

**Online Appendix for “How Widespread is Strategic Partisan Voting in
Congress? Revisiting ‘Backward Induction in the Wild’**

Adam Zelizer

Supplemental Information is intended for online publication only.

Contents

Appendix A: Description of Discrepancies between Original and Replicated Results

Analyses of Senate voting data in both this paper and BIW relies on roll call data provided by VoteView.com. VoteView updates their data occasionally, though does not log the changes made. As a result it is something of a detective exercise to determine why my results do not match BIW's.

Of the 2.898 million votes in BIW's analyses, I am able to match all but 11 to the updated dataset. All of these votes are in the 45th Congress, and it appears VoteView corrected data errors. For example, Senator David Hartley Armstrong from Missouri was appointed to Congress on September 29, 1877 to serve out the remainder of the term of Lewis Bogy, who died in office. In the BIW data, Armstrong was listed as a member of Congress (who voted nea) on the very first roll call of the session.

The updated dataset has 1,161 votes not included in the BIW data. Again, a sizable portion, 785, come from the 45th Congress. The remainder include 374 votes from the 74th - 105th Congress that are all counted as "present" votes in the updated dataset but are all listed as abstentions in the BIW dataset. 2 votes from the 112th Congress were hand-corrected by BIW in their code.

Whether a member formally abstains or votes present makes no difference to bill passage under congressional rules; for most votes, a simple majority of those voting, excluding those voting present, suffices for passage. However, changing abstentions to present votes does make a difference to our analysis because BIW considers present votes to be deviations from the party line when the party position is to pass a bill, but consistent with the party line when the party wants to defeat a bill. While it is not clear that present votes should be counted in this way — a member voting present is treated differently than a member who casts no vote — I choose to maintain parallelism with the original paper.

Of the votes that appear in both of our datasets, 99.97% are coded the same way in the

two datasets. Of the 783 differences, 780 occur in the 45th Congress and 3 in the 111th. These appear to be more minor fixes from VoteView.

Now turning to the right-hand side of the regression, members' rankings in the vote order. Again, over 99.97% of observations have the same number of members in the Senate across the two datasets; 597 discrepancies occur in the 45th Congress and 88 in the 106th.

Members' rankings within the vote order differ more meaningfully; only 94% have the same order across the datasets. This discrepancy is due to senators with compound last names. BIW lists Carol Moseley Braun's surname as "Braun" and Blanche Lambert Lincoln's as "Lambert Lincoln". Congress.gov notes that the correct surnames are "Moseley Braun" and "Lincoln". Vote orders for those senators, as well as all other senators during the affected congresses whose surnames fall between the compound surnames, differ between the two analyses. This is a bigger discrepancy for the 103 – 105 congresses, during which Sen. Moseley Braun served, than the 106 – 111, during which Sen. Lincoln served, although, perhaps surprisingly, five other senators had surnames between Lambert and Lincoln in the 106th Congress. Over 170,000 observations' vote orders are slightly changed by correcting just these two surnames.

These discrepancies cause the replication results to differ from those in the original analysis.

Appendix B: US Senate Analysis, with Roll Call by Party Fixed Effects

BIW's specifications account for the potential confound that senators' voting behavior may correlate with their surname by including senator fixed effects, which control for differences in their unmeasured, time invariant propensities to deviate from the party line that may confound estimates of the effect of alphabetical order. Therefore, the only variation in party voting, and vote order, is within rather than across senator.

Another potential confound is not addressed, except only partially, and in the paper's Appendix. Shocks to party-line voting may also occur for all members at the same time, or on the same roll call vote, as a shift in the vote order. For the same reason BIW includes senator (and senator by congress) fixed effects, we might want to include roll call fixed effects to account for spurious correlation between party-line voting at the bill level and any shocks to vote order.

Including roll call fixed effects would exclude some potential confounds. For example, if Senator Edward Zorinsky were replaced by Senator Joseph Abbott¹ at the beginning of a congress, the other senators would shift one spot back in the vote order. If that session were marked by across-the-board strong party-line voting due to the partisan split of the chamber, secular changes in partisanship over time, or an impending presidential election, we would estimate a negative effect of vote order on deviating from the party-line even though BIW's mechanism is not operative. If their mechanism is present, though, and remaining senators become less likely to deviate from the party because Senator Abbott deviates first and leaves them holding the line, then we would throw out relevant variation by including the roll call fixed effect.

The inclusion of both senator and roll call fixed effects dramatically changes estimated vote order effects from those in BIW. Table ?? shows that including roll call fixed effects causes one estimate to flip sign and the other three to decline in magnitude by 57 – 99%.

¹These are the first and last senators by surname across the entire period, though they did not serve at the same time.

Only one reaches conventional levels of statistical significance, and that is with regression-based standard error estimates.² At the same time, this design is far more precise. Standard errors decline substantially, which does illustrate that roll call fixed effects explain meaningful variation in party-line voting. Including roll call by party fixed effects only slightly improves precision compared to the model with only roll call call fixed effects. Again, estimated vote order effects largely disappear.

There is no objective answer as to which specification is correct, but it certainly is worth considering how estimated vote order effects largely disappear with this change of specification. BIW's specification is a permissive one that allows potentially confounding trends rather than throw out useful variation. At the same time, the specification employed yields much noisier estimates than a reasonable alternative. The original results are sensitive to the choice of specification.

²Presumably, standard error estimates would be larger via the randomization procedure. I do not use randomization-based standard errors here so that we can evaluate the impact on BIW's results from making one change in specification at a time.

Table B1: Vote Order Effects US Senate: 35th – 112th Congresses, with Roll Call Fixed Effects

DV: Deviate	Roll Call Specific Order		Order Among All Senators	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Roll Call Fixed Effects				
Alphabetical Rank (\widehat{SE})	-0.002 (0.020)	-0.050 (0.021)	0.014 (0.029)	-0.096 (0.109)
Legislator FEs	Yes	No	Yes	No
Legislator by Congress FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes
Roll Call FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roll Call by Party Fixed Effects				
Alphabetical Rank (\widehat{SE})	0.001 (0.020)	-0.039 (0.019)	0.018 (0.027)	-0.060 (0.103)
Legislator FEs	Yes	No	Yes	No
Legislator by Congress FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes
Roll Call x Party FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N = 2,898,253 for all analyses.				

Appendix C: US Senate State Delegation Analysis

Close and Lopsided Votes

BIW claims that “ Roll calls are classified as either ‘lopsided’ or ‘close’ according to the definition in Snyder and Groseclose (2000)” (Snyder and Groseclose, 1974, p.197). In their paper, Snyder and Groseclose (1974, p. 197 (hereafter SG)) discuss how they define a close vote. A close vote is one in which the yeas position wins between 35%–65% of the vote.

There are two exceptions to this criterion. First, some votes require a supermajority in order to pass. Treaties, cloture votes, and veto overrides all require supermajority support. In this case, SG use thresholds of 51.7%–81.7% (or 66.7 ± 15 percent). BIW adopts this same criteria.

One problem with this criteria is that the supermajority requirement to invoke cloture changed in 1975, decreasing from 66.7% to 60%. As a result, the thresholds could also have changed, to 45%–75%, for cloture votes for these congresses to be consistent with the broader logic.

SG adopts another criteria: when one party controlled more than 62% of seats in the legislature, SG use thresholds of 30% and 70%, since the original thresholds would in effect define every party line vote as close. Although the contemporary Senate is tightly contested by the parties, historically it often was lopsided. Of the 78 congresses in the BIW analysis, twenty-one featured this level of lopsided party control. BIW does not incorporate this dimension of SG’s coding procedure.

To maintain parallelism with BIW, I use its definition of close votes.

State Delegation Placebo Test: Post-1973 House of Representatives

We can examine voting behavior in the post-1973 House of Representatives to examine whether party loyalty varies with surnames. BIW shows that there are no within-legislator vote order effects in the contemporary House, since electronic voting eliminated the alpha-

betical roll call. With no vote order effects, any differences in party line voting must be due to legislators' expressive or instrumental preferences. However, instrumental preferences are assumed to be the same within party, so any differences in party-line voting by surname in the House would be due to personal ideologies or pandering to constituents, i.e. expressive preferences. While we cannot hold constituent preferences constant as in the paired senator analysis because House districts are single member, we can examine variation in party voting due to House members' expressive preferences as a bundle.³

Table ?? shows the results of a state delegation analysis of House members' votes. It is the same specification as used to estimate differences in party-line voting across senators but used to estimate differences in party-line voting by House members due to expressive preferences. I again regress party deviation on House members' roll call order and fixed effects, either state by party by congress or state by party by roll call. Regression-based standard errors clustered at the congress level are reported.

Table C1: House Delegation Results

DV: Deviate	Roll Call Specific Order		Order Among All Senators	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
U.S. House: 93rd – 117th Congresses (N = 11,986,322)				
Alphabetical Rank	-0.0008	-0.0009	-0.0010	-0.0009
(SE)	(0.0019)	(0.0019)	(0.0019)	(0.0019)
Fixed Effects				
State x Party x Congress	Yes	No	Yes	No
State x Party x Roll Call	No	Yes	No	Yes

Standard errors clustered at the congress level.

There are no differences in party deviation within House delegations by surname. Estimated vote order differences, which we are interpreting as non-causal variation in partisan

³It is hard to think of a circumstance in which legislators' personal ideologies are negatively correlated with their constituents' preferences.

voting by surname, are smaller than -0.001 across specifications, or 90% smaller than vote order effect estimates in the Senate state delegation analysis and 99% smaller than BIW's vote order effect estimates. Estimates fall well short of conventional levels of statistical significance.