

MONIKA L. MCDERMOTT
University of Connecticut

DAVID R. JONES
*Baruch College,
City University of New York*

Congressional Performance, Incumbent Behavior, and Voting in Senate Elections

Conventional wisdom suggests that individual members of Congress have no real incentive to act in ways that might improve public evaluations of their collective body. In particular, the literature provides no clear evidence that public evaluations of Congress affect individual races for Congress, and little reason to expect that voters would hold specific individuals responsible for the institution's performance. We suggest that this conventional wisdom is incorrect. Using multiple state-level exit polls of Senate voting conducted by Voter News Service in 1996 and 1998, we arrive at two key findings. First, we find that evaluations of Congress do have a significant effect on voting within individual U.S. Senate races across a wide variety of electoral contexts. Second, we find that punishments or rewards for congressional performance are not distributed equally across all members, or even across members of a particular party. Instead, we find that the degree to which citizens hold a senator accountable for congressional performance is significantly influenced by that senator's actual level of support for the majority party in Congress, as demonstrated on party votes.

Are voters able to hold specific members of Congress accountable for congressional job performance based on the members' individual contributions to that performance? While the literature has yet to analyze this particular question, it generally does not provide much reason for optimism. Studies have found that government performance evaluations do affect voting in congressional elections, but most of the significant results are associated with presidential and economic performance (for a review, see Jacobson 2001). Regarding accountability for congressional performance specifically, the dominant image has traditionally been of individual members remaining popular despite public dissatisfaction with the collective Congress (see, for example, Fenno

1978). Only recently has evidence been presented that congressional candidates from the majority party are held responsible for the actions of Congress, but this work still only suggests collective rather than individual responsibility (for example, Jones and McDermott 2004). On top of all this, the literature provides ample reason to question the extent of the public's knowledge about their member's voting behavior in office (Hurley and Hill 1980 and Stokes and Miller 1966, for instance).

Given the evidence, or lack thereof, incumbent members of Congress may rightly question whether public evaluations of government performance have any significant effect on their own individual electoral chances. If not, this lack of accountability would not bode well for normative ideas of representation; candidates might feel little need to fear voter retribution for poor government performance, and thus no reason to alter their own behavior or positions.

The literature has largely overlooked, however, two important aspects to this topic that are potentially of great interest to candidates for Congress. First, since the literature on voting in congressional elections generally pools together respondents from disparate electoral contexts, it cannot tell us about the effect of performance evaluations—of Congress, the president, or the economy—*within particular contests*, the aspect of the question that an individual member of Congress would care about most. Second, if congressional performance evaluations do have significant effects across a variety of contests, we do not know if the magnitude of these effects is dependent on the behavior of particular candidates, uniform across all members of a particular party, or uniform across all congressional candidates generally.

This study expands upon existing work by addressing these important questions in an analysis of the 1996 and 1998 elections. We begin by drawing on the literature to develop specific hypotheses about how evaluations of Congress's job performance might affect voting in individual congressional races, and how this effect might differ across contests with different candidates. We then discuss the use of state-level exit polls conducted by Voter News Service to test these hypotheses in U.S. Senate elections. The analysis follows in two stages: first, we describe the separate logistic regressions we ran for each contest, and then we combine these data with information about incumbent behavior in office. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for the study of congressional elections, for the popular image of the American voter, and for the behavior of members of Congress.

Congressional Evaluations and Voting

Theories of referendum voting argue that the public bases its electoral decisions, at least in part, on the recent performance of the government. For years, the primary focus of this literature has been on the effects of presidential performance and on the economy. In the context of congressional elections, scholars have shown that voters who feel the president is doing a good job often reward candidates from the president's party, and those who feel the president is doing a poor job may punish members of the president's party at the polls (Fiorina 1981). Similarly, there is some evidence that positive economic evaluations may benefit congressional candidates from the president's party and harm candidates from the opposing party (Jacobson 2001).

Although the president may be the most salient actor in the federal government, this official is certainly not the only one responsible for government performance. As the legislative branch of government, Congress also wields considerable control over the direction of the country. Because of this power, it seems logical to suspect that voters might also use evaluations of congressional performance as a factor when voting. Specifically, just as voters hold members of the party in control of the executive branch responsible for the performance of the president, so too might voters hold the party in control of the legislative branch responsible for the performance of Congress. If voters approve of the job Congress is doing, then they will support the majority party and its candidates; if they disapprove, they will favor the minority party.¹ And because voters' retrospective evaluations result in judgments about the parties, rather than about incumbents in general (Fiorina 1981), these effects should hold true regardless of whether candidates are incumbents, challengers, or competitors in open-seat races.

Existing voting literature has only recently turned to testing the possibility that evaluations of congressional performance affect voting in congressional elections, and the results are not uniform. In previous work based on pooled national data on House races from 1980 through 2000, we found that voters who approve of the job Congress is doing are significantly more likely to support candidates from the majority party in Congress than are voters who disapprove (McDermott and Jones 2003). We found the same pattern across races with majority party incumbents and minority party incumbents (majority party challengers), as well as in open-seat races. In addition, we have found that congressional approval has similar effects on voting behavior in mid-term elections to the House and Senate from 1990 through 1998 (Jones and McDermott 2004). On the other hand, Hibbing and Tiritilli's (2000,

128) analysis of House elections leads them to conclude that “most of the time, even when people are quite disapproving of Congress, this approval does not have direct electoral repercussions.”

Even if these existing studies were in agreement, because they are all based on national samples, we would still not know if evaluations of Congress have a significant effect on voting within individual races for Congress. In addition, the studies do not (and cannot, given national samples) test whether or not effects differ across electoral contexts or if individual candidate or incumbent actions have any impact on these effects. This paper seeks to address those outstanding questions, using data appropriate to the task.

Our initial hypothesis is that congressional performance evaluations will have a significant impact on voting behavior across a variety of individual races for seats in the U.S. Senate.² In particular, drawing on existing theories and findings about the partisan impact of performance evaluations in elections, we hypothesize that voters who approve of the job that Congress is doing should be more willing to support individual majority party Senate candidates, whereas those who disapprove should be less willing to support individual majority party Senate candidates.³

If congressional evaluations affect voting for majority party candidates in individual races, then are all candidates from the majority party held equally accountable, or do the actions of individual candidates influence the extent to which they are punished or rewarded by voters? Not all party members behave in the same fashion, so it seems reasonable that some will provide voters with clearer referendums on congressional performance than will others. For example, it would make more sense for a voter dissatisfied with the performance of Congress to punish a majority party candidate who was consistently supportive of the majority party’s dominant agenda (either through voting record or rhetoric) than to punish a majority party candidate who did not always support the party’s position. Similarly, a voter who is dissatisfied with the performance of Congress should favor minority party candidates who consistently opposed what the dominant majority party was doing rather than minority party candidates who sometimes sided with the majority party and its agenda.

Voting behavior of this type seems theoretically reasonable, but it cannot occur in practice if voters have no clue as to how candidates behave either in office or on the campaign trail. Voters would need to be at least somewhat cognizant of their incumbents’ voting records or, in open-seat races, knowledgeable about the candidates’ agendas.

Some research suggests that the public has very little knowledge of how members of Congress actually vote while in office (Hurley and

Hill 1980; Stokes and Miller 1966), but other studies offer more promising indications. For example, we know that members actively attempt to define their image relative to what is going on in Congress, distancing themselves on certain policies and taking credit for others (Fenno 1978). Recent studies indicate that, although voters may not follow every vote cast by their representatives in Washington, many voters can gain a reasonable sense of where their members stand. Gant and Davis (1984) suggest that heuristics allow citizens to vote on the basis of issues even while appearing ignorant to survey researchers. Larson (1990) shows that voters can learn information from the media about their members. Lipinski (2001) shows that members' efforts to communicate their votes can be effective in increasing voters' knowledge of those votes. In addition, Wilson and Gronke (2000) find that, although some citizens may merely be guessing or even "projecting," more citizens can correctly recall or guess their member's vote on a salient issue than cannot (451–52). Finally, Gronke, Koch, and Wilson (2003) find that voters have some sense of whether their House members support or oppose the president's legislative initiatives and that this intuition can moderate the traditional effects of presidential evaluations on member evaluations and vote choice.

For open-seat races, we also have reason to believe that voters may be able to make judgments about the extent to which candidates hew to the party line. For example, Jacobson (2001, 129–31) finds that during open-seat elections in the 1990s, ideological and policy reasons were either the most common or second-most common reasons given by voters for liking or disliking both House and Senate candidates. In addition, such reasons were consistently more common than purely partisan reasons alone.

Our second hypothesis adopts this more optimistic view of the American voter. We argue that the extent to which congressional evaluations affect voting in any single election is partially determined by voters' perceptions of how closely aligned the candidates are to the majority party. Evaluations of Congress should have a more powerful impact in races in which at least one candidate is either firmly supportive of the majority party or firmly opposed to it; either case provides voters with the opportunity for a clear referendum on what Congress has been doing. In races with more-moderate candidates, congressional approval should have less of an effect on voting because when a candidate sometimes supports the majority party agenda and other times opposes it, voters will be less clear on whether to reward or punish that candidate based on the majority party's actions. This logic does not mean that voters do not hold middle-of-the-road congressional candidates

accountable for their policy positions, merely that voters are less likely to link moderate candidates to a particular party when apportioning blame or credit for congressional performance.

Data and Analysis

Testing these hypotheses requires survey data with a highly specific set of features. Because we are looking for effects within individual Senate races, we need independent, representative samples from multiple races. Because we aim to compare these effects across races, these surveys need to be conducted using essentially identical questionnaire designs. And because we are primarily interested in the effects of congressional job performance evaluations, all the surveys must include the standard congressional approval question. The only publicly available data of which we are aware that precisely meet all of the above criteria are Voter News Service's (VNS) independent state-by-state surveys of voters exiting the polls in 32 states with Senate races on Election Day in 1998 (this set includes every state with a Senate race that year except Alaska and Hawaii).⁴ In addition to meeting the necessary criteria, these surveys have another distinct advantage over the more commonly used American National Election Studies (ANES) data. By interviewing voters as they leave the polls, these surveys do not suffer from the well-documented problems that typical postelection surveys, such as the ANES, do—determining who actually voted and the relative extent of voters' recall accuracy, or lack thereof (see Wright 1993).

One potential drawback of these data is that, because they come from one specific election, we might reasonably question whether the results are generalizable. In particular, do results that are demonstrated in an off-year election also hold true in the context of a presidential election? In an attempt to address this concern, we conducted an analysis of similar, although not identical, data from 1996. The 1996 VNS exit polls do not have all of the same advantages and controls presented by the 1998 data (as we will discuss), but they do provide an opportunity for a roughly analogous, second test of our hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Congressional Evaluations in Individual Senate Races

To test our first hypothesis—that evaluations of congressional job performance affect voting behavior in individual Senate races—we used logistic regression equations to estimate models of the vote in each of the 32 states with a Senate election survey. The dependent

variable in each model was a dichotomous choice variable equal to 1 for voters choosing the Republican (majority party) candidate and 0 for those choosing the Democratic (minority party) candidate. The key independent variable was each voter's evaluation of Congress's job performance: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?" Approval is coded 1, disapproval -1, and no opinion 0.⁵

Each model also included voters' evaluations of presidential job performance (measured and coded similarly to congressional performance) and voters' evaluations of the change in their family's financial situation over the past two years (1 = better, 0 = same, and -1 = worse). In addition, the models each included controls for voter party identification (1 = Republican, 0 = independent/other, and -1 = Democrat) and ideology (1 = conservative, 0 = moderate, and -1 = liberal).

The exit poll data have two potential shortcomings: first, they do not include controls for strength of partisanship, ideology, or other independent variables; and second, they do not include controls for incumbent member's performance. It is impossible to control for partisan and ideological strength using state-level data, but a test using the seven-point party and ideological scales in the pooled national ANES data from the same year demonstrate the same significant effects of congressional approval found here using VNS data.⁶ As for the second shortcoming, even ANES fails to ask respondents to rate the performance of their incumbent senator. Searching a wide variety of sources (Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, National Network of State Polls, Roper Center), we found only one state survey in 1998 that asked a vote question as well as incumbent approval and congressional approval questions: a California Field Institute survey of likely California Senate voters. When we used the Field survey to estimate a model of vote choice that included a three-point incumbent approval variable (measured similarly to congressional approval), full seven-point scales of both party identification and ideological self-description, as well as the other variables described earlier, the magnitude of the congressional approval effect did not diminish at all compared to its effect in the VNS model that lacks such controls.⁷ Given this evidence, we are confident that our findings regarding congressional approval are not substantially affected by the absence of either controls for degree of partisanship or ideology, or an incumbent approval measure.⁸

Our hypothesis predicts that in each contest the coefficient for congressional approval will be positive and significant. This result would indicate that voters who approve of the job Congress is doing are more likely to support the majority party (Republican) candidate than are voters who disapprove. We expect to find these effects across every

type of seat status included in the table—Republican incumbent, Democratic incumbent, and open seat—even when we control for voters’ performance evaluations of the president, their own financial situations, and their partisan and ideological predispositions.

Table 1 reports the results of estimating the model in each of the 32 Senate elections surveyed by VNS in 1998. In 27 of the 32 elections, the coefficients for congressional approval are positive and statistically significant when we control for all of the other variables in the model, as expected. In other words, in 27 of these races, approval of Congress significantly increased voting for the majority party candidate, and disapproval significantly decreased voting for the majority party candidate. This same significant relationship is dominant across all three race types identified in the “Seat Status” column of the table: races with Republican incumbents (R), races with Democratic incumbents (D), and open-seat races (O).

In Nevada, North Dakota, and South Carolina, the coefficients are also positive but do not reach standard levels of significance. In South Dakota, the coefficient is negative but insignificant. In Louisiana, the coefficient is statistically significant in the incorrect direction. The Democrat in that race, John Breaux, was the only Senate candidate from his party to actually benefit from positive evaluations of Congress. Explaining the source of variation in these effects is the focus of the next section. For the moment, it is worth noting that in four of these five races the incumbent’s party unity scores in the Senate were below the average for all running incumbents in 1998.⁹ In particular, Breaux was the Democrat most often defecting to support the Republican majority.

We find these overwhelmingly significant results for the congressional approval variable across a wide variety of electoral contexts despite the fact that we controlled for evaluations of the president and of the voter’s financial situation. Presidential approval has a negative and significant effect on voting Republican in all races, as expected, since the president in 1998 was a Democrat. The coefficients for the financial evaluation variable are also generally negative, although, as in other studies, they are often not statistically significant. The coefficients for party identification are in the expected direction and significant in all models, as are those for ideology, with one exception (Indiana). Overall, despite the parsimonious nature of the model, it fits each election relatively well—most of the pseudo- R^2 measures are above 50%.

The far right-hand column in Table 1 provides an indication of the probabilistic effect of congressional approval in each race. This column reports the difference in the probability of voting for the Republican candidate if a voter approves of Congress as opposed to disapproving

of Congress (when all other variables in the model are held at their midpoints). For example, a voter in Arkansas (open seat) with neutral views on most matters but who disapproves of the job Congress is doing has only a .45 probability of voting for the Republican candidate (Fay Boozman), and thus is slightly more likely to vote for the Democrat (Blanche Lincoln). But if that same voter were to approve of Congress's performance, then the probability of he or she voting for the Republican candidate would increase by +.18 (as reported in the table) to a much better than even .63 probability of supporting the Republican majority party's candidate. In the 27 states in which the coefficient for congressional approval is significant and positive, the effect of congressional evaluations on a voter's probability of voting Republican ranges from a low of +.07 (Florida) to a high of +.32 (New York and North Carolina).¹⁰ The overall average effect of congressional evaluations in all 32 races is +.13.¹¹

These results provide strong evidence that congressional evaluations matter to voters' decisions. Yet the evident variation in the effect across these elections necessarily raises the question: Does the behavior of the candidates while in Congress influence whether congressional approval will have a large effect, a relatively small effect, or no effect at all in any given election? We now turn to this question.

Hypothesis 2: Incumbent Behavior as a Conditioning Factor

Our second hypothesis is that the level of candidate support for the majority party conditions the effects of congressional approval on voting. Although we believe this hypothesis could apply to all types of candidates, including those in open-seat races, in this paper we can only test the effects in incumbent races because of a lack of available measures of open-seat Senate candidates' support for the majority party line.

Our hypothesis suggests that among Republican incumbents, those who demonstrate the staunchest support for the Republican majority and its agenda are the most likely to be judged by the performance of Congress. As a result, we expect that in races with Republican incumbents, greater incumbent support for the majority party will boost the impact of congressional evaluations on voting: public approval of Congress will be even more helpful to these incumbent Republican candidates, and disapproval of Congress will be even more harmful.

Democratic incumbents' relative level of support for the Republican majority will have a different conditioning effect. We suggest that these congressional evaluation effects will be stronger when the incumbent Democrat presents the starkest possible contrast to the

TABLE 1
 Congressional Evaluations and Voting for Republican Candidates in U.S. Senate Races, 1998
 (standard errors in parentheses)

State	Seat Status	Independent Variables						Pseudo-R ²	N	Probabilistic Effect of Congress Evaluation
		Congress Evaluation	Presidential Evaluation	Financial Situation	Party	Ideology	Constant			
Alabama	R	.29 (.11)	-.91 (.12)	-.20 (.15)	1.59 (.17)	.50 (.17)	1.39 (.14)	.57	845	+09
Arizona	R	.31 (.10)	-.54 (.11)	.02 (.12)	1.19 (.17)	.62 (.14)	1.42 (.11)	.44	1082	+10
Arkansas	O	.37 (.12)	-1.27 (.12)	-.70 (.18)	1.27 (.17)	.92 (.22)	.15 (.13)	.69	813	+18
California	D	.43 (.07)	-.92 (.06)	-.07 (.09)	1.30 (.07)	.90 (.10)	-.01 (.07)	.63	2734	+21
Colorado	R	.28 (.09)	-.64 (.09)	-.28 (.10)	1.44 (.12)	.71 (.14)	.98 (.09)	.55	1380	+11
Connecticut	D	.17 (.08)	-1.05 (.08)	-.00 (.11)	.89 (.11)	.52 (.13)	-.76 (.08)	.49	1418	+08
Florida	D	.16 (.08)	-.93 (.07)	-.29 (.10)	.83 (.09)	.81 (.11)	-.84 (.08)	.53	1803	+07
Georgia	R	.45 (.10)	-.98 (.10)	-.18 (.14)	1.36 (.12)	.89 (.15)	.36 (.11)	.66	1313	+21
Idaho	O	.58 (.11)	-.84 (.11)	-.16 (.15)	1.40 (.15)	.63 (.18)	.96 (.12)	.60	898	+23
Illinois	D	.29 (.08)	-.81 (.08)	-.16 (.10)	1.29 (.10)	.80 (.11)	.59 (.08)	.54	1611	+14
Indiana	O	.34 (.10)	-1.04 (.11)	-.05 (.14)	1.56 (.14)	.12 (.16)	-1.40 (.13)	.57	1059	+11
Iowa	R	.32 (.09)	-.62 (.11)	.13 (.12)	1.18 (.13)	.55 (.14)	1.36 (.11)	.45	1179	+10
Kansas	R	.50 (.12)	-.85 (.11)	-.10 (.16)	.77 (.14)	.58 (.19)	.75 (.12)	.45	668	+22
Kentucky	O	.18 (.08)	-.92 (.08)	-.17 (.12)	1.23 (.09)	.60 (.12)	.41 (.08)	.55	1443	+08
Louisiana	D	-.35 (.14)	-1.14 (.13)	-.50 (.19)	1.01 (.15)	.60 (.19)	-.77 (.15)	.59	672	-15
Maryland	D	.32 (.10)	-.95 (.10)	-.22 (.13)	1.10 (.12)	.61 (.15)	-1.02 (.10)	.56	1272	+12

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1
 Congressional Evaluations and Voting for Republican Candidates in U.S. Senate Races, 1998
 (continued)

State	Seat Status	Independent Variables							Pseudo-R ²	N	Probabilistic Effect of Congress Evaluation
		Congress Evaluation	Presidential Evaluation	Financial Situation	Party	Ideology	Constant				
Missouri	R	.42 (.10)	-1.02 (.10)	-06 (.13)	1.25 (.13)	.13 (.14)	.63 (.10)	.56	1038	+19	
Nevada	D	.11 (.10)	-.93 (.10)	-02 (.13)	1.40 (.12)	.23 (.15)	-05 (.10)	.56	951	+05	
New Hampshire	R	.53 (.09)	-.69 (.10)	-.25 (.13)	1.10 (.12)	.82 (.13)	1.35 (.11)	.49	1250	+18	
New York	R	.67 (.07)	-.68 (.07)	-.20 (.09)	1.15 (.08)	.74 (.10)	.21 (.07)	.52	2112	+32	
North Carolina	R	.66 (.09)	-.98 (.09)	-16 (.13)	1.44 (.10)	1.04 (.13)	-.26 (.09)	.69	1580	+32	
North Dakota	D	.09 (.11)	-.89 (.12)	-05 (.16)	1.21 (.16)	.54 (.18)	-1.06 (.13)	.50	685	+03	
Ohio	O	.40 (.08)	-.68 (.08)	.31 (.11)	1.08 (.09)	.63 (.12)	.42 (.08)	.48	1503	+19	
Oklahoma	R	.67 (.12)	-.95 (.13)	-.33 (.17)	1.07 (.17)	.49 (.17)	1.49 (.16)	.58	745	+21	
Oregon	D	.27 (.12)	-.91 (.12)	-.51 (.18)	1.07 (.16)	.87 (.19)	-1.00 (.13)	.58	788	+11	
Pennsylvania	R	.23 (.09)	-.63 (.09)	.07 (.12)	.83 (.10)	.36 (.14)	.92 (.09)	.35	1109	+09	
South Carolina	D	.08 (.09)	-.80 (.09)	-.29 (.13)	1.40 (.12)	.75 (.15)	-.29 (.10)	.57	1137	+04	
South Dakota	D	-05 (.10)	-.83 (.11)	-15 (.16)	.45 (.13)	.99 (.18)	-1.12 (.12)	.39	670	-02	
Utah	R	.45 (.11)	-.72 (.11)	-02 (.16)	1.35 (.16)	.58 (.20)	.29 (.12)	.55	747	+22	
Vermont	D	.23 (.11)	-.73 (.11)	-22 (.15)	.73 (.15)	.65 (.16)	-1.28 (.12)	.37	738	+08	
Washington	D	.42 (.10)	-1.21 (.10)	-.40 (.14)	1.41 (.15)	1.28 (.17)	-.28 (.10)	.72	1419	+20	
Wisconsin	D	.28 (.07)	-.77 (.07)	-14 (.10)	1.17 (.09)	.87 (.11)	-01 (.08)	.55	1710	+13	

Note: For each state, we estimated a logistic regression model including all of the independent variables. Table entries for these variables are logistic regression coefficients. All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$ except those in **boldface**. See the text for an explanation of probabilistic effect.

Republican majority. For voters who approve of the job Congress is doing under the leadership of the Republican majority, voting against Democratic incumbents would be the natural behavior—but it makes more sense to vote against incumbent Democrats who have consistently opposed the Republican majority than against those who have sometimes sided with the Republican majority. Correspondingly, for voters who disapprove of Congress as run by the Republican majority, it makes more sense to support a Democratic incumbent when the Democrat has consistently favored an alternative agenda, but less sense when the Democrat has sometimes supported the Republican agenda. As a result, we expect that lower levels of Democratic incumbent support for the Republican majority (that is, heightened opposition) will increase the impact of congressional attitudes on voting; higher levels of support (less opposition) will decrease the impact.

To test for these hypothesized differences across Senate races, we pooled the surveys used in Table 1 and created an additional independent variable representing each incumbent's support for the majority party.¹² We based each incumbent's score on the percentage of times during the term of office prior to the election that the incumbent voted with the Republican Party on "party unity votes" (votes on which a majority of Republicans opposed a majority of Democrats, as reported by *Congressional Quarterly*). Scores among Democrats range from 6% to 27% support for the Republican Party; scores among Republicans range from 58% to 97% support for the Republican Party. To test our hypothesis, we interacted this variable with the existing measure of congressional approval. The key test of the hypothesis lies in this interactive term. We expect the coefficient for this interactive term to be positive for Republican incumbents, demonstrating increased impact of congressional evaluations as incumbent support for the Republican agenda increases. We expect it to be negative for Democratic incumbents, indicating decreasing effects for congressional evaluations as incumbent support for the Republican agenda increases. We ran separate models for Republican incumbents and Democratic incumbents.¹³

The other variables in the model (presidential and financial evaluations, party, and ideology) remained the same as in Table 1, except we included one additional control variable. Although incumbent approval was unavailable at the level of the individual voter in the VNS survey, it was possible to obtain each incumbent's own unique statewide approval rating, taken from different polls in each state, and import this measure into our pooled analysis. Because state polls generally vary widely in terms of their availability from state to state, their timing relative to the next election, and their question format, we chose to use the approval

ratings from 27 separate state surveys—one for each incumbent in the study—conducted by Mason-Dixon in October of 1996. We would have preferred these surveys to have been conducted closer to the elections in this study, but for many incumbents in our analysis, this was the only survey on record that asked about their performance. For measurement consistency, we used surveys of incumbent approval conducted at the same time as each other, and with the same question format as each other, for all incumbents. For each state, we used the percentage of that state rating the performance of their incumbent as “excellent” or “pretty good” as our imported measure of incumbent approval for voters in that state.¹⁴

Finally, to control for state-specific factors that may influence voting behavior above and beyond incumbent job performance, we included state dummy variables in our model. Since there were no specific causal hypotheses for these variables, we suppressed their coefficients from the tables to conserve space.¹⁵

Table 2 presents the results of estimating the model in races with Republican incumbents and in races with Democratic incumbents. The key variable is the interaction between incumbent support for the majority party and voters’ evaluations of Congress. In both cases, the variable behaves precisely as expected: positive and significant in races with Republican incumbents; negative and significant in races with Democratic incumbents. In races with a Republican incumbent, the more closely tied the incumbent is to the Republican majority’s agenda, the more important congressional evaluations are to voters in making their decisions. In races with Democratic incumbents, the more opposition the incumbent shows to the Republican majority agenda, the more important evaluations of Congress are to voters’ decisions.

In this interactive model, the coefficient for congressional evaluations reflects the effect of this variable when incumbent support for the majority party is exactly 0. Therefore, the negative and insignificant coefficient for congressional evaluations in races with Republican incumbents means that if a Republican incumbent for some reason never supported the Republican Party, approval of Congress would not have the standard, positive effect on voters’ choices. The positive and significant coefficient for congressional evaluations in races with Democratic incumbents indicates that this variable has a strong, significant effect when the Democratic candidate poses a clear alternative to the Republican majority (a majority party support score of 0).

The meaning of these interactions becomes clearer when we see them displayed graphically. Based on the results in Table 2, Figure 1 plots the predicted probabilistic effect of congressional evaluations

TABLE 2
 Incumbent Support for the Majority Party and the
 Use of Congressional Evaluations
 in U.S. Senate Election Voting, 1998
 (standard errors in parentheses)

Independent Variables	Voting Republican in Races with a Republican Incumbent	Voting Republican in Races with a Democratic Incumbent
Congress evaluation	-.22 (.23)	.51 (.06)
Presidential evaluation	-.77 (.03)	-.92 (.02)
Financial situation	-.15 (.03)	-.19 (.03)
Party	1.20 (.03)	1.14 (.03)
Ideology	.64 (.04)	.77 (.04)
Incumbent's approval rating	.16 (.02)	.17 (.03)
Incumbent support for majority party	-.05 (.01)	.04 (.02)
Incumbent support \times Congress evaluation	.007 (.003)	-.022 (.004)
Constant	-3.98 (.83)	-8.55 (1.31)
Pseudo-R ²	.55	.58
N	15,033	17,608

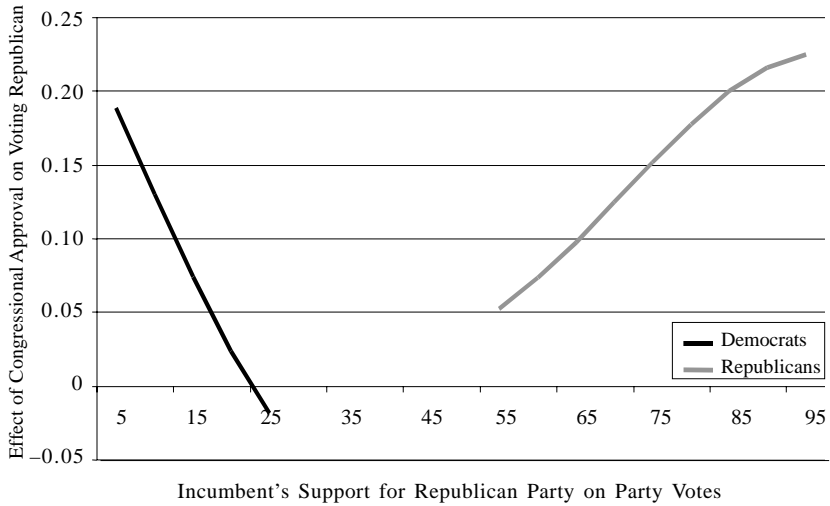
Note: Table entries are logistic regression coefficients. All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$ except those in **boldface**. State dummy variables were included in the estimation but are suppressed from the table (see text).

(y-axis) as a function of the incumbents' level of support for the majority party (x-axis). The probabilistic effect is measured here in the same way that it was in the last column of Table 1: the difference between the probabilities of voting Republican if a voter approves of Congress as opposed to disapproving of Congress, all else being equal.

The line with the positive slope on the right-hand side of the figure represents the effects of congressional evaluations on voting in races with Republican incumbents. In these races, if the Republican incumbent supported the majority party 97% of the time (far right on the x-axis), then congressional approval would produce the largest increase in the probability of voting for this majority party candidate: +.23. But if the Republican incumbent supported the majority party only 58% of the time, then the effect of congressional approval on the probability of voting for this candidate would drop to +.06.

The line with the negative slope on the left-hand side of the figure represents the effects of congressional evaluations in races with Democratic incumbents. If the Democratic incumbent supported the

FIGURE 1
Incumbent's Majority Party Support and the
Probabilistic Effect of Congressional Approval on Voting, 1998



Republican majority party only 6% of the time (far left on the x-axis)—providing a clear contrast to the majority party—voter approval of Congress would have a big impact (+.18) on the probability of voting for the opposing Republican party candidate. But as a Democratic incumbent's support for the majority party increases, the effect of congressional approval eventually drops to nothing. The probabilistic effect even becomes negative for those Democratic incumbents most closely aligned with the Republican Party. As we saw in Table 1, in John Breaux's reelection race in Louisiana, congressional approval actually had a negative and significant effect—opposite that predicted—presumably because Breaux's voting record was so distant from his own party that voters did not treat him like a typical Democratic incumbent.¹⁶

Consistent with our hypothesis, incumbent candidates' support for the majority party does condition how much of a role voters' evaluations of Congress will play in congressional races. For those candidates who are either strongly supportive of, or strongly opposed to, the majority party, congressional approval will play a large role in voters' decisions. In races with candidates located somewhere in the middle, not closely aligned or opposed to the ruling majority party in Congress, congressional evaluations are less meaningful and therefore less influential for voters.

*Effects on Senate Voting during
Presidential Election Years*

Since the findings reported here are new to the study of voting behavior, the question naturally arises as to whether or not they would also exist in other years and other electoral contexts. Specifically, can a pattern of effects similar to that found for this midterm election also be found in Senate races during a presidential election year? Data availability considerations prevented us from conducting an exact replication of these tests in a presidential election year, but we were able to conduct a close approximation using 29 VNS state-level exit surveys from the 1996 election. This section briefly summarizes the modifications and results.

For our purposes, the 1996 questionnaires contain only two differences from the 1998 questionnaires. First, the congressional approval item in 1996 asks respondents whether they approve or disapprove of what the *Republicans* in Congress have done in the last two years.¹⁷ Second, the 1996 surveys do not ask a Clinton job approval question; in its place, we substitute the presidential vote question (1 = Clinton vote, 0 = no presidential vote, -1 = voted for Clinton opponent). All other elements of the models and tests remain the same.

Conducting the same tests on the 1996 data as we performed on the 1998 data, we found virtually identical results (Tables A-1 and A-2 of the appendix present the specific results). Regarding the first hypothesis that congressional approval has a significant positive effect in individual races for the U.S. Senate, we found that congressional evaluations are indeed significant and in the correct direction in 28 of the 29 surveyed Senate races. The one exception is Alabama, which is in the correct direction but is not statistically significant.

We also found strong support for the second hypothesis, that the effect of congressional evaluations is conditioned by incumbent support for the majority party. As expected, in 1996 the model's interactive term is significant and positive in races with Republican incumbents, and significant and negative in races with Democratic incumbents. The basic pattern is clearly the same: greater support for the Republican majority's agenda increases the effect of congressional evaluations for Republican incumbents and decreases the effect for Democratic incumbents.

Discussion

This study has sought to build upon the existing literature in two main ways. The existing literature, including that on congressional approval effects, has generally analyzed voting behavior by pooling

together respondents from disparate electoral contexts. While this work led to important conclusions at a national level, it left unanswered questions of responsibility in individual electoral contests and for individual members. In contrast, using independent representative samples for each race, we demonstrated the rich diversity in the range of a variable's effects that can be found when races are analyzed individually. Namely, we found that performance evaluations of the national government affect voting behavior in *individual* elections to Congress. We focused on the effects of congressional evaluations, but the same diversity is also evident for other traditional predictors of voting behavior.

Second, existing literature has generally portrayed voters as unable or unwilling to hold individual members accountable for the performance of Congress. This study finds evidence that voters not only assign responsibility to the majority party, but also partition this responsibility according to the level of support that individual incumbents provide to the majority party. These are important findings both for what they say about the abilities of the American voter and for their implications for members of Congress. In particular, these findings appear to place the American voter in a more positive light, at least in these particular elections. Voter responses to direct knowledge questions on surveys are sometimes disappointing, but the effects demonstrated here imply that, on some level, a significant proportion of the electorate has the ability to (a) distinguish between the performance of the legislative as opposed to the executive branch of government, (b) understand that the majority party tends to have more control over what happens in Congress than does the other party, (c) sense which party is the dominant majority party in Congress, and (d) sense whether their incumbent is a maverick or a typical member of his or her respective party.

Faced with the ability of voters to assign individual responsibility for congressional performance, members of Congress may have a powerful incentive to care about how the public views not only the collective institution, but also the members' own contributions to that image. Members of the majority party who want to avoid being punished for the sins of an unpopular Congress may want to oppose their party's leadership. Majority party members who want to maximize the potential benefit of a popular Congress may have an incentive to tie themselves tightly to the party. For minority party members, the incentives are similar, although reversed—to take advantage of an unpopular Congress, minority party members may want to clearly demonstrate their opposition to the majority party's agenda. To minimize potentially harmful effects from being in the out party during a popular Congress, minority party members may want to mute their opposition. After all, the results

presented here demonstrate that members' electoral fortunes may be determined by such actions.

One caveat remains: because of limited data availability, the scope of this paper's analysis is limited to the 1996 and 1998 elections. Whether the results can be generalized to a larger phenomenon or they merely reflect an aberration in these two elections is uncertain. Nevertheless, there is encouraging evidence to suggest that these results may hold true for other elections.¹⁸ The American voter, it appears, has the information and the incentive necessary to hold U.S. senators individually accountable for the collective performance of Congress.

Monika L. McDermott is Assistant Professor of Public Policy, University of Connecticut, 1800 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut 06117. David R. Jones is Associate Professor of Political Science, Baruch College, City University of New York, 1 Bernard Baruch Way, B 5-280, New York, New York 10010.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2003, Chicago, Illinois. We thank Joseph Doherty for help in obtaining data. We would also like to thank several anonymous reviewers and C. Lawrence Evans, coeditor of this journal, for helpful comments.

1. Voters' attitudes toward Congress—congressional approval—have been shown to be a product of many things, most dealing with whether or not voters feel their interests are being well represented by Congress's agenda. Whether voters feel represented in general (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995), in a partisan sense (e.g., Patterson, Ripley, and Quinlan 1992), or ideologically (Jones and McDermott 2002) all impact their congressional evaluations. These attitudes are distinct from feelings of "confidence" in the institution of Congress, which focus more on institutional design and implementation than on day-to-day action and behavior (e.g., Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995). For a comprehensive analysis of differences in aggregate congressional approval over time rather than across individual voters, see Durr, Gilmour, and Wolbrecht 1997.

2. Since our existing work (Jones and McDermott 2004; McDermott and Jones 2003) finds evidence of congressional approval effects in House elections using data from a national sample, we strongly suspect that we would also find our hypothesized effect in individual elections to the House. This study, however, is limited to the Senate by data availability on individual races; we discuss this limitation in detail in the data and analysis section of the paper.

3. We also considered an alternative hypothesis, less consistent with existing, partisan theories of performance evaluations and voting, that suggests positive congressional evaluations boost the electoral fortunes of all incumbents, regardless of party (and subsequently do not significantly affect candidates for open seats). Our data demonstrate no support for this alternative hypothesis (see the analysis section).

4. The failure to ask a congressional approval question prevented the use of most other state-level surveys, such as the American National Election Survey (ANES) Pooled Senate Study and state-level VNS exit polls in other election years (but see later sections for more information on 1996 VNS surveys). House races were also ruled out by the criteria of this analysis. Although the 1978 ANES sampled congressional districts, sampling within districts was not randomized across the district, making the samples inappropriate for analyzing individual races. In addition, the average sample size was only 25 respondents per district. The 2002 VNS exit polls also included all required elements, but, because of Election Day problems with the data collection, the media consortium that controlled the now-defunct VNS has, at least for now, decided not to release those data publicly.

5. Across the states, the average proportion of respondents not giving an opinion on the congressional approval question was 13.6%.

6. The test also employed ANES's fuller five-point scales for evaluations of the president, financial conditions, and Congress. Further details are available from the authors upon request.

7. The California Field Poll was conducted by the Field Institute, August 18–24, 1998. The variables measured were as described earlier except for the financial question, which was prospective rather than retrospective, and the party identification and ideology variables, which were coded as seven-point scales ranging from –3 (strong Democrat, strong liberal) to +3 (strong Republican, strong conservative). Further details are available from the authors upon request.

8. From a theoretical perspective, it is actually not possible for incumbent approval to be an underlying explanation for the hypothesized (and demonstrated) effects of congressional approval. Specifically, incumbent approval cannot explain the effects of congressional approval in seats with no incumbent, and it predicts the *opposite* effect in races where the minority party candidate is the incumbent (congressional approval decreases voting for minority party incumbents; incumbent approval should increase voting for minority party incumbents).

9. South Dakota (Tom Daschle) is the exception. See the next section for more details on party loyalty.

10. Pooled analysis of these races, using interactive variables for each state and its congressional approval effect, demonstrates that many of these differences are statistically significant. For example, New York and North Carolina show significantly larger effects than average, while South Dakota and Florida show significantly smaller effects.

11. We also examined the effects among various types of races to see if factors such as incumbency or competitiveness conditioned the effects of congressional approval. We found no significant differences in the effects of congressional approval in incumbent races versus open-seat races or in competitive versus noncompetitive races. The open-seat findings may seem counterintuitive in light of the differential results we demonstrate among incumbents for Hypothesis 2 (discussed in the next section). But just as voters see differences in the extent to which incumbents support the majority party, they should also see differences in the extent to which open-seat candidates support the majority party. Candidates who are stronger supporters of the majority party should see more benefit from positive congressional evaluations (or harm from negative evaluations), regardless of whether they are incumbents or open-seat candidates.

Candidates who display neither much support nor much opposition to the majority candidates should see lesser effects. As a result, there is no reason to believe that open-seat races would show significantly different effects, *on average*, than incumbent races.

12. The results reported here are in no way dependent on the large N size resulting from pooling these data. We also tested this hypothesis at the aggregate level with 27 cases—one for each state—and obtained the same significant results.

13. We also conducted an analysis pooling Democratic and Republican incumbents together and controlling for the differential effects between parties using a three-way interactive variable. The results are substantively similar. For ease of presentation and explanation, we present the separate models.

14. The incumbent approval data for each of the 27 incumbents, details about the Mason-Dixon surveys, and other information regarding the availability of Senate incumbent approval measures are all available at the Job Approval Ratings website (www.unc.edu/~beyle/jars.html). These are the same data featured in Binder, Maltzman, and Sigelman 1998. Our approval measure is significantly correlated with incumbent's margin of victory in the last election (used to test district marginality or safety), and these two measures perform about the same in the model.

15. Because the incumbent approval variable is also aggregated by state and there are only 27 states, inclusion of the state dummies can dramatically affect the estimated effect of incumbent approval. Specifically, in the Democratic equation, the direction of the incumbent approval variable reverses when we do not include the dummy variables.

16. Because of the relatively small number of incumbent senators, it is possible that a few key outliers, such as Breaux, could be driving the overall results. To test for this possibility, we removed the major outliers on the party unity variable—Breaux for the Democrats, D'Amato and Specter for the Republicans—from the party models. We found no differences either in the substance or the significance of any of the independent variables in the two models. In addition, the results from 1996, reported in the next section, demonstrate the same pattern even though the races contain no significant outliers on party unity. As a result, we are confident that the findings reflect a real pattern of party unity effects in these two elections and are not being driven by a few strange cases.

17. We feel the standard congressional approval question used in the 1998 survey is a more stringent test of our hypotheses since it does not include any party cue and thereby requires voters to rely on their own impressions of Congress, rather than allowing them to take a partisan shortcut.

18. There are several reasons to think that the patterns found in these two elections are not merely aberrations. Since the effects in these years are so consistent with each other, the key question is whether or not there is something about these two elections that is different from most other elections. Comparing the aggregate values of the key variables in these years to those in other elections over the past two decades, we find little difference. In particular, neither congressional approval nor the aggregate two-party vote is significantly different from its overall mean during the period. The level of party unity in the Senate has increased a bit over this period, but our measure of party unity is averaged over each member's six-year term and thus does not represent an unusual spike in the data. We are also encouraged by the results of aforementioned existing research that find effects of congressional evaluations in House elections for years other than these two.

TABLE A-1
 Congressional Evaluations and Voting for Republican Candidates in U.S. Senate Races, 1996
 (standard errors in parentheses)

State	Seat Status	Independent Variables					Pseudo R ²	N	Probabilistic Effect of Congress Evaluation
		Congress Evaluation	Presidential Vote	Financial Situation	Party	Ideology			
Alabama	O	.14 (.13)	-1.13 (.12)	-35 (.14)	1.00 (.15)	.55 (.15)	-.06 (.12)	.65	+07
Arkansas	O	.77 (.13)	-.87 (.13)	-16 (.16)	.82 (.17)	.40 (.17)	.49 (.13)	.61	+35
Colorado	O	.82 (.11)	-1.01 (.10)	-01 (.13)	.60 (.13)	.70 (.15)	-1.11 (.10)	.64	+39
Georgia	O	.86 (.11)	-1.04 (.11)	-10 (.12)	.66 (.13)	.47 (.15)	-.38 (.11)	.66	+39
Illinois	O	.63 (.10)	-.98 (.08)	-.26 (.10)	.87 (.10)	.61 (.12)	-.32 (.08)	.62	+30
Iowa	D	.59 (.07)	-1.16 (.07)	-.20 (.10)	.80 (.09)	.56 (.10)	-.25 (.07)	.64	+28
Kansas (Full)	O	.46 (.11)	-.90 (.12)	-14 (.15)	1.07 (.13)	.61 (.17)	-.25 (.11)	.64	+22
Kansas (Short)	O	.53 (.10)	-.96 (.10)	00 (.12)	.77 (.11)	.79 (.14)	-.50 (.10)	.60	+24
Kentucky	R	.56 (.09)	-1.03 (.09)	-19 (.12)	.79 (.11)	.27 (.12)	.58 (.09)	.61	+25
Louisiana	O	.36 (.11)	-1.54 (.10)	-.44 (.12)	.29 (.12)	.58 (.12)	10 (.10)	.66	+18
Maine	O	1.93 (.09)	-.75 (.08)	-19 (.10)	.81 (.11)	19 (.11)	.51 (.08)	.45	+73
Massachusetts	D	.78 (.08)	-.82 (.08)	-09 (.09)	.80 (.11)	.37 (.10)	.47 (.08)	.52	+36
Michigan	D	.54 (.10)	-1.07 (.08)	-.29 (.10)	.80 (.10)	.49 (.12)	-.55 (.08)	.61	+24
Minnesota	D	.63 (.10)	-1.01 (.09)	-.27 (.12)	.97 (.12)	.70 (.15)	-15 (.09)	.66	+30
Montana	D	.38 (.10)	-1.06 (.11)	-13 (.13)	1.03 (.14)	.47 (.15)	-.57 (.10)	.62	+18
Nebraska	O	.47 (.11)	-.78 (.12)	-.43 (.14)	.84 (.13)	.67 (.16)	-13 (.11)	.56	+23
New Hampshire	R	.38 (.11)	-1.09 (.10)	-.33 (.12)	1.02 (.15)	.81 (.16)	-.05 (.10)	.66	+19
New Jersey	O	.80 (.09)	-.99 (.08)	00 (.10)	.92 (.10)	.31 (.12)	-13 (.08)	.63	+38
New Mexico	R	.51 (.11)	-.68 (.12)	-20 (.12)	.97 (.14)	20 (.14)	1.46 (.13)	.47	+16
North Carolina	R	.72 (.11)	-1.00 (.08)	-15 (.15)	.53 (.09)	.98 (.11)	-12 (.07)	.64	+33
Oklahoma	R	.69 (.08)	-.92 (.10)	-09 (.13)	.76 (.11)	.30 (.15)	.30 (.11)	.59	+30
Oregon	O	.95 (.09)	-.86 (.09)	-12 (.11)	.57 (.11)	1.17 (.14)	03 (.08)	.66	+44
Rhode Island	O	.73 (.11)	-.63 (.10)	-.25 (.13)	.73 (.15)	23 (.14)	-.25 (.10)	.44	+35
South Carolina	R	.29 (.11)	-.85 (.11)	-09 (.13)	.90 (.13)	.48 (.14)	05 (.10)	.55	+14
South Dakota	R	.48 (.10)	-.97 (.11)	-06 (.13)	.64 (.12)	.77 (.15)	-.72 (.11)	.57	+21
Tennessee	R	.48 (.12)	-.96 (.12)	-.27 (.13)	1.18 (.14)	22 (.14)	1.03 (.11)	.64	+19
Texas	R	.78 (.09)	-.87 (.08)	-.21 (.09)	1.10 (.09)	.46 (.10)	.16 (.07)	.67	+37
Virginia	R	.46 (.10)	-.64 (.10)	-02 (.11)	.88 (.13)	.32 (.13)	01 (.08)	.50	+23
Wyoming	O	.57 (.09)	-.65 (.10)	-09 (.11)	.87 (.11)	.51 (.13)	-.17 (.09)	.55	+28

Note: For each state, we estimated a logistic regression model including all of the independent variables. Table entries for these variables are logistic regression coefficients. All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$ except those in **boldface**. See the text for an explanation of probabilistic effect.

TABLE A-2
 Incumbent Support for the Majority Party
 and the Use of Congressional Evaluations
 in U.S. Senate Election Voting, 1996
 (standard errors in parentheses)

Independent Variables	Voting Republican in Races with a Republican Incumbent	Voting Republican in Races with a Democratic Incumbent
Congress evaluation	-2.06 (.72)	.71 (.07)
Presidential vote	-.97 (.03)	-1.09 (.04)
Financial situation	-.14 (.04)	-.19 (.05)
Party	.82 (.04)	.84 (.05)
Ideology	.47 (.04)	.50 (.05)
Incumbent's approval rating	.01 (.01)	-.07 (.01)
Incumbent support for majority party	.10 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Incumbent support × Congress evaluation	.03 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
Constant	-10.07 (1.56)	3.03 (.64)
Pseudo-R ²	.59	.60
N	13,783	8,623

Note: Table entries are logistic regression coefficients. All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$ except those in **boldface**. Race-specific dummy variables were included in the estimation but are suppressed from the table (see text).

REFERENCES

- Beyle, Thad, Richard Niemi, and Lee Sigelman. N.d. "U.S. Senators 1978–2004 Database." <http://www.unc.edu/~beyle/jars.html> (January 20, 2004).
- Binder, Sarah, Forrest Maltzman, and Lee Sigelman. 1998. "Senators' Home State Reputations: Why Do Constituents Love a Bill Cohen So Much More than an Al D'Amato?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23: 545–60.
- Durr, Robert H., John B. Gilmour, and Christina Wolbrecht. 1997. "Explaining Congressional Approval." *American Journal of Political Science* 41: 175–207.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Gant, Michael M., and Dwight F. Davis. 1984. "Mental Economy and Voter Rationality: The Informed Citizen Problem in Voting Research." *Journal of Politics* 46: 132–53.
- Gronke, Paul, Jeffrey Koch, and J. Matthew Wilson. 2003. "Follow the Leader? Presidential Approval, Presidential Support, and Representatives' Electoral Fortunes." *Journal of Politics* 65: 785–808.
- Hibbing, John R., and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 1995. *Congress as Public Enemy: Public Attitudes towards American Political Institutions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Hibbing, John H., and Eric Tiritilli. 2000. "Public Disapproval of Congress Can Be Dangerous to Majority Party Candidates: The Case of 1994." In *Continuity and Change in House Elections*, ed. David W. Brady, John Cogan, and Morris P. Fiorina. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hurley, Patricia, and Kim Quaile Hill. 1980. "The Prospects for Issue-Voting in Contemporary Congressional Elections." *American Politics Quarterly* 8: 425–48.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2001. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 5th ed. New York: Longman.
- Jones, David R., and Monika L. McDermott. 2002. "Ideological Perceptions of the Majority Party and Approval of Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 27: 245–64.
- Jones, David R., and Monika L. McDermott. 2004. "The Responsible Party Government Model in House and Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 1–12.
- Larson, Stephanie Greco. 1990. "Information and Learning in a Congressional District: A Social Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 34: 1102–18.
- Lipinski, Daniel. 2001. "The Effect of Messages Communicated by Members of Congress: The Impact of Publicizing Votes." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26: 81–100.
- McDermott, Monika L., and David R. Jones. 2003. "Do Public Evaluations of Congress Matter? Retrospective Voting in Congressional Elections." *American Politics Research* 31: 155–77.
- Patterson, Samuel C., Randall B. Ripley, and Stephen V. Quinlan. 1992. "Citizens' Orientations toward Legislatures: Congress and the State Legislature." *Western Political Quarterly* 45: 315–38.
- Stokes, Donald E., and Warren E. Miller. 1966. "Party Government and the Saliency of Congressmen." In *Elections and the Political Order*, ed. Angus Campbell, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. New York: Wiley.
- Wilson, J. Matthew, and Paul Gronke. 2000. "Concordance and Projection in Citizen Perceptions of Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25: 445–68.
- Wright, Gerald C. 1993. "Errors in Measuring Vote Choice in the National Election Studies, 1952–88." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 291–316.

