

Congress on Display,  
Congress at Work

Edited by

WILLIAM T. BIANCO

*Ann Arbor*

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS



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## Preface

This book is the product of a conference held at the University of Rochester in October 1997 in honor of Richard F. Fenno's 40th anniversary as a university professor. It honors a man whose contributions to legislative studies, to political science, to the Rochester political science department, and to his students are so large as to defy superlatives.

The essays in this book span the field of legislative studies, ranging from Aldrich and Shepsle's theory of legislative institutions to Castle and Fett's analysis of party switching by southern politicians to Balla and Wright's work on congressional control over the bureaucracy. All of them have their roots somewhere in Dick Fenno's research program. His characterization of legislators as rational actors, his expectation that congressional rules, procedures, and institutions reflect the preferences and constraints faced by members of Congress, and his insistence on seeing politics as politicians do are a constant throughout this volume.

As with any edited work, this one owes its fruition to the efforts of many individuals and institutions. Many thanks are owed to the Department of Political Science at the University of Rochester, especially Pamm Ferguson, Bruce Jacobs, and Harold Stanley for their work in organizing the conference, and to the University of Rochester for providing the necessary funding.

As for myself, I'd like to thank the more senior Rochester graduates for cheerfully deferring to my judgments about this volume's format, content, and deadlines. Chuck Myers of the University of Michigan Press also deserves thanks for finding this book a home. James Honaker provided able research assistance. And Regina Smyth supplied her usual and much-appreciated sage advice and wise counsel.

My final acknowledgment is to Dick Fenno. His career is a demonstration of the qualities that define a first-rate scholar: focus, persistence, insight, and grace. After an amazing 40-year run, with awards and accomplishments enough for an entire subfield, he remains hard at work, soaking and poking away. He is an academic's academic.

As a final demonstration of the position that Dick holds in all of our hearts, I defer to another scholar, Chuck Jones. During my first year as a graduate student at Rochester, Jones gave the Cutler Lecture. Before beginning his

**Majority Party Leadership, Strategic Choice,  
and Committee Power:  
Appropriations in the House, 1995–98**

*Bryan W. Marshall, Brandon C. Prins, and David W. Rohde*

**Introduction**

This essay is part of a continuing effort to elaborate and apply a theory of legislative organization in Congress that has been labeled “conditional party government.” Developed by David Rohde (1991) and John Aldrich (1995) and extended further in joint work (Aldrich and Rohde 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1997–98, 1998), the theory deals with the role of parties in Congress and the willingness of members to empower their parties and their leaders to influence the legislative process. In this analysis our specific purpose is to follow up on an earlier study of the appropriations process in the House (Aldrich and Rohde 1996b). The earlier research focused mainly on the process in 1995 as compared with previous Congresses: the theoretical expectations about appropriations politics under the new Republican regime and how the events of 1995 measured up to those expectations. Here we want to extend that analysis through 1998 by exploring the ways that changing contexts and changing choices by relevant actors affected appropriations politics. In so doing, we also hope to shed light on questions raised by Dodd and Oppenheimer (1997) about the degree to which conditional party government would continue to apply to the House after the revolutionary 104th Congress.

We begin by elaborating the theoretical expectations that follow from conditional party government regarding this situation. Then we consider quantitative evidence regarding three stages of the decision-making process related to appropriations: voting within committee, decisions on special rules, and floor voting for the period 1995–98, with some comparisons to earlier years. Next, we focus on specific decisions by the majority leadership on structuring the agenda for appropriations bills in 1997–98. Finally, we return to the theoretical issues that motivated this study and draw conclusions.

**Theoretical Issues**

***Conditional Party Government: A Brief Outline***

The theory of conditional party government is discussed extensively in the work cited earlier, so we will confine ourselves to a very brief consideration

here. The modifier *conditional* is used to indicate the theoretical contention that the strength of party organizations within the legislative setting (both the powers granted to parties by members and the willingness of those members to tolerate or support the exercise of such powers) depends on certain things that are mainly determined by the exogenous patterns of electoral politics. Specifically, the condition involves the degree of preference agreement within legislative parties and the degree of preference conflict between them. In general, the theory contends that as intraparty homogeneity and interparty conflict increase, members will be more inclined to support the grant of strong powers to party leaders and to support the use of those powers. As intraparty homogeneity increases, members see that the use of leader powers is less likely to result in policy outcomes that are significantly different from their preferences; as interparty conflict grows, the consequences to members of one party of legislative victory by the other party become increasingly adverse. In addition to expectations about the grant and exercise of leadership power, the theory predicts that rank-and-file members will also seek to develop mechanisms to ensure that those colleagues to whom the party grants power (e.g., committee chairs) will not use that power to frustrate the party's legislative goals.

As noted, the impetus for the theory depends on the results of exogenous electoral forces—the pattern of preferences among members who get elected. In addition, the theory's expectations are conditional in another way, also related to electoral forces. We do not expect the party organization to be active or efficacious on all issues. The theory explicitly assumes that legislators have a variety of motives—election, policy, and power—that affect their behavior (Fenno 1973). Only some issues—those that are linked to partisan divisions in the electorate, either among voters or among activists—invoke partisanship. These issues make up the party's issue agenda, which varies over time (Cox and McCubbins 1993). Thus the theory's expectations relate only to a subset of issues, and we would anticipate that the dynamics of legislating on other types of issues would be very different (Rohde 1994). The issues that constitute the party's agenda are relevant to the operation of conditional party government.

Because the basic framework of our theory was articulated before the election of 1994, the new Republican majority offered an excellent opportunity to empirically evaluate a variety of its implications. In particular, because both general perceptions and specific measurements (Aldrich and Rohde 1998) support the conclusion that the House after 1994 saw the greatest degree of intraparty homogeneity and interparty conflict in many decades, the theory offers the clear expectation that the leadership of the parties (especially that of the majority) would seek the grant of significant new powers and that members would possess strong incentives to support new powers and their exercise. The evidence presented in the collaborative research between Aldrich and Rohde cited earlier provides strong support for the theory's predictions. Speaker Newt

Gingrich received new powers, especially relating to the operation of committees, that made him the strongest Speaker since Joe Cannon. The members of the House GOP Conference supported the exercise of these powers to pursue the party's legislative agenda—indeed, they often insisted on it. Of course the Republican membership did not agree with every application of leadership power. When there was disagreement, Republican members often resisted and succeeded in blocking the leaders' actions.

Although most analysts have agreed that the theory of conditional party government was applicable to the 104th Congress and that the evidence from that Congress supported its predictions, some have questioned whether the theory would continue to apply in the 105th Congress and beyond. Specifically, Dodd and Oppenheimer (1997) have argued that even though the parties in the House continued to be internally homogeneous and divided from each other, constraints would limit the applicability of the theory. These constraints include (1) the close seat distribution between the parties, (2) the existence of a significant number of competitive districts, (3) the emergence of issues that split the majority party, and (4) member willingness to trust party leaders. As the authors note, Aldrich and Rohde recognized that because of the multiple goals of members, other factors would influence the degree to which partisan considerations dominated in the legislative process, so we see no necessary conflict between the basic theory and these arguments. In the succeeding pages, we intend to examine the continued applicability of conditional party government to the appropriations process in 1997–98 and to shed some light on the relevance of the constraints that Dodd and Oppenheimer have noted.

### *Previous Work on House Appropriations Politics*

Before proceeding to a discussion of the most recent Congress, it is necessary to convey the highlights of earlier work dealing with House Appropriations, both before the 104th Congress and during those “revolutionary” years.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient to our purposes to note the main findings from the work of Fenno (1966, 1973), Smith and Deering (1984), and White (1989). Fenno's research (1973) showed that House Appropriations was the least partisan of the six committees studied in his comparative analysis. Subcommittees were largely autonomous, and “[c]ommittee unity on the floor is the ultimate and critical product of the norm system” within the committee (1973, 123, 127). In his earlier study of Appropriations, Fenno found that the norms included “bargaining and compromise as methods of decision making,” and every subcommittee was expected to observe the norm of “minimal partisanship” (1966, 25, 164). Following up on Fenno's work as part of a general study of House and Senate committees, Smith and Deering (1984) found that Democratic party reforms decentralized the committee's operations even further but also made the com-

mittee more responsible to the Democratic Caucus. Furthermore, the committee's control over expenditures continued to decline, undermining its prestige and influence even more, and an increasing proportion of members sought assignment for policy reasons rather than the institutional power motives that Fenno found to predominate. The system of subcommittee specialization and relative autonomy persisted but in noticeably weakened form.

The most recent full-scale study of the committee is by White (1989). The time period captured in his analysis overlaps with the increase in party government in the House during the 1980s. White found that both parties sought to put loyalist members on the committee but that both also sought "responsible" members of the type Fenno's research had described more than 20 years earlier. His interviews indicated that "philosophical zealots" did not make it on the committee and that it operated "with a premium on being non- or bi-partisan, and on consensus operation" (1989, 142). White argued that the picture of the committee retained strong similarities with the portrait Fenno had offered. "The committee remained one of the most nonpartisan on the Hill. Chairmen still dominated subcommittees, through the command of staff more than the norms of deference" (White 1989, 15).

Having provided this summary picture of the working of House Appropriations before the GOP takeover, we now outline the results of the previous research on the politics of appropriations in the 104th Congress. The evidence is strong that, as expected by the theory of conditional party government, the impact of the change in membership and party control was profound. First, as we noted previously, at the opening of the new Congress, Gingrich and the party leadership were granted significant new powers. Of particular import here were the Speaker's assertion of the right to name new major committee chairs (including for Appropriations) in violation of seniority,<sup>2</sup> greatly enhanced leadership influence over committee assignments (which was used to place seven freshmen and four sophomores on the committee), a 6-year term limit for chairs, a one-third reduction overall in committee staff, and a shift from the committee's leaders to the majority leader in control over appropriations bills on the floor. In addition, after enhancing leadership control over committee chairs, the GOP undermined subcommittee independence by giving the full committee chairs the power to appoint subcommittee members and their chairs. (Previously members had been self-selected, and subcommittee chairs secured their positions by seniority.)

Although these changes in formal powers were important, it is clear that the significant changes in the politics of appropriations that occurred in the 104th Congress were mainly the result of deliberate strategic choices by the GOP leadership. The enhanced powers were instruments in the pursuit of the leadership strategy. Specifically, before 1995 the Appropriations Committee had a great deal of independence within its sphere. The committee focused

principally on constraining overall spending, providing specific dollar amounts for individual programs, and ensuring the passage of their funding bills. This focus tended to mitigate the propensity for partisan conflict (White 1989). Disagreements, then, were relatively rare on the floor and even less frequent within the committee.

In 1995, however, the majority leadership decided to pursue a very different course. The Republicans were committed to a policy agenda that would substantially change existing government policy (Aldrich and Rohde 1996a; Bader 1996; Gimpel 1996). The segment of the GOP Conference most committed to change (particularly freshmen and sophomores) was very concerned that senior Republicans on many committees would be too committed to the status quo to support new policies. This concern reflected a long-standing division within the GOP Conference (Connelly and Pitney 1994). Also, stand-alone bills with large changes in policy would be inviting targets for Senate Democratic resistance and presidential vetoes. To avoid these problems, the Republican leadership decided to use the Appropriations Committee as a major vehicle for legislative policy change.

The evidence in Aldrich and Rohde (1996b) clearly shows that doing so was a leadership-originated strategy and that it was imposed on the Appropriations Committee over the determined objections of the senior committee leadership. The leadership also played a substantial role in pressuring and monitoring the committee's actions on individual bills. The GOP efforts to impose policy changes through appropriations bills transformed the committee's decision-making patterns. There was a nearly 10-fold increase in partisan votes on amendments, and the source of most of the increase was the legislative items (called riders) imposed from outside the committee. For example, the Veterans Administration-Housing and Urban Development bill contained 30 pages of legislative language dealing with the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies.

Another aspect of leadership activity in pursuing its strategy was the molding of the floor environment through the Speaker's control of the Rules Committee. The inclusion of legislative language in appropriations bills is a violation of the rules of the House. It was possible, however, to protect riders (either in the original bill or in amendments that will be offered) from points of order on the floor by barring such actions in the special rules that set the terms of floor debate. Legislative language had long been included in committee bills by bipartisan agreement in situations in which the authorizing committee had not completed its work and the protection of those provisions had generally been noncontroversial. The use of riders for partisan purposes had been comparatively rare before 1995, but in that year it was pervasive, and partisanship in the debates over rules for the bills also soared. The rules were often drafted to advantage GOP proposals or to frustrate Democratic efforts to revise or

defeat those proposals. Senior or moderate Republicans were often pressured to support these special rules, even though the rules would produce policy outcomes the members did not favor.

Similarly, when the bills came to the floor, the majority leaders used their powers to try to keep GOP members in line, and they used their control over floor activity to influence outcomes (e.g., by choosing when to take votes or by pulling bills from the floor when the strategic situation turned against them). The contrast in preferences between the more senior members of Appropriations and the hard conservatives in the conference was further illustrated in floor action in 1995 by conservative-sponsored amendments that tried to push policy even further to the right; many of these amendments passed over the objections of committee Republicans.

The eventual result of these policy conflicts is well-known.<sup>3</sup> The Senate resisted many of the House GOP's policy initiatives, which (along with delays in the budget process) considerably slowed the passage of appropriations bills. As anticipated, President Clinton found many of the initiatives that survived the interchamber negotiations to be unpalatable. He vetoed a number of appropriations bills and threatened to veto others. As a result, the new budget year arrived without the passage of appropriations for all agencies. To prevent those agencies from shutting down, Congress proposed a continuing appropriations resolution, along with the budget reconciliation bill to complete that process and a bill to increase the debt ceiling. All of these measures, however, contained major policy changes that Clinton opposed. Contrary to the expectations of many House Republicans, including many leaders, the president stood his ground and vetoed the bills. In the ensuing weeks, two partial government shutdowns occurred. Also contrary to GOP expectations, the public's reaction was mainly to blame the Republicans in Congress for these events; citizens sided with the president on most of the specific policy conflicts (Rohde 1996).

These events dragged on into 1996, and the House Republican leadership eventually became seriously concerned about the potential for this conflict to undermine its chances of maintaining majority control. Republican leaders decided to shift strategy and were able to persuade a sufficient number of their members to go along. They struck a compromise with Clinton that favored the president on most issues, and the process was finally completed in April 1996, with the fiscal year half over. With the 1996 elections looming, the GOP leaders decided not to repeat the process in the fiscal 1997 appropriations. Although efforts to make policy changes through appropriations and the use of riders did not stop completely, they were reduced substantially. As we show in a later section, conflict dropped markedly within the committee, in the debates over special rules, and on the House floor. The majority leaders decided to focus on producing some legislative results for which their members could

claim credit with the voters, and the 1996 appropriations process was brought to an expeditious conclusion.

### Leadership Strategy and Partisan Conflict

The previous work on conditional party government, both the general analysis and the specific research on Appropriations, contains the basic ideas of the view we want to elaborate here. As we have said, the theory contends that the propensity of members to empower party leaders and to support their exercise of powers depends directly on the degree of intraparty homogeneity on policy and of interparty divergence. It also contends that legislators have a variety of motives that vary in import from one to another. The key point of relevance here is that these motives tend to vary systematically among party leaders, committee members, and rank-and-file members. This variance in motives can lead to different perspectives on what strategies should be followed and what policies should be proposed.

Consider the three major goals assumed in the theory. First, the desire to be elected and reelected has two relevant aspects: the reelection of a particular member and the retention (or for those in the minority, the achievement) of majority control. The second and third goals are the adoption of good public policy and the achievement of institutional power. Most party leaders—despite former Speaker Tom Foley's unfortunate experience—do not have to worry about their personal reelection, but majority status is of great import and concern to them. Relatedly, just by seeking leadership posts they have demonstrated that institutional power is of significant consequence to them. The importance of policy goals varies from individual to individual, as is true of committee and rank-and-file members.

Appropriations members can serve all three goals through committee service, but previous research indicates that the desire for institutional power has been a dominant motive for seeking assignment, with policy a stronger second from the 1980s on than before. Consequently, the committee's members (especially the more senior ones) have jealously sought to protect the panel's power and influence. These interests were clearly behind the efforts by the committee chair, Livingston, and many subcommittee chairs (the group collectively known as the cardinals) to resist the extensive use of riders in 1995 and more recently. They frequently asserted that this approach undermined what they saw as their principal task: the timely passage of 13 appropriations bills that adequately funded the government programs Congress had authorized. For this group as well, the maintenance of majority status was of special import, although most of the senior members were personally safe from serious electoral challenge.

Rank-and-file members' perspectives varied substantially with regard to these goals. One systematic element was that policy motives were generally more important (at least relatively) among the more junior members of the GOP Conference, among whom those elected in 1992 and 1994 constituted a majority. We would usually expect policy to be relatively more important than power goals among junior as opposed to senior members; they have achieved less within the body and thus would have less to lose if majority status shifted. Among junior GOP members in the 104th and 105th Congresses, however, policy goals appear to have been more prominent than usual relative even to electoral interests. Of course, policy goals are a matter of individual preference, but in this case systematic forces appear to have been at work. Many of these junior members were motivated to seek office in the first place by the desire to change the direction of policy in Washington. This motivation was reinforced in many instances by the personal commitment of members to serve only a short time; some had pledged to quit after only three terms. Although not legal pledges, most were sincere (and others, perhaps, constrained). For such members, traditional institutional power positions were out of reach, and even majority status would be of relatively little import.

This variable mix of goals interacts with the grant of power within the majority party in the House. The party leaders play a predominant (albeit certainly not exclusive) role in setting the policy agenda for the body.<sup>4</sup> To be sure, they are not free agents. Indeed, it is a central expectation of the conditional party government theory that rank-and-file members will monitor leadership efforts in this regard and will move to pressure or sanction leaders if they move too far from expectations. Yet the decisions about what bills to bring up, when, and under what procedures basically rest with the leaders. They also must decide whether to take a prominent role in shaping the development of a given bill in committee or leave the committee to its own devices. Furthermore, the Rules Committee can be used not only to shape the floor procedures for consideration of a bill but also to alter the bill's content after the committee with legislative jurisdiction has completed its work but before the bill hits the floor. The Speaker must decide whether to use this option.

All of these choices will be shaped by the strategies the leadership has decided to follow, and the choice of strategies is made in light of the leaders' goals. Committee members and rank-and-file members react to the leaders' choices in terms of *their* goals. The events of 1995–96 are clearly comprehensible in these terms. Most of those at the Republican Conference in 1995, including a significant portion of the leadership, were strongly committed to major policy changes. Moreover, in the heady days after November 1994, few GOP members saw any conflict between this and electoral goals, collective or individual. The Democrats were down, and it looked like they would go further down. Most Republicans saw Clinton as seriously vulnerable for 1996 and

expected that it would be easy to add to the party's ranks in the House and Senate. As the political context changed and the possibility of the majority's vulnerability became increasingly apparent, however, some actors altered their calculations. The theory would expect that the impetus for a change in strategy would come disproportionately from members of the leadership (who would be relatively more concerned about collective electoral success), from party moderates (who would have less investment in radical policy change), and from members who felt individually vulnerable to defeat. This trend would be reinforced by Appropriations Committee members, who had independent reasons for forgoing reliance on the committee for radical change. The analysis of 1995–96 is largely consistent with these expectations.

This elaboration on the implications of the motivational assumptions of the theory sets the stage for the analysis of the politics of appropriations in 1997–98. The scope and character of partisan conflict in the House and the degree of impact parties have on policy outcomes depend on the interaction of the mix of goals among the leadership, committee members, and rank-and-file members and on the strategic choices made based on those goals. If, as in 1995, the majority leadership decides to press for significant policy changes on issues that divide the parties' electoral bases (either because they actually anticipate enacting them or to satisfy activist elements of their electorate), partisan conflict will be amplified. If, instead, as in 1996, the leadership chooses to focus on producing legislative achievements in collaboration with the minority, for which electoral credit can be claimed, partisan conflict will be muted. Similarly, leaders will exacerbate the level of partisan conflict within the committee if they decide to try to use the committee as a vehicle for partisan policy purposes. If instead the committee is left to its own devices, the level of partisanship will depend on the interaction of choices made based on the goals of the committee's members. As the theory of conditional party government has contended since its origins, the patterns of partisanship and the impact of party organizations on policy and behavior depend not only on the amount of power granted to the party by the members but also on the strategic choices that are made on how to use those powers.

Finally, although we will elaborate further as we proceed, this discussion permits some preliminary comments on the points Dodd and Oppenheimer raised. The strategic choices of leaders (and the members' reactions to them) clearly are shaped by the numerical balance in the chamber, as well as by the degree of homogeneity on issues within the party. Saying that homogeneity in the House GOP in 1995 was higher than that in any majority party in decades is not to say that the homogeneity is perfect or the same on all issues. Where there is numerically significant resistance within the majority party to what the leadership wants to do, and where that resistance is sufficiently intense to outweigh the incentives the leaders can bring to bear, they may have to compro-



mise their plans or accept defeat. The results are the same whether the resistance is due to actual policy disagreement or to contrasting electoral calculations. Also, as the original exposition of the theory made clear, the willingness of rank-and-file members to support the exercise of power by leaders depends in part on the degree to which those members believe that those leaders largely share their interests and goals.

### Empirical Analysis: Change and Continuity in the Appropriations Process

In 1995, the House Appropriations Committee was at the center of the Republican effort to enact broad policy change. As Aldrich and Rohde (1996b) observed, Gingrich and the GOP leadership helped structure the committee to better facilitate the use of these funding measures to substantively alter federal social policy, as well as cut spending for programs the Republicans did not endorse. After the 1996 elections, however, there was little change in the composition of the Appropriations Committee. It continued to advantage the GOP majority as much as, if not more so than, during the 104th Congress. As table 1 illustrates, the number of seats assigned to GOP members in the 105th Congress remains considerably larger than the Republican majority in the chamber would warrant (56.7 percent in committee to 51.7 percent in the chamber). Moreover, the mean number of majority subcommittee assignments in 1997

TABLE 1. Partisan Division on the Appropriations Committee

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Committee division	37D-23R	32R-24D	33R-25D	34R-26D	34R-26D
Majority percentage in the House	59.3%D	52.9%R	54.3%R	52.1%R	51.7%R
Majority percentage on the committee	61.7%D	57.1%R	56.9%R	56.7%R	56.7%R
Committee percentage minus House percentage	+2.4%D	+4.2%R	+2.6%R	+4.6%R	+5.0%R
Division of subcommittee seats	89D-46R	90R-49D	91R-49D	94R-57D	94R-57D
Majority percentage on subcommittees	65.9%D	64.7%R	65.0%R	62.3%R	62.3%R
Subcommittee percentage minus House percentage	+6.6%D	+11.8%R	+10.7%R	+10.2%R	+10.6%R
Mean majority subcommittee assignments	2.41	2.81	2.76	2.76	2.76
Mean minority subcommittee assignments	2.00	2.04	1.96	2.19	2.19

continues to be nearly as high as in 1995. Consequently, the Republican majority leaders in the House have maintained the potential to affect legislative change through the appropriations process, if they so choose.

### Voting within the Appropriations Committee

The strategic choices of the House Republican leadership clearly influenced the debate surrounding the 13 regular appropriations bills.<sup>5</sup> In 1995 alone, 80 recorded votes were taken in the House Appropriations Committee, of which 73 were partisan amendments. More than 97 percent of all votes involved the majorities of the two parties voting in opposite directions, and, quite remarkably, all five of the votes taken to report funding measures out of committee were partisan. Given the importance of this committee's jurisdiction, such conflict may not seem surprising. Yet, as Fenno (1966, 1973) and White (1989) observed, Appropriations has long been a committee that attempts to mitigate such intense conflict by accommodating the interests of the minority. In contrast to 1995, the incidence of partisanship on the committee from the 96th to the 102nd Congresses was considerably less, with only about six partisan amendments being offered, on average, each Congress (see table 2).

As striking as the pivotal role the committee played in the Republican revolution in 1995 was the leadership's calculated move away from using the

TABLE 2. Partisanship on Roll Call Votes in the House Appropriations Committee, 96th-105th Congresses

Congresses	All votes	First-degree amendments	Passage	Number of partisan amendments
96th-102nd	90.0% (N = 51)	93.0% (N = 46)	50.0% (N = 2)	6.1 (average per Congress)
103rd	100% (N = 8)	100% (N = 8)	— (N = 0)	8
1995	97.5% (N = 80)	97.3% (N = 75)	100% (N = 5)	73
1996	95.7% (N = 47)	95.7% (N = 46)	100% (N = 1)	44
1997	91.3% (N = 23)	94.7% (N = 19)	75.0% (N = 4)	18
1998*	83.3% (N = 42)	84.2% (N = 38)	75.0% (N = 4)	32

Note: Cell entries give the percentage of floor roll calls on which majorities of the two parties voted on opposite sides.

\*Data are up through July 30, 1998.

committee in 1996 and 1997. As a direct consequence of this change in strategy, we find a conspicuous change in the incidence and level of partisan conflict. Table 2 shows that the number of recorded roll call votes was nearly halved in 1996 and halved again in 1997, and the relative level of partisanship within the committee dropped as well. Yet even 1996 and 1997 demonstrate (when compared with earlier Congresses) that the accommodating consensus-oriented environment discussed extensively by Fenno (1966) and White (1989) has been affected by the diverging interests of the two parties, and decision making within the committee still tends to reflect the pursuit of partisan priorities. Indeed, in earlier Congresses the committee rarely experienced conflict on final passage votes. However, 80 percent of these votes from 1996 and 1997 involved partisan splits.

As might be expected, conflict within the Appropriations Committee varied dramatically across the different funding measures. In 1995, for example, a large portion of the activity occurred on the Health and Human Services spending bill. Indeed, 2 days were devoted to debating over 30 amendments offered within the committee, and multiple legislative riders created intense conflict on the House floor (*CQWR*, August 5, 1995, 2365).<sup>6</sup> While conflict within the Appropriations Committee continued in 1996, by 1997 only two recorded votes were taken on this measure. In contrast, the Agriculture and Military Construction funding bills experienced very few recorded roll call votes in committee in each of the first 3 years of Republican rule.

It appears, then, that the appropriations process generated less conflict within the committee during 1996 and 1997. Yet the conflict manifested invariably broke along partisan lines, and a number of issues continued to provoke intense controversy. In 1997, for instance, conservative appropriators forced a postponement on reporting out the Health and Human Services bill by threatening to offer more than 100 amendments (*CQWR*, December 6, 1997, 2982). And conflict erupted in committee on the Treasury-Postal Service bill because GOP appropriators included a controversial provision to allow certain types of firearms to be imported (*CQWR*, December 6, 1997, 2984). Thus, although there was an overall decline in the incidence and level of partisan conflict within the committee during 1996-97, on those policies that the leadership chose analogous strategies to those used in 1995, we tend to observe analogous levels of partisan conflict.

### Emerging GOP Differences in Committee

Despite the Republicans' perceived electoral mandate in 1994, there was still disagreement within the party as to both goals and strategies. Tension existed between ideologues, who desired rapid and dramatic policy change, and more moderate members, who generally saw the legislative process as an incremen-

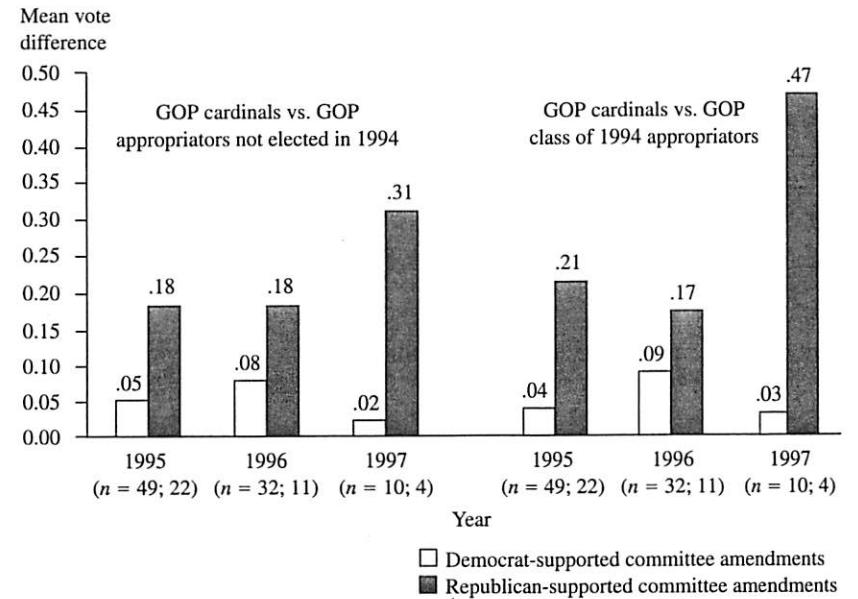


Fig. 1. Mean vote difference between GOP cardinals and GOP appropriators, controlling for party support for amendments (all first-degree committee amendments)

tal enterprise (Aldrich and Rohde 1997-98; Fenno 1997; Pomper 1997). Seniority, then, generally tended to distinguish these factions much like it did for the Democrats during the 1960s and 1970s. Many junior members elected in 1992 and 1994 demonstrated an unwillingness to accommodate the interests of Democrats, whereas their more senior colleagues had become accustomed to collaborating with opposition members in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

Even in 1995, when Appropriations was at the heart of the Republican revolution, differences emerged within the GOP ranks. Figure 1 shows that the mean vote difference between the Republican cardinals and the rest of the GOP members on the Appropriations Committee was considerable.<sup>8</sup> Yet more interesting is how these differences increased from 1995 to 1997. Indeed, although the number of GOP-supported committee amendments was admittedly quite small in 1997, the difference between the cardinals and the rest of the committee, particularly the members of the class of 1994, was more than two times greater than in 1995.<sup>9</sup> It appears, then, that as the subcommittee chairs were allowed more autonomy in crafting these regular spending bills, disagreements over their content increasingly emerged within the committee between the different GOP factions.

As a result of the Republican leadership's strategic choices, conflict within the Appropriations Committee in 1997 was largely confined to a few issues on only a handful of the funding measures. Furthermore, the intensification of differences among Republican appropriators was largely restricted to GOP proposals. Indeed, from 1995 to 1997, tension was rarely manifest between the cardinals and the other Republican members on Democratic-supported committee amendments. In fact, in 1997 the difference between subcommittee chairs and the GOP class of 1994 appropriators on Republican-supported amendments was over 15 times more than the difference evinced on Democratic-supported amendments.

### ***1998: Renewed Reliance on Appropriations***

In contrast to 1996 and 1997, preliminary evidence from 1998 appears to show the GOP leadership once again choosing to use appropriations as a principal vehicle for realizing its goals. Consequently, patterns similar to those observed in 1995 on appropriations decision making have appeared in 1998 because of the strategic choices of the GOP leadership. In table 2, we see that the number of recorded committee roll call votes has nearly doubled from 1997, as has the number of partisan amendments. Although the overall level of partisanship appears to have decreased somewhat from 1997, the Foreign Operations funding measure has yet to be reported to the floor by the committee. Historically, this appropriations bill has generated considerable conflict (*CQWR*, May 31, 1997, 1258). Given the recent debates over International Monetary Fund funding and United Nations dues, any committee activity following the August recess has the potential to produce further partisan strife.

Like 1995, then, appropriators in 1998 have once again been called on to carry a substantial legislative load, and many programs are being targeted for sizable funding cuts (see *Washington Post*, June 28, 1998, A4). Many of the legislative issues raised in 1998 involve attempts by conservative Republicans to legislate social policy. At least as far as the leadership is concerned, however, many of these attempts appear to be intended for immediate electoral purposes rather than a genuine attempt to make substantive changes in public policy. Indeed, according to Pianin (1998, A4), "some riders are intended only to make a political point by drawing a distinction between the parties and have little chance making it into final versions of legislation." Worried about the maintenance of their majority, the Republican leaders sought to emphasize issues that were salient to their base voters. "Republicans are seeking to energize conservative voters—those most likely to turn out on their behalf in November" (Stevenson 1998). The White House, though, appears to have taken these GOP moves seriously. As in 1995, President Clinton has vowed to veto more than half of these funding measures, potentially setting the stage for

another government shutdown in the months ahead (*The Hill*, August 12, 1998, 2–3; *National Journal*, August 8, 1998, 1848–53).

Additionally in 1998, differences have resurfaced in committee between the cardinals and the class of 1994. For example, Representative Neumann (R-WI) and other conservative budget hawks demanded a special GOP Conference meeting that determined that a \$2.25 billion provision in the Treasury/Postal Service/General Government appropriations bill designated to fund year 2000 (Y2K) computer-related glitches should be stripped out and considered in a separate supplemental bill (see *CQWR*, June 20, 1998, 1700). Neumann and other members of the conference were concerned that committee leaders (Livingston [R-LA] and Kolbe [R-AZ], in particular) attempted to circumvent budgetary spending caps by inappropriately designating certain funds as emergency related.<sup>10</sup> Neumann's attempt to strip the provision was defeated, but the committee vote was 14–32, pairing most of the Democrats and cardinals against nearly all of the members from the class of 1994.<sup>11</sup>

### **Floor Voting: The Linkage between Goals and Strategies**

#### ***Special Rules***

Similar to the evidence within committee, we find the change in leadership strategies also to affect debate on the floor on the regular appropriations bills. Table 3 reflects changes in the leadership's use of special rules. In particular, the level of partisan conflict on these rules declined between 1995 and 1997. For example, in 1996 and 1997, although 92 percent of the regular appropriations bills received rules, only 15 percent of these measures in 1996 and 23 percent in 1997 found partisan majorities opposed. In 1995, on the other hand, more than two-thirds of them generated as much partisan conflict. These differences reflect a change in what the leadership was attempting to do with these special rules. In 1995, the GOP leadership used the rules to include controversial policy riders. However, in 1996 and 1997 a similar strategy was not pursued to the same extent. Thus, as indicated in table 3, the incidence of partisan conflict observed on these rules was lower in 1997 than it had been in 1995. The decreased incidence of conflict reflects both the change in leadership strategy and the extent that the conference had sought to constrain the actions of the committee in 1995.

#### ***Floor Debate***

Further consequences of the leadership's change in strategy are evident from floor roll call voting.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the changes we find in floor decision making on appropriations appear to be less the result of policy moderation and more the

TABLE 3. Characteristics of Special Rules on Regular Appropriations Bills, 96th–105th Congresses

	96th	100th	103rd	1995	1996	1997	1998 <sup>a</sup>
Number of bills	25	26	26	13	13	13	11
Percentage of bills with rules	68%	58%	81%	100%	92%	92%	100%
Percentage of bills with nonconsensual rules	8%	35%	39%	77%	15%	31%	63.6%
Percentage of bills with partisan rules	0%	31%	38%	69%	15%	23%	63.6%
Percentage of rules with waivers for rule 21(2)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mean party difference (all rules with votes)	11.2 (N = 6)	64.8 (N = 10)	94.6 (N = 10)	78.3 (N = 11)	91.0 (N = 2)	78.0 (N = 4)	82.1 (N = 8)
Mean party difference (nonconsensual votes)	23.0 (N = 2)	69.6 (N = 9)	94.6 (N = 10)	82.7 (N = 10)	91.0 (N = 2)	78.0 (N = 4)	82.1 (N = 8)
Mean party difference (partisan votes)	— (N = 0)	74.1 (N = 8)	94.6 (N = 10)	91.9 (N = 9)	91.0 (N = 2)	95.0 (N = 3)	93.7 (N = 7)

<sup>a</sup>Data are up through July 30, 1998.

result of strategy moderation employed by the GOP leadership. Table 4 indicates the reduction in the frequency of partisan conflict across different types of votes. Looking at the second column in the table, the proportion of party-unity votes drops from 75 percent to 61 percent between 1995 and 1997. In addition, columns 4 and 5 indicate substantial decreases from 1995 to 1997 for final passage votes, 57 percent to 42 percent, and conference reports, 42 percent to 8 percent.<sup>13</sup>

The frequency of votes from 1995 to 1997 tells a similar story. The number of first-degree amendments (column 3 from table 4) and the subset that were partisan in 1997 (column 6 from table 4) were both less than half their numbers in 1995. Based on the dramatic decrease in the frequency of proposed floor changes, as well as the magnitude in which these proposed changes generated partisan divisions, we can infer that the 1997 regular appropriations bills were handled very differently by the Republicans on the House floor. Indeed, the content of the bills in 1997 was very different from that in 1995. Specifically, the lower levels and decreased incidence of partisan conflict during 1997 were due to the leadership's practice of restraint in using the appropriations

TABLE 4. Partisanship on Roll Call Votes on Floor Voting (All Members) on Appropriations Bills, 96th–105th Congresses

Congresses	All votes	First-degree amendments	Passage	Conference reports	Number of partisan amendments
1979	41.1% (N = 95)	57.1% (N = 56)	23.1% (N = 13)	0% (N = 4)	32
1980	41.9% (N = 74)	60.0% (N = 45)	20.0% (N = 10)	0% (N = 5)	27
1987	80.7% (N = 57)	84.6% (N = 39)	60.0% (N = 10)	— (N = 0)	33
1988	45.9% (N = 61)	68.4% (N = 19)	23.1% (N = 13)	16.7% (N = 12)	13
1995	74.9% (N = 251)	70.5% (N = 149)	57.1% (N = 14)	41.7% (N = 12)	105
1996	59.8% (N = 132)	66.3% (N = 92)	46.2% (N = 13)	11.1% (N = 9)	61
1997	61.0% (N = 141)	71.0% (N = 69)	41.7% (N = 12)	8.3% (N = 12)	49
Total	61.3% (N = 811)	68.2% (N = 469)	38.8% (N = 85)	16.7% (N = 54)	320

Note: Cell entries give the percentage of floor roll calls on which majorities of the two parties voted on opposite sides.

process as a vehicle to enact the GOP's legislative agenda. This change in leadership strategy resulted in greater exercise of autonomy by the committee, which in turn alleviated some partisan controversy and led to greater moderation in proposed social spending cuts.

The patterns found in table 4 mark significant changes in appropriations decision making between 1995 and 1997. But the departure from the historically normal appropriations process is also apparent when making comparisons with the 96th and 100th Congresses. For example, the last column of table 4 reflects the magnitude of change with respect to the incidence of partisan conflict over time. Specifically, one can see that the number of partisan amendments during 1995 alone was nearly as great as the number from both the 96th Congress (1979–80) and the 100th Congress (1987–88) combined. The stark change in the incidence of partisan conflict in 1995 reflects the extent to which the leadership was attempting to employ the appropriations process as a vehicle to carry out the majority party's policy priorities.

Certainly, Fenno's insights from 25 years ago seem remarkably applicable to these findings (1973, 24). Indeed, the bipartisan process of decision making on appropriations has largely given way to partisan conflict as the debate has become more focused on prosecuting party priorities. Left to its own device, there will be more partisanship on appropriations than seen in past Congresses because of the more homogeneous preferences within the parties and their reflection in the committee membership. However, our evidence also demonstrates that the conflict observed on appropriations decisions depends to a large extent on the strategic choices made by the GOP leadership.

### *Emerging GOP Differences on the Floor*

The changes in the appropriations process become more evident when the analysis is focused on some of the major factions in committee and on the floor. Indeed, the differences in voting behavior we present in the following figures and table not only reflect the change in leadership strategy from 1995 to 1997 but also represent the different mix of goals among the GOP membership. For example, figure 2 shows that on Republican-supported amendments, a majority of the cardinals voted differently than a majority of Republicans on the floor nearly 31 percent of the time in 1995, 59 percent of the time in 1996, and nearly 40 percent of the time in 1997. Yet, once again, the cardinals were very united with the rest of the conference on Democratic-supported amendments between 1995 and 1997. It would appear, then, that many of the cardinals were united and dissatisfied with a large number of the proposed changes to their bills that had the support of the GOP Conference. We conclude that the cardinals were increasingly unwilling to accede to the leadership's attempts at legislating through these funding measures.

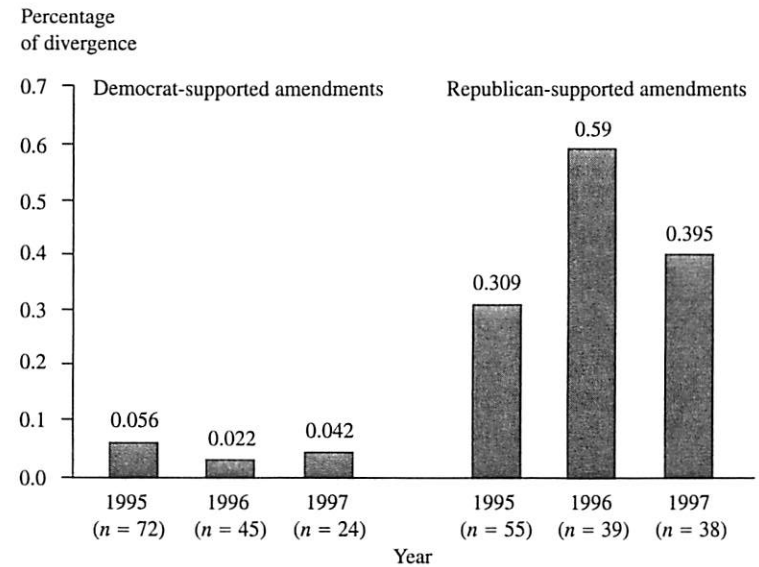


Fig. 2. Divergence between GOP cardinals and GOP Conference, controlling for party support for amendments (conflictual first-degree amendments only)

In addition, figure 3 presents a comparison among appropriators from the GOP class of 1994, nonappropriators from that class, and the rest of the GOP Conference. On those amendments supported by a majority of Democrats, a majority of either appropriators or nonappropriators from the class of 1994 rarely voted differently than a majority of the GOP Conference. In fact, between 1995 and 1997 on Democratic-supported amendments, the two groups from the class of 1994 were indistinguishable. However, on the subset of amendments supported by a majority of Republicans, substantial differences emerged between the two groups in terms of their divergence with the GOP Conference. The biggest differences were seen in 1995 and 1996. For example, on GOP-supported amendments, a majority of appropriators from the class of 1994 voted opposite a majority of the GOP Conference nearly 22 percent of the time in 1995 and nearly 26 percent of the time in 1996, whereas the nonappropriators from that class voted opposite a majority of the GOP Conference only half as often.

The evidence from 1995 and 1996 suggests that class of 1994 appropriators may have been somewhat different from the rest of their classmates. These differences may have played a role in the leadership's selection in 1995 of these particular freshmen to sit on the Appropriations Committee. In 1997 the pattern for appropriators from the class of 1994 is somewhat different from in

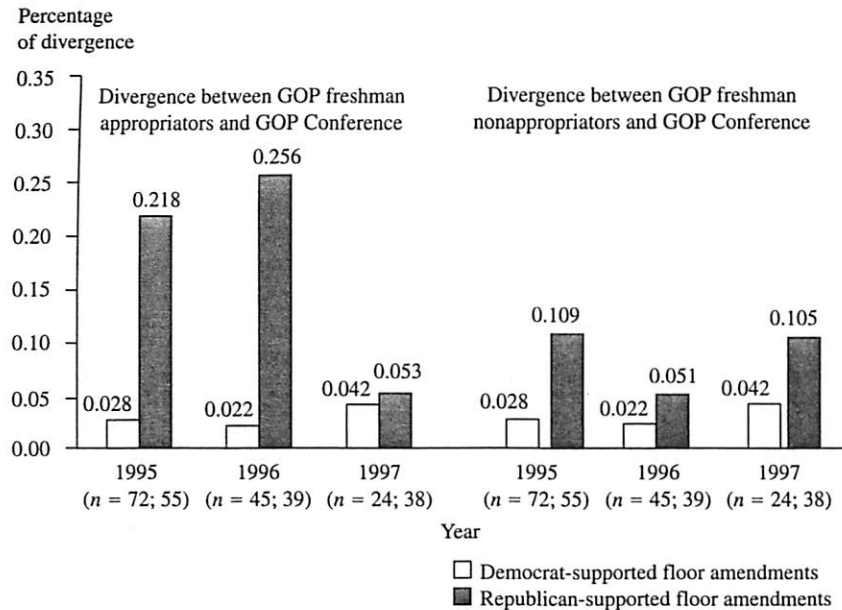


Fig. 3. Proportion of floor amendments in which a majority of the GOP class of 1994 voted opposite the GOP Conference, controlling for party support for amendments (conflictual first-degree amendments only)

1995. A majority of those junior appropriators voted opposite a majority of the conference on GOP-supported amendments only one-fourth as often as in 1995. If the junior appropriators were more moderate than their GOP classmates, the changes in 1997 may reflect that the recent election heightened their perception of vulnerability to a greater extent than it did for the more conservative members in their class. In contrast, little change is found from 1995 and 1997 (11 percent in both years) in divergence between the GOP Conference and class of 1994 nonappropriators on Republican-supported amendments.

Party cohesion on Republican- and Democratic-supported amendments tends to parallel the divergence findings. On the subset of amendments in which a majority of members from both parties were opposed, the average proportion of GOP appropriators from the class of 1994 voting aye on Republican-supported amendments was 69 percent in 1995, 57 percent the following year, and back up to 76 percent in 1997. These findings suggest that the junior appropriators were just as, or slightly more, cohesive in support of GOP-preferred changes to appropriations bills in 1997 as they were in 1995.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, the cohesion of nonappropriators from that class on GOP-preferred changes went from 85 percent (the highest of any GOP subgroup) in 1995 to 80

percent by 1997. There was even less change in cohesion among the other GOP subgroups. For members of the GOP Conference, cohesion on Republican-supported amendments was 81 percent in 1995 and 76 percent in 1997. For the cardinals, cohesion on the same amendments was 59 percent in 1995 and 54 percent in 1997. Overall, then, we can conclude that there was relatively little change in behavior among the membership on Republican-supported amendments to appropriations bills.

Although there appears to be relatively little change within groups over this 3-year period, differences among the groups are clearly apparent. The cohesion scores suggest that the GOP cardinals were significantly less supportive of the party position than the class of 1994 appropriators and even less so compared with their nonappropriator classmates on GOP-supported amendments. Interestingly, in 1995–96 the cardinals were notably more cohesive against Democratic-supported amendments than either appropriators or nonappropriators from the class of 1994. This difference disappeared in 1997 when both GOP subgroups voted more cohesively than the cardinals against Democratic-supported amendments.

What we have observed, then, is strong Republican unity against Democrat changes to funding legislation from 1995 to 1997. This finding is not surprising given the clear differences in party preferences. However, within the Republican party differences emerged when GOP-supported proposals were considered. If we consider voting with the GOP Conference as a baseline for conservative policy support, we find very limited evidence of the different subgroups moderating their behavior between 1995 and 1997. In fact, from the evidence presented, the GOP class of 1994 appropriators appear to be both less likely to vote against the conference and more cohesive in their support of Republican-preferred changes to appropriations in 1997 than they were in 1995. However, it also appears that the freshmen appointed to the Appropriations Committee in 1994 may have been less ideologically driven than their fellow classmates. Although the evidence illustrated in figure 3 and table 5 demonstrates that they disagreed with the conference on GOP-supported amendments considerably less often than did the cardinals, they did so more often than the rest of the 1994 class. If policy moderation was occurring on appropriations in 1996–97, our evidence suggests that it is the result not of moderating policy preferences within the GOP Conference but of moderating leadership strategies. When the leadership chooses to regress back to strategies such as those employed in 1995, parallel changes in the incidence and character of conflict are the result.

### Some Legislative Specifics from 1997–98

We can amplify the discussion of the shifting strategies of the GOP leadership, and the reactions to those strategies by House Republicans, by briefly consid-

ering a few particular bills from 1997 and 1998. Here we outline both matters of policy content and efforts to use control of the floor to shape the agenda to the Republicans' advantage.

### Appropriations in 1997

We have seen from the aggregate evidence that overall the regular appropriations bills considered in 1997 did not provoke the level of partisan conflict that characterized 1995. Only 3 of the 13 bills had special rules that triggered party conflict on the floor (although others involved disagreements before they reached their final form). These three cases reflected the use of controversial rules provisions that were included by the Rules Committee at the behest of the GOP leadership rather than because of actions of Appropriations Committee members. As David Obey (D-WI), the ranking Democrat on Appropriations said during debate on a rule, "On the Committee on Appropriations on each of these bills except one, we have worked out a very effective bipartisan working

TABLE 5. Cohesion on Party-Unity Votes by Year (First-Degree Amendments Only)

	1995	1996	1997
<b>GOP-supported amendments</b>	<i>N</i> = 35	<i>N</i> = 19	<i>N</i> = 27
Republicans	79%	72%	75%
GOP Conference <sup>a</sup>	81%	75%	76%
GOP class of 1994 (nonappropriators)	85%	82%	80%
GOP class of 1994 <sup>b</sup> (appropriators)	69%	57%	76%
GOP cardinals	59%	34%	54%
Democrats	20%	18%	11%
<b>Democrat-supported amendments</b>	<i>N</i> = 57	<i>N</i> = 40	<i>N</i> = 20
Republicans	16%	21%	20%
GOP Conference <sup>a</sup>	17%	22%	21%
GOP class of 1994 (nonappropriators)	15%	21%	21%
GOP class of 1994 <sup>b</sup> (appropriators)	16%	22%	19%
GOP cardinals	8%	9%	16%
Democrats	76%	76%	79%

Note: Cohesion is defined as the percentage of specified members voting aye averaged across votes.

<sup>a</sup>GOP conference excludes Appropriations Committee members.

<sup>b</sup>GOP freshmen were sophomores in 1997.

relationship. . . . The problem is that . . . the Committee on Rules has imposed a partisan straightjacket on the debate for those bills, and it has in the process turned those bipartisan products into partisan war zones" (*Congressional Record*, July 23, 1997, H5653).

The legislative branch appropriations bill and its rule were largely uncontroversial except for the decision by the Rules Committee to bar a single Democratic amendment that sought to block the use of money from a disputed contingency fund for an investigation of labor laws and union activity. Similarly, the dispute about the rule for the Interior appropriations bill revolved only around the usual conflict over funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). NEA supporters wanted an up-or-down vote on agency funding, but GOP conservatives objected, and the Rules Committee refused to permit a vote on the grounds that it would involve authorizing language in the bill. However, the Rules Committee permitted a leadership-supported alternative amendment (that involved 28 pages of authorizing language). The amendment would have completely restructured federal arts funding, but it had received no committee hearings. The rule squeaked by on a 217–216 vote, after strong efforts by the Republican leadership and last-minute vote switches by members. One NEA supporter, moderate Republican Sherwood Boehlert of New York, said: "I am still against the [proposed restructuring of the NEA]. . . . My vote today was for the party and for the leadership" (*CQWR*, July 12, 1997, 1617).

The final rule controversy occurred on the agriculture bill, because of a dispute over another rule (for the foreign-aid appropriation), in which the Rules Committee had proposed to bar an amendment by Nancy Pelosi of California, a senior Appropriations Democrat. To protest that action, Democrats delayed debate on the agriculture bill with numerous time-wasting procedural motions. In response, the GOP leadership had the Rules Committee propose a rule for that bill that would severely limit amendments and motions for the remainder of its consideration. The difference in perspective between the majority leadership and GOP members of Appropriations was illustrated during the debate on the rule. Sonny Callahan (R-AL), the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, sympathized with the Democrats: "I happen to agree with the minority. . . . I think they should have had a different rule." Similarly, Appropriations chair Livingston said: "Is there legitimacy to some of their complaints? Of course there is," although he criticized the Democrats for carrying their protest too far (*CQWR*, July 26, 1997, 1756).<sup>15</sup>

Of course, the conflicts over special rules were not the only partisan matters on appropriations bills in 1997; there were also substantive disputes over funding levels and other things. However, as we have seen from the aggregate evidence and the discussion here, both on the rules for the 13 regular appropriations bills and on the legislation, partisan conflict was more limited and less intense than it had been in 1995. Left largely to its own devices, in 1996 and

1997 the Appropriations Committee reverted generally to the bipartisan patterns of decision making of its past. In 1997 this tendency was reinforced and facilitated by the budget agreement that the Clinton administration and congressional Republicans concluded early in 1997; they agreed to set the amounts available for discretionary spending in advance. The partisan conflicts that still occurred revolved largely, as we have seen, around a small number of specific decisions by the majority leaders, who sought to advantage their party's interests.

### *The Strategy Shift in 1998*

The GOP leadership's actions related to special rules on 1998 appropriations bills reveal clearly their decisions to assert stronger influence over the committee's product and across a wider range of issues than in 1996 and 1997. As we saw in the data in table 3, as large a proportion of rules were partisan as in 1995 (7 of the 11 considered so far) and with about the same level of partisan conflict. Some of the bills involved disputes mainly over a single item, similar to the situation we discussed with regard to the 1997 bills. For example, disagreement on the Interior bill again centered solely on funding the NEA. This year the Appropriations Committee decided, contrary to the plans and wishes of the GOP leadership, to include funding for the NEA in the bill (*CQWR*, June 27, 1998, 1771). Because the funds had not been authorized, this rider would have needed protection in the special rule to escape deletion on the floor on a point of order. Under pressure from conservatives who wanted to kill the agency, the majority leadership refused to supply protection.<sup>16</sup> However, in response to demands of GOP moderates, they protected a proposed floor amendment that would restore NEA funding. Moreover, in an effort to extract a bit of electoral advantage from this move, the rule provided that the NEA amendment could only be offered by threatened Representative Nancy Johnson of Connecticut rather than by the agency's longtime champion Sidney Yates (D-IL), who was retiring that year. This action angered many Democrats and chagrined some committee Republicans, but it was not enough to bring down the rule.

On the Defense bill, the only dispute involved a decision by the Rules Committee to remove from the bill the funds appropriated to deal with the Y2K problem in the Defense Department's computers; the funds had been designated emergency funds. The emergency label freed the committee from the necessity, under the budget agreement, of offsetting the money with cuts in other accounts. Republican fiscal conservatives objected and demanded that the leaders block this effort; they complied. David Obey, the full committee's ranking Democrat, attacked the decision on the floor; he contended that it was important to have the funds in the bill to deal with the problem immediately, and Bill Young (R-FL), the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on

National Security, stated on the floor that he agreed with Obey (*Congressional Record*, June 24, 1998, H5216, H5219). The legislative branch appropriations bill only involved Democratic complaints that the GOP, as in 1997, refused to protect a proposed amendment that would have restricted the use of money from the committee contingency fund. Democrats stated that it was otherwise "a fair rule" and "otherwise a good bill."

On other rules, the conflicts were more extensive or unusual. The rule for the treasury appropriations bill, like that for defense, stripped emergency funds for the Y2K problem; that provided the principal objection for Democrats. However, the rule protected legislative language that would have required health plans for federal employees to provide coverage for many contraceptives. The rule thus provoked opposition from GOP pro-life members. The rule could not survive the combination, and it was defeated 125–291. After a recess, a new rule was brought to the floor. In it the majority leadership took the unusual step of giving protection to only a single instance of legislative language that would block a pay raise for members of Congress. This limited protection satisfied GOP conservatives because it left vulnerable the provision on contraceptives, but it similarly exposed all other legislative provisions. The protection for the pay raise provision was a device to induce members to vote for the rule by permitting supporters to claim that a vote against the rule was a vote for a congressional pay raise. The chair of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee issued a news release before the vote stating that Republicans would do just that against any Democrat who voted no on the rule (*CQWR*, July 18, 1998, 1949). It may have worked, because although 23 Republicans voted against it, the rule passed with the support of 20 Democrats. Democrats, however, took their revenge during consideration of the bill. While Republicans struck the Y2K funds and the contraceptive language on points of order, Democrats similarly objected to a host of provisions, many favored by the GOP. About 50 provisions were struck in all.

The District of Columbia bill's rule included protection for four major controversial riders that appealed to social conservatives. These riders included funding for school vouchers, a prohibition of needle exchange programs, and a ban on adoptions by unmarried couples. Finally, the Republicans decided to use the usually uncontroversial Veterans Administration–Housing and Urban Development bill as a vehicle to try to compel passage into law of their proposed revamping of federal housing programs. To this end, they authorized inclusion as a rider the entire housing reform bill that had been passed earlier in the session; statements in floor debate made it clear that this was specifically a leadership decision (*Congressional Record*, July 16, 1998, H5645). Additionally, the rule failed to protect a provision that would raise the limits on mortgages approved by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a provision that Democrats and moderate Republicans supported. In the Rules



Committee's hearings on the rule, the chair of the Veterans-Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee objected to the inclusion of the housing bill, and during floor debate one Republican member of the subcommittee spoke against the rule because of its failure to protect the FHA provision. Recognizing that they were in danger of losing the rule, the majority leaders took the unusual step of adopting an amendment to the rule that shielded the FHA language. This tactic reduced Republican defections to one, and the rule passed. However, the retention of the housing provisions led nearly three-fourths of Democrats to oppose the bill's passage.

In addition to provoking greater partisanship over the structure of floor debate, the GOP leadership strategy amplified party conflict over the final form of the appropriations bills in 1998. Historically, appropriations bills had usually been passed by large bipartisan majorities because such bills contained many benefits for the constituents of most members. A member would only oppose passage of an appropriations bill if he or she were extremely dissatisfied with its contents. As we saw in table 4, in 1979-80 partisan opposition to passage of appropriations bills was rare. With the resurgence of partisanship in the 1980s and 1990s, such opposition became more frequent. Partisan conflict on these bills peaked in 1987 and 1995, with party-unity votes on passage of 6 of the 13 bills in the former year and 8 of 14 in the latter. We saw at least equivalent levels of controversy in 1998, with party votes on 6 of 11 bills considered so far.

Thus we see that the Republican leadership's strategy in 1998 was to use appropriations bills much more extensively than in the previous 2 years to advance the GOP's legislative agenda. Although this strategy was used in some instances at the leaders' initiative, in other cases it was a response to pressure from the conservative wing of the party's conference. As the appropriations season began, moreover, moves were begun to empower further the central party organization's ability to reinforce party homogeneity. In late June, Robert Ehrlich (R-MD) began circulating a petition demanding that members of the party "support the Conference on procedural matters and to abstain from divisive action" (*Roll Call*, June 22, 1998, 32). It also called on the Speaker to establish a formal mechanism for removing committee and subcommittee chairs who violated the call. The letter quickly garnered more than 100 signatures, and one of the first to sign was Speaker Gingrich. In addition, according to one member involved in the effort, Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas encouraged the group to demand that the leadership punish the "5 percent of Members who make life difficult for 95 percent of us" (*Roll Call*, June 22, 1998, 32). Ehrlich and other supporters made clear that the appropriations process was a particular focus of their efforts. "The appropriations season is when you really need to have your act together as the majority party. . . . It's the true test of whether you can govern" (*USA Today*, July 13, 1998, 7A).

## Conclusion

The theory of conditional party government asserts that the realization of conflict, particularly partisan conflict, depends not only on the distinctness of preferences between the two parties and the powers granted to leaders by the rank and file but also on the precise strategic choices members and their leaders make. In 1995, the appropriations process was deliberately used by the new Republican leadership to enact important components of its conservative legislative agenda. Yet the culmination of events from 1995 to 1996 that led to the shutdown of several federal agencies and the nail-biting closeness associated with many GOP (especially freshman) electoral victories had important implications for member goals and strategies. The Speaker's and the Republicans' plummeting support in the polls in late 1995 and early 1996 heightened the concern among the leadership and many members about maintaining their majority in the impending elections.

The appropriations evidence from 1997 and 1998 clearly demonstrates the importance of strategic choices made by party leaders. In 1997, the GOP leaders continued the strategy of 1996 by refraining from frequent use of the appropriations bills as vehicles for advancing the party agenda. As a result, the patterns of party conflict on those bills were similar to those in 1996. Then, in 1998, the majority leadership again decided (partly for electoral reasons) to serve partisan interests by shaping the content of many appropriations bills and the structure of floor consideration. The consequence was patterns of party conflict more like those in 1995 than those in 1996-97.

In addition to the amplified discussion we have offered here of the role of leadership goals in the theory of conditional party government, inferences from the theory depend heavily on the relationship among party leaders, committee members, and the rank and file. The evidence regarding the appropriations process in 1997-98 has provided us with significant new information related to these relationships. First, we saw new evidence of contrasting preferences and goals between the senior membership of the Appropriations Committee and members of the GOP Conference. These contrasts provoked frequent complaints from the appropriators about leadership strategies, and the strategies were in turn usually responses to the demands of rank-and-file members whose preferences differed from those of the appropriators. The committee-conference difference was also one reason for the Ehrlich effort to further enhance leadership power to pressure recalcitrant Republicans.

Regarding conference-leader relationships, we saw that the leaders generally had encountered dissatisfaction from members when they emphasized electoral moderation over partisan policy pursuits. Most of the dissatisfaction came from the conservative wing of the party and not from moderates. More-

over, we did not observe any rank-and-file reluctance to continued empowerment of the leadership, as the discussion of the Ehrlich effort indicated.

We can now also offer some final comments regarding the issues Dodd and Oppenheimer (1997) raised. Clearly, the narrow GOP majority has constrained the party and its leadership from 1995 to the present. That constraint, moreover, has become a greater problem as further divisions emerge within the GOP Conference. Our analysis demonstrates, however, that this constraint has not blocked the operation of the implications of the theory of conditional party government in the 105th Congress. Within the appropriations process, partisan leadership action and party conflict over policy did not decrease over time. Rather, they sharply increased in 1998 relative to 1996–97. Similarly, although leader and member concern over electoral interests increased in 1996 and later, this concern did not prevent significant and increased party organization activity within the legislative process. To the contrary, it is important to note that members usually complained about the actions of the majority leadership when the leaders sought to soft-pedal the pursuit of partisan policy interests, not when they attempted full use of their power on behalf of the party agenda.

So we conclude that the present analysis provides further support for the view that the role of party organizations in the House and the relationships between leaders and members are basically consistent with the predictions of the theory of conditional party government. A relatively homogeneous majority party, with sharply different preferences from the minority, provides the logical basis for empowering party leaders and supporting the exercise of those powers in pursuit of the party agenda. Whether and how those leaders use those powers depends on their goals and the possible strategies they perceive to achieve them. How rank-and-file members respond to particular strategy choices of the leadership depends, in turn, on the mix of goals and perceptions among the members.

#### NOTES

1. For a more extensive discussion, see Aldrich and Rohde (1996b) and Marshall, Prins, and Rohde (1997), on which these few paragraphs are based.
2. Shortly after the 1994 election, Gingrich chose fifth-ranking Robert Livingston of Louisiana to be the new chair.
3. For a more extensive discussion of these events and the strategic maneuvering surrounding them, see Maraniss and Weisskopf (1996) and Rohde (1996).
4. Although this agenda-setting role was more predominant in the GOP leadership in 1995–98 than before, it had been growing for some time. See Sinclair (1995, 1997), Bader (1996), Aldrich and Rohde (1996a), and Rohde (1991).
5. We focus only on the 13 regular appropriations bills each year to maximize the comparability of the data across Congresses.

6. *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* is cited as *CQWR* in this essay, and the individual articles cited do not appear in the list of references.

7. In fact, the GOP newcomers charged that they would change government before it changed them. “We are not going to be housebroken, period” (quote by Representative Souder [R-IN] in *CQWR*, October 28, 1995, 3254).

8. Mean vote differences are computed similarly throughout the analysis for different subgroups. For figure 1, the variable is computed from the absolute value of the proportion of cardinals voting aye minus the proportion of the remaining GOP contingent on appropriations voting aye averaged across votes.

9. We control for party support on amendments throughout our analysis. In figure 1, GOP-supported amendments represent the subset of first-degree amendments in which the number of Republicans in support of the amendment is greater than the number of Democrats. The subset of Democratic-supported amendments is similarly defined.

10. Under the 1997 Budget Agreement, funds designated as emergency related do not require offsetting cuts in other areas.

11. Of the 13 GOP appropriators voting to strip the provision, 10 were from the class of 1992 or later.

12. Because the fiscal year 1999 appropriations process is still in progress, we do not have available for analysis roll call data comparable to that for earlier years. We offer some limited discussion of 1998 roll calls in a later section.

13. In 1995, there are 14 final passage votes rather than 13 because the legislative branch appropriations bill was passed for a second time after being vetoed by President Clinton. In both votes, Republican unity was nearly identical; however, 56 percent of Democrats voted aye on the first vote and only 46 percent on the second vote. We included both votes to prevent biasing our analysis because the first vote was bipartisan whereas the second was a party-unity vote.

14. Cohesion scores in table 5 are based on the subset of first-degree amendments to appropriations bills in which a majority of members from both parties vote in opposition to one another. No substantive differences exist when all amendments are included. Still, selecting on the subset of party-unity votes allows us to refine our comparisons among the different subgroups even more on those amendments in which clear differences exist between the parties.

15. Although it does not involve a regular appropriations bill, it is worth noting the 1997 supplemental appropriation here because it further illustrates the gap between committee Republicans and the leadership. As with the 1995 budget fight, the GOP leadership sought to include a number of desired legislative policy changes in the bill that dealt mainly with disaster aid for flood victims in the Midwest. Livingston objected to the inclusion of the riders, but he was overruled. The leaders made clear that they would not recognize the independent authority the appropriators wanted. As Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas said on the floor, “The supposition that the supplemental bill . . . or any appropriations bill . . . is the property of that committee and that committee alone is a supposition of course that is errant and could only provoke mischief” (*Roll Call*, June 2, 1997, 14).

16. Rules Committee Chair Gerald Solomon of New York stated that protection was denied because of the GOP’s policy of not protecting riders when the committee

with legislative jurisdiction objected, which was the case here (*Congressional Record*, July 21, 1998, 5975).

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