "Demand-side theory and congressional committee composition: A constituency characteristics approach." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 895–918.

Albouy, David. 2013. "Partisan representation in Congress and the geographic distribution of federal funds." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 95(1):127–141.

Aldrich, John H and David W Rohde. 1997. "The transition to Republican rule in the House: Implications for theories of congressional politics." *Political Science Quarterly* 112(4):541–567.

Aldrich, John H and David W Rohde. 2000*a*. The consequences of party organization in the House: The role of the majority and minority parties in conditional party government. In *Polarized politics: Congress and the president in a partisan era*. Citeseer pp. 31–72.

Aldrich, John H and David W Rohde. 2000*b*. "The republican revolution and the house appropriations committee." *The Journal of Politics* 62(1):1–33.

Alexander, Dan, Christopher R Berry and William G Howell. 2016. "Distributive politics and legislator ideology." *The Journal of Politics* 78(1):214–231.

Alvarez, R Michael and Jason L Saving. 1997. "Deficits, democrats, and distributive benefits: congressional elections and the pork barrel in the 1980s." *Political Research Quarterly* 50(4):809–831.

Arnold, R Douglas. 1980. *Congress and the bureaucracy: A theory of influence*. Vol. 28 Yale University Press.

Arnold, R Douglas. 1990. *The logic of congressional action*. Yale University Press.

Ashworth, Scott and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. 2006. "Delivering the goods: Legislative particularism in different electoral and institutional settings." *The Journal of Politics* 68(1):168–179.

Balla, Steven J, Eric D Lawrence, Forrest Maltzman and Lee Sigelman. 2002. "Partisanship, blame avoidance, and the distribution of legislative pork." *American journal of political science* pp. 515–525.

Berry, Christopher R and Anthony Fowler. 2016. "Cardinals or clerics? Congressional committees and the distribution of pork." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3):692–708.

Berry, Christopher R, Barry C Burden and William G Howell. 2010. "The president and the distribution of federal spending." *American Political Science Review* 104(4):783–799.

Bertelli, Anthony M and Christian R Grose. 2009. "Secretaries of pork? A new theory of distributive public policy." *The Journal of Politics* 71(3):926–945.

Bickers, Kenneth N and Robert M Stein. 1996. "The electoral dynamics of the federal pork barrel." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 1300–1326.

Bickers, Kenneth N and Robert M Stein. 2000. "The congressional pork barrel in a Republican era." *The Journal of Politics* 62(4):1070–1086.

Bovitz, Gregory L. 2002. "Electoral consequences of porkbusting in the US House of Representatives." *Political Science Quarterly* 117(3):455–477.

Breunig, Christian and Marius R Busemeyer. 2012. "Fiscal austerity and the trade-off between public investment and social spending." *Journal of European Public Policy* 19(6):921–938.

Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn and Morris Fiorina. 1987. The personal vote. In *The Personal Vote*. Harvard University Press.

Calonico, Sebastian, Matias D Cattaneo and Rocio Titiunik. 2014. "Robust nonparametric confidence intervals for regression-discontinuity designs." *Econometrica* 82(6):2295–2326.

Cattaneo, Matias D, Nicolás Idrobo and Rocío Titiunik. 2019. *A practical introduction to regression discontinuity designs: Foundations*. Cambridge University Press.

Caughey, Devin and Jasjeet S Sekhon. 2011. "Elections and the regression discontinuity design: Lessons from close US house races, 1942–2008." *Political Analysis* 19(4):385–408.

Caughey, Devin, Yiqing Xu and Christopher Warshaw. 2017. "Incremental democracy: The policy effects of partisan control of state government." *The Journal of Politics* 79(4):1342–1358.

Christenson, Dino P, Douglas L Kriner and Andrew Reeves. 2017. "All the president's senators: Presidential copartisans and the allocation of federal grants." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42(2):269–294.

Clemens, Austin, Michael Crespin and Charles J Finocchiaro. 2015. "Earmarks and subcommittee government in the US Congress." *American Politics Research* 43(6):1074–1106.

Cox, Gary W and Mathew D McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the agenda: Responsible party government in the US House of Representatives*. Cambridge University Press.

Cox, Gary W and Mathew D McCubbins. 2007. *Legislative leviathan: Party government in the House*. Cambridge University Press.

Crespin, Michael H and Charles J Finocchiaro. 2013. "Elections and the Politics of Pork in the US Senate." *Social Science Quarterly* 94(2):506–529.

Curry, James M and Christopher P Donnelly. 2021. "State Congressional Delegations and the Distribution of Federal Funds." *Political Research Quarterly* 74(3):756–771.

de la Cuesta, Brandon and Kosuke Imai. 2016. "Misunderstandings about the regression discontinuity design in the study of close elections." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19(1):375–396.

Dynes, Adam M and John B Holbein. 2020. "Noisy retrospection: The effect of party control on policy outcomes." *American Political Science Review* 114(1):237–257.

Egan, Patrick J. 2013. *Partisan priorities: How issue ownership drives and distorts American politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Eggers, Andrew C, Anthony Fowler, Jens Hainmueller, Andrew B Hall and James M Snyder Jr. 2015. "On the validity of the regression discontinuity design for estimating electoral effects: New evidence from over 40,000 close races." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1):259–274.

Evans, Diana. 2004. *Greasing the wheels: Using pork barrel projects to build majority coalitions in Congress*. Cambridge University Press.

Fagan, EJ. 2021. "Issue ownership and the priorities of party elites in the United States, 2004–2016." *Party Politics* 27(1):149–160.

Ferejohn, John. 1986. "Incumbent performance and electoral control." *Public choice* pp. 5–25.

Ferejohn, John A. 1974. *Pork barrel politics: Rivers and harbors legislation, 1947-1968*. Stanford University Press.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1978. "Economic retrospective voting in American national elections: A micro-analysis." *American Journal of political science* pp. 426–443.

Fiorina, Morris P and Morris P Fiorina. 1989. *Congress, Keystone of the Washington Establishment: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. Yale University Press.

Fouirnaies, Alexander and Andrew B Hall. 2020. "How divisive primaries hurt parties: Evidence from near-runoffs in us legislatures." *The Journal of Politics* 82(1):43–56.

Fowler, Anthony and Andrew Hall. 2014. "Disentangling the personal and partisan incumbency advantages: Evidence from close elections and term limits." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 9(4):501–531.

Frisch, Scott A and Sean Q Kelly. 2015. *Cheese factories on the moon: why earmarks are good for American democracy*. Routledge.

Grimmer, Justin, Sean J Westwood and Solomon Messing. 2014. The impression of influence. In *The Impression of Influence*. Princeton University Press.

Hall, Andrew B. 2015. "What happens when extremists win primaries?" *American Political Science Review* 109(1):18–42.

Hammond, Ben and Leah Rosenstiel. 2020. "Measuring the influence of political actors on the federal budget." *American Political Science Review* 114(2):603–608.

Hill, Andrew J and Daniel B Jones. 2017. "Does partisan affiliation impact the distribution of spending? Evidence from state governments' expenditures on education." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 143:58–77.

Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2009. "Party, electoral vulnerability, and earmarks in the US House of Representatives." *The Journal of Politics* 71(3):1050–1061.

Lazarus, Jeffrey and Amy Steigerwalt. 2009. "Different Houses: The distribution of earmarks in the US House and Senate." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(3):347–373.

Lazarus, Jeffrey and Shauna Reilly. 2010. "The electoral benefits of distributive spending." *Political Research Quarterly* 63(2):343–355.

Lee, David S. 2008. "Randomized experiments from non-random selection in US House elections." *Journal of Econometrics* 142(2):675–697.

Lee, Frances E. 2000. "Senate representation and coalition building in distributive politics." *American Political Science Review* 94(1):59–72.

Lee, Frances E. 2003. "Geographic politics in the US House of Representatives: Coalition building and distribution of benefits." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4):714–728.

Leigh, Andrew. 2008. "Estimating the impact of gubernatorial partisanship on policy settings and economic outcomes: A regression discontinuity approach." *European Journal of Political Economy* 24(1):256–268.

Lowande, Kenneth, Melinda Ritchie and Erinn Lauterbach. 2019. "Descriptive and substantive representation in congress: Evidence from 80,000 congressional inquiries." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3):644–659.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The electoral connection*. Yale university press.

Mills, Russell W. 2013. "Congressional modification of benefit-cost analysis as a vehicle for particularized benefits and a limitation on agency discretion: the case of the federal contract tower program." *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis* 4(3):301–333.

Mills, Russell W, Nicole Kalaf-Hughes and Jason A MacDonald. 2016. "Agency policy preferences, congressional letter-marking and the allocation of distributive policy benefits." *Journal of Public Policy* 36(4):547–571.

Napolio, Nicholas G. 2021. "Implementing presidential particularism: bureaucracy and the distribution of federal grants." *Political Science Research and Methods* pp. 1–11.

Neiheisel, Jacob R and Michael C Brady. 2017. "Congressional lettermarks, ideology, and member receipt of stimulus awards from the US Department of Labor." *Research & Politics* 4(3):2053168017727201.

Pettersson-Lidbom, Per. 2008. "Do parties matter for economic outcomes? A regression-discontinuity approach." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 6(5):1037–1056.

Sellers, Patrick J. 1997. "Fiscal consistency and federal district spending in congressional elections." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 1024–1041.

Shepsle, Kenneth A. 1979. "Institutional arrangements and equilibrium in multidimensional voting models." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 27–59.

Shepsle, Kenneth A and Barry R Weingast. 1981. "Political preferences for the pork barrel: A generalization." *American journal of political science* pp. 96–111.

Shepsle, Kenneth A and Barry R Weingast. 1987. "The institutional foundations of committee power." *American Political Science Review* 81(1):85–104.

Sidman, Andrew H. 2019. *Pork barrel politics: How government spending determines elections in a polarized era*. Columbia University Press.

Skovron, Christopher and Rocıo Titiunik. 2015. "A practical guide to regression discontinuity designs in political science." *American Journal of Political Science* 2015:1–36.

Stein, Robert M and Kenneth N Bickers. 1997. *Perpetuating the pork barrel: Policy subsystems and American democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Walgrave, Stefaan, Jonas Lefevere and Anke Tresch. 2012. "The associative dimension of issue ownership." *Public opinion quarterly* 76(4):771–782.

Weingast, Barry R and William J Marshall. 1988. "The industrial organization of Congress; or, why legislatures, like firms, are not organized as markets." *Journal of Political Economy* 96(1):132–163.

Appendix

Table A1: The Effect of MC Partisanship on District Spending by Policy Area

	Effect of a Republican Win
Agriculture	0.774*
	(0.312)
Defense	0.594
	(0.686)
Energy	0.087
	(0.558)
Finance	-0.073
	(0.375)
Foreign Affairs	-0.107
	(0.090)
Homeland Security	-0.513
	(0.515)
Housing	0.009
	(0.558)
Interior	0.189
	(0.376)
Labor	0.034
	(0.047)
Military Construction	-0.495
	(0.575)
State	-0.507
	(0.305)
Treasury	-0.160
	(0.439)
Veterans Affairs	0.776
	(1.141)
Commerce	0.218
	(0.282)
Transportation	1.247*
	(0.434)

* $p < 0.05$

NOTE: Each policy area results was estimated using a separate regression. The RD design and estimation strategy matches that of analysis described in the manuscript. I use MSE-optimized bandwidths, a triangular kernel function, and a local polynomial design with a linear approximation of the model on each side of the cutoff point.

Table A2: The Effect of MC Partisanship on District Spending by Policy Area

	Effect of a Republican win on spending in the next Congress
Agriculture	0.692*
	(0.331)
Defense	0.463
	(0.678)
Energy	-0.045
	(0.585)
Finance	-0.148
	(0.432)
Foreign Affairs	-0.081
	(0.122)
Homeland Security	-0.732
	(0.573)
Housing	0.160
	(0.578)
Interior	0.405
	(0.370)
Labor	0.098
	(0.101)
Military Construction	-0.445
	(0.584)
State	-0.374
	(0.359)
Treasury	0.166
	(0.577)
Veterans Affairs	0.360
	(1.139)
Commerce	0.349
	(0.331)
Transportation	1.369*
	(0.455)

* $p < 0.05$

NOTE: Each policy area results was estimated using a separate regression. The RD design and estimation strategy matches that of analysis described in the manuscript. I use MSE-optimized bandwidths, a triangular kernel function, and a local polynomial design with a linear approximation of the model on each side of the cutoff point.

Figure A1: District Spending in the Congress After a Close Election

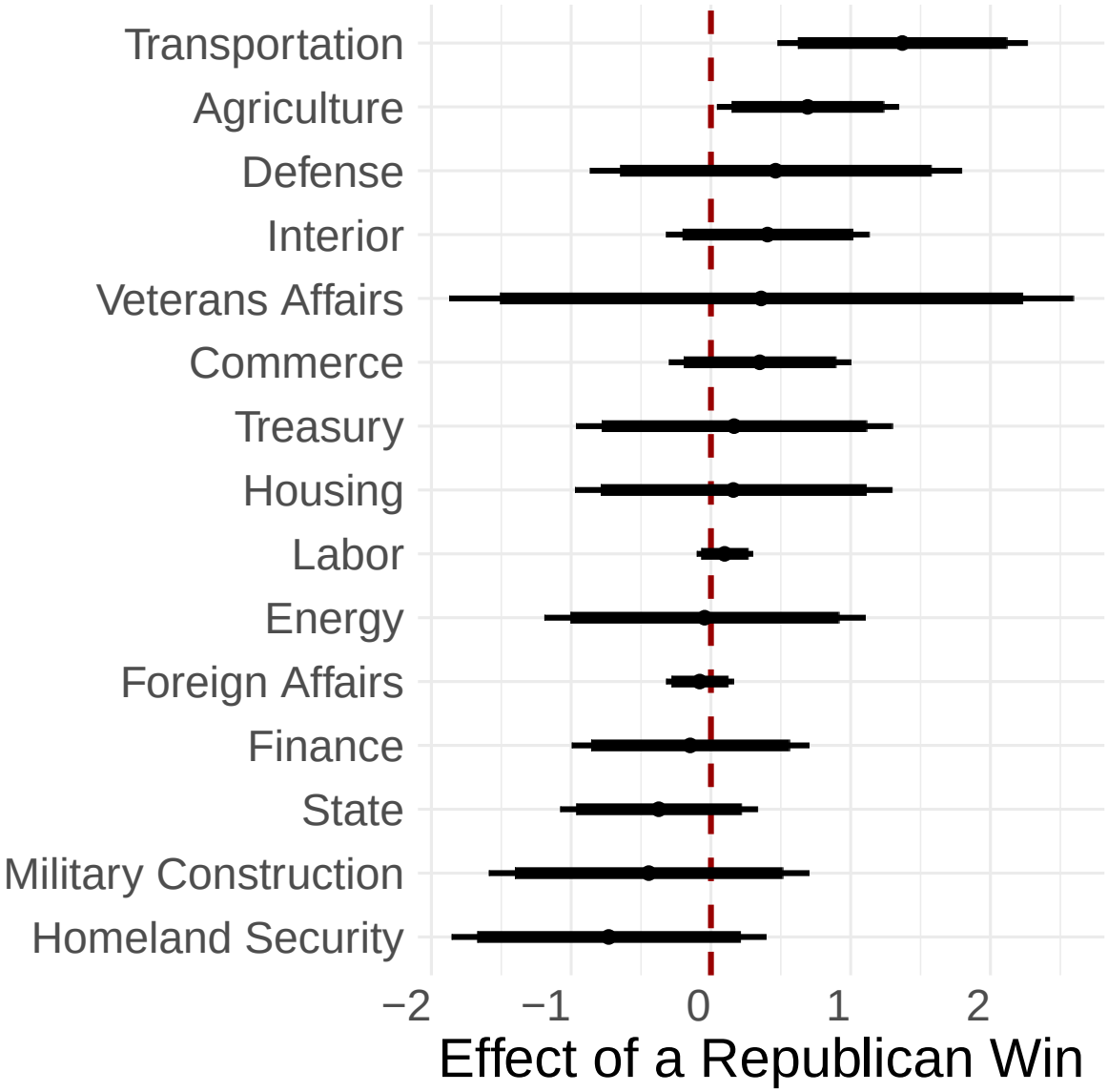

Figure A2, Table A3, and Table A4 represent the RD validity checks referenced in the Research Design section of the manuscript.

Figure A2: Density Test of the Running Variable (Vote Margin)

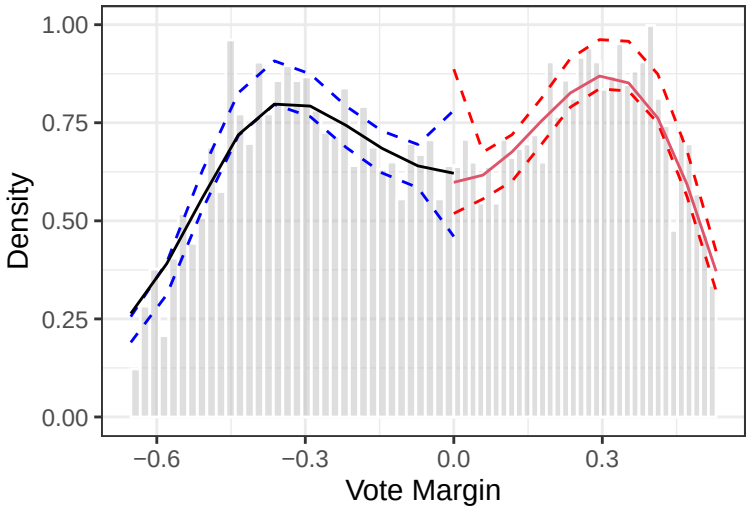

Table A3: The Effect of Legislator Partisanship on Total Vote

	RD on Covariate – Total Votes
Effect of a Republican Win	-2571.479 (6032.098) [-14394.173, 9251.216]
Bandwidth	MSE-Optimal
Kernel	Triangular
N	5990
Effective N	1781

* p < 0.05

Table A4: Placebo Cutoffs RD

	Placebo Cutoff -0.15	Placebo Cutoff 0.15
Effect of a Republican Win	-0.168 (0.125) [-0.414, 0.078]	0.162 (0.116) [-0.065, 0.388]
Bandwidth	MSE-Optimal	MSE-Optimal
Kernel	Triangular	Triangular
N	3248	2742
Effective N	441	413

* p < 0.05

Table A5: RD Estimates Using Military Construction Appropriations Data

	Logged Spending in the Next Congress
Effect of a Republican Win	0.982
	(1.633)
	[-2.218, 4.183]
Bandwidth	MSE-Optimal
Kernel	Triangular
N	5990
Effective N	1811

* $p < 0.05$

Table A6: The Effect of Legislator Partisanship on District Spending, Controlling for MC Incumbency

	Logged Spending in the Next Congress	Logged Spending in the Next Two Congr
Effect of a Republican Win	0.128	0.137*
	(0.083)	(0.067)
	[-0.034, 0.290]	[0.006, 0.268]
Bandwidth	mserd	mserd
Kernel	Triangular	Triangular
N	5990	5529
Effective N	1599	1105

* $p < 0.05$