

Accountability in American Legislatures

Chapter 7 “Accountability” in Primary Elections

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Prior to the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, gay marriage was a hot-button issue in American legislatures. In the 1990s, 32 state legislatures adopted laws that defined marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman, but in the 2000s, over a dozen states passed laws recognizing same-sex marriages or civil unions (NCSL, 2015). One of these states was New York. The state senate voted against legalizing same sex-marriage 38-24 in 2009 but reconsidered a similar measure two years later. State Senator James Alesi voted against the 2009 bill, but as noted in the previous chapter, he was the first Republican to support the new legislation. Alesi told the *New York Post* that “My vote is probably the most significant vote on this issue, because how I vote will send a message down the line” (Dicker, 2011). Three other senate Republicans heard this message and broke party lines to help pass the *Marriage Equality Act*, 33-29. After the 2011 vote, visitors in the New York General Assembly chambers erupted into a victorious chant of “U.S.A! U.S.A!” (Blain & Lovett, 2011), but not everyone shared this excitement, particularly members of the Republican caucus.

The following year and less than two months after *The New York Times* wrote an article titled “State Senator Loses Support of Local GOP” (Eligon, 2012), Alesi announced his retirement from the legislature citing fears of the primary election: “The conservatives pretty much declared there would be trouble for the four senators” (Preston, 2012). Alesi was right. The three other Republicans who supported the *Marriage Equality Act* sought reelection but faced party ire for their actions.

Senator Roy McDonald, for instance, defended his support of the *Marriage Equality Act* and breaking party ranks by stating:

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You get to the point where you evolve in your life where everything is not black and white, good and bad, and you try to do the right thing. You might not like that. You might be very cynical about that. Well, fuck it, I don't care what you think. I'm trying to do the right thing. I'm tired of Republican-Democrat politics...They can take the job and shove it (Headcount, 2011).

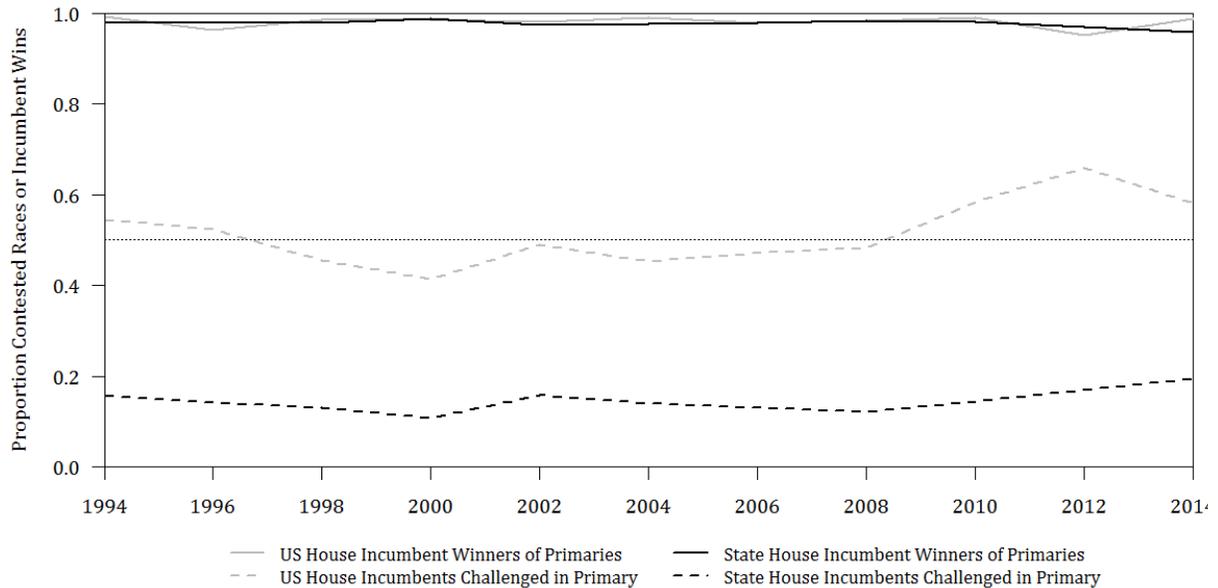
While passionate, these words were not well received by party leaders. The vice chairwoman of the Wilton Republican Committee in McDonald's district stated: "If I said that to the person who hired me, I would be fired" (Eligon, 2012). And this is what happened. Republicans nominated county clerk Kathleen Marchione over McDonald in the 2012 Republican primary for McDonald's seat.

The two other Republican supporters of the *Marriage Equality Act* only had marginally more electoral success than McDonald. Stephen Saland squeaked out his party's nomination 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent but lost a three-way general election race by fewer than 2,500 votes. In this contest, it likely was not helpful that Saland's primary challenger ran under the "Conservative" party label in the general election and received over 17,000 votes. The fourth Republican to support the *Marriage Equality Act* - Senator Mark Grisaniti - secured both his nomination and reelection in 2012.² Determined during the contest, the President of The National Organization for Marriage stated "We've defeated Republican after Republican who voted for gay marriage, and we will defeat Mark Grisanti" (Vogel, 2012), which conservatives did two years later in the Republican primary.

Grisaniti's defeat left no Republicans in the New York Senate who supported the *Marriage Equality Act* less than three years after its passage, and the fates of these Republican senators could serve as examples for other state legislators: If you buck the party line, there can be an electoral price to pay. It, however, is unclear the extent to which the events around the *Marriage Equality Act* are exemplary or anecdotal. At first glance, competitive state legislative primaries appear to be the exception rather than the rule. Figure 1 illustrates the levels of primary competition in U.S. and state house elections from 1994 - 2014. Fewer than 20 percent of state house incumbents regularly face in-party primary challengers (Figure 1: dashed grey line). For 6.4 percent of state legislators, the primary challenger is the only competition incumbents face. Some competition is better than no competition, but

² Alesi was helpful in this campaign, donating almost \$17,000 to Grisanti's campaign.

Figure 1: Competition in US and State House Primary Elections



Solid lines represent the proportion of US House (grey) and state house (black) incumbents who won their or faced an in-party challenger in primary elections from 1994 to 2014. Over 98 percent of incumbents who seek reelection win their primary election.

with so few in-party primary challengers, typically 97 percent of incumbents win their primaries (Figure 1: solid black line), leading one American politics textbook to characterize a state legislative primary to be “not unlike the common cold. It is a nuisance, but seldom fatal” (Bibby, 2003, p. 172).³

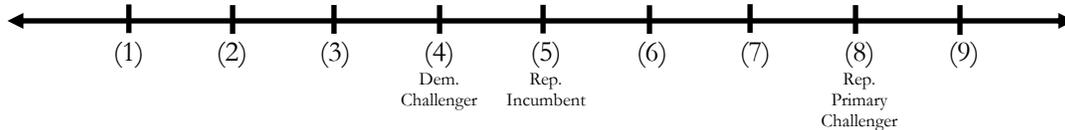
97 percent is not 100 percent, and in the search for accountability in American legislatures, the Republican fatalities in New York primary elections suggest that incentives for representation could exist in the party nomination process. Senator Alesi openly stated he would not run for reelection because he thought he would lose the primary. Another New York Republican may have personally supported same-sex marriage but voted for the *Marriage Equality Act* to avoid electoral punishment. If this was the case, the threat of losing a primary election creates incentives for legislators to represent their party base. This is a form of accountability, as electoral sanction constrains legislators’ behavior, but primary “accountability” in the absence of general election accountability could lead legislators to ignore the majority of their constituency.

³ This quote was found thanks to Hirano and Snyder (2014).

In this chapter, I investigate the extent to which such primary “accountability” exists in American legislatures. I first derive theoretical predictions regarding when incumbents should face challengers and be successful in primary elections. I test these predictions using a new dataset of state legislative primary election results from the 1990s and 2000s. Raising concerns for representation and accountability in American legislatures – at least for the median voter – I find that more ideologically extreme and party loyal legislators face fewer primary challengers and more frequently win their party’s nomination. The strength of the relationship between ideological extremity and competition in primary elections is stronger in more partisan districts for Republicans, but it is not impacted by states’ primary rules. American legislative primaries then create electoral incentives for legislators’ behavior, but these incentives entice legislators to be loyal to their party rather than their whole district, raising further concerns regarding whether desirable electoral connections exist in American legislatures.

Incentives for Representation in Two-Stage Elections

Figure 2: Hypothetical Ideological Positions of Candidates in a State Legislative Primary



The above figure represents the ideological position of three candidates in a state legislative election. See Table 1 for predictions regarding election outcomes.

After his vote for the *Marriage Equality Act*, Alesi was confident he could win the general election but expressed concern he would lack support in the primary election and decided not to run for reelection. The spatial model helps illustrate the logic behind Alesi’s primary fears. Let Figure 2 represent a moderate Republican district with 9 voters. For simplicity, I again assume a discrete policy space where numbers indicate an individual’s ideal point.⁴ Voters 1 – 3 are registered Democrats; Voter 4 is an independent Democrat; Voters 5 and 6 are independent Republicans; and Voters 7 – 9 are registered Republicans. Voters 1 – 4 participate in the Democrat primary; Voters 5-9 participate in the

⁴ For richer theoretical predictions regarding intra-party competition in primaries, I recommend readers consider Aranson and Ordeshook (1972), Coleman (1971) and Owen and Grofman (2006).

Table 1: Example Outcomes of State Legislative Primary Elections

Scenario	Republican Incumbent Ideal Point	Democrat Challenger Ideal Point	Rep. Primary Challenger Ideal Point	Moderate District (Voters 1 - 9)		Conservative District (Voters 4 - 9)	
				Winner Rep. Primary	Winner Gen. Election	Winner Rep. Primary	Winner Gen. Election
A	5	4	None	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)
B	5	4	8	Primary Challenger (Voters 7 - 9)	Democrat Challenger (Voters 1 - 5)	Primary Challenger (Voters 7 - 9)	Primary Challenger (Voters 6 - 9)
C	6	4	8	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 7)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 7)	Incumbent (Voters 5 - 9)

Republican primary; and all voters participate in the general election. I also consider a more conservative district where I remove Voters 1 - 3 from the district. I assume voters support the most ideologically proximate candidate, and if indifferent between two candidates, a voter supports the candidate who shares their party affiliation. If indifferent between candidates of the same party, a voter supports the incumbent.⁵ Following these assumptions, Table 1 presents the outcomes of state legislative races in moderate and conservative districts where candidates' ideal points vary under Scenario A, Scenario B, and Scenario C.

First consider Scenario A where there is only a Republican incumbent and one Democratic candidate running for a state legislative seat. With no intra-party competition, there is no primary election and only a general election. As discussed in Chapter 5, the median voter theorem predicts candidates have an electoral incentive to adopt a moderate - the median voter's - ideological position to maximize his chances of winning (e.g. Downs 1957). In the example illustrated by Figure 2, this ideological position is the ideal point of Voter 5.⁶ If the Republican incumbent takes this position in either the moderate or conservative district, he obtains the support of Voters 5 - 9 and wins the general election.

Now consider Scenario B where there is the same Republican incumbent and Democrat challenger, but there also is a conservative Republican who is upset with the incumbent's representation

⁵ Results are the same without this party assumption by moving Voter 6 to the ideological position of $6+\epsilon$ where $\epsilon < 1$.

⁶ I hold the Democratic candidate's ideological position fixed at 4 in all examples for simplicity. Readers should be aware this does not satisfy conditions for a Nash equilibrium in Scenario C. If the Republican incumbent is at 6, the Democratic candidate has the incentive to position herself at 5 to win the general election.

(e.g. for his vote on the *Marriage Equality Act*). This upset Republican challenges the incumbent in the primary and positions himself at the ideologically conservative position of 8. In a moderate district, the incumbent's ideological position of 5 is optimal to beat the Democrat in the general election, as done in Scenario A, but applying the logic of the median voter theorem to primary elections suggests an ideological position of 5 is not optimal for winning the Republican primary. Recall, Republican primary voters are Voters 5 – 9, making the median *primary* voter Voter 7. When the incumbent takes an ideological position of 5, the incumbent only receives Voters' 5 and 6 support in the primary. The primary challenger, meanwhile, receives Voters' 7, 8, and 9 support and wins primary election.

In either the moderate or conservative district, the primary election outcome is the same when candidates take the positions laid out in Scenario B, as voters in the Republican primary election do not change when removing 3 Democrats. General election outcomes, however, will differ. In the general election, the moderate district's median voter – Voter 5 – prefers the Democratic challenger's ideal point of 4 to the Republican primary challenger's position of 8. Voter 5 then supports the Democratic challenger, and the Republican primary challenger loses. In the conservative district without Voters 1 – 3, Voter 6 becomes pivotal in the general election. This Republican voter supports the primary challenger over the Democrat challenger, and the primary challenger wins the general election. This result implies that primary challengers should theoretically foresee having the most primary election success against moderate same-party incumbents and general election success in partisan districts. In turn, these types of races should be the most competitive and attract primary challengers.

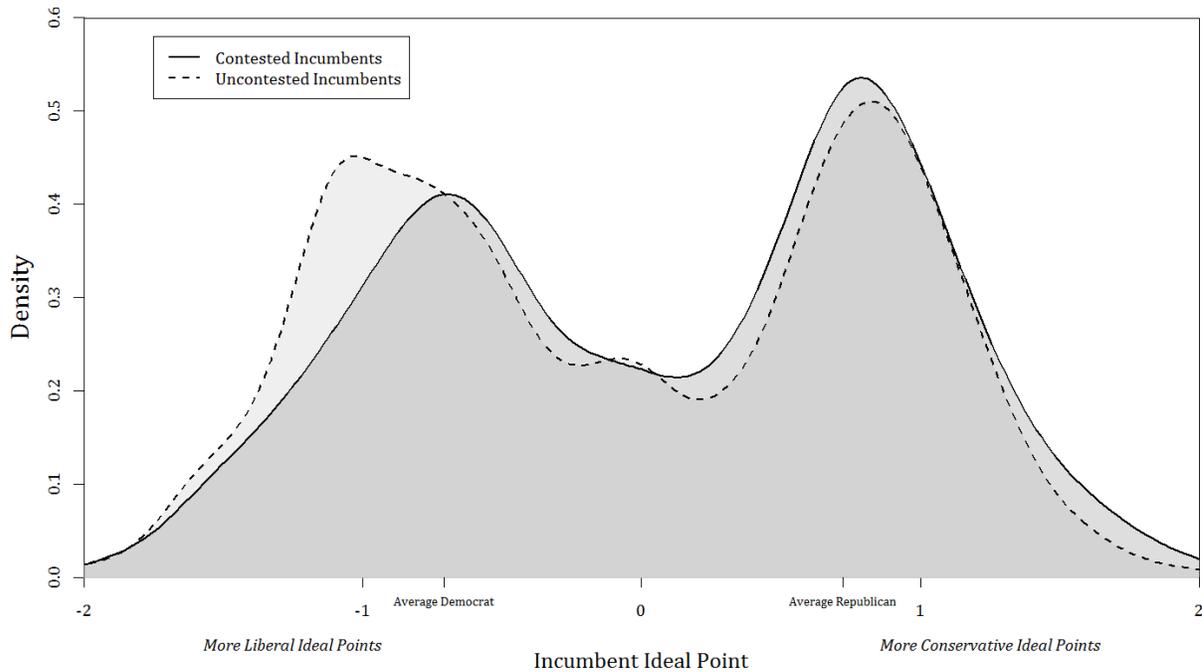
A primary challenger may like the ideological positioning of candidates in Scenario B – as this leads to his victory in the primary election - but in this scenario, the incumbent loses. A key assumption underlying theories of electoral accountability, however, is that incumbents don't enjoy losing. Scenario C illustrates how the incumbent can avoid electoral defeat. Recall in Scenario B, the incumbent lost the median primary voter – Voter 7 – to the primary challenger. If the incumbent changes his ideal point from 5 to the more conservative position of 6 and other candidates remain fixed, the incumbent wins

Voter 7's support and his party's nomination. The incumbent also wins the general election with Voter 5's support in either the moderate or conservative district.

Electoral victory takes more than a candidate choosing to place himself at 5 or 6, but the simple differences between the outcomes of Scenarios B and C illustrate an important theoretical point: primary elections can alter the incentives for representation. When applied to the general election, the median voter theorem suggests there are centripetal forces that lead candidates to moderate positions, but when also applied to primary elections, centrifugal forces instead lead candidates to more extreme positions (Burden, 2001). In the above example, the Republican incumbent has an incentive to provide more conservative representation to ward off primary competition from the right, but by doing so, the median voter of the moderate district does not receive her ideal representation. In regard to the moral hazard problem posed by representative government, a normatively desirable aspect of this theoretical prediction is that a legislator is "accountable" to someone, even if it is only his partisan base, but primary elections can ultimately present incumbents, such as Alesi, an ideological trade off. Providing more moderate representation could result in more general election votes at the expense of primary votes, but more extreme representation attracts primary support at the expense of general election support.

Research on Congressional primaries suggests that such a tradeoff exists. Hall and Snyder (2015) provide evidence that more extreme U.S. House candidates are more successful in primary elections, which is consistent with Brady, Han, and Pope's (2007) finding that House incumbents who are more extreme than their general election constituency fare worse in primary elections. When studying the Senate, Hirano and Snyder found extreme U.S. Senators more likely to be challenged in primary elections. However once challenged, extreme Senators were no more likely to lose than moderates (Hirano and Snyder 2014; see also Boatwright 2014). Despite these federal-level findings, I am unaware of analyses that examine how a state legislator's representation affects his or her primary competition outside of a single study of California. Comparing 1996 to 1998 primary election results,

Figure 3: Distribution of Contested & Uncontested Primary Elections by Incumbent Ideology



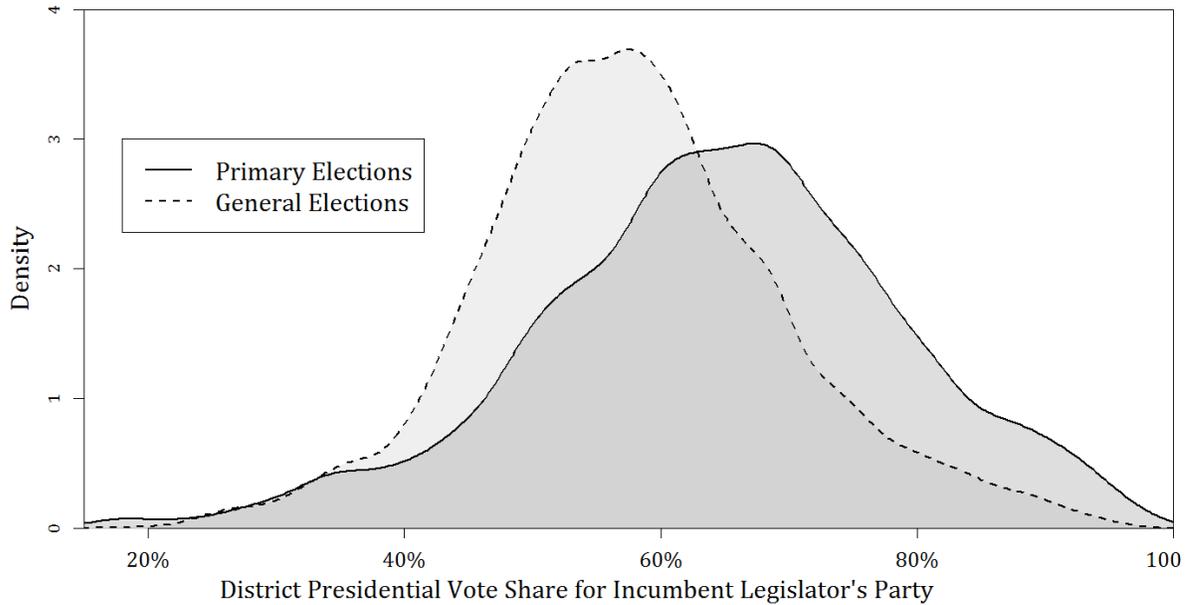
Dark and light grey regions represent the distribution of state legislative incumbents who did and did not face a primary challenger by incumbent ideology where higher ideal point values represent more conservative representation.

Gerber (2002) found moderates did better in state assembly elections where voters could select either Republican or Democratic candidates on the same ballot under the blanket primary.⁷

To better understand the important relationship between representation and primary competition, Jason Windett, myself, and devoted research assistants collected all state legislative primary election results from 1991 – 2014. Using these data, Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the distribution of incumbents who faced a primary challenger by the incumbent’s ideology and the partisanship of the incumbent’s district. Consistent with theoretical predictions, challengers more often contest moderate incumbents in primary elections. When considering legislators whose ideology is more conservative than an “Average Democrat” and more liberal than an “Average Republican,” the solid line in Figure 3

⁷ In research on primary competition that does not consider state legislators’ representation, Hogan (2003) examines the 1994 and 1996 elections in 25 states and finds races with an incumbent, in professionalized legislatures, and are less often competitive. Studying 15 states’ elections from the 1970s, Grau (1981) finds there is greater primary competition in states with multimember districts or in the south. Focusing on 1976 and 1978 elections, Grau finds that approximately 30% of incumbents face primary challengers but only 3% do not secure their nomination. Other previous research predominantly focuses on southern elections (Jewell, 1959; Jewell & Breau, 1991; Key, 1949), the top-two primary (Beck & Henrickson, 2013), or single states, such as Indiana (Standing & Robinson, 1958) or Illinois (Wiggins & Petty, 1979).

Figure 4: Distribution of Contested & Uncontested Incumbents in Primary Elections by District Partisanship



Dark and light grey regions represent the distribution of state legislative incumbents who did and did not face a primary challenger by the district partisanship from 2001 - 2014.

falls above the dashed line, indicating there are more contested than uncontested primaries for incumbents who fall in this middle part of the ideological spectrum. Meanwhile incumbents who are more liberal than the “Average Democrat,” are less often challenged in primary elections, but perhaps surprisingly legislators who are more conservative than the “Average Republican” appear to be more often challenged in primary elections.

When only considering the bivariate relationship between incumbent ideology and primary challenges, the relationship between ideological representation and primary competition does not completely comport with theoretical predictions. Primary challengers, however, do not only consider who they run against but also think about where they are running. Recall in Scenario B, the Republican primary challenger always wins the primary election but only wins the general election in the conservative district. Partisan districts are then theoretically attractive to primary challengers, and empirically, the data presented in Figure 4 - which plots the distributions of contested incumbents by the district-level partisanship for the incumbent’s party - support this prediction. The relative right skew of the dark grey region indicates that primary challengers more frequently appear in more partisan

districts. In primary elections with a challenger, the average presidential vote for the incumbent's party is approximately 64 percent but only 57 percent in general elections that feature a major party challenger.

Figures 3 and 4 begin to shed light on what types of incumbents and districts attract primary challengers, but the patterns illustrated by these Figures are undoubtedly interrelated. Primary challengers, for example, may target ideologically extreme, Republican state legislators (Figure 3), but this pattern may only emerge because extreme legislators represent more partisan districts (Chapter 4: Figure 1). In the other direction, primary challengers may first consider a district's partisanship before running (Figure 4), but again partisan districts are typically represented by more ideological legislators, producing the patterns in Figure 3. It then remains difficult to discern whether state legislators' representation has a meaningful relationship with primary election competition.

To disentangle this puzzle, I conduct statistical analyses similar to those in Chapter 2 but focus on the primary instead of general election. My dependent variable of interest is whether an incumbent from a single member district faced a primary opponent. After my investigation of challenger entry, I conduct similar analyses of who wins primary elections. Most independent variables employed here are the same as those used in previous chapters with three key differences.

First, predictions derived from the spatial model suggest incumbents will face less primary competition if the incumbent's ideal point is closer to the median voter in their party primary (e.g. Cadigan & Janeba, 2002). Testing this specific prediction requires ideological measures of each the incumbent and primary voters within a district. The latter public opinion measure, however, does not readily exist at the state legislative district level. I therefore cannot create a "ideological distance" measure for primary elections similar to that used to study general elections in previous chapters. Given this limitation, I follow work on Congressional primary competition and estimate the direct relationship between a legislator's ideology and the likelihood he receives a primary challenger using the ideal points developed by Shor and McCarty (2011). Since lower and higher ideal point values respectively represent more extreme representation for Democrat or Republican incumbents, I estimate separate models for

Democrats and Republicans. To test the prediction implied by Scenario B - that moderate legislators face more primary competition in more partisan districts - I also estimate the impact a legislator's ideology has on the likelihood of a primary challenger conditional on district partisanship by interacting these variables.

I also introduce two new variables for my analyses of primary elections: whether a legislator ran in a closed primary (i.e. that restricted to a particular set of party voters) and a legislator's party loyalty score, which is the percentage of roll-calls in which a legislator voted with the majority of his own party. I expand upon the theoretical importance of these variables in greater detail below, but in sum, the spatial model predicts moderate incumbents will be less electorally successful in a closed primary, and I expect incumbents whose voting record is loyal to the party will be less likely to draw intra-party competition. In each study of primary challenger entry and incumbent re-nomination, I use probit regressions with random effects for states to estimate how these different indicators of competition relate to my independent variables of interest.

Challenger Entry in Primary Elections

A state legislator cannot lose an election if there is no challenger, and statistical analyses suggest that political rather than institutional features of the legislature appear to do more to consistently explain variation in whether an incumbent faces a primary opponent. Using probit estimates from the first two columns of Table 2, Table 3 presents the differences in the average predicted probability that an incumbent faced a challenger in a primary election for a given change in an independent variable. A standard deviation increase in district partisanship for the incumbent's party increases the likelihood of a primary challenger by at least .05, and suggesting primary challengers are attracted to being a part of a more meaningful state legislative party, an increase of Democratic chamber seat share of 10 percent increases the likelihood a Democratic incumbent faces a primary challenger by .009.

Institutional features of the legislature, such lengths of legislative sessions, legislative salaries, or legislative staff, meanwhile have little relationship with challenger entry in state legislative primaries. However, estimates in the sixth row of Table 3 suggest that the probability a Democrat incumbent faces

Table 2: Probit Analyses of Primary Challenger Entry and Incumbent Re-Nomination

Dependent Variable:	Challenger Entry		Incumbent Nomination		Incumbent Nomination	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Party Races	All	All	All	All	Contested	Contested
Legislator Ideal Point	0.636* (0.164)	0.233 (0.313)	-0.923* (0.270)	-0.197 (0.478)	-1.003* (0.410)	0.912 (0.691)
Closed Primary	0.040 (0.148)	-0.343* (0.173)	-0.096 (0.162)	-0.117 (0.179)	-0.055 (0.249)	-0.719* (0.276)
Party Loyalty Score	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.008* (0.002)	0.007* (0.003)	0.009* (0.003)	0.005 (0.004)	0.008 (0.005)
Ideal Point x Inc. Party Pres. Vote	-0.582* (0.243)	-0.758 (0.494)	0.800* (0.407)	0.434 (0.748)	1.185 (0.615)	-1.527 (1.086)
Ideal Point x Closed Primary	-0.049 (0.124)	0.407* (0.155)	-0.267 (0.175)	0.128 (0.219)	-0.306 (0.269)	0.767* (0.319)
Change Annual Log Q2 State Personal Income	-0.893 (0.901)	-1.465 (0.790)	-0.531 (1.674)	-1.546 (1.304)	-1.070 (2.263)	-4.413* (1.839)
Incumbent Party Presidential Vote	1.752* (0.216)	2.355* (0.461)	-1.457* (0.351)	-1.787* (0.693)	-0.150 (0.506)	1.129 (1.022)
Legislator Salary (in 1000s of 2010 dollars)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	0.004* (0.001)	0.005* (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)
Session Length	-0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Legislative Staff per Member	-0.009 (0.019)	0.034 (0.021)	-0.035* (0.016)	-0.017 (0.018)	-0.051* (0.021)	0.014 (0.025)
Distance to Capital (Logged)	0.020 (0.017)	-0.080* (0.021)	-0.048 (0.029)	0.022 (0.035)	-0.053 (0.042)	-0.013 (0.048)
Logged Avg. Amt. to Win Race (State-Year Average)	0.101 (0.067)	0.086 (0.066)	-0.090 (0.080)	-0.088 (0.077)	0.007 (0.122)	-0.022 (0.105)
Chamber Party Share	0.207 (0.173)	0.294 (0.212)	-0.822* (0.233)	-0.126 (0.264)	-0.758* (0.331)	0.069 (0.411)
Southern Dummy	0.121 (0.153)	0.079 (0.168)	0.085 (0.117)	0.042 (0.122)	0.092 (0.176)	0.066 (0.165)
Midterm Election	-0.060 (0.039)	0.074 (0.039)	-0.061 (0.071)	-0.092 (0.067)	-0.132 (0.100)	-0.085 (0.099)
Term Limits Enacted	-0.280* (0.110)	0.035 (0.103)	0.220* (0.087)	0.109 (0.098)	-0.014 (0.133)	0.219 (0.142)
Freshman Incumbent	-0.146* (0.049)	-0.252* (0.051)	-0.022 (0.090)	0.067 (0.088)	-0.148 (0.124)	-0.143 (0.125)
Terms Served	0.001 (0.006)	0.008 (0.008)	0.000 (0.012)	-0.024 (0.013)	-0.006 (0.017)	-0.033 (0.018)
District Size (Logged)	-0.088 (0.106)	-0.039 (0.116)	0.189 (0.119)	0.112 (0.120)	0.219 (0.180)	0.107 (0.161)
Previous Primary Contested	0.576* (0.041)	0.399* (0.044)	-0.276* (0.073)	-0.240* (0.075)	0.136 (0.096)	0.079 (0.100)
State Senate Race	0.070 (0.089)	0.013 (0.100)	-0.188 (0.107)	-0.234* (0.110)	-0.271 (0.158)	-0.299 (0.159)
Redistricting Year	0.186* (0.052)	0.091 (0.053)	-0.212* (0.086)	-0.095 (0.084)	-0.069 (0.123)	-0.050 (0.117)
Constant	-1.903* (0.818)	-2.214* (0.922)	1.851* (0.833)	2.292* (0.907)	-0.784 (1.320)	-1.051 (1.393)
N	10415	8961	10415	8961	1441	1270
Log-Likelihood	-3593.5	-3335.3	-859.6	-936.7	-534.9	-545.9

*Probit estimates of the likelihood an incumbent faces a primary challenger or wins their party's nomination. Column headings indicate the party of the incumbent and sample of races uses. Estimations include random effects for states, and standard errors are in parentheses; * p < 0.05*

a primary challenger is .051 less in term limit states. Republican incumbents meanwhile less often face primary challengers when their district is close to the state capital. This relationship is inconsistent with findings concerning major party challengers in general elections (Chapter 2) but does not hold across both parties within my studies of primary competition.

Table 3: Predicted Changes in Probabilities of a Primary Challenger

Variable	Change in Variable Value	Change in Probability of Challenger to...	
		Democrat Incumbents	Republican Incumbents
Length of Legislative Session	Increase 100 Days	-0.007	+0.015
Legislative Salary	Increase \$10,000	-0.001	-0.006
Legislative Staff per Member	Increase 17 Staffers (approx. NH to CA)	-0.028	+0.134
District Distance from Capital	Increase 100 Miles	+0.004	-0.015*
Average Cost of Campaign	Increase \$50,000	+0.011	+0.009
Term Limits	All States Have Term Limits	-0.051*	+0.007
Party Seat Share in Chamber	Increase 10 percent	+0.004	+0.006
Closed Primary	All States have Closed Primary	+0.015	-0.004
Party Loyalty	Increase 10%	-0.010*	-0.015*
Ideological Representation	Change 1 Standard Deviation (More Liberal for Dems; More Conservative for Reps.)	-0.045*	-0.029*
District Partisanship	Increase a Standard Deviation (approx. 13 percent)	0.059*	+0.053*
State Economy	Increase 1 Standard Deviation (approx. 2 percent)	-0.003	-0.006

*Differences in average predicted probabilities of an incumbent facing a primary challenger associated with changing the listed variable value indicated by the second column, using probit estimates from Table 2. * $p \leq .05$*

There is suggestive – albeit relatively statistically uncertain - evidence that economic conditions relate to primary competition. When the state economy grows by 2 percent, Republican incumbents are 0.006 less likely to face a primary challenge (t-statistic 1.86), and Democrats are 0.003 less likely to encounter intra-party competition (t-statistic 1.00). Recall, similar economic growth produced a larger .072 change in the likelihood an incumbent faces a major party challenger in the general election (Chapter 2), but the findings in Tables 2 imply Republicans have an even greater incentive to produce strong state economies due to the primary. Otherwise, they will be more likely to face competition.

Perhaps more promising for solving the moral hazard problem posed by representative government, analyses in Table 2 also support the above theoretical predictions that challengers consider incumbents' representation before entering a primary election. Consistent with the patterns illustrated by Figure 2, liberal Democrats face fewer primary challengers than moderate Democrats, all else equal. A standard deviation decrease in a Democrat incumbent's ideal point (making this incumbent more liberal) decreases the likelihood of a primary challenger by 0.045. These statistical analyses that account for both incumbent ideology and district partisanship suggest that a standard deviation increase in a

Republican incumbent's ideal point (making this incumbent more conservative) similarly decreases the likelihood of a primary challenger by 0.029. State legislators of both parties then have an incentive to provide ideologically extreme representation if they want to avoid a primary challenger.

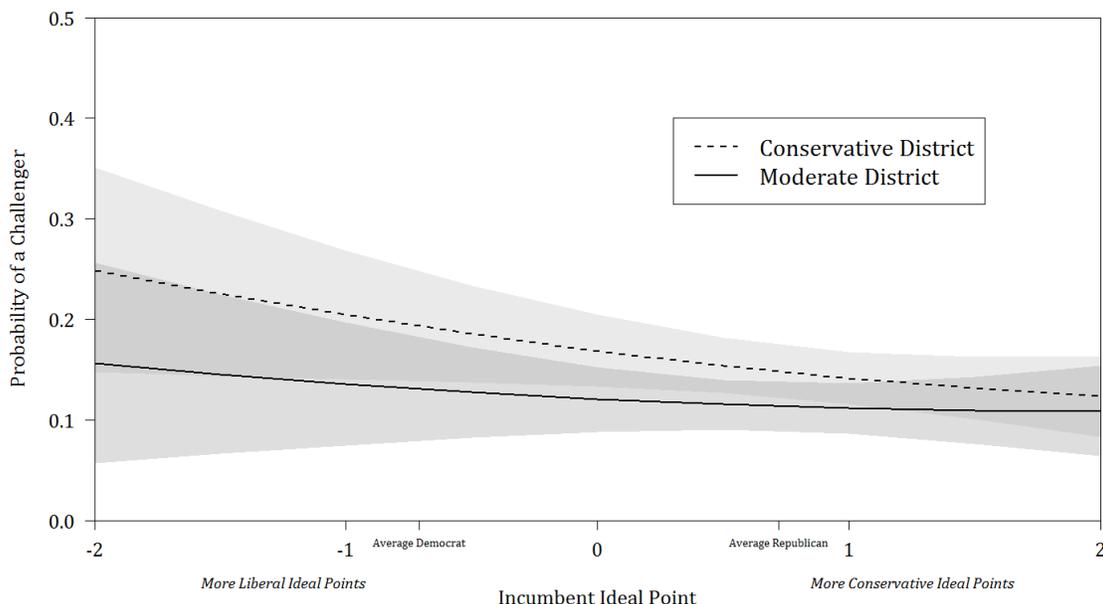
Electoral Incentives to Appeal to Partisan Voters

The above findings present a potential dilemma for state legislators who wish to stay in office but want to avoid competition. Recall Chapter 2 provides evidence that moderate representation will result in fewer general election challengers, but the findings above suggest that such representation will increase the likelihood of a general election challenger. The two-stage election process then creates a potential trade-off for legislators who want to avoid competition. If legislators want to avoid general election competition, they should represent the median voter of their district. If legislators want to win the primary election, they should provide more extreme representation appealing to their partisan base.

As legislators consider the above trade-off between providing ideologically moderate or extreme representation, it is important for legislators to consider who votes primary and general elections. Recall from Scenario B, competition should vary in districts and primary elections where the makeup of the electorate differs. A Republican incumbent may want to make a different representation decisions if they represent a moderate district versus a conservative district.

To test this theoretical prediction, I evaluate how the relationship between representation and primary competition varies conditional on how partisan a district is and find the impact of representation on primary competition is particularly pronounced in more conservative districts for Republicans. Illustrating this relationship, Figure 5 plots the predicted probability a Republican incumbent faces a primary challenger in moderate or partisan district (solid and dashed lines) as a function of legislator ideology (x-axis). Moving from the left to right on this x-axis indicates a Republican incumbent provides increasingly conservative representation, and I again define moderate and safe districts as those where the incumbent's party received 50 or 60 percent of the presidential vote. If a Republican state legislator provided ideological representation of an average Republican instead of an average Democrat in a conservative district, the probability this Republican faces a challenger falls by

Figure 5: Predicted Probability of a Primary Challenger to a Republican Incumbent



Average predicted probability of a primary challenger to a Republican incumbent under different levels of representation (x-axis) and in conservative and moderate of districts (dashed and solid lines), as defined by district-level presidential vote. Conservative Republicans are more likely to be challenged in conservative districts.

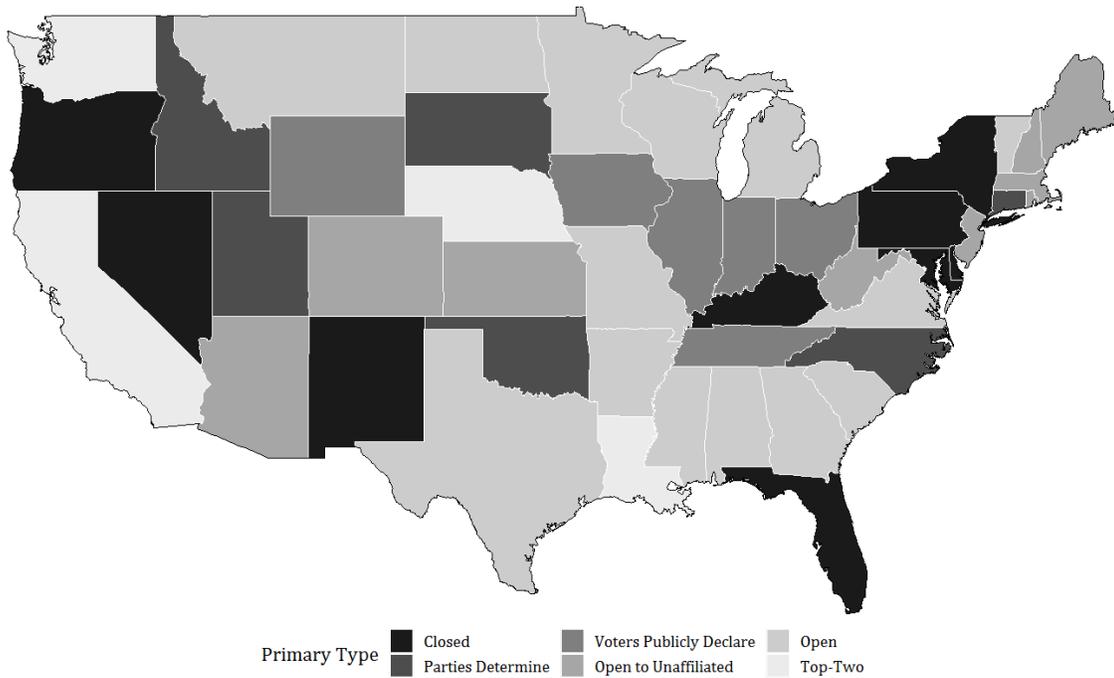
0.045 in a conservative district (Figure 5: dashed line; t-statistic of difference 1.97) but only 0.017 (t-statistic of difference 0.751) in a moderate district, suggesting that liberal representation in conservative districts increases the likelihood a Republican incumbent faces primary competition.

For Democrat incumbents, the overall relationship between representation and primary challenger entry is stronger than it is for Republicans and less dependent on the type of district that a Democratic state legislator represents. If a Democratic legislator provides ideological representation of an average Democrat instead of an average Republican, this incumbent would be approximately 0.09 less likely to face a primary challenger in either a liberal or moderate districts, as defined by whether Democratic presidential candidates on average received 60 or 50 percent of the vote.

Closed Primaries

The above findings then indicate that - at least for Republicans - who participates in primary elections matter for primary competition. Any voter may participate in a state legislative primary, but in some states, there are restrictions on *which* party’s primary a voter may participate, creating “closed primaries.” Restrictions vary by state, and using the National Conference of State Legislatures’ classification of primary systems, Figure 6 illustrates which voters can participate in primaries in

Figure 6: Open and Closed Primary States as of 2015



different states. Voters in 15 states could choose vote in either the Democrat or Republican primary (second-lightest grey states), but 9 states have “closed primaries” that are restricted to registered party members (black states). Most other states fall somewhere between these two extremes with differing degrees of openness. For instance in some states, independent voters can participate in any primary but sometimes must publicly declare whether they will participate in the Republican or Democrat primary. Republican and Democratic primaries within a single state at times have different rules, as the individual parties determine who can vote in their elections. More recently, California and Washington joined Louisiana and adopted a top-two primary system where all voters and candidates regardless of party participate in a single primary election.

In a country that prides itself on being a free, fair, and open democracy, it may seem odd that some states restrict who can vote in elections. But for some legislators, it is open primaries that make little sense. As put by former Colorado State Senator Ted Harvey: “It’s like saying the Mormon Church will get to choose who is going to be the Pope or allowing [New England Patriots coach] Bill Belichick to decide who’s going to be the quarterback for the Denver Broncos” (Greenblatt, 2016). Like football

coaches' decisions impact on teams' success, participation by non-party members in a party's primary could have deflating effects on the ideological homogeneity of a party.⁸ Texas, for example, has an open primary system, and Republican legislator Patricia Harris told the *Texas Tribune*: "That's how I'd get elected a lot of times, is because my constituents that are Democrats vote in Republican primaries" (EmpowerTexans, 2015). With her cross-over support in the primary, Harris is able to be one of the most liberal Republicans in the Texas house. Mississippi State Senator Chris McDaniel claims that the election of Republicans such as Harris through open primaries creates parties with "watered-down" "ideals, principles, and ideologies" (Wolfe, 2014).

Concerns of electing a "watered-down" Republican arose in a Montana senate primary contest between State Senator Scott Boulanger and State Representative Pat Connell and ultimately led to the Republican party filing lawsuits to close their primary. Prior to the election, Boulanger told the *Helena Independent Record* that "I represent the conservative Republicans... (Connell) represents the 20 percent of the Republicans who are trying to convince everyone that 80 percent of us are wrong" (Bureau, 2014) Connell, meanwhile, told the same newspaper that "I've listened to myself being called a RINO (Republican in name only) and a liberal, and that I might as well be a Democrat because I crossed the aisle. I guess that's great sound-bite politics, but ... does it really matter who you're working with if you're getting something done?" With Montana's open primaries and only one candidate in the Democratic primary, voting for and electing a moderate in the Republican primary was probably attractive for many Democratic voters. If such cross-over voting occurred, it was likely critical. Connell defeated Boulanger by a mere 39 votes and went onto win the general election.

Upset with the outcome of the election, future state representative Matthew Monforton filed a lawsuit to close Montana's primaries to registered party members (Associated Press, 2014). Monforton told Mediatracker.org that "I don't think that Republicans should be crossing over and mucking up Democrat elections any more than they should be doing that to us" (Catlett, 2014). Former Montana State Senator Jim Elliot called the effort to close the primary system "a quest for ideological uniformity

⁸ This "deflating" statement is unrelated to the author's bitterness about Superbowl XXXVI.

in the Republican Party” taken up by a “group of pious zealots” (Elliott, 2015). Monforton’s lawsuits were unsuccessful, and Montana’s open primary system likely contributed to Monforton’s decision to exit from the legislature. On the same day Republican Walt Sales announced his candidacy for Monforton’s seat in the next election, Monforton announced his retirement, angrily telling the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, “The Montana Republican Party will always be a charade until we stop Democrat activists from infiltrating our primaries and electing phony ‘Republicans’ like Ryan Zinke and Walt Sales” (Carter, 2015). Sales went onto win the primary and general election and become one of the more moderate members of the Montana Republican caucus.

Limiting primary contests to partisans may prevent the election of moderates, but Tennessee State Senator Jeff Yarbro fears “If we limit participation to people who are hardcore partisans, you’re going to see the legislature get even more polarized and less responsive to the people that they represent” (Boucher, 2015). Existing political science research, however, may assuage some of Yarbro’s concerns. At least within presidential primaries, the ideology of primary voters does not appear to vary much from the general election electorate (Geer, 1988; Norrander, 1989; Sides, Tausanovitch, Vavreck, & Warshaw, 2016, see also Hill, 2015; Jacobson, 2012), and co-authors along with myself find little evidence that closed primary systems produce more ideologically extreme state legislators (McGhee, Masket, Shor, Rogers, & McCarty, 2014; see also Bullock & Clinton, 2011). But our research fails to evaluate whether legislators’ themselves have an electoral incentive to provide more extreme representation. Legislators’ ideology appears to matter in state legislative primaries, particularly in partisan districts for Republicans (Figure 5). However, does legislators’ representation matter more if there are restrictions on who can vote in a primary?

Predictions of the spatial model suggest it should. Reconsider the example scenarios from Table 1. Each scenario originally had five voters participate in the Republican primary: two independent Republicans (Voters 5 and 6) and three registered Republicans (Voters 7, 8, and 9). To win the primary, the Republican candidate needed the support of the median primary voter: Voter 7. The Republican incumbent could accomplish this by positioning himself at 6 (Scenario C). Now reconsider these

examples but limit eligible Republican primary voters to registered Republicans: Voters 7 - 9. The pivotal voter in the Republican primary is now Voter 8, and to win this voter's support and the Republican nomination, the incumbent must take an even more conservative position of 8. Changing which voters can participate in primary elections then theoretically influences who will win primary nominations.

To better understand primary laws' impact on state legislative electoral competition, my statistical analyses account for whether a state's primary was restricted to only registered party members. I also examine whether challengers more often contested ideologically extreme incumbents in closed primary states using an interaction term between this "closed primary" variable and my measure of legislator ideology. Democratic incumbents regardless of their ideological representation appear no more likely to face a primary challenger under a closed primary system, and restricting who can vote in Republican primaries to registered Republicans surprisingly appears to be detrimental instead of beneficial for conservative legislators. Under more open primary systems, a standard deviation increase (making the Republican legislator more conservative) in a Republican's ideal point decreases the likelihood of a primary challenger by approximately .05 (t-statistic of difference 3.09). However in an closed primary state, such a change in representation results in a predicted increase in the probability of a challenger of 0.030 (t-statistic of difference 1.21). The data then suggest that establishing closed primaries in Montana would make conservative legislators more – not less – likely to face a primary opponent.

Party Loyalty

When criticizing Republicans' litigious efforts to close Montana's primary system, former Republican State Senator Jesse O'Hara claimed "party bosses are asking the courts to limit voter choice in primaries in order to transfer power and influence from Montana voters to themselves" (O'Hara, 2015). If true, such efforts would counter some of progressive era reformers' original motivations to establish direct primaries. Reformers were less focused on weeding out "Republican phonies" but instead sought to reduce party leaders' influence in the nomination process (see Ware, 2002 for a

detailed history). Montana party leaders, however, very clearly sought to use primaries to instill party discipline. When filing affidavits in the lawsuit to establish closed primaries, majority leaders Matthew Rosendale and Keith Regier even named 18 “dissident” Republican state legislators whom they rated as “distressingly low” in party loyalty. Rosendale expected “this problem will get worse without significant changes in how the Republican Party nominates its candidates during elections” (Rosendale, 2015).

Conservative party leaders are not the only ones who use primaries to seek retribution against incumbents who break party ranks. Such breaking of ranks repeated occurred in the 2015 Illinois General Assembly where Democrats held 71 seats, enough to override a gubernatorial veto. After Illinois Governor Bruce Renner vetoed a bill that would remove the governor from negotiations with state union workers, a veto-override vote was held in the House but failed. An upset Speaker of the House Michael Madigan placed blame on Democratic Representative Ken Dunkin – who was absent from the vote – telling the press on the day of the vote that “Had Mr. Dunkin been here, there would have been 71 democrats voting to override” (Thomas, 2015). To which the defiant Dunkin responded, “I don’t work for Mike Madigan” (Schutz, 2015) Two months later, Duncan again made his independence from party leadership clear when he was the lone Democrat not to support an override of Governor Renner’s veto of legislation concerning child care and services for the elderly. Defending his position, Dunkin told the *Chicago Tribune*, he was not in Springfield to “be some robotic Democrat” (Geiger, 2015).

Dunkin explained he was acting in Illinois voters’ best interests, but he ultimately paid for breaking party lines. Democrat Juliana Stratton challenged Dunkin in the 2016 primary with the support of Illinois Democrat party establishment. She raised over \$2.2 million and received the endorsements of the Illinois Secretary of State, Chicago Teacher’s Union President, and even the President of the United States: Barack Obama. Once an Illinois state legislator himself, President Obama was not a fan of Dunkin (Schuba, 2016). For example, Obama gave a speech on bipartisanship to the Illinois General Assembly in 2016, during which Obama and Dunkin had the following exchange, (Obama, 2016; Zorn, 2016):

Obama: “... And where I’ve got an opportunity to find some common ground, that doesn’t make me a sellout to my own party.”

Ken Dunkin stands in the chamber and yells: “Heck, yeah!”

Obama: "That applies -- (laughter) -- "Well, we'll talk later, Dunkin. You just sit down," (Applause and Laughter.)

Involving himself in Dunkin's Democratic state legislative primary itself, the President recorded a TV ad for Juliana Stratton and stated (Pearson, 2016):

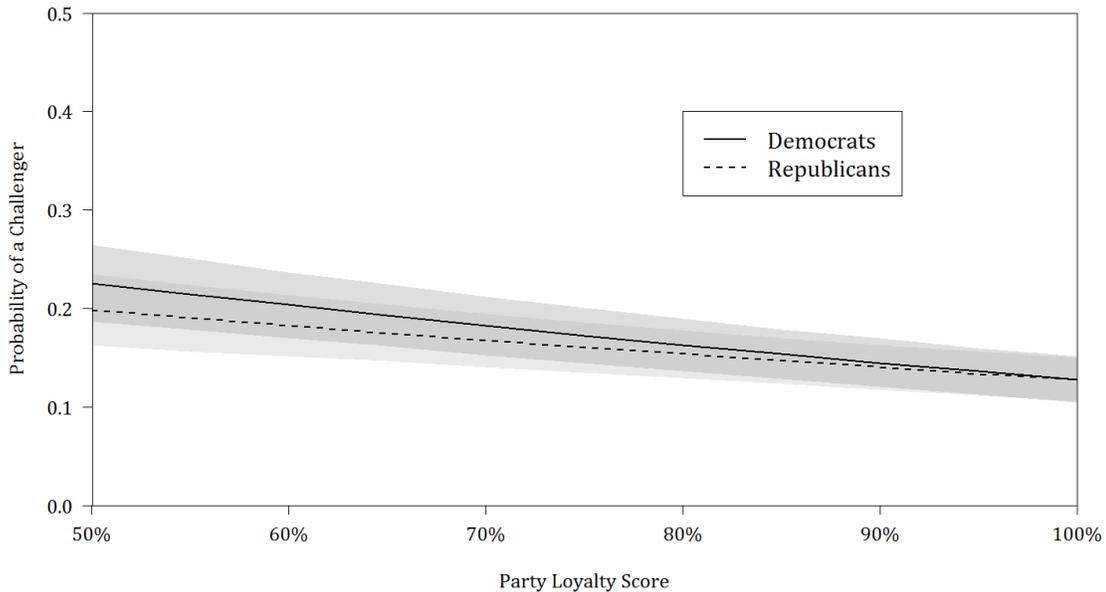
"Juliana will fight to get guns off our streets and fight for tougher penalties for violent offenders. I'm Barack Obama. I'm asking you to vote for Democrat Juliana Stratton for state representative."

To the pleasure of President Obama and Speaker Madigan, Stratton went on to defeat the disloyal Dunkin in the primary 68 percent to 32 percent.

Dunkin would likely tell progressive reformers that the establishment of the direct primary did not go far enough to limit party leaders' power over the nomination process. Even with Dunkin's defeat, it is not clear if bucking party leadership has systematic electoral consequences for state legislators. I am unaware of an existing study that tests such a proposition, even within Congress. To investigate the extent to which disloyal party members more often face competition, I estimate the proportion of votes in a which a legislator voted with the majority of their party by legislative session using roll-call votes collected by Shor and McCarty. I then estimate the relationship between this "party loyalty" score and the likelihood an incumbent faces a challenger.

Using the estimates from the first two columns of Table 2, Figure 7 plots the predicted probability Democrat and Republican incumbents face primary challenges as they become increasingly loyal to their party. Both Democrats and Republicans face less competition if they toe the party line within the legislature. On average, a Democrat state legislator votes with his party 87 percent of the time, and the probability this legislator faced a challenger was .141. If this average Democrat instead voted with their party 77 percent of the time, this probability of a challenger rises to .154 (t-statistic of difference: 3.42), suggesting going against the party leadership is not electorally advisable. The comparable probabilities for a Republican legislator are .142 and .160 (t-statistic of difference: 4.14). From these estimates cannot be determined from these estimates that party leaders are necessarily recruiting more challengers to pit against disloyal members, but the patterns illustrated by Figure 7 suggest the President of The National Organization for Marriage message to New York state legislators

Figure 7: Relationship between Primary Challenger Entry and Party Loyalty of Incumbents



Average predicted probability of a primary challenger to Republican and Democrat incumbents as incumbents become increasingly party loyal.

that “if you are a Republican and you vote for gay marriage, this is a career ending move” is not a completely hollow threat (Kaplan, 2012).

Winning Re-Nomination in Primary Elections

Figures 5 and 7 indicate that primary challengers respond to legislators’ representation and - in the context of Powell’s requirements for accountability – shape the extent to which voters have a “fair opportunity” to cast a ballot against the incumbent in the primary election. Challengers are necessary to threaten incumbents’ electoral security, but it is again important that threats to incumbents’ electoral security are not empty. For primary elections to constrain legislators’ behavior or contribute to the levels of “accountability” in American legislatures, there also needs to be a “meaningful relationship” between how legislators act in office and how they perform in elections. A critical assumption underlying the above theoretical predictions concerning challengers is that voters respond to state legislators’ ideological positions. Findings in the Chapter 5 cast doubt that this meaningfully occurs in general elections, particularly in partisan districts, but there is evidence that voters who participate in primaries are more educated and politically interested than general election voters (Blunt, 2000;

Kamarck, Podkul, & Zeppos, 2017; Sides et al., 2016), potentially increasing the likelihood primary-level electoral connections exist.

To better understand the extent to which there is an electoral connection between representation and voter behavior in primary elections, I conduct two sets of analyses that examine the likelihood an incumbent wins his or her party nomination. The first study focuses on the same set of races as above, but the dependent variable is whether an incumbent seeking reelection won their party's nomination instead of if the incumbent faced a primary challenger. Estimates from this first study will be influenced by the behavior of both challengers and voters, as voters can only cast ballots against their representative when there is a challenger. Challenger's selective entry into races – based on legislators' ideology – then potentially limit our understanding of voter behavior in primaries.⁹ To partly remove this selection effect and better understand the relationship between representation and voter behavior, my second analysis focuses only on races where the incumbent faces a challenger. Probit estimates for these analyses are available in the final four columns of Table 2, and Table 4 provides predicted differences in the probability of an incumbent's re-nomination associated with changes in independent variables of interest.

Again consistent with spatial model predictions, incumbents' representation matters for their electoral success in primary elections. When considering all races where the incumbent sought reelection, decreasing a typical Democrat's ideal point by a standard deviation (making him more liberal) increases that Democrat's probability of nomination by .022. The relationship between representation and who wins primary elections, however, is non-linear. Increasing the typical

⁹ Consider if voters randomly cast ballots. When studying all races with random voters, ideologically moderate incumbents should lose more often by being *able* to lose with a challenger present, given challengers more often contest ideologically moderate incumbents, but when only studying contested races, ideologically moderate incumbents would not be more likely to lose when only studying contested races, as the outcomes should be random. If there is a relationship between a contested legislator's ideal point and their likelihood of reelection, this would serve as strong evidence that voters respond to legislators' representation. This contested sample, however, presents a tougher test to find a relationship between legislator and voter behavior. If legislators could only be moderate or extreme, and only extreme legislators are contested. There would then be little to no variation in the extremity of challenged incumbents, which would depress the estimated relationship between ideological extremity and voter behavior.

Table 4: Predicted Changes in Probabilities of Primary Nomination

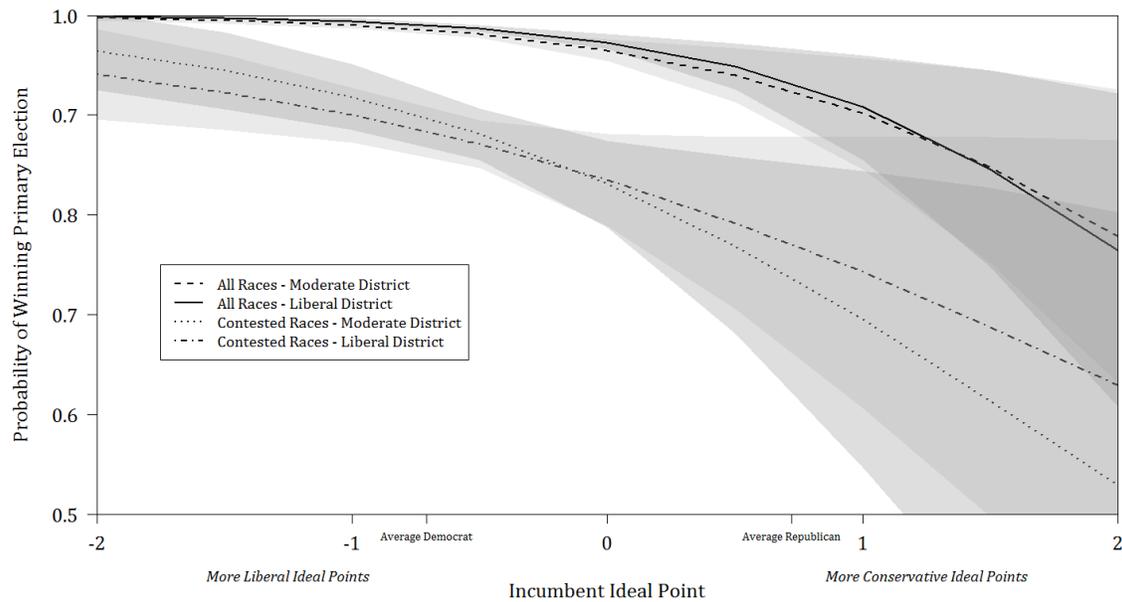
Variable	Change in Variable Value	Change in Probability of Victory			
		Sample: All Races		Sample: Contested Races	
		Democrat Incumbents	Republican Incumbents	Democrat Incumbents	Republican Incumbents
Length of Legislative Session	Increase 100 Days	-0.000	-0.007	-0.033	-0.015
Legislative Salary	Increase \$10,000	+0.002*	+0.002*	+0.009*	+0.008
Legislative Staff per Member	Increase 17 Staffers (approx. NH to CA)	-0.036	-0.018	-0.022*	+0.051
District Distance from Capital	Increase 100 Miles	-0.002	+0.001	-0.011	-0.003
Average Cost of Campaign	Increase \$50,000	-0.002	-0.003	+0.000	-0.003
Term Limits	All States Have Term Limits	+0.008*	+0.006	-0.003	+0.050
Party Seat Share in Chamber	Increase 10 percent	-0.002*	-0.001	-0.014	+0.002
Closed Primary	All States have Closed Primary	+0.003	-0.001	+0.023	-0.030
Party Loyalty	Increase 10%	+0.003*	+0.004*	+0.010	0.018
Ideological Representation	Change 1 Std Deviation (More Liberal for Dems; More Conservative for Reps.)	+0.022*	+0.006	+0.057*	+0.025
District Partisanship	Increase 1 Std. Deviation (approx. 13 percent)	-0.012*	-0.012*	-0.022*	-0.004
State Economy	Increase 1 Std. Deviation (approx. 2 percent)	-0.000	-0.002	-0.004	-0.023

*Differences in average predicted probabilities of an incumbent winning their primary election associated with changing the listed variable value indicated by the second column, using probit estimates from Table 2. "All Races" sample include races with and without a challenger, and "Contested Races" only include races where there was a challenger * $p \leq .05$*

Democrat’s ideal point by a standard deviation (making him more conservative) decreases the likelihood of re-nomination by .049. Democratic legislators then not only have incentives to provide more liberal representation but stronger greater disincentive to provide more conservative representation.

When only considering contested races – those races where a challenger has already responded to an incumbent’s ideological representation and decided to run - decreasing and increasing a typical Democrat’s ideal point by a standard deviation respectively increases and decreases the probability of re-nomination by 0.057 and .081. These differences are larger than those found above when studying all races, which suggest that incumbent’s losses in primary elections are not entirely attributable to elite behavior. Instead it appears that Democratic voters systematically punish more moderate legislators in primary elections.

Figure 8: Relationship between Democrat Incumbent Re-Nomination and Representation

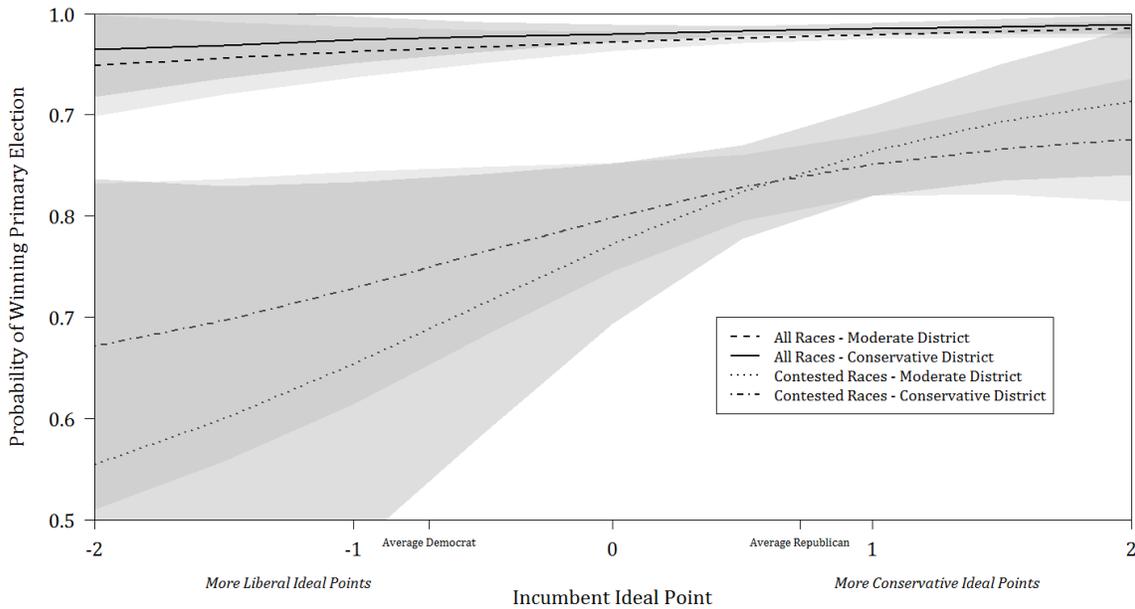


Average predicted probability of Democrat incumbent re-nomination under different levels of representation (x-axis).

Similar but less stark and certain, non-linear patterns emerge when considering Republican primary elections. When considering all races, increasing a Republican’s ideal point by a standard deviation (making him more conservative) increases the probability of re-nomination by .006 (t-statistic of difference 1.02), and decreasing a Republican’s ideal point by a standard deviation (making him more liberal) has the opposite effect, decreasing the probability of that Republican winning the primary election by .007 (t-statistic of difference: 0.91). The comparable predicted probability increase and decrease amongst contested races are .025 and .044. None of these differences, however, are statistically distinguishable from zero, and unlike findings concerning challenger entry, the relationship between incumbent re-nomination and representation does not appear to be conditional on whether a particular district is liberal, moderate, or conservative for both Democrats and Republicans (Figures 8 and 9).

A legislator’s success in the primary election not only depends on his ideological representation but also the extent to which he is loyal to his party. Statistical analyses in the second two columns of Table 2 suggest that Democrat and Republican incumbents who vote 10 percent more often with their party are at least .003 more likely to win their party’s primary. This relationship, however, appears to be largely driven by challenger behavior. When conditioning for whether an incumbent had a challenger,

Figure 9: Relationship between Republican Incumbent Re-Nomination and Representation



Average predicted probability of Republican incumbent re-nomination under different levels of representation (x-axis).

the relationship between a legislator’s party loyalty and the primary election outcome is indistinguishable from zero (Table 2: Final 2 Columns). Returning to the Illinois state legislature Ken Dunkin’s lack of party loyalty, these analyses suggest that Dunkin’s disloyalty did little to upset voters but instead made upset party elites who ran and supported a challenger against a disloyal incumbent party member.

Analyses in Tables 4 and 5 also suggest that the Montana Republican party need be less concerned about whether their primary election is open or closed. When considering all races, a Republican incumbent is actually .001 less likely to win re-nomination in a closed rather than open primary (t-statistic of difference 0.14), and when considering races with a primary challenger, the comparable change in probability is .030 (t-statistic of difference 0.75). Findings concerning the openness of a primary system and the re-nomination of Democratic state legislative incumbents are similarly uncertain, and across both parties, these closed primary conclusions do not meaningfully change for more ideologically extreme legislators. Open primaries then may be a theoretically attractive option to reduce polarization in American legislatures, but the data do not support this theoretical prediction.

Recap

Specific rules pertaining to primaries are unlikely responsible for the polarization in American legislatures, but the evidence presented here suggests that primaries – of any type – are partly to blame. Consistent with predictions of the spatial model, ideologically extreme incumbents are more successful in primary elections. Such incumbents face fewer primary challengers (Figures 3 and 5) and lose their party’s nomination less often (Figures 8 and 9). Legislators concerned about their primary prospects additionally appear to have incentives to be loyal to their party, countering the motivations behind progressive era reforms who sought to decrease party leaders’ influence.

The above findings help establish that state legislative primaries create an electoral connection between voters’ and their legislators. Legislators are then “accountable” to someone in primaries, but one can walk away from these findings both encouraged and discouraged. Looking at the glass half empty, the “accountability” afforded by primaries creates incentives for legislators to represent their partisan base instead of the majority of their district, concerning those worried about the rising levels of polarization in state legislature. From a glass half full perspective, these findings are evidence that legislators’ behavior has implications for the elections, thereby partly solving the moral hazard problem posed by representative government. State legislators may have incentives to represent their ideological base, but at least there is this incentive to represent *some* part of the electorate instead of permitting legislators to behave however they want.

The incentives for legislators’ behavior created by primary elections then counter the meager incentives created by general elections. Analyses in Chapters 2 and 5 suggest that legislators who appeal to the median voter avoid major party challengers and gain general election votes. The analyses, here, meanwhile suggest incumbents who do the opposite and provide ideologically extreme representation face fewer primary challengers and more often re-secure their party’s nominations. Two constituencies then pull legislators in opposite directions. These counteracting centripetal and centrifugal electoral forces can place great stress and pressure on legislators. A legislator who cannot accommodate both his primary and general election constituencies, such as appeared to be the case Senator Alesi after

supporting gay marriage in New York, may throw his hands up in air and say “I quit,” preventing voters the opportunity to punish them at the ballot box, which is the subject of the next chapter.

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