

**Speakership Elections since 1860:
The Rise of the Organizational Caucus***

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[Authors' Note: This paper represents a draft chapter (Chapter 7) of an in-progress book manuscript. As a result, the chapter builds on analyses and arguments in earlier chapters. This note is an attempt to provide readers with some quick-and-dirty background, so that the substance of this chapter makes more intuitive sense.

The thrust of the book manuscript is twofold: (1) to examine how Congress was viewed as a instrument for mass party building in the antebellum era, via the control of House officer positions, namely the Speaker (who staffed committees and guided the policy process) but also the Printer (who was a great source of patronage and led the party's propaganda efforts) and the Clerk (who controlled significant patronage and also wielded significant institutional power, especially at the start of a Congress); and (2) to document how control of the House's initial organization was extremely difficult to achieve during the antebellum era. On this second point, an example is helpful: of the eleven speakership elections between 1839 and 1859, five required more than one ballot. And of those five, three were extremely contentious – choosing a speaker required three weeks and 61 ballots in 1849 (31st Congress), two months and 133 ballots in 1855-56 (34th Congress), and two months and 44 ballots in 1859-60 (36th Congress).

Moreover, it was also not always possible to predict who would be elected an officer of the House even after the Speaker was chosen. In the 4th Congress, the House elected a Republican Clerk after electing a Federalist Speaker. In the 25th Congress, the Democrats reelected James K. Polk (Tenn.) Speaker in a single ballot, but then the Whigs prevailed after twelve ballots in electing their candidate for House Printer. In the 26th Congress, the Democrats lost the speakership to the Whigs in an eleven ballot affair, but then were able to capture the Printer and Clerk, each on single ballots. In the 31st Congress, the Democrats elected Howell Cobb (Ga.) Speaker after 61 ballots, but lost the Clerkship to Whig Thomas Campbell (Tenn.) after 20 ballots. Finally, in the 34th Congress, the emerging Republican Party was able to elect a Speaker and Clerk, but lost the Printer to the Democrats. Thus, while the majority party could usually install its candidates as House officers, it did not always have a single candidate for these posts, and could not always guarantee his election even when they did.

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Beginning in 1861, however, this uncertainty in organizing the House vanished. The Republicans quickly and efficiently organized the chamber in the 36th Congress, electing their preferred candidates for all officer positions, and since then (to the present day) House organization by the majority party has (with one exception in 1923) been simple and straightforward – as we describe in an early chapter of the book, “the formal organization of the House is a now type of kabuki theater, a highly stylized drama that values form over substance.” This chapter describes this transformation. At the heart of the chapter’s account, is the congressional party caucus. Beginning during the Civil War era, the major parties in Congress began meeting prior to the start of a Congress and settled all organizational decisions in caucus – and made those caucus decisions binding on the House floor. Conflicts continued to occur on officer candidates, of course, and several multi-ballot contests for speakership nominations took place, but once settled, those conflicts did not spill over onto the House floor. As we argue in this chapter, sometime during the Civil War/Reconstruction period, a kind of caucus-induced equilibrium developed on matters of House organization, and that equilibrium remains very much in evidence today.]

Speakership Elections since 1860: The Rise of the Organizational Caucus

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As the Nation entered the Civil War era, the antebellum pattern of protracted House speakership battles appeared poised to continue. Despite the secession of eleven southern states and a large Republican House majority, speakership divisions surfaced in the 37th Congress, culminating in the apparent lack of a majority winner on the first ballot. Unlike many previous speakership contests, however, the Republican majority quickly coalesced; indeed, before the official first-ballot tally was even announced, a number of dissident Republicans switched their votes to Galusha Grow, the party front runner, so as to elect him immediately and forego a second ballot. This rapid turnaround in speakership voting was an important break from the recent past, and more importantly, was as a harbinger for the future. The quick election of Grow ushered in a new era in organizational politics: in all but one instance over the next 140+ years, speakership contests would be straightforward affairs on the House floor, determined by a single ballot.¹

The disappearance of protracted speakership battles did not indicate, of course, that divisions of opinion over speakership candidates within the major parties vanished as well. Indeed, throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, both major parties were to varying degrees heterogenous coalitions, and thus were often characterized by ideological divisions. Nevertheless, beginning with the Civil War era, the majority party began settling intraparty disagreements over speakership candidates (and all officer candidates, generally) in

1. The sole exception was in the 68th Congress, which we discuss in detail later in this chapter, when the speakership contest stretched nine ballots over three days (Dec. 3–5, 1923).

caucus, prior to the House's convening. Thus, the decision on the floor has become the public realization of the more-or-less private negotiation in the majority party caucus.

This chapter investigates this transition in speakership-election eras, from one in which intraparty divisions often spilled out onto the House floor to one in which all major politicking over candidates was embedded in the party caucuses. This caucus-induced organizational arrangement solved the lingering instability that had often plagued speakership decisions during the antebellum era. Moreover, in fairly short order, this binding organizational caucus institutionalized, that is, the caucus evolved into an *equilibrium institution* (Shepsle 1986), as both parties embraced the practice of organizing the chamber "in the family" rather than risking potential complications on the House floor. As such, the congressional party caucus became the key to House organization in the late-nineteenth century, a role that it played throughout the twentieth century and continues to play today.

Stepping back, until the Republican party emerged in the 1850s, each major party was constituted by an inter-regional coalition. Events beyond the narrow confines of the House regularly transpired to make orderly organization of the chamber difficult, if not almost impossible. Those events, one way or the other, were fundamentally electoral. On the one hand, social agitation over slavery interfered with the ability of House members to set the slavery issue to the side, and to rally their support around the matters that had brought about the parties in the first place, such as spoils and national economic development. On the other hand, elections were sometimes close and third parties successful which, together, made small, seemingly marginal blocs of members pivotal in deciding who would organize the House. While the House was not

always dysfunctional at the dawn of each Congress, it was dysfunctional enough times that it abetted the constitutional crisis that finally came to a head in 1861.

After the Civil War, many of the factors that had contributed to the occasional inability of the House to smoothly organize itself persisted. Thus, there was no guarantee that the House would suddenly be able to take the easy election of a Speaker on its first day of business for granted. True enough, the temptation to use the organization of the House to sidestep slavery was swept aside with emancipation and, especially, the ascendance of the Republican party which was not polarized by that pernicious issue. Still, it does not take disagreement over a deeply moral and emotional issue like slavery to provide party factions with temptations to bolt and organize the chamber in league with the opposition — or at least to hold out and extract as much as possible from one's own party in return for parliamentary peace. In the modern day, virtually every parliamentary system around the world has stumbled upon problems of coalition formation at some point, without the scourge of slavery hindering agreement.

Few who gathered for the first Civil War Congress would have predicted that the House would go on to enjoy relative stability in the partisan organization of the chamber during and after the war. Yet, expectations changed rapidly in the years of War and Reconstruction — to the point that, in a sense, Martin Van Buren's plans to create a *consistently* secure partisan organization finally came to fruition.

Seeking to downplay the partisan dimensions of the war, Republican leaders refused to call a caucus on the eve of the convening of the 37th Congress, which had been called into session early, owing to the growing national emergency. Beginning with the next Congress, the Republican party met and quickly settled on a caucus nominee, Schuyler Colfax (Ind.). The

Democrats also met to nominate officers, but were unable to settle on a single candidate for Speaker. It was not until the 39th Congress (1865–67) that the Democrats, too, settled on a caucus nominee of their own (James Brooks, N.Y.) to challenge Colfax on behalf of the minority party. From that moment to the present both major parties have made it their business to meet and settle on a single nominee for the speakership before the House first convenes.

Table 7-1 summarizes the most basic information about these nominations. An appendix provides a bit more information about the nominations, including citations to newspaper accounts of the caucus meetings. The column labeled “margin percentage” in Table 7-1 records the relative size of the seat advantage enjoyed by the larger of the two major parties over the smaller party. Over the half century starting in 1863 with the 38th Congress, the size of the party margin was less than 10% eight times, and twice the largest party only held a plurality of the chamber. In none of these cases was the minority party, or one of the minor third parties, able to leverage the margin into a protracted speakership election battle.

[Table 7-1 about here]

That the majority party was able to contain every dispute over the speakership within the family after 1861 and organize the House on one ballot, with the exception of the 68th Congress, is the subject of this chapter. We consider four periods to be especially important in setting expectations about the selection of speakers and focus our narrative on those. These periods are (1) the Civil War (and early Reconstruction) Congresses, when the Republicans exhibited great discipline to first establish the tactic of a binding organizational caucus for Speaker, (2) the Congresses in the mid-to-late 1870s when the Democrats returned to power and embraced the binding organizational caucus, (3) the decade from the early-1880s to the early-1890s, wherein

regional and ideological tensions pervaded both parties and threatened the stability of the organizational arrangement, and (4) the Congresses of the 1920s, when the progressive insurgency provided at least a momentary taste of antebellum speakership politics.

The Civil War and the Establishment of Party Discipline

The 37th Congress convened on July 4, 1861, in the midst of the greatest crisis the Nation has ever faced. In the few short months after Abraham Lincoln's election and subsequent inauguration, eleven southern (slave) states — South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas — had seceded from the Union, and had organized to form a separate nation, the Confederate States of America. Lincoln, in his role as Commander and Chief, acted swiftly to preserve the Union, while the infant Confederacy actively resisted. Civil War was here.

There was one major political beneficiary among this national chaos, the Republican Party in Congress. Thanks to the southern secession, the Republicans were the majority party in the House for the first time in their short history, controlling 102 of the 174 seats at the opening of the 37th Congress (Dubin 1998, p. 191). Thus, the Republicans were in a position to organize the chamber completely on their own, not having to rely upon third parties (Know Nothings and Anti-Lecomptons, for example) for assistance, as had been the case in the recent past. Yet, they made no attempt to caucus prior to Congress convening, deciding instead to downplay overt partisanship during a time of war and allow members to vote their consciences (Bogue 1981, p. 122). However, the norm from the 36th Congress would be followed, whereby the Republican leader on the first speakership ballot would subsequently command united party support (Curry

1968, p. 26). As Illisevich (1988, p. 202) noted, “the Republicans had agreed not to tolerate any protracted conflict over the speakership. There was too much to be done.”

As members of Congress began arriving in Washington, three leading candidates for Speaker were consistently mentioned in the press: Galusha Grow (Penn.), a devoted Radical who had been an early speakership candidate in the 36th Congress; Frank Blair (Mo.), a moderate ex-Democrat and close associate of Lincoln’s who had worked effectively to keep his home state in the Union;² and Schulyer Colfax (Ind.), an amiable former Whig and Know Nothing with solid anti-slavery credentials.³ While press accounts had the election up for grabs, the war-time mood and strong anti-southern feelings permeating the capitol made Grow the likely favorite. Sensing this, Colfax withdrew from consideration just as the speakership balloting was to begin, in the opening moments of the Congress (*CG*, 37-1, 7/4/1861, p. 3).

Upon informal completion of the first ballot, Grow emerged as the leading vote-getter, receiving 71 of 159 votes cast, nine short of a majority. Blair, his closest competitor, could only muster 40 votes, with the remaining votes scattering among twelve other candidates. Before the official tally could be announced, however, Blair was recognized and (like Colfax earlier) removed himself from further consideration as a candidate. He then urged his supporters to switch their votes to Grow immediately, rather than wait for a second ballot. Many of them did, as 26 of Blair’s 40 supporters switched their votes to Grow, thereby electing him (*CG*, 37-1,

2. Frank Blair was the son of Francis Preston Blair, the former House Printer.

3. See *NYT*, Jun. 30, 1861, p. 4; Jul. 1, 1861, p. 4; Jul. 3, 1861, p. 4; Jul. 4, 1861, p. 1; *CT*, Jul. 6, 1861, p. 2; *NYTrib*, July 4, 1861, pp. 4–5.

7/4/1861, p. 4).⁴ In the spirit of playing down partisanship, the House then quickly elected Emerson Etheridge, a Unionist from Tennessee, as Clerk, turning out the incumbent, John Forney, whom the Republicans had supported in the previous Congress.⁵ Etheridge's candidacy was promoted by Lincoln, as a direct appeal to the anti-secession forces in the Union-controlled slave states of Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky.

Upon accepting the speakership, Grow set out to complete the organization of the House. Here, he followed the path set out by Banks and Pennington before him — specifically, he used committee assignments, and especially *chairmanships*, to allocate power within the chamber and placate different regional and ideological groups within the party (Curry 1968, pp. 26–29; Bogue 1981, pp. 114–15). He offered Blair, his major competitor, the chairmanship of Ways and Means, but Blair refused the assignment, choosing instead the chairmanship of Military Affairs. Grow then offered Colfax the chairmanship of Ways and Means, but he preferred to maintain his chairmanship of Post Office and Post Roads, a prime engine for pork and patronage. Grow then handed out chairmanships to his own prominent members of his own Radical group, with Ways and Means finally going to Thaddeus Stevens (Penn.), Judiciary to John Bingham (Ohio), Public Expenditures to John Covode (Penn.), Public Lands to John Potter (Wisc.), Manufactures to John Hutchins (Ohio), and Commerce to Elihu Washburne (Ill.) (CG, 37-1, 7/8/1861, pp. 21–22).

4. Follett (1896, p. 51) mistakenly reports that Grow's election required a second ballot.

5. Forney was not a favorite of the Radical Republicans. Despite his recent conversion to anti-slavery politics, Forney, a former heavyweight in the Pennsylvania Democratic machine before his falling out with the Buchanan forces, remained close with many leading members of the moderate wing of the Democratic party. Still, Forney had been useful to the Republicans in the 36th Congress, and he remained on good personal terms with Lincoln. He was compensated by being selected as Secretary of the Senate in the 37th Congress.

Thus, as the Republicans became the majority party in the House, they managed to avoid internal strife in their organization of the chamber by distributing power, via the Speaker, in the form of committee chairmanships and assignments. Grow played his part by rewarding rivals, after they (and many of their supporters) acknowledged his position as top vote-getter on the opening speakership ballot and subsequently threw their support to him. This tacit equilibrium allowed the Republicans to maintain their solidarity while respecting intraparty differences, which helped the party avoid the messy public spectacle of a prolonged speakership battle.

This Republican solidarity would be tested soon enough. The war went poorly for the Union throughout 1861 and 1862, which proved disheartening for both the party and the Nation. This led to a significant backlash against the Republicans in the midterm elections of 1862–63. As a result, when the 38th Congress convened in December 1863, the Republicans could only manage plurality control of the House — 85 of 184 seats, or 46.2% (Martis 1989, pp. 116–17). They were thus in need of assistance in organizing the House, and, as a result, sought help from border-state Unionists, notably those who supported nation-wide abolition and a vigorous prosecution of the war.⁶ Rather than attempt to coordinate with Unionists on the floor, which would introduce uncertainty into the organizational process, Republican leaders called for a caucus to meet prior to Congress convening. This “Union caucus” would allow a discussion of possible officers, and the potential nomination of a slate of coalition candidates.

In addition to basic coordination issues, Republican leaders pushed for a caucus to head off a potential organizational crisis of a different sort. Rumors had spread that Emerson

6. Martis (1989, p. 38) refers to such pro-emancipation, pro-war Unionists as “Unconditional Unionists.”

Etheridge, the House Clerk, was plotting an organizational coup. Etheridge had been a loyal administration supporter through the end of 1862, until the war's theme broadened to include emancipation. Like many other Tennessee loyalists, Etheridge opposed freedom and social equality for slaves, and thus felt betrayed by the Republican party (Maness 1989). As a result, a realigning of allegiances began. As Belz (1970, p. 555) states, "The Emancipation Proclamation portended revolution and impelled many border Unionists to cooperate with Democrats in the conservative opposition."

Etheridge was one such Unionist, and after some scheming, he hatched a plan to overturn Republican control of the House by tilting the roll of members-elect toward a conservative coalition of Democrats and Unionists. He intended to take advantage of the stipulations in a recently passed 1863 law, which formally provided the Clerk with the ability to certify the credentials of members-elect.⁷ The intention of the law was to enhance Republican strength in the succeeding Congress by providing the Clerk with discretion to count loyalists from portions of the South under Union military control. Etheridge, however, planned to apply a strict reading of the law, thereby requiring that very particular credentials be presented in order to receive certification. He then contacted Democratic House leaders and shared his plan, describing the exact form of credentials necessary while urging them to disseminate the information to Unionists as well as to their fellow Democrats (Belz 1970, pp. 555–56).

Unfortunately for Etheridge, the details of his scheme leaked out. Republican leaders, including President Lincoln, reacted quickly and began to counter-organize. The caucus was an

7. *Statutes at Large*, 37-3, 804. The law stated that the Clerk, in making his roll, "would place thereon the names of all persons and such persons only, whose credentials show that they were regularly elected in accordance with their states respectively, or the laws of the United States."

essential element in the strategy to meet Etheridge, both offensively (by coordinating on a single speakership candidate) and defensively (by coordinating to counter Etheridge's roll call scheme).

In late November 1863, informal canvassing for the speakership was well under way. With Speaker Grow defeated in the midterm elections, Schuyler Colfax emerged as the near-unanimous Republican candidate. As members began arriving in Washington, forecasts of Colfax's strength were widely reported, with estimates of his having 85 votes already pledged.⁸ These estimates proved to be accurate, as Colfax's nomination "was agreed to without dissent and by acclamation" (*NYT*, Dec. 6, 1863, p. 1; c.f. *NYTrib*, Dec. 7, 1863, p. 4), when the Union caucus met on December 5, 1863, two days prior to the opening of the 38th Congress.⁹ A long discussion also took place regarding Etheridge's potential scheme, during which caucus members' election credentials were certified. Before adjourning, caucus leaders urged all attendees to be present at the opening of the session.

The proceedings on the opening day of the Congress, December 7, 1863, demonstrated the value of the Union caucus just days before. Once Etheridge had finished his initial call of the House roll, sixteen members from five states (Maryland, Missouri, West Virginia, Kansas, and Oregon) had been excluded while three members from Louisiana had been added, under Etheridge's interpretation of the Act of March 3, 1863 (*CG*, 38-1, 12/7/1863, p. 4). After some heated discussion, Henry Dawes (R-Mass.) offered a resolution that the Maryland members be

8. *NYT*, Dec. 5, 1863, p. 3; for an earlier estimate, see *NYT*, Dec. 2, 1863, p. 4. Also see *NYTrib*, Dec. 3, 1863, p. 1 and Dec. 5, 1863, p. 6.

9. Elihu Washburn (Ill.) and Reuben Fenton (N.Y.) were entered into nomination, but both asked to withdraw their names after the nominating speeches were made. *NYTrib*, Dec. 7, 1863, p. 4.

added to the Clerk's roll. James C. Allen (D-Ill.) responded by moving to table Dawes's resolution and demanded the yeas and nays.¹⁰

Here then was the showdown. The question on Allen's tabling motion was taken, and it failed by a vote of 74–94 (*CG*, 38-1, 12/7/1863, p. 5). In the end, the Republicans unanimously opposed the tabling motion. The conservative forces were divided, however, with five Democrats and six Unionists voting against tabling — that is, in opposition to Etheridge's scheme to deny the Republicans the opportunity to organize the chamber. Had a unified coalition of Democrats and Unionists emerged instead in support of Etheridge, his scheme would have prevailed by a margin of two votes (Belz 1970, p. 562).¹¹

Victorious in the procedural standoff, the Republicans then moved to add the Maryland members to the roll, followed in quick succession by the Missouri, West Virginia, Kansas, and Oregon delegations. Once accomplished, the Republicans turned their attention to organizing the chamber. Schulyer Colfax was elected Speaker on the first ballot, receiving 101 of 180 votes

10. Interestingly, Allen had served as the House Clerk in the 35th Congress.

11. The partisan breakdown on the roll call was 0-83 for Republicans, 67-5 for Democrats, and 7-6 for Unionists. Party codes taken from Martis (1989), but the following adjustments were made: Unionists are a combined category (Conditional and Unconditional Unionists) and one member's party code was switched (Rufus Spalding of Ohio, whom Martis classifies as a Republican while other sources code him as a Democrat).

cast (*CG*, 38-1, 12/7/1863, pp. 6–7).¹² He received all 85 Republican votes cast, along with 16 votes from Unionists.

The Union caucus met again that evening to discuss the remaining House officer positions. Ballots were held and the majority winners for four positions — Edward McPherson of Pennsylvania for Clerk, Nehemiah Ordway of New Hampshire for Sergeant-at-Arms, William S. King of Minnesota for Postmaster, and Ira Goodenow of New York for Doorkeeper — were announced, after which the nominations were declared unanimous (*NYT*, Dec. 8, 1863, p. 1).¹³

The following day, December 8, the House proceeded to the rest of the organization, turning first to the election of a Clerk. James Moorhead (R-Penn.), per the guidelines of the Union caucus, nominated Edward McPherson, a protege of Thaddeus Stevens and former Republican House member in the 37th and 38th Congresses who had lost his reelection bid; Robert Mallory (U-Ky.) nominated Emerson Etheridge, this time as the conservative candidate rather than the administration choice. The latter action was viewed by many Republicans as

12. Although the *House Journal* reports a total of 182 votes, the roll call record only accounts for 180 votes. In addition to Colfax, Samuel S. Cox (Ohio), the chief Democratic candidate, received 42 votes, with the other 39 scattering among six other candidates — John Dawson (Penn., 12 votes), Robert Mallory (Ky., 10), Henry G. Stebbins (N.Y., 8), Austin A. King (Mo., 6), Frank Blair (Mo., 2), and John D. Stiles (Penn., 1). Among Democrats, opposition to Cox came primarily from New York and Pennsylvania. In terms of DW-NOMINATE scores, Cox's support was strongest on the left side of the space, that is, among non-Republicans who were most opposed to Republican economic policies.

13. In terms of tallies for the minor House offices, McPherson captured 57 votes against 44 votes for James Buffinton (ex- and future Republican MC from Massachusetts) on the fourth ballot. The first ballot for Clerk pitted four Republican ex-House members against each other: McPherson (32 votes), Buffinton (32), Samuel C. Fessenden (21 votes, Maine), and Green Adams (14 votes, Kentucky). Ordway, who also required four ballots to secure the position of Sergeant-at-Arms, eventually received 51 of 92 votes cast. King received 66 of 96 votes cast for the position of Postmaster and Goodenow received 55 of 99 votes cast for Doorkeeper.

unseemly. Owen Lovejoy (R-Ill.) stated that the nomination of Etheridge, after his failed, nefarious, procedural maneuver, “required a good deal of brass” (*CG*, 38-1, 12/8/1863, p. 11).

The roll was called, and McPherson emerged victorious, capturing 102 of 171 votes cast. He received all Republican votes and most Unionists, with Etheridge polling all Democratic votes and a smattering of Unionists.¹⁴ The elections of the caucus nominees for Sergeant-at-Arms, Postmaster, and Doorkeeper quickly followed suit (*CG*, 38-1, 12/8/1863, pp. 11–12).

The full slate of officers having been elected, Speaker Colfax turned to the task of staffing the various standing committees. In doing so, he took seriously the necessity of sharing power across interests within the party. After consulting with party leaders and cabinet members, Colfax sequestered himself for two full days, producing more than twenty different standing committee configurations before settling on a satisfactory set of assignments (Bogue 1981, pp. 116–17). First, he made sure to reward his chief pre-caucus rival for the speakership, Elihu Washburne (Ill.), by reappointing him to chair the Commerce committee. Colfax’s other caucus rival, Reuben Fenton (N.Y.), was awarded with a coveted position on Ways and Means, after a House career that had featured memberships on committees like Private Land Claims and Invalid Pensions. Colfax also placated the moderate wing of his party by distributing the chairmanships of Elections and Judiciary to Henry Dawes (Mass.) and James F. Wilson (Iowa), respectively.

14. After his defeat, Etheridge became an even more vociferous critic of the Republican administration. He led a group of conservatives in nominating George McClellan for the presidency. He then ran unsuccessfully for election as a Conservative to the House from his former 9th District in 1865 and to the Governorship of Tennessee in 1867. He finally regained political office with his election to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1869. In time, much to his chagrin, the Conservative movement in Tennessee was subsumed by the Democratic Party. As a result, Etheridge returned to the Republican fold, supporting Rutherford Hayes’s bid for the Presidency in 1876, and he remained a loyal party member until his death in 1902.

His Radical wing received the lion's share of chairmanships, with Ways and Means going to Thaddeus Stevens (Penn.), Public Lands to George W. Julian (Ind.), and Public Expenditures to Calvin T. Hulburt (N.Y.). Finally, he acknowledged the support of the Unionist bloc that made his election possible by appointing Henry Winter Davis (Md.) to chair Foreign Affairs and Brutus J. Clay (Ky.) to chair Agriculture.

Thus, Colfax followed Grow in his dutiful fulfillment of the caucus-generated House organization. To secure smooth and seamless decision making in the set of officer elections on the House floor, ideological divisions and conflicts were dealt with at the pre-floor stage, within the majority-party caucus. To insure that the majority-rule decision of the caucus would become the *unanimous* choice of party members on the floor, rewards would need to be meted out — in this case, the Speaker was the key central agent, distributing committee assignments and chairmanships to all factions within the party. And because the party was a continuing institution, the equilibrium was self-enforcing. That is, party leaders desired to insure a stable stream of organizational outcomes into the future; thus, the Speaker, as the agent of the caucus and servant of the party, had no incentive to defect on the caucus-induced equilibrium.

Moreover, events in the 38th Congress, specifically the Etheridge conspiracy, provided Republican House leaders with an additional reason to emphasize the need for pre-floor organization. Apart from the collective benefits of organization generally, Etheridge's failed coup underscored the uncertainty and potential high costs of allowing majority-party factions to sort themselves out on the House floor. The lesson was clear — any individual position-taking benefits that majority-party members might accrue from unconstrained balloting for Speaker were far outweighed by the inherent risks of such an arrangement for the party as a whole.

The Republicans' electoral setback in the midterm elections of 1862–63 was erased by the turnaround in Union military fortunes in late-1864 and 1865. Consequently, Lincoln was reelected in November 1864, and Republican candidates swept the 1864–65 congressional elections throughout the North. The Republicans would operate in a position of dominance, without serious competition, for the next decade. As a result, Republican organization of the House, with the party caucus serving as the focal point, was relatively straightforward. Schuyler Colfax remained the unanimous caucus choice for Speaker in the 39th and 40th Congresses, and he was reelected by wide margins on the floor, 139–36 and 127–30, respectively. After each election, a set of caucus-nominated candidates for Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Postmaster, and Doorkeeper was elected by resolution, which became the normal form of electing the minor House officers, even though the House rules continued to provide for their election by ballot (*CG*, 39-1, 12/4/1865, p. 5; 40–1, 12/2/1867, pp. 4, 6–7).¹⁵ In each speakership election, Republican unity on the floor was firm. Moreover, Colfax continued to distribute power within the party in an even-handed way, through his committee chairmanships and assignments.

When Colfax left the House at the convening of the 41st Congress (March 1869), having been elected Vice President, the Republicans chose James G. Blaine (Me.) as their candidate for

15. The results were 138–35 and without opposition, respectively. In the 39th Congress, the nominees were Edward McPherson for Clerk, Nehemiah Ordway for Sergeant-at-Arms, Joshua Given for Postmaster, and Ira Goodenow for Doorkeeper. McPherson and Ordway were nominated by acclamation; Goodenow was nominated after receiving 66 of 123 votes on a first caucus ballot; and Given was nominated after receiving 71 of 119 votes on a second caucus ballot, after no majority winner emerged on the first ballot (*NYT*, Dec. 4, 1865, p. 1). In the 40th Congress, McPherson and Ordway were once again the caucus nominees for Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms, while Charles E. Lippincott from Illinois was nominated for Doorkeeper and William S. King of Minnesota was nominated as Postmaster after receiving 64 and 61 of 121 votes, respectively, both on a first caucus ballot (*NYT*, Mar. 5, 1867, p. 1).

Speaker, without any evidence of a serious campaign by Blaine or any other pretender for the office. After Blaine was nominated by acclamation, he would win an easy victory on the floor over the Democratic nominee, Michael Kerr (D, Ind.), on a 135–57 vote that reflected perfect party unity on both sides (*NYT*, Mar. 3, 1869, p. 1; *NYTrib*, Mar. 3, 1869, p. 1; *CG*, 41-1, 3/4/1869, pp. 4–5). Similar victories were had by the set of Republican caucus nominees for the other officer positions.¹⁶

Given Blaine's moderate predispositions, he took special pains to treat the Radical element of the party favorably. He distributed important committee chairmanships to several prominent Radicals, assigning Ways and Means to Robert C. Schenck (Ohio), Judiciary to John Bingham (Ohio), Public Lands to George Julian (Ind.), and Reconstruction to Benjamin Butler (Mass.). He balanced these Radical appointments with a string of important committee chairmanships to influential moderates, with Henry Dawes (Mass.) controlling Appropriations, James Garfield (Ohio) manning Banking and Currency, and Nathan Dixon (R.I.) guiding Commerce (*CG*, 41-1, 3/15/1869, pp. 75–77). Blaine organized the House to allow each wing of the party to follow its major agenda: the Radicals were placed in positions to guide social policy, while the moderates were placed in positions to lead economic/financial policies. His Solomon-

16. Although Blaine won nomination by acclamation, the minor offices were all contested. McPherson, Ordway, and King were reelected Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Postmaster, respectively, while Otis S. Buxton of New York was elected Doorkeeper (*CG*, 41-1, 3/5/1869, p. 19). McPherson was challenged for nomination in caucus by Ephraim R. Eckley (Ohio) and Samuel McKee (Ky.). McPherson received 83 votes to Eckley's 26 and McKee's 20. Ordway defeated H.W. Washburn (Ind.) on a 75–57 ballot. Buxton defeated W.T. Collins 98–29. King required more than one ballot to narrowly defeat Josiah Given (Iowa) for the position of Postmaster. See *NYT*, Mar. 3, 1869, p. 1; *NYTrib*, Mar. 3, 1869, p. 1.

like strategy was met with much approval, and he was rewarded with unanimous caucus re-nominations and subsequent floor reelections in the 42nd and 43rd Congresses.¹⁷

Thus, less than a decade after the Civil War, a clear binding caucus on organizational matters had developed in the House. Majority-party members were expected to support caucus nominations, so that the election of House officers, and the subsequent distribution of patronage and power (via committee assignments), could be accomplished in a smooth and timely manner. The binding organizational caucus thus solved the instability problem in speakership elections that surfaced in the last two decades of the antebellum era. The caucus effected a *structure-induced equilibrium* by providing an institutional solution to the organizational difficulties that often spilled out onto the House floor at the convening of a new Congress.

The caucus was *binding* because of the very real sanctions that could be imposed on defectors. As George Alfred Townsend (1873, p. 505–06), the Washington correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*, stated in his portrait of political life in the Nation’s capital, *Washington,*

Outside and Inside:

Whoever goes into caucus must abide by its verdict or be dishonored, like the man who gambles and then must pay up, though it be plucking bread from the mouths of his wife and children. He must obey the party behest, conscience or no conscience. ... Suppose a member ... bolts caucus; what are the consequences? He forfeits his right to meet in private sessions of his party again, and one might as well be in limbo now-a-days as in no party.

17. Blaine defeated George W. Morgan (D-Ohio) and Fernando Wood (D-N.Y.) 126–92 and 189–76 (with four votes scattering), respectively (*CG*, 42-1, 3/4/1871, p. 6; *CR*, 43-1, 12/1/1873, p. 6). McPherson, Ordway, and Buxton would also be reelected Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Doorkeeper, respectively, in these two Congresses, while Henry Sherwood of Michigan would replace William S. King of Minnesota as Doorkeeper in the 43rd Congress.

This theme was echoed a decade later by political scientist Woodrow Wilson (1885, p. 213), in his academic treatise, *Congressional Government*:

There is no place in congressional jousts for the free lance. The man who disobeys his party caucus is understood to disavow party allegiance altogether, and to assume that dangerous neutrality which is so apt to degenerate into mere caprice, and which is almost sure to destroy his influence by bringing him under the suspicion of being unreliable, – a suspicion always conclusively damning in practical life. An individual, or any minority of weak numbers of small influence, who has the temerity to neglect the decisions of the caucus is sure ... to be read out of the party, almost without chance of reinstatement.

Thus, caucus violators, or “bolters,” could expect swift reprisals from party leaders. In addition to penalties like having their committee assignments stripped (or their seniority on committees eliminated) and their share of policy spoils taken away, bolters were potentially putting their entire political futures on the line. In short, in the new caucus-driven organizational arrangement, the possibility of being cast out of the party, for all practical purposes, was a credible outcome.

That said, this binding caucus arrangement was limited to organizational matters. Efforts to expand the caucus’s role into the realm of policy, and thus create a legislative structure more similar to a parliamentary system, was attempted, but failed.

At first, however, this possibility seemed far from remote. In the Republican caucus prior to the convening of the 39th Congress, after a slate of officer nominations was determined, a motion was offered by Thaddeus Stevens to appoint a joint congressional committee to examine and report on the former rebel states, specifically to determine if they should receive representation in Congress (*NYT*, Dec. 5, 1865, p. 4; *NYH*, Dec. 5, 1865; *NYW*, Dec. 5, 1865).

The motion was considered and unanimously agreed upon. The next day, following the election

of House officers, this motion to create a Joint Committee of Fifteen (six members from the Senate and nine from the House) was then considered on the House floor and passed 133–36, with all Republicans voting in support (*CG*, 39-1, 12/4/1865, p. 6). With this vote, Congress, and particularly the Radicals, was given procedural control of southern Reconstruction.

A crucial part of this Radical initiative depended on the House Clerk, Edward McPherson. If a congressional committee was to be put in charge of southern Reconstruction, it was imperative that the Clerk not recognize southern representatives in his roll of members-elect prior to the organization of the 39th Congress; otherwise, a precedent for readmittance would be set. McPherson, a loyal Republican and advocate of the Radical cause, played his part in the drama, passing over (and thus failing to recognize) members-elect from Tennessee, Virginia, and Louisiana, states that were reorganized along the lines of President Johnson's Reconstruction plan, while allowing no interference or interruption during his call of the roll (Trefousse 1997, pp. 174–76; Jenkins and Stewart 2004).¹⁸

While the Radicals believed the creation of the Joint Committee of Fifteen was merely the first step in a caucus-driven set of Reconstruction policies, many Republican House members viewed this simply as an organizational decision, not unlike those associated with officer

18. As McPherson had remained loyal at a crucial time, Stevens tabbed him for a larger role in the Radical agenda. On March 2, 1867, the penultimate day of the 39th Congress, the House passed a sundry appropriations bill (*Statutes at Large*, 39-2, pp. 466-67). Tucked away in the bill was a provision transferring authority for the selection of newspapers to publish the nation's laws in the former-Confederate states from the Secretary of State, who had possessed this authority since 1787, to the House Clerk. This provision provided McPherson with a prime patronage tool, as the compensation paid to selected newspapers was substantial (Smith 1977, p. 238). Moreover, per Stevens' wishes, McPherson could use this patronage to select newspapers sympathetic to the Radicals' point of view. In Stevens' view, the current Secretary of State, William Seward, was not reliable, as he would likely pursue a more moderate course.

elections. As a result, Radical and moderate Republicans continued to lock horns on the true role of the caucus; the former would push to make *all* caucus decisions, organizational *and* policy-related, binding on all members, while the latter would hold fast to the notion that members were only bound to caucus decisions on matters of organization. Blaine, the leader of the moderate wing, articulated a clear view on the issue:

The caucus is a convenience of party organization to determine the course to be pursued in matters of expediency which do not involve question of moral obligation or personal justice. Rightfully employed, the caucus is not only useful but necessary in the conduct and government of party interests. Wrongfully applied, it is a weakness, an offense, a stumbling-block in the way of party prosperity (Blaine 1886, p. 504).

While Radical leaders routinely threatened moderates with expulsion when divisions on Reconstruction-related policies emerged in caucus, they were unable to bind members on policy. The Radicals simply were not a large enough faction within the party to employ effective coercion, certainly not without risking the health and future well-being of the party as a whole. Moreover, public opinion was not on their side; mainstream media outlets, like the *New York Times*, echoed Blaine's perspective, framing caucus-imposed constraints on questions of policy as inherently undemocratic:

The party caucus which may be usefully employed to promote a private citizen to the rank of Sergeant-at-Arms is hardly the sort of thing by which to operate upon men's convictions in concerns of national import (*NYT*, Jan. 18, 1866, p. 4).

The obvious use of a caucus is for consultation and exchange of views. A vote of a legislative caucus is not binding upon its members, but decides how many of those present are in favor of a certain outcome. ... when a caucus ... takes away a man's right of private judgment, it becomes an instrument of oppression; it cannot long live (*NYT*, Mar. 11, 1875, p. 6).

Thus, Republican divisions on issues like the impeachment of President Johnson and the granting of amnesty to former-Confederate soldiers created disagreements in caucus that inevitably spilled out onto the House floor. While the Radicals won some policy victories, like the creation of the Freedman's Bureau and the construction of the Reconstruction amendments, they were reigned in by the lack of a binding caucus on policy. Thus, the course of southern Reconstruction was not as extreme as the ideal Radical blueprint would have prescribed.

The Democrats Embrace the Caucus

The Republicans were not alone in recognizing the importance of the binding organizational caucus. During their time as the minority party, the Democrats had striven to present themselves as a unified opposition. While the Republicans' sizeable numerical advantage made this coordination hopelessly in vain, Democratic leaders viewed the effort as an investment that would yield dividends when the party returned to majority status.

Throughout the 1860s the organization of the minority Democrats labored in the shadows of the majority Republicans. As far as we can tell, leadership of the party throughout the decade was uncontested in caucus, as a series of certain losers were given the dubious honor of being named the party's choice for Speaker — James Brooks (N.Y., 39th Cong.), Samuel Marshall (Ill, 40th Cong.), Michael Kerr (Ind., 41st Cong.), and George W. Morgan (Ohio, 42nd Cong.). This changed at the opening of the 43rd Congress (1873–75). Even though Democrats were once again in the minority, they had experienced their best showing in any presidential year since 1860. With readmitted southern states sending more and more Democrats to Washington, the Democratic leadership was now valuable, and it was contested.

The Democratic caucus that preceded the opening of the 43rd Congress was a trial run for later caucuses when the Democrats actually held the majority. Three candidates presented themselves for the honor of being given the party's nomination for Speaker, Fernando Wood (N.Y.), James C. Robinson (Ill.), and Samuel S. Cox (N.Y.).¹⁹ Wood led on the first ballot with 30 votes, against 20 for Cox and 19 for Robinson. On the second ballot Robinson's supporters united behind Wood, giving him 44 votes, to 22 for Cox and 4 votes scattered among four other candidates (*NYT*, 11/30/1873, p. 1). Reflecting deep divisions in the caucus over Wood's prominent role in the congressional salary increase —the so-called "Salary Grab" — in the 42nd Congress, the caucus broke up rancorously, with several Democrats threatening to bolt and support Blaine. The next day when the House organized, one Democrat did in fact support Blaine — Harry B. Banning (Ohio) — and three others cast their votes for Democrats other than Wood — Richard Bland (Mo., who voted for Alexander H. Stephens [Ga.]), Thomas J. Creamer (N.Y., Heister Clymer [Penn.]), and William S. Holman (Ind., Cox).

The Democrats largely stayed unified on organizational votes through the 43rd Congress, when these votes were largely symbolic. Staying together would be more consequential at the start of the 44th Congress (1875–77), which followed on the heels of the Democratic landslide in the midterm elections of 1874–75. The organization of the House was theirs to lose, as they controlled 176 of 292 seats (Dubin 1998, p. 235). Yet, the Democrats struggled for an identity, being comprised of a heterogenous group of members — protectionists and free traders,

19. Cox had served previously in the House as a member from Ohio and had run unsuccessfully for Speaker in the 38th Congress. After losing his reelection bid in 1864, he moved to New York, where he carried favor with the Tammany politicians. Eventually, he earned their trust and received their backing in his return to Congress. See Lindsey (1959).

inflationists and hard-money advocates, reformers and machine politicians, among others. Democratic leaders looked to the caucus to produce the framework for an organization.

As members began arriving in Washington, and as the caucus meeting approached, politicking on possible speakership candidates was rampant.²⁰ Eventually three candidates emerged — Michael Kerr (Ind.), a hard-money, anti-tariff intellectual; Samuel Randall (Penn.), a pro-tariff, pro-South, machine politician; and Samuel S. Cox (N.Y.), the Tammany-backed spoilsman and political opportunist — none a clear favorite. Fernando Wood (N.Y.) originally worked to receive the nomination, but withdrew on the eve of the caucus, devoting his energies to the canvass for Randall (*NYT*, 11/26/1875, p. 1; *BG*, 12/1/1875, p. 1).

On Saturday, December 4, 1875, the Democratic caucus convened. The first ballot read Kerr 71, Randall 59, and Cox 31. A second ballot was then held, with Kerr receiving 77 votes to Randall's 63 and Cox's 21. Finally, on the third ballot, Kerr emerged victorious, garnering 90 votes to Randall's 63 and Cox's 7. Randall was then recognized and urged the Democrats to coalesce in harmony; to that end, he moved that Kerr's nomination be made unanimous, which carried amid applause (*NYT*, Dec. 5, 1875, p. 1; *NYTrib*, Dec. 6, 1875, p. 2).²¹

When the 44th Congress convened two days later, the speakership balloting went according to plans: Kerr emerged as the winner on the first ballot, besting Blaine 173–106 on a strict party line vote.²² Kerr would then play his part in promoting party harmony and

20. See *NYT*, Nov. 26, 1875, p. 1; Dec. 1, 1875, p. 1; Dec. 2, 1875, p. 1; Dec. 3, 1875, p. 1; Dec. 4, 1875, p. 1.

21. For an extensive analysis of the speakership election of 1875, especially the Democrats' pre-caucus and caucus politicking, see House (1965).

22. The three scattering votes were cast by members who had caucused with neither major party.

maintaining the caucus-induced House organization by appointing Randall to chair Appropriations and Cox to chair Banking and Currency. To round out the major “money” committees, Kerr appointed William H. Morrison (Ill.), a midwestern colleague who shared his own policy views, to chair Ways and Means. Power was thus parceled out among the Democratic factions, with no one faction gaining an exclusive advantage on tariff and currency legislation as the House opened for business.

Kerr died shortly after the completion of the first session of the 44th Congress, leaving the speakership vacant. The choice of Speaker in this instance helped provide a footnote to the disputed Hayes-Tilden presidential race, since the winner would be responsible for protecting Tilden’s interests in the outcome of the affair. The race shaped up to be a reprise of the original contest earlier in the Congress, with Kerr removed and a couple of stalking horses added to the mix (William R. Morrison, Ill., and Milton Saylor, Ohio) in the event the caucus deadlocked. Tilden’s interest in the speakership contest led him to announce a preference for Randall. As the caucus convened, Morrison withdrew in deference to Randall and Saylor withdrew in favor of Cox. Randall narrowly prevailed against Cox, 73–63 (*BG*, 12/1/1876, p. 1; *NYT*, 12/3/1876, p. 7) and would go on to defeat James Garfield (R-Ohio) for the speakership, 161–82.

Randall would be reelected Speaker in the next two Congresses. In both instances, he was challenged in caucus, but survived with first-ballot victories. And, each time, Democrats rallied around him on the floor once the matter had been settled in caucus.

While it is perhaps not surprising that Randall held his party together on the floor at the start of the 45th Congress (1877–79), when the Democrats maintained a slim majority, the same cannot be said about the start of the 46th (1879–81), when the Democrats held only a plurality of

House seats. Overall, the 1878 midterm elections had been a mixed bag for the party nationally, as Democrats lost seats in the House, moving from a majority of 19 to a plurality of 9, but gained seats in the Senate, moving from a minority of five to a majority of nine (Martis 1989, pp. 130–133). The balance in the House was held by thirteen Greenbackers, third-party members who had presented problems for both Democrats and Republicans, as the lingering effects of the Panic of 1873 persisted and the implementation of the Specie Payment Resumption Act loomed.

Democrats from the south and west particularly argued that Greenback gains were a signal for Democrats to embrace soft money and tariff reductions as a way to regain the presidency in 1880. Practically speaking, with the election of thirteen Greenbackers to the 46th Congress, considerable Greenback sympathy among southern and Midwestern Democrats, and a small numerical Democratic advantage over the Republicans, the ingredients were in place for a return of antebellum patterns in the organization of the House. Randall's hold on the speakership was immediately cast in doubt once the midterm results were known.

Adding to the complications of organizing the 46th Congress was the deadlock that emerged at the end of the 45th Congress over the appropriations bills, particularly the Army bill, which Democratic House members were intent upon using to bar federal poll watchers from southern elections (Stewart 1989). The 45th Congress adjourned without the Army bill passing, which prompted President Hayes to call Congress into special session on March 18 to deal with the unpassed appropriations bills and ambassadorial nominations. Therefore, unlike most years, when speakership contests could unfold across a full calendar year and take advantage of the long summer/fall recess for the canvassing of support, the speakership contest of 1879 was compressed into a very small time window.

Three speakership campaigns emerged.²³ On the Democratic side, supporters of Joseph J. Blackburn (Ky.) organized quickly and actively, making explicit appeals to substance (i.e., soft money) and to region — on this latter point, the realization that southerners now constituted a majority of the Democratic caucus and that Blackburn had been a confederate general was lost on no one. Randall, preoccupied with House business, was less quick to act, but his supporters likewise set up shop. Not to be outdone, the Greenback central committee also established a campaign operation, headed by James B. Weaver (Iowa). Interestingly, not only was there little evidence of overt Republican organization for the speakership campaign, but the one mention of Republican efforts came in a reported telegram from James Garfield (Ohio) to Randall offering Republican help should he need it on the House floor (*WP*, Mar 11, 1879, p. 1).

Congress had been called into session on Tuesday, March 18, 1879. Under past practices, the party caucuses would have convened the night before the formal opening of Congress to decide on their nominations. In this case, however, the senior Democratic leadership decided that they were uncertain enough about Greenback strength and tactics that they would need extra time to organize if the caucus did not evolve smoothly. Therefore, the Democrats called their caucus for three days before the House's convening, on Saturday, March 15.

Going into the caucus meeting, both the Randall and Blackburn forces claimed substantial support — Randall claiming 93 votes locked up and Blackburn 69 (*NYT*, Mar. 17,

23. The following account is generally taken from the following newspaper articles: *BG* 2/11/1879, p. 1; 2/13/1879, p. 1; 3/5/1879, p. 1; 3/7/1879, p. 1; 3/8/1879, p. 1; 3/10/1879, p. 1; 3/13/1879, p. 1; 3/17/1879, pp. 1, 3; 3/18/1879, p. 1; 3/19/1879, p. 1; 3/24/1879, p. 2; *WP* 11/15/1878, p. 1; 11/11/1878, p. 2; 2/14/1879, p. 1; 2/15/1879, p. 1; 3/7/1879, p. 1; 3/11/1879, p. 1; 3/14/1879, p. 2; 3/15/1879, p. 2; 3/17/1879, p. 2; 3/17/1879, p. 1; 3/18/1879, p. 1; 3/21/1879, p. 1; 3/22/1879, p. 2; 3/26/1879, p. 1. *NYT* 3/7/1879, p. 1; 3/8/1879, p. 1; 3/10/1879, p. 1; 3/16/1879, p. 1; 3/17/1879, p. 1; 3/18/1879, p. 1; 3/19/1879, p. 1; 3/20/1879, p. 1.

1879, p. 1). If Blackburn's numbers were solid, then it spelled danger for Randall, and perhaps the whole party, since it portended the possibility of a multi-ballot affair in caucus that might spill over onto the House floor.

As the caucus was forming, a significant arrival was that of Samuel S. Cox (N.Y.), who had been identified as a possible nominee of the Greenbacks. Cox left the chamber when his name was placed in nomination, according to the custom, but his appearance and willingness to contest within the Democratic caucus was taken as evidence that the Democrats would be able to confine the conflict within the caucus itself.

A motion to vote in caucus by secret ballot passed; this was seen as a test of strength between the two candidates, which Randall won.²⁴ The roll call took an hour and a half to complete, and in the end, the pre-caucus support of each candidate had proven to be over-stated, but more so for Blackburn — Randall received the support of 75 members of his caucus, compared to 57 for Blackburn, and nine other votes scattered among Cox, John McMahon (Ohio), and William Morrison (Ill.).

Immediately upon the announcement of the tally, Blackburn entered the chamber and asked recognition from the chair. At the end of a “manly speech,” Blackburn made the following appeal:

I am a party man. I am a partisan, not for the sake of a party, but because I honestly believe the best interests of my country are to be subserved by the triumph of my party's principles. I have this to say: The edict of this caucus is to

24. Why Randall would have supported a secret ballot was never made clear in newspaper accounts but, presumably, Randall relied on southern support, some of which would have melted under public scrutiny. Thus, it appears that Randall had learned the long run lesson of the antebellum *viva voce* reform, which was that inter-sectional partisan alliances were more stable when cloaked in secrecy.

be final and conclusive, and if there be one among the 57 gentlemen whose partial friendship has given me their votes that hesitates or doubts, to him I now appeal to make the verdict of this caucus effective when to-morrow's roll is called. (*BG*, Mar. 18, 1879, p. 1; *NYT*, Mar. 18, 1879, p. 1)

Blackburn then continued, "I move you Sir, that the nomination of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Randall] for Speakership of the House of Representatives of the Forty-sixth Congress be made unanimous."

Whether the Democrats would in fact close ranks around Randall would only be known the next day. Since only four Democrats (excluding the nominated candidates) had been absent from the caucus meeting, any defection from Randall would be a sign of the caucus's weakness as an organizational tool.²⁵

Once the roll had been called and the House turned to the business of organizing, Randall and James Garfield were placed in nomination, as expected, by their respective parties. Gilbert De La Matyr (G-Ind.), a Methodist preacher whose one term of service was in the 46th Congress, caused a stir by rising and placing in nomination Hendrick B. Wright, a Democrat from Pennsylvania. This development caused a physical reaction from Randall and a ripple of worry among Democratic leaders. In the end, the worry was unfounded. The Democrats remained solidly behind Randall, as he collected 144 votes, to 125 for Garfield, 13 for Wright, and 1 for William "Pig Iron" Kelley (R-Penn.). Only one Democrat, Adlai Stevenson (Ill.), supported Wright.²⁶ The rest of Wright's support came from Republicans and Greenbackers.

25. Other than the nominated speakership candidates, the absent Democrats were identified as Wright (Penn.), Lay (Missouri), O'Reilly (N.Y.), and Culberson (Tex.). In the end only Wright abandoned Randall.

26. Wright, himself, did not vote. Martis classifies Wright as a Greenbacker during the 46th Congress, but all the press accounts, and his subsequent behavior in attending Democratic

In the end, the only true drama came when it was realized that Randall had received a majority of all votes cast, but not a majority of all *members elected*. As Omar Conger (R-Mich.) appealed to the Clerk to declare that a majority of all elected members was necessary for the selection of a Speaker, Democrats filibustered long enough to allow for the arrival of Daniel O'Reilly (D-N.Y.) from the train depot, who demanded to have his vote counted for Randall, thus leaving Conger's point moot.

For his part, Randall smoothed over the factional rift in his party through his committee appointments. Randall rewarded Blackburn by appointing him to Appropriations, after first offering him the chair of Banking and Currency, and to Rules (*BG*, Apr. 6, 1879, p. 1).²⁷ Since the most important piece of business for the special session was the negotiation over the Army appropriations bill, with its restriction on southern poll workers the sticking point, Randall's appointment of Blackburn to Appropriations and his continued chairmanship of the Expenditure in the War Department committee was more than symbolic — it was a strong signal that the national Democratic party was committed to dismantling Reconstruction.

Overall, Randall's committee assignments were viewed as equitably balancing the regional interests of his party (*BG*, Apr. 12, 1879, p. 1; *NYT*, Apr. 12, 1879, p. 5; *WP*, Apr. 12, 1879, p. 2.). Of the fifty-two committees, twenty-six were chaired by northerners and an equal number by southerners. The *Boston Globe* correspondent reported that the

anti-Randall element among the Democrats has been treated much better than it was two years ago — as well, perhaps, as could be expected, or as Atkins put it

caucuses, lead us to classify him as a Democrat in the 46th Congress.

27. A preliminary account that Randall had named Blackburn to chair Appropriations was in error. See *BG*, Mar. 18, 1879, p. 1.

today, “as well as was possible, under the circumstances; that is, as well as the speaker could do without reflecting upon his own friends.” (Apr. 12, 1879, p. 1)

The Democratic desire to court those with soft money sentiments was acknowledged with committee assignments that caused the Greenback members to be “highly pleased” (*WP*, April 12, 1879, p. 1). De La Matyr, who had acted as the leader of the Greenbacks when he nominated Wright, was placed on Coinage, for instance, and remarked that he felt his party had been treated handsomely. The same was not the case for the nominal Democrats who had dallied with the Greenbacks on the vote for Speaker. Wright himself, who had chaired Manufactures in the 45th Congress, was removed from the committee altogether, allowed to retain his seat on Public Lands, and given the chair of a select committee to investigate “the depression of labor.” This latter committee was viewed as a platform for Wright and accorded little weight as far as influence in the chamber goes.²⁸ On the other hand, Stevenson was appointed to chair the Mines and Mining Committee and given a seat on the Private Land Claims.

Thus, Randall, like Kerr and the Republican Speakers before him, put party interests ahead of his personal preferences, by preserving the organizational equilibrium that had developed around caucus decision making and the distribution of power (via committee assignments) in the chamber.

Factional Divisions and Threats to the Caucus Organization

While the congressional party caucuses would emerge to be critical organizational instruments in House politics between the 38th and 46th Congresses (1863-1881), the

28. The *New York Times* correspondent that analyzed the composition of the committee referred to Wright as a “lunatic” in discussing his assignments (*NYT* Apr. 12, 1879, p. 4).

equilibrium nature of their design would be directly challenged during the Gilded age.

Specifically, the binding commitment attached to the organizational party caucus would be tested by several intraparty speakership battles within a span of ten years.

The first such case would be in the 47th Congress (1881–83), when the Republicans regained control of the chamber in the national elections of 1880, riding the presidential coattails of James Garfield back into power. The world had changed considerably since their last period of majority control in 1875: the Reconstruction of the South had ended, the protective tariff and currency issues had come to dominate the national agenda, and clear factions within the Republican party had developed. This new context would frame the battle within the Republican caucus over officer selection, specifically the choice of Speaker.

Nearly a month before the convening of the 47th Congress, in December 1881, the jockeying over the speakership was already in full swing. Several contenders from different sections of the nation had emerged and descended on Washington, to set up their campaign operations in anticipation of the arrival of the Republican House members. These Republican speakership hopefuls were Frank Hiscock (N.Y.), J. Warren Keifer (Oh.), Thomas B. Reed (Me.), Julius Burrows (Mich.), Mark Dannel (Mn.), and John Kasson (Ia.) (*NYT*, Nov. 17, 1881, p. 1). A seventh contender, Godlove Orth (Ind.), emerged shortly thereafter.

For the next three weeks, the Republican speakership jockeying would be covered extensively in the national press. Of the seven candidates, three received the lion's share of the news coverage: Hiscock, who was perceived as the eastern candidate and front-runner going into the caucus; Keifer, who had sizeable support in the midwest; and Kasson, who was the leading

candidate of the west.²⁹ All of the others were viewed mostly as “favorite sons.” Nevertheless, there was a general belief that a first-ballot winner would not emerge; thus, the supporters of these minor candidates would be critical in the eventual election of one of the major candidates. As a result, newspaper stories were ripe with rumors of various “combinations.”

On December 2, 1881, one day before the convening of the Republican House caucus, a decided change in the “mood” of the speakership campaign occurred. Suddenly, Keifer was viewed as the frontrunner, as party bosses began cutting deals behind the scenes. To that point, any issues of concern raised in the press were sectional, with members from various regions discussing the role of geographical considerations in the distribution of power within the party. Now, the campaign appeared to hinge on ideological concerns, specifically the direction of the Republican party in the short term. Specifically, leaders of the party’s two major factions, the “Stalwarts” and “Half Breeds,” began to view the speakership as a chit in their tug-of-war for control of the party. The Stalwarts represented the conservative wing of the party; they were machine politicians who survived on patronage politics and thus opposed the reform efforts (like civil service reform) that had arisen in the late-1870s. They had been major supporters of U.S. Grant’s administration and Reconstruction, and had opposed President Hayes’ decision to forego the continued maintenance of a southern wing of the party. The Half Breeds represented the moderate wing of the party; they were less dependent on patronage politics and worked to design a more pragmatic party, especially one tied to the interests of the business community. They

29. See *NYT*, Nov. 17, 1881, p. 1; Nov. 25, 1881, p. 1; Nov. 27, 1881, p. 1; Nov. 28, 1881, pp. 1, 4; Nov. 29, 1881, p. 1; Dec. 1, 1881, p. 1; Dec. 2, 1881, p. 1; and *CT*, Nov. 27, 1881, p. 3; Nov. 28, 1881, p. 1; Nov. 29, 1881, p. 2; Nov. 30, 1881, p. 2; Dec. 1, 1881, p. 4; Dec. 2, 1881, p. 2.

were open to moderate reform efforts, supported the end of Reconstruction, and favored Hayes' approach of courting white southern Democrats.³⁰

Keifer's sudden rise was connected directly to a deal struck between two Stalwart leaders, former-Senator Roscoe Conkling, the New York party boss, and Senator J. Donald Cameron, the Pennsylvania party boss. Conkling considered Hiscock, his fellow New Yorker, to be closer to James Blaine and the Half Breeds, while he viewed Keifer, a former Civil War general, proponent of Reconstruction, and supporter of Grant, as more of a Stalwart.³¹ To maintain congressional patronage, and control of committees to which potential reform legislation would be assigned, Conkling and Cameron agreed to throw their influence behind Keifer. Cameron, in particular, was able to convince all but one of the 18 members of the Pennsylvania delegation to support Keifer, after many of them had previously pledged their support to Hiscock. These efforts were supplemented by the influence of President Chester Arthur, a Stalwart and former Conkling lieutenant, who ascended to the presidency after Garfield's assassination. Arthur's control of executive patronage was a useful tool in assembling a Stalwart House organization, especially in acquiring the support of the ten Republican members from the South.³²

30. For a more extensive description of the Stalwarts and Half Breeds, see Morgan (1969) and Doenecke (1981), and Peskin (1984).

31. Conkling did not view Keifer as a "prime" Stalwart, as Keifer had supported John Sherman (Oh.) and then James Garfield, rather than backing Grant, in the Republican National Convention of 1880. Still, Keifer was a loyal Grant supporter during Grant's presidency, while Hiscock had been a vocal Grant opponent in 1872. Thus, Keifer, in Conkling's mind, was the best option among the "eligible" candidates. See *NYT*, Dec. 3, 1881, p. 3.

32. For a detailed account of the Stalwart intrigue, and the role played by Conkling, Cameron, and Arthur, see *CT*, Dec. 3, 1881, p. 3; Dec. 9, 1881, pp. 4, 9; and *NYT*, Dec. 3, 1881, pp. 1, 4; Dec. 4, 1881, pp. 1, 8.

When the Republican caucus met on December 3, 1881, the speakership divisions were apparent. On the first ballot, thanks to the Stalwart efforts on his behalf, Keifer led the crowded field with 52 votes, followed by Hiscock with 44, and 50 votes scattering among Kasson, Reed, Burrows, Orth, and Dunnell. A second ballot was then taken, with very little change. It became apparent that an immediate decision would not occur, and, indeed, a protracted balloting was underway. Six hours and sixteen ballots would eventually be needed to settle the election. The individual ballot results are presented in Table 7-2. Keifer maintained his lead throughout, Hiscock steadfastly held on to second place, while the minor candidates persevered and remained in the race. Eventually, Burrows relinquished his voters following the fifteenth ballot, and Hiscock and Kasson immediately followed suit. Many of these voters swung their support to Keifer on the sixteenth ballot, providing him with enough votes for victory. Each of the minor candidates hoped by staying in the race that he might emerge as the compromise candidate. Yet, Keifer's vote-total remained strong, and Burrows, Hiscock, and Kasson finally acquiesced and allowed Keifer to take the nomination. In doing so, they hoped to be rewarded later in the committee assignment process.

[Table 7-2 about here]

The drama then continued with the nomination for Clerk. Edward McPherson of Pennsylvania, the former House Clerk in the 39th through 43rd Congresses, was the clear frontrunner in the pre-balloting period. However, McPherson had run afoul of Cameron and his Pennsylvania cronies during the 1880 Republican National Convention, and Cameron wished to exact revenge by denying him the clerkship nomination. Unfortunately for Cameron, McPherson was well liked by Republican House members and won an easy victory on the first caucus ballot,

collecting 92 votes to 42 for Joseph H. Rainey, a former House member from South Carolina, with seven votes scattering (*CT*, Dec. 4, 1881, p. 9). Two members of the Pennsylvania delegation — Samuel F. Barr and Russell Errett — refused to accept McPherson's nomination, however, and vowed to oppose him on the House floor. Three other Pennsylvania members also threatened to follow suit. A possible caucus bolt was in the offing (*NYT*, Dec. 5, 1881, pp. 1, 4).

The stage now shifted to the opening of the 47th Congress on December 5, 1881. As the Republicans controlled only 146 of 293 House seats, one short of a bare majority,³³ the party's caucus nominations seemed quite precarious on their face.³⁴ Despite receiving voting assurances from three minor party members — Independent Republican J. Hyatt Smith (N.Y.) and Readjusters John Paul (Va.) and Abram Fulkerson (Va.) — a successful Republican organization was susceptible to any number of possible defections: several disgruntled Half Breeds could hold out to challenge the Stalwart organizational plan; a sectional alliance could form to extract additional benefits; the Pennsylvanians could try to deny McPherson the clerkship, and so on.

None of these disastrous scenarios played themselves out. Keifer was elected Speaker on the first House ballot, receiving 148 votes — *all* of the 145 Republicans (he himself abstained) plus the three pledged minor party members — to 129 for Samuel Randall (Penn.) and eight for Nicholas Ford (Mo.), the Greenback candidate. McPherson was also elected on the first House ballot, receiving the *same* set of 148 votes (which, of course, included the full Pennsylvania

33. The Republicans would add five seats via election contests in the 47th Congress, bringing their total to 151 seats. See Jenkins (2004).

34. Third-party House members — Greenbackers, Readjusters, and Independents — numbered between 11 and 14 in the 47th Congress (depending on the party codes of Dubin and Martis).

delegation). Thus, in the face of the slimmest of party margins, the Republicans maintained perfect unity and the caucus nominees were elected.

And what of the threatened bolt by the Pennsylvania members on the clerkship election of McPherson? As noted, the said bolt did not occur, in large part due to the actions of J. Donald Cameron in leading his state delegation. As the *New York Times* (Dec. 5, 1881, p. 1, 4) reported:

Senator Cameron bitterly opposed McPherson's nomination, but this opposition will not be maintained against the action of [the] caucus.... [h]is prompt disavowal of sympathy with the action of the threatening Pennsylvanians is undoubtedly prompted by a sincere desire to preserve intact the caucus as a direct means of grace.

Thus, Cameron accepted the caucus decision and turned the partisan thumbscrew to insure its success. As a result, Barr, Errett, and all other Pennsylvanians who had considered a bolt "had been led to perceive the folly of the course they had marked out for themselves and their votes were found recorded for [McPherson]" (*NYT*, Dec. 6, 1881, p. 1).

Cementing the party unity on the floor, and the maintenance of the caucus-induced equilibrium, was the distribution of standing committee assignments, especially the committee chairmanships. Keifer took his time putting his committee slate together, amid almost constant speculation in the press, finally releasing the results more than two weeks after the conclusion of the speakership contest. The list was both balanced, to maintain harmony across the various geographic and ideological interests in the party, as well as tilted in some degree to reward his caucus supporters. Keifer appointed Hiscock, his chief rival, to chair Appropriations. In terms of his other speakership rivals, Keifer appointed Burrows Chair of Territories and Reed Chair of Judiciary, while placing Kasson and Dunnell to prime positions (the second and third spots) on Ways and Means. In sum, Pennsylvania received seven chairmanships, Ohio four, and New

York and Wisconsin three each, reflecting Keifer's winning coalition. The western states received a number of prime committee positions and chairmanships, and were provided with a stacked Coinage committee, which would be open to a liberal silver policy. Ways and Means was largely protectionist, but there was also widespread sentiment within the committee that a slight downward revision in tariff schedules was prudent.

Thus, amid squabbles in the G.O.P. caucus and in the face of a razor-thin partisan environment in the chamber, the caucus-speaker-committee institutional arrangement held fast and preserved a seamless House organization for the Republicans. While the organizational efficiency of this institutional arrangement was impressive, its normative aspects often drew criticism. At a time when the press had jumped on the government-reform bandwagon, the institutional equilibrium inherent in the House's organization reeked of corruption. The following editorial from the *Chicago Tribune* (Jan. 11, 1882, p. 4) captures this sentiment well:

The case of Mr. Speaker McKeever, *alias* Keifer, promises to become a leading case, so to speak, on the subject of abuses in the appointment of House Committees. Doubtless no Speaker of the National House of Representative has, for many years, reached the dignity of the gavel without having "traded" more or less in committee assignments. It is part and parcel of the spoils system which is the shame of American politics. "You tickle me and I'll tickle you," insinuatingly remarks the candidate for the Speakership to this and that member of the House. Precisely as the candidate for Congress offers a post-office, or a Deputy-Marshalship for a vote in convention, so the candidate for the Speakership offers this or that place or this or that committee for a vote in caucus... What could be more monstrous than the act of the Speaker of the House of Representatives in converting the committee assignments at this disposal into a certain kind of patronage to be distributed among those who howled the loudest for his election?

Arguments such as these aside, the institutional arrangement was securely in place, and from the vantage point of congressional party leaders, it was doing the job.

The very next Congress (the 48th) was another instance of party control of the chamber giving way to a contentious battle over the nomination followed by a unified front on the House floor. On the surface, the Democratic speakership contest in 1883 resembled the one in 1877, as the two major protagonists were Samuel Randall and a leading anti-protectionist from Kentucky, this time John G. Carlisle.³⁵ —

But party politics had changed in the ensuing decade, setting the stage for the triumph of a border state southerner. The end of Reconstruction had diffused regional issues *per se*. The issue of the protective tariff had risen to preeminence in national politics, with the great majority of Democrats favoring “tariff for revenue only.” This turn of events put Randall’s protectionist stance significantly out of the party mainstream; nevertheless, his allies fought hard for his reelection, and a spirited speakership campaign arose and extended over much of the year (Barnes 1931). Finally, on December 1, 1883, the Democratic caucus met and Carlisle emerged victorious, garnering 106 votes, to 52 for Randall, and 30 for Samuel S. Cox (*NYT*, Dec. 3, 1883, p. 1). One distinctive feature of the caucus was that the vote was taken *viva voce* — a decision that was regarded as a test of strength for Randall which he lost badly.³⁶ While the actual individual votes appear to have been lost to the dustbin of history, the state-by-state tallies have

35. Indeed, it could have seemed *exactly* like 1877, since Blackburn was initially a candidate for Speaker. Eventually, Blackburn and Carlisle worked out a deal in which Blackburn would contest the reelection of John Williams for the Senate, with Carlisle’s assistance (*NYT*, Aug. 30, 1883, p. 1). Carlisle publicly denied the tit-for-tat (*NYT*, Sept. 3, 1883, p. 1), but following the *Times* report, Blackburn was never mentioned in any press accounts as an active candidate again, and his efforts on behalf of Carlisle were regularly noted. Blackburn eventually defeated Williams in a nineteen-ballot contest. Although Carlisle’s name was consistently mentioned as the logical compromise candidate, he never consented to having his name put forward.

36. As in previous year, Randall’s only hope rested on his ability to gain the support from southerners whose constituents regarded Randall’s protectionist stance an anathema.

not; they are reported in Table 7-3 and reveal the strong regional structuring of the vote, particularly among Randall's support.³⁷

[Table 7-3 about here]

In keeping with past practice, Carlisle treated his chief caucus opponent, Randall, well, appointing him Chair of Appropriations and assigning him the third-ranked position on Rules (behind himself and his Kentucky ally, Joseph Blackburn). This maintained harmony among the two chief factions (pro- and anti-tariff) in the party. Carlisle would be unanimously reelected as the Democratic caucus nominee for Speaker in the 49th and 50th Congresses, and go on to win an easy victory on the House floor each time.

The Republicans returned to power in the 51st Congress (1889–91), and an intense struggle for the speakership nomination ensued. William B. Reed (Me.) eventually emerged victorious on the second caucus ballot. Like the Democrats in the 48th Congress, the Republican canvass in the 51st centered around the major ideological division in the party which also had a strong regional structuring. This issue in this instance was not focused on the tariff, but on industrial development and matters like currency and Mississippi River improvements. Republicans tended to sort on these issues as a direct function of how far their districts were from east coast money centers. As a consequence, the candidates who emerged were readily identified along an East-West divide. The eastern pole was anchored by Reed; the primary western candidate was William McKinley, Jr. (Ohio).

37. Further statistical analysis, not reported here, reveals that as much as region, the state delegations that stood the firmest behind Carlisle were also the least protectionist.

The westerners together received a bare majority of the votes on the first ballot, but a shift of seven votes toward Reed on the second ballot was sufficient to ensure his victory. Table 7-4 reports the first ballot distribution of candidates' votes by state. Three minor candidates — Joseph Cannon (Ill.), David Henderson (Iowa), and Julius Ceasar Burrows (Mich.) — were essentially favorite sons, who were available should the balloting become protracted. Reed showed his greatest strength in his home region as well, but also showed strength outside his regional base, which was also true of McKinley's support, to a lesser degree.

[Table 7-4 about here]

Reed moved quickly to mend fences via his committee assignments. He elevated McKinley to the chairmanship of Ways and Means and named him to the second rank on Rules — making him the *de facto* chair of that committee, too.³⁸ Cannon was allowed to claim the chair of Appropriations (he had been the ranking minority member for two Congresses), though he was demoted to third on Rules, to make way for Reed. Reed then split the “pork barrel” between Henderson and Burrows. Henderson was given the chair of Rivers and Harbors, having been the ranking minority member on the committee since the 48th Congress, while Burrows was provided with the chair of Levees and Improvement of the Mississippi River.

An odd coda ended the organization of the 51st Congress. On the whole, the caucus actions were ratified on the House floor when it convened to organize. Reed defeated Carlisle for Speaker, 166–154, and then the Republican nominees for Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Doorkeeper were elected “in a bunch” and without opposition (*NYT*, Dec. 3, 1889, p. 1). Then

38. The Speaker was the chair of the Rules Committee at the time. However, news accounts during this period make it clear that the Speaker often did not take an active role in the deliberations of Rules, leaving it to the second-ranked member to run its day-to-day business.

came the election of the Chaplain. When the resolution was presented to elect the Republican nominee, Charles B. Ramsdell, Joseph B. Cheadle (R-Ind.) moved to substitute the name of the incumbent (Democratic) chaplain, William H. Milburn.³⁹ The substitute passed, first with a teller vote, and then with a roll call vote of 160–155, with four Republicans bolting and supporting the Democratic chaplain. The roll call revealed the bolters to be Cheadle (Ind.), Hamilton G. Ewart (N.C.), Orren C. Moore (N.H.), and Herman Lehlbach (N.J.). As well, eight other Republicans absented themselves from the vote,⁴⁰ which allowed the Democrats to prevail with only four Republican bolters actually voting. Though the office was a minor one, this bolt alarmed Reed — who had tried mightily to convince them to stay loyal.⁴¹ This disloyalty demanded action, which Reed took in making out the committee assignments. Cheadle, the ring leader, was in line to chair the Claims Committee, but Reed denied it to him, demoting him instead to the third-ranking Republican on the committee, from the second in the previous Congress, and gave him no other committee assignment. Embarrassed and angry, Cheadle in fact refused even his one assignment (*NYT*, Dec. 23, 1889, p. 1), and went committee-less until he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Post Office Committee at the end of the session.

39. Why the bolt would be about the Chaplain is a bit of a mystery. The incumbent Milburn was a hardy partisan Democrat — it is said he was driven out of Connecticut for his Democratic sermons — but was well liked in the chamber and appreciated for his “brevity and directness.”

40. These were Thomas H.B. Browne (Va.), Benjamin Butterworth (Ohio), Alfred C. Harmer (Penn.), Myron H. McCord (Wisc.), James O’Donnell (Mich.), William D. Owen (Ind.), Lewis E. Payson (Ill.), and Jacob J. Pugsley (Ohio). Only one Democrat, William H. Forney (Ala.) was absent on the chaplaincy vote.

41. To indicate the perceived seriousness of this action, the headline in the *New York Times* (Dec. 3, 1889, p. 1) was “The Caucus Whip Broken,” with sub-headlines “Republicans in Dire Dismay from a Bolt” and “Party Discipline Endangered on the First Day of the Session.”

Reed's term as Speaker was both notorious and revolutionary, as he expanded the scope of the Speaker's parliamentary powers to explicitly and parochially favor the majority party. But his hold on the Speaker's gavel did not last long, as the Republicans suffered significant losses in the 1890 midterm elections, losses which were attributed to voter backlash against the McKinley Tariff — an interpretation bolstered by the defeat of McKinley for reelection, along with other Republican leaders like Thomas H. Carter (Mont.) and Joseph G. Cannon (Ill.).

Thus, the Democrats looked ahead to the 52nd Congress (1891–93), firmly in control of the House organization. Their Speaker nominee for the past four Congresses, John Carlisle, had been elected to the Senate, however, which set up a scramble for a new leading man. The outcome of the 1890 elections framed the Democrats' speakership canvass, emboldening the tariff reform forces as well as spurring the eastern protectionist wing into countervailing action.

In the end, two major candidates for the nomination emerged, John Q. Mills (Tex.) and Charles F. Crisp (Ga.). Mills had chaired Ways and Means in the 50th Congress and was the Democrats' leading expert on the tariff. He had framed a downward reduction of the tariff in that Congress, which died in the Republican-controlled Senate.⁴² Crisp, on the other hand, was known for his parliamentary skills, and had been at the forefront of the Democratic sparring with Reed over his use of House rules in the 51st Congress. Among the other candidates, William K. Springer (Ill.) had built a constituency in the Great-Lakes states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, while Benton McMillin (Tenn.) carved out support in the Border South. William H. Hatch (Mo.) had a more limited following, with advocates mainly in his home state.

42. For a detailed overview of tariff politics in the 1880s and 1890s, see Morgan (1969), Terrill (1973), Reitano (1994), and Bensel (2000). The Mills Tariff Bill, in fact, forms the major basis of Reitano's analysis.

As the opening of the 52nd Congress neared, Mills emerged as the front runner. He began actively campaigning, traveling toward Washington in October 1890, giving speeches throughout the South, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic, generating exposure and building his candidacy. To many, Mills' victory seemed a foregone conclusion. A correspondent for the *New York Times*, writing in the second week of November 1890, stated: "Unless the spirit of the Democratic Party is very much misunderstood, the majority for Mr. Mills will be so large before the caucus meets that all other competitors for the prize will withdraw and permit the election to be made by acclamation" (Nov. 10, 1891, p. 1).

By the third week of November, however, the early predictions of an easy victory for Mills appeared premature. Crisp had been campaigning hard, and decided to throw his future into the hands of the eastern wing of the party, with its preferences for more moderate tariff reform. In doing so, he received the support of the Tammany crowd and the followers of Samuel Randall, and with them votes in New York and Pennsylvania.⁴³ Crisp also broke with Mills on the currency issue, with Mills being a firm advocate of gold while Crisp supported bimetallism. This gained Crisp votes in the West. Crisp also was open to a return to patronage policies of years past, which appealed to machine politicians in places like Ohio and New Jersey, while Mills stood for reform on all fronts. Thus, very quickly, the choice between Mills and Crisp became a choice between the policies of former-President Grover Cleveland and those of his Democratic opponents. Mills was the reform candidate — in favor of significant tariff

43. Crisp was careful not to be pinned down on the tariff during his campaign. In the past, his voting record in Congress on tariff issues mirrored that of Mills. By the Fall of 1891, Crisp only made general references to tariff policy, and appeared to have assured the protectionists in the East that they would be treated well under his regime as Speaker.

reduction, opposed to free silver, and anti-spoils. Crisp was the candidate of the old guard — for protection (or, at least, more moderate tariff reform), in favor of free silver, and pro-spoils.

Through the end of November and into early December, the race heated up and became increasingly bitter, with accusations and insults flying between the Mills and Crisp camps. Coverage of the day-to-day happenings of the campaign were extensive in the media.⁴⁴ Springer, McMillin, and Hatch felt significant pressure to drop out of the race, but each balked. Thus, as the caucus date neared, Mills and Crisp were running roughly neck-and-neck, with Springer, McMillin, and Hatch seemingly commanding enough votes to prevent a first-ballot victory.

When the Democratic House caucus convened on December 5, 1891, the caucus members adopted a public ballot, so individual vote choices would be known by all. The first ballot revealed several divisions, with Crisp emerging as the top vote-getter with 84, followed by Mills with 78, Springer with 32, McMillin with 18, Hatch with 14, and Moses Stevens (Mass.) with 1. This would prove to be the first of 30 ballots that stretched over two days.⁴⁵ The breakdown of the balloting appears in Table 7-5.

[Table 7-5 about here]

The balloting proceeded as a form of political trench warfare. After 17 ballots and little movement, the caucus adjourned, to reconvene in two days. In the interim, politicking for votes

44. For coverage of the speakership race up to the convening of the caucus, see, for example, *CT*, Nov. 13, p. 9; Nov. 17, p. 6; Nov. 20, p. 9; Nov. 21, p. 9; Nov. 25, p. 10; Nov. 26, p. 2; Nov. 27, p. 10; Nov. 28, pp. 1, 12; Nov. 29, p. 10; Nov. 30, p. 5; Dec. 1, p. 1; Dec. 2, p. 1; Dec. 3, p. 1; Dec. 4, p. 1; Dec. 5, p. 1; and *NYT*, Nov. 13, p. 5; Nov. 17, p. 5; Nov. 18, p. 3; Nov. 19, p. 1; Nov. 20, p. 5; Nov. 21, p. 1; Nov. 22, p. 2; Nov. 27, p. 1; Nov. 28, p. 1; Nov. 29, pp. 1, 4; Dec. 1, pp. 1, 4; Dec. 2, p. 1; Dec. 3, p. 1; Dec. 4, p. 2; Dec. 5, pp. 1, 2.

45. For coverage of the caucus election, see *CT*, Dec. 6, pp. 1, 12; Dec. 7, pp. 1, 4; Dec. 8, pp. 1, 4; and *NYT*, Dec. 6, p. 1; Dec. 7, pp. 1, 2, 4, 6; Dec. 8, pp. 2, 4.

was widespread. Advocates for Crisp and Mills organized and began discussions with Springer, Hatch, and McMillin as well as their supporters. But the three leaders and their camps stood firm, and little was expected to change on the first ballot of the second day. The frustration of the “reformist” element in the Democratic party outside the halls of Congress was summed up by an editorial in the *New York Times* (Dec. 7, 1891, p. 4):

Ever since the people declared in 1890 by an overwhelming majority against McKinley and Reed Republicanism and in favor of a reform and reduction of the tariff, the sole reliance of the defeated party has been on the known treachery to Democracy of the leaders now backing Crisp, and on the assumed folly, stupidity, and appetite of a certain number of Democratic politicians. Messrs. Springer and McMillin and their followers have done all that they could do, so far, to justify the calculations of the Republicans. ... The injury inflicted upon the Democratic Party by the proceedings of Saturday [Dec. 5] cannot be wholly repaired. It will be impossible to efface the impression made on the country of the power of those leaders in the party who are Democrats for spoils, and not for principle.

When the caucus reconvened on December 7, the 18th ballot was not much different from the 17th, and the next three were more of the same. Between the 22nd and 24th ballots, some movement occurred, as Hatch withdrew from the race and Springer lost five votes. These former Hatch and Springer voters scattered between Crisp and Mills, but Crisp was the major beneficiary as he extended his lead over Mills from three votes to six. The next three ballots showed no change, as Springer and McMillin met with their respective supporters and held impromptu conferences with agents of Crisp and Mills. On the next two ballots, more of Springer’s supporters defected, and Crisp’s lead over Mills extended to ten votes. Prior to the 30th ballot, McMillin withdrew from the race and threw his support to Mills. Springer followed moments later with his own withdrawal, and threw his support to Crisp. The former Springer and McMillin votes scattered between Crisp and Mills, but Crisp again won out. When the

voting on the 30th ballot was completed, Crisp had emerged victorious with 119 votes, to 105 for Mills, 4 for Springer, and 1 dogged vote for Moses Stevens. Nominations for the minor officer positions – Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Doorkeeper, and Postmaster – were then dealt with quickly, each on one ballot.⁴⁶

Given the contentiousness of the Crisp–Mills speakership race, would the Mills men stand behind Crisp in the speakership vote on the floor? After the caucus had finished its work and elected Crisp, Mills when asked about the result replied: “I have nothing to say to the press” (*LAT*, Dec. 8, 1891, p. 1). Moreover, when the House convened the following day, the Mills men were clearly bitter at the previous night’s outcome (*NYT*, Dec. 8, 1891, p. 1). Yet, the party bond prevailed. When his place on the speakership roll call was reached, “Mills, who stood at the back of the House awaiting the call of his name, answered promptly and clearly with the name of his opponent [Crisp]” (*NYT*, Dec. 8, 1891, p. 1). When the roll call was finished, Crisp received the full support of the members who attended the Democratic caucus the previous night.

As with all the other highly contested party contests during this period, Crisp and Mills began their canvass with strong regional and ideological support forming their base of support, but the final distribution of support for Crisp ended up more evenly spread throughout the caucus, and he would reciprocate by distributing committee positions to reflect all the major voices in the party. But, first, he had to deal with those who had contested unsuccessfully for the

46. The minor offices elicited little interest in the caucus, except the Doorkeeper position. The New York delegation wanted to control the spoils of the office – the Doorkeeper at that point controlled over 150 salaried positions – and they required that Crisp and his advocates fall in line behind their candidate, fellow New Yorker Charles “Iceman” Turner, before they would promise to support Crisp’s speakership cause. This Crisp and his advocates agreed to do, and Turner was easily elected Doorkeeper.

speakership. The two speakership candidates who threw their support to Crisp — Hatch and Springer — received prime assignments. Hatch received the Chair of Agriculture. Springer was made Chairman of Ways and Means, which put him in charge of crafting tariff policy. Springer supported only minor downward revision – and in fact would oversee the crafting of small, targeted tariff bills, the so-called “popgun” tariffs – which thereby met the needs of the protectionist element that had backed Crisp. Giving the chair of Ways and Means to Springer was a rebuff to Mills, who was compensated with the chair of Commerce. McMillin was not given a chairmanship, but was granted the second-ranked spot on Ways and Means.

Crisp then worked to balance the key themes in the race: protection vs. tariff revision; gold vs. bimetallism; and patronage vs. civil service reform. To offset the selection of Springer as Chair of Ways and Means, Crisp appointed William Holman (Ind.) to chair Appropriations; this was an acknowledgment that some tariff reform was needed, as Holman was notoriously frugal and supported a reduction in the huge surplus that had been created by the protectionist aspects of the tariff. In addition, Crisp appointed one of his Mills’ supporters, John Andrew (Mass.), to chair the Reform in Civil Service Committee. This was a defeat for the spoilsmen in the party. Finally, Crisp selected Richard “Silver Dick” Bland (Mo.), who was the nation’s leading advocate of “free silver,” to chair the Coinage Committee. As a result, he would be in a position to dictate policy in the area, and thus push for an aggressive bimetal program.

Thus, despite an often acrimonious speakership race and a lengthy caucus battle, the Democratic party remained intact, thanks in large part to the caucus-speaker-committee institutional arrangement. Thanks to Crisp’s balancing of committee assignments, the “losers” in the speakership race were allotted a degree of power, which maintained party harmony.

A Stable Equilibrium with One Exception

After the conclusion of the Crisp–Mills contest in 1891, prior to the 52nd Congress, a relative peace pervaded caucus nominations. While each of the parties would continue to battle internally over tariff and currency issues, as well as larger issues related to populism and progressivism, the sanctity of caucus decisions and unity on matters of House officer selection would be respected by all. Indeed, the Crisp–Mills battle in 1891 would be the last instance of a majority-party speakership nomination in caucus extending beyond the first ballot.⁴⁷ As a result, the next significant threat to the majority party’s ability to organize the House occurred outside of the caucus, on the House floor. This episode, in 1923 at the opening of the 68th Congress, would harken back to the floor battles over House organization before the Civil War.

That brouhaha in the 68th Congress in fact had its roots in House politics over a decade earlier, corresponding specifically to the growing disaffection within the majority Republican party after the turn-of-the-twentieth-century. Young House Republicans — the so-called “progressive” Republicans — were increasingly unhappy with the Speaker, Joseph P. Cannon (Ill.), and the way that he used his powers to favor the interests of senior Republicans. As a result, spirited calls for reform emerged in the latter part of the 60th Congress, but fell just short of being enacted. A show of opposition against Cannon was then made in the Republican caucus elections in March 1909, in advance of the opening of the 61st Congress. Cannon, who had received the Republican speakership nomination by acclamation three previous times, received 162 votes, with 25 votes scattering and 30 absences (*NYT*, Mar. 14, 1909, p. 1).

47. In fact, over the next 13 Congresses (the 53rd through 65th) the choice for Speaker in the majority-party caucus would be *unanimous* on the first ballot in all but one Congress (the 61st).

The caucus vote on Cannon would be a harbinger, as the progressive Republicans, shortly after the House was organized, would combine with the Democrats in the chamber to reject the rules from the previous House, stripping the Speaker of many of his powers, specifically his ability to make committee assignments, and create a new, enlarged Rules Committee that would be elected by the House membership. This famous episode in the history of the House would have lasting effects, as this decentralization of power (from the Speaker to the committees) would remain the institutional status quo until the latter-part of the twentieth century.⁴⁸

More importantly for our story, however, is the *way* the revolt against Cannon transpired. While a previous move against Cannon occurred in the 60th Congress, and a symbolic coalition opposed him in the nominating caucus in March 1909, the progressive Republicans did not seek to topple him during the initial House organization in the 61st Congress. Despite possessing a pivotal bloc of votes, the progressive Republicans honored the caucus commitment — of the 55 Republican members who did not cast a vote for Cannon in caucus, only 12 opposed him on the floor. The other 43 backed his candidacy, which allowed him to be elected with 204 of 391 votes cast (*NYT*, Mar. 16, 1909, p. 1; *CT*, Mar. 16, 1909, p. 1). Only shortly thereafter, on the issue of readopting the rules from the previous House, did the progressive Republicans bolt the party and work to decentralize power in the chamber.

Thus, while disagreeing with Cannon's rule, the progressive Republicans recognized the short-term and long-term importance of remaining united on the election of House officers and

48. For a more detailed overview of the revolt against Cannon, see Ripley (1967), Holt (1967, pp. 16–28), Jones (1968), Palsby, Gallaher, and Rundquist (1969), Peabody (1976), Shepsle (1978), Rager (1998), and Schickler (2001, pp. 71–83); c.f. Lawrence, Maltzman, and Wahlbeck (2001), Krehbiel and Wiseman (2003).

organizing the chamber along the lines outlined in caucus. Indeed, after stripping him of some of his powers, the progressives had a chance to oust Cannon. Viewing the revolt against him as “vote of no confidence,” Cannon proposed to allow the House to deem the Speaker’s office “vacant.” And while the Democrats were eager to fulfill his wish, the progressives eased back and allowed Cannon to remain in the Speaker’s chair.⁴⁹ They were unwilling to join the Democrats on a compromise candidate, and they were equally unwilling to force the House into an extended speakership battle, which would damage the party. While they may have disagreed with the regular Republican leadership, the “partisanship of most of the [progressives] were as deep-dyed as that of their constituents” (Holt 1967, pp. 22–23).

The next eight years after the revolt against Cannon were quite tranquil in terms of caucus nominations. The Democrats returned to power and controlled the House from the 62nd through 65th Congresses (1911–19), and Champ Clark (Mo.) was unanimously chosen as the Democratic caucus nominee each time.

In terms of House organization more generally, one significant change did occur after the Democrats regained control of the House in the 62nd Congress. As they had run collectively on a reform agenda, the Democrats examined the chamber’s organizational bureaucracy and determined that nearly \$200,000 could be trimmed from the budget by eliminating “superfluous” House patronage (*NYT*, Apr. 2, 1911, p. 1; Apr. 4, 1911, p. 10; *CT*, Apr. 2, 1911, p. 6). The bulk of this savings (over \$120,000) came from the elimination of 102 jobs in the House organization — three in the Speaker’s office; 28 in the Clerk’s office; 42 in the Sergeant-at-Arms office; and

49. Only seven progressive Republicans voted with the Democrats to remove Cannon.

28 in the Doorkeeper's office.⁵⁰ In addition, the Democratic caucus, on the recommendation of the Democratic Committee on Committees, took the remaining patronage positions in the offices of the Clerk, Doorkeeper, and Postmaster and placed them under the authority of a new three-man caucus committee, the Committee on Organization. This new committee was to distribute the said patronage among the various state delegations, by ratio of the size of the state's Democratic contingent to the Democratic membership in the chamber (*NYT*, Apr. 2, 1911, p. 1).

While individual aspirants would still vie for these minor House offices, as there were still significant salaries attached to each, the Democratic reforms eliminated much of the coalitional competition. Because the patronage aspect of each officer position was stripped, they were no longer prime repositories for spoils and thus did not attract regional/ideological interests. As a result, over time, these minor officer positions professionalized, becoming much less distinctly partisan. Consequently, any subsequent intracaucus jockeying over House positions would primarily involve the speakership along with other emerging floor membership positions (majority leader, majority whip, caucus/conference chairman, etc.).

The Republicans returned to power in the 66th Congress (1919–21). In that and the succeeding Congress they selected Frederick Gillett (Mass.) as their Speaker nominee. Gillett's speakership was similar in spirit to that of Clark, that is, weak relative to the iron fist that characterized Cannon's reign of power. The decentralization after the "revolt" spread power throughout the chamber, and the majority leader and Steering Committee were in many ways more central to directing House business than the Speaker. Amid this decentralization, the

50. The remainder of the savings dealt with the elimination of six "useless" committees and the elimination of one month's extra pay to each employee annually.

Republican House agenda stalled, and the 1922 midterm elections reduced the Republicans' share of the chamber from 302 to 225 (out of 435) seats.

One set of Republicans that survived the electoral backlash in 1922 were the western progressives, the next generation of members who had initiated the overthrow of Cannon in 1909. They were upset at the myopia of the regular Republicans — the “Old Guard” — and blamed their overly conservative nature for the party's poor electoral fortunes. The progressives believed that a liberalization of House rules was required to free up legislation that languished in committees dominated by the regulars. Beginning in the lame duck session of the 67th Congress, the progressive Republicans began acting like free agents, cooperating with the liberal faction of the Democratic party on House votes and signaling that they would use their pivotal status to push for rules changes in the subsequent Congress.

The progressives made their intentions formally known on December 1, 1923, in the Republican organizing caucus. Gillett was renominated Speaker easily on the first ballot, winning 190 votes, but 24 votes from the progressive Republican ranks were cast against him — Henry A. Cooper (Wisc.) received 15 votes, Martin Madden (Ill.) 8 votes, and Edward Little (Kans.) 1 vote (*CT*, Dec. 2, 1923, p. 1; *NYT*, Dec. 2, 1923, p. 1).⁵¹ As the Republicans would count 225 House seats at the opening of the 68th Congress, compared to the 207 held by the Democrats, the progressive wing of the party, which confidently asserted control of 20–to–25 seats, would determine the balance of power.

The progressive Republicans demanded a revision of the House rules, to distribute power in the chamber more fairly, and intended to vote against Gillett unless they were provided with

51. Eleven members were absent from the caucus.

assurances to that end (*NYT*, Dec. 3, 1923, p. 1; *LAT*, Dec. 3, 1923, p. 11). Nicholas Longworth (Ohio), the Republican majority leader, announced in response that he was unwilling to compromise with the “insurgents” (*LAT*, Dec. 3, 1923, p. 11). Thus, an intraparty stare down occurred as the House was set to convene.

The progressives refused to blink. When the 68th Congress opened on December 3, 1923, the progressives broke from the regular Republicans and prevented the organization of the House. Four separate speakership ballots would be held, with no election. The results of the balloting are presented in Table 7-6. Twenty progressive Republicans, joined by two members of the Farmer-Labor party, opposed Gillett; seventeen votes were distributed to Cooper and five to Madden (*NYT*, Dec. 4, 1923, p. 1).⁵² Gillett and Finis J. Garrett (D-Tenn.) were running virtually neck-and-neck, each about 10–12 votes short of victory. Viewing no quick resolution, Longworth moved an adjournment until the following day. The progressive Republicans reiterated their call for rules reforms that evening, but Longworth and his allies would make no concessions, arguing that public opinion would support their position and force the progressives to yield (*NYT*, Dec. 4, 1923, p. 1; *CT*, Dec. 4, 1923, p. 1).

[Table 7-6 about here]

Longworth underestimated the progressives’ resolve. The House met again on December 4, 1923, held four additional ballots, and still no Speaker was chosen. The twenty progressive Republicans held firm behind Cooper and Madden, and Gillett made no gains. After the fourth ballot of the day (and eighth overall), Longworth moved an adjournment and reversed his

52. Madden declared himself not a candidate before the balloting began, and voted for Gillett. Richard Yates (R-Ill.) swung his vote from Gillett to Madden on the second ballot, but returned to the Gillett fold on the third ballot.

position. He offered the progressives a compromise — the rules from the previous House would be adopted for one month, during which time members could debate rules changes on the floor. After such debate, the House could then adopt any rules changes favored by a majority of the members. Progressive leaders were receptive, and a deal between them and Longworth was hashed out in a conference that evening (*NYT*, Dec. 5, 1923, p. 1; *CT*, Dec. 5, 1923, p. 1; *LAT*, Dec. 5, 1923, p. 1). The following day, Gillett was elected on the first ballot (and ninth overall), with 215 votes, to 197 for Garrett and 2 for Madden. Eighteen of the 20 progressive Republicans swung their support to Gillett, providing him with the margin of victory.⁵³

After completing the organization of the chamber, Longworth kept his promise and allowed debate on the House rules to proceed. Several changes were eventually adopted, the major ones being the development of a workable discharge rule (which required the support of only 150 members), by which legislation could be drawn out of committee, and the reduction in the power of committee chairman, via the elimination of the “pocket veto” that chairs used to stifle the will of the committee (Hasbrouck 1927, pp. 20–22; Schickler 2001, pp. 102–09).

The 1924 elections, with Calvin Coolidge providing strong coattails, increased the Republicans’ House majority from 225 to 247 seats. This gave Longworth and the regular Republicans a working majority in the 69th Congress, without having to cooperate with the progressives. Thus, the regulars saw this as an opportunity to tighten the party bond and force the progressives to fall in line. A first salvo would be made in advance of the Republican caucus in late February 1925, when it was announced that 13 progressives who had worked against the

53. Only William F. James (Mich.) and Frank R. Reid (Ill.) continued to support Madden. See *NYT*, Dec. 6, 1923, p. 1; *CT*, Dec. 6, 1923, p. 3; *LAT*, Dec. 6, 1923, p. 1.

party's presidential ticket of Coolidge and Dawes would be excluded from attending the caucus.⁵⁴

These 13 progressives — Henry A. Cooper (Wisc.), Edward Voigt (Wisc.), John M. Nelson (Wisc.), John C. Shafer (Wisc.), Florian Lampert (Wisc.), Joseph D. Beck (Wisc.), Edward E. Browne (Wisc.), George J. Schneider (Wisc.), James A. Frear (Wisc.), Hubert H. Peavey (Wisc.), James H. Sinclair (N.D.), Oscar E. Keller (Minn.), and Fiorello H. La Guardia (N.Y.)⁵⁵ — had thrown their support behind Robert La Follette's third-party presidential candidacy, and had also been part of the bloc that had held up the House organization in the prior Congress.⁵⁶

With the progressives barred from the caucus, Nicholas Longworth was nominated Speaker on the first ballot, besting Martin Madden (Ill.) 145 to 85 (*NYT*, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 1; *CT*, Feb. 28, 1925, pp. 1, 5). The Republican leadership then began planning a punishment for the progressives. Longworth and Bertrand Snell (N.Y.), Chairman of the Rules Committee, favored stripping the progressives of their prime committee assignments (*NYT*, Mar. 1, 1925, p. 20). The first formal decision in this regard occurred on March 5, 1925, when the Republican Committee on Committees (RCOC) removed Frear (Wisc.) from his seat on Ways and Means. The RCOC

54. Rumors of the exclusion of the progressives began almost immediately after the November elections. It was not made official, however, until January 29, 1925, when William R. Wood (R-Ind.), Chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, announced the decision. See *CT*, Jan. 30, 1925, p. 1; *NYT*, Jan. 30, 1925, p. 1; *LAT*, Jan. 30, 1925, p. 1.

55. La Guardia's exclusion is a bit more complicated. The regular Republicans contended that in addition to supporting La Follette, La Guardia had also become a Socialist (and won election on the Socialist ticket). La Guardia disputed this, claiming that he still was entitled to be treated as a Republican in chamber politics. His arguments were to no avail, however, and he went without a committee assignment in the 69th Congress. He would run under the Republican banner in the 1926 elections, and reassume more formal ties with the Republicans in the 70th Congress.

56. A similar scenario played out in the Republican Senate conference, where La Follette, Edwin Ladd (N.D.), Smith Brookhart (Iowa), and Lynn Frazier (N.D.) were excluded for refusing to support the Coolidge–Dawes ticket.

also announced that the progressives would find themselves at the end of the line when committee assignments were announced, which meant that they would receive nothing better than low rank on some very minor committees (*NYT*, Mar. 6, 1925, p. 1; *CT*, Mar. 6, 1925, p. 1; *LAT*, Mar. 6, 1925, p. 3). And, consistent with their decree, the RCOC announced early assignments to Appropriations and to Commerce, with no progressives selected.

The 69th Congress would not convene until December 7, 1925, leaving a good deal of time for the Republican blocs to iron out their differences. But Longworth continued to take a hard line. Declaring that he would work to return the speakership to a position of prominence in the House, he identified party unity as a critical goal in reestablishing a strong party organization. In that vein, the *New York Times* reported that he favored “vigorous warfare on all members who accept election as Republicans but refuse to work in harness with the organization” (Dec. 1, 1925, p. 27). To regain their status within the Republican caucus, Longworth determined that the 13 members of the progressive bloc had to support his speakership candidacy on the House floor. This would be the critical test of the progressives’ party loyalty. To underscore the threat, the RCOC met on December 5, 1925 and dropped progressive John M. Nelson (Wisc.) from the Rules Committee (*NYT*, Dec. 6, 1925, p. 1).⁵⁷

Rather than cave to Longworth’s demands, the progressives grew defiant. Once again they rallied around Henry A. Cooper (Wisc.), fellow progressive and elder statesman in the House, and vowed to resist Longworth and his “gag rule” (*NYT*, Dec. 7, 1925, p. 1; *CT*, Dec. 7, 1925, p. 1; *LAT*, Dec. 7, 1925, p. 1). When the 69th Congress convened on December 7, 1925,

57. A second requirement was that the progressives support the regular Republicans in rescinding the liberalized discharge rule (which required only 150 signatures) that was passed in the 68th Congress. This requirement, however, was never made a critical test of party loyalty.

the progressives were true to their word. Longworth won the speakership easily, receiving 229 votes to 173 for Finis Garrett (Tenn.) and 13 for Cooper. Of the 13 progressives barred from the caucus, eleven voted for Cooper, the twelfth member of the excluded group.⁵⁸ Only Oscar E. Keller (Minn.) buckled and voted for Longworth.

In his acceptance speech, Longworth noted the “unanimity” of his Republican support, and spoke at length in favor of “responsible party government” and against European style “bloc government.” In doing so, Longworth “read out of the Republican councils the handful of insurgents who opposed his election” (*NYT*, Dec. 9, 1925, p. 1). He then proceeded to oversee the rolling back the progressive-led rules reforms of the previous Congress, the first and most notable of which was the increase in the number of signatures needed to discharge a committee from 150 to 218.

In finalizing the House committee assignments over the next few days, the RCOC would perform the coup de grâce against the progressives. While the RCOC did recognize the progressives as “Republicans,” and thus as members of the majority party, punishment would nonetheless be severe.⁵⁹ The committee assignments for the 12 members who supported La Follette and subsequently refused to vote for Longworth appear in Table 7-7. For comparisons, their assignments in the 68th Congress are also listed.

[Table 7-7 about here]

58. These eleven were joined by Knud Welfald (FL-Minn.) and Ole J. Kvale (FL-Minn.).

59. The exception would be La Guardia, who was deemed a Socialist and treated as a third-party member for committee assignment purposes.

All of the progressives were clearly worse off in the 69th Congress. In addition to Nelson and Frear losing their seats on Rules and Ways and Means, respectively, Browne was dropped from Foreign Affairs, La Guardia and Schneider lost their spots on Post Office and Post Roads, Peavey was booted from Rivers and Harbors, Sinclair and Voight were removed from Agriculture, Shafer was dropped from Coinage, and Lampert lost his Chairmanship of Patents. And when members were allowed to retain their committees of origin, like Cooper on Foreign Affairs and Beck on Labor, for example, they were stripped of their seniority and placed at the end of the Republican contingent. In addition, many of these members were encumbered with minor committees, most of which possessed little value and dealt with mundane (but potentially time-consuming) matters. Oscar E. Keller (Minn.), the one member of the original bloc of 13 La Follette supporters who did end up voting for Longworth, was considerably more fortunate by comparison, retaining his Chairmanship of Railways and Canals, along with his seats (and seniority) on Claims and District of Columbia. Keller's favorable treatment by the RCOC was an explicit thumb-in-the-eye to his progressive brethren.

With their comfortable majority, the regular Republicans did not need to bargain with the progressive wing of the party in the 69th Congress. And the progressives loudly and defiantly maintained their independence throughout the Congress' proceedings. However, they had been marginalized; sitting outside of the caucus and inhabiting only minor committees, their ability to affect legislation was minimal. Thus, when the regular Republican leadership made a peace offering in advance of the 70th Congress — readmittance into the caucus, and thus reinstatement as “regulars,” in exchange for loyalty on matters of party organization — the progressives were receptive (*NYT*, Jan. 28, 1927, p. 7; Feb. 5, 1927, p. 7). And while only one member of the

progressive bloc, John M. Nelson, attended the organizational caucus on February 21, 1927, wherein Longworth was nominated by acclamation, there was a general understanding that they would fall in line behind the Republican choice for Speaker on the House floor.⁶⁰

And that is what occurred. On December 5, 1927, the 70th Congress (1927–29) convened, and Longworth was elected Speaker, receiving 225 votes to 187 for Finis J. Garrett. Eleven of the twelve dissident progressives had been reelected to the 70th Congress, and ten were present for the speakership vote.⁶¹ All ten voted for Longworth. In his acceptance speech, Longworth paid special note to the progressives' "homecoming." He declared:

I am particularly blessed to have received the votes of gentlemen who have been seated on my party's side of the aisle for the past four years but who on two previous occasions have preferred to vote for a candidate for Speaker other than the one proposed by the Republican majority. I welcome your return to the Republican Party, where you rightfully belong. I like to row in the same boat with that fine old veteran of a hundred political battles, Henry Allen Cooper, and with Nelson and Frear, and all of you (*NYT*, Dec. 6, 1927, p. 2).

Thus, just as Longworth had read the progressives out of the party two years before, he now read them back in. The tightening of the party noose, via expulsion from the caucus and sanctions in the committee assignment process, had done the trick.⁶²

60. While the Republican share of House seats fell from 247 in the 69th Congress to 238 in the 70th Congress, the regular bloc still possessed a relatively comfortable majority in the chamber. Thus, the Republican leadership did not have to bargain with the progressives. This was a case of Longworth showing leadership, by meeting the progressives halfway, in an attempt to mend fences and strengthen the party for the long run.

61. Voight was the only non-returning member, and Beck did not attend the opening of Congress.

62. For an overview of the conflicts between progressive and regular Republicans over matters of House organization in the 68th through 70th Congresses, see Berdahl (1949a, 1949b).

Were the progressives transformed into regulars? Hardly. They continued to maintain their maverick tendencies. Nevertheless, they were back in tow on matters of party organization, and the power of the binding organizational caucus was underscored.

Since the 70th Congress, the caucus-speaker-committees institutional arrangement has been extremely stable. There have been no election controversies on the House floor, and while caucus decisions have sometimes been contentious, no speakership nominations in the majority party's caucus have extended beyond a single ballot. Moreover, only once since the progressive revolt against Longworth in the 69th Congress has a member of the majority party supported someone other than the caucus nominee for Speaker on the House floor — in the 105th Congress, four Republican members opposed the reelection of Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.).⁶³

On the minority side, organization has been almost as stable. The progressive wing of the Republican party was a continued hindrance in the 1930s, especially after the party was pushed out of power in the 1930 midterm elections. Five progressive Republicans would vote for George J. Schneider (R-Wisc.) at the start of the 72nd Congress, rather than the caucus nominee, Bertrand H. Snell (N.Y.). Probably due to Snell's precarious hold on power in the Republican caucus — he had won the speakership (and, thus, the minority leader) nomination after a grueling eight ballot affair over John Tilson (Conn.) — the five progressives were not disciplined. Republican party defections also occurred on Speaker votes in the 73rd (1933-35), 74th (1935-37) and 75th (1937-39) Congresses, but Snell had by this time consolidated power and proceeded to punish the defectors — William Lemke (R-N.D.) and Usher L. Burdick (N.D.) —

63. The four Republicans were Thomas Campbell (Calif.) and Michael Forbes (N.Y.), who voted for James Leach (R-Iowa); Leach, who voted for former-House member, Robert Michel (R-Ill.); and Linda Smith (Wash.), who voted for former-House member Robert Walker (R-Penn.).

by placing them at the end of very minor committees.⁶⁴ More generally, the progressive element of the Republican party was driven out beginning in the 74th Congress, when residual members started their own Progressive party. They continued to weaken in strength until finally disappearing after the 78th Congress (1943–45).

No additional minority-party caucus violations occurred until 2001, when James A. Traficant, Jr. (D-Ohio) rebuffed the Democratic speakership nominee, Richard Gephardt (Mo.), and voted for the Republican nominee, Dennis Hastert (Ill.). As a result, Traficant was expelled from the Democratic caucus and had his committee assignments stripped (Cohn 2001).⁶⁵ The other case was Gary Eugene “Gene” Taylor (D-Miss.), who voted for John Murtha (D-Penn.) for Speaker in the 107th, 108th, and 109th Congresses. In doing so, he opposed his party’s nominee, Gephardt (107th Congress) and Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). Unlike Traficant, Taylor was allowed to remain in the Democratic caucus and was not (obviously) sanctioned. When the Democrats regained control of the House in the 110th Congress, Taylor did vote for Pelosi, in caucus and on the floor.

64. Lemke would vote for Paul J. Kvale (Farmer-Labor-Minn.) in the 73rd Congress, William P. Lambertson (R-Kan.) in the 74th Congress, and Fred L. Crawford in the 75th Congress. Burdick would join Lemke in voting for Lambertson and Crawford.

65. Traficant would later be expelled by the House, after being found guilty of nine rules violations dealing with bribery, racketeering, and tax evasion. He was then convicted of similar charges in Federal court and sentenced to serve eight years in prison.

Concluding Remarks

Recent rational-choice-based historical accounts are flush with examples of political actors searching for means to control the uncertainties of political life and the world around them. Many such accounts involve party leaders in Congress attempting to use (and manipulate) rules and structures for distinctly partisan gains (Stewart and Weingast 1992; Aldrich 1995; Binder 1997; Dion 1997; Jenkins 2004). The emergence of the binding organizational caucus in the House was another such partisan attempt. The final decade-and-a-half of the antebellum era witnessed serious organizational problems in the House, as speakership battles were becoming more common and extending over weeks and sometimes months. Difficulties in electing the other officer positions (i.e., the Clerk, the Printer, the Sergeant-at-Arms, etc.) only extended the organizational time line. Moreover, after all was said and done, the dominant party in the House sometimes was “rolled” on its choices, especially on some of the lesser officer positions.

As the Nation entered the Civil War era, Republican leaders sought an end to this organizational instability. This was made all the more pressing after a failed coup by the House Clerk at the beginning of the 38th Congress. The solution Republican House leaders settled on was to pull organizational decisions off of the floor and embed them in a party caucus, which would meet before the new Congress convened. Within the caucus, possible officer candidates would be debated and nominees would eventually be chosen; party members would then be bound to the caucus decisions. To instill and preserve party harmony, and to placate party factions that had “lost out” on the organizational decisions, the Speaker would disperse power liberally, through committee assignments and chairmanships. Thus, the party would explicitly

agree to coordinate on organizational matters, so that the House could begin functioning, as long as the power to control policy areas (via committee chairmanships) was shared.

Thus, an institutional solution was created to solve the instability in organizational choice, with the caucus serving as the institutional “glue.” Within this caucus-induced organizational arrangement, the Speaker was the lynchpin — his was the first (and most important) office to be filled, as it controlled the means (committee assignments) to disperse power within the chamber and fulfill the power-sharing agreement underlying the explicit party bond in caucus. Should a Speaker renege on the agreement, he (as agent of the underlying majority) would lose his authority and put his position (at that point, and certainly in terms of possible reelection in the future) at risk.

This caucus-induced equilibrium also provided a credible deterrent to defection from the caucus agreement. Should a member “bolt” the caucus, that is, agree to be bound but then vote against the caucus nominees on the House floor, he would run the risk of swift and severe punishment. Chief among punishable defections was to vote against the party’s speakership candidate (Hasbrouk 1927, p. 35). Ironically, such defections would be punished by the (subsequently elected) Speaker himself, or later by the party’s Committee on Committees, with sanctions taking the form of removal from important committees and/or expulsion from the caucus. The most famous example of such sanctions occurred in 1925, prior to the convening of the 69th Congress, when Republican leaders denied caucus admittance to 12 progressive members who had opposed Republican Calvin Coolidge in his 1924 campaign for President. When 11 of these members voted against Nicholas Longworth, the Republican caucus nominee for Speaker, they were subsequently read out of the party and stripped of their prime committee

assignments. Chastened, these progressives later agreed to follow party dictates on organizational matters, and they were allowed back in the caucus in the following Congress.

Thus, over time, the caucused-induced institutional equilibrium on organizational matters became an equilibrium institution (Shepsle 1986). That is, the caucus-speaker-committees institutional arrangement became a fixture of House organization during Reconstruction and has remained so, without interruption, through the present day.⁶⁶

Yet, the party caucus has not successfully broadened its authority into the realm of policy. The struggles of the Radicals during Reconstruction in this regard has already been documented. The Republicans continued to dabble with policy-based caucus decision making at various times, but never instituted caucus rules that were *strictly* binding on party members.⁶⁷ The Democrats *did* draft strict caucus rules on policy matters — specifically, a two-thirds rule that instructed dissident party members to follow supermajority caucus decisions — and for a time, after the overthrow of Cannon, attempted to institute a binding policy caucus (Haines 1915; Hasbrouck 1927, pp. 29–34). This arrangement spanned the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, and while successful on occasion, it inevitably ran into difficulties (with members chafing at the persistent

66. After the Cannon revolt, the Speaker became less influential in House politics, with the parties' Committee on Committees playing a larger role in staffing the various standing committees. In recent decades, the Speaker has reemerged as the central player in House politics.

67. To underscore this, the Republicans designated their organizational apparatus a “conference” rather than a “caucus” during the period of the Wilson presidency, when the Democrats pursued their binding policy caucus.

party whip, especially in the face of constituent pressure) and could not be maintained (see Green 2002). A binding policy caucus has not been attempted again since.⁶⁸

68. A related literature has evolved which examines the degree to which congressional party caucuses are binding on *procedural* matters in the House, specifically on rules-related votes that allow the majority party to expedite its policy agenda. Results on such “procedural party cartels” have been mixed. See, for example, Cox and McCubbins (1993, 1994, 2002, 2005), Schickler and Rich (1997a, 1997b), Schickler (2001), Peters (2002), Forgette (2004), and Jenkins, Crespino, and Carson (2005).

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Table 7-1. Summary of Speaker nominations in caucus, 38th–110th Congress.

Cong.	Year	Democrats					Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates	Republicans		
		D	R	Oth.	Margin pct.	Ballots				Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates
38	1863	72	86	27	7.6*	No choice			Schuyler Colfax (Ind.)	1	1	
39	1865	38	136	19	50.8	James Brooks (N.Y.)	Unknown		Schuyler Colfax (Ind.)	1	1	
40	1867	47	173	4	56.3	Samuel S. Marshall (Ill.)	Unknown		Schuyler Colfax (Ind.)	Unknown	No report	
41	1869	67	171	5	42.8	Michael C. Kerr (Ind.)	Unknown		James G. Blaine (Me.)	1	1	
42	1871	104	136	3	13.2	George W. Morgan (Ohio)	1		James G. Blaine (Me.)	1	1	
43	1873	88	199	5	38.0	Fernando Wood (N.Y.)	2	3.0	James G. Blaine (Me.)	1	1	
44	1875	182	103	8	27.0	Michael C. Kerr (Ind.)	3	2.8	James G. Blaine (Me.)	Unknown	No report	
						Samuel Randall (Penn.)	1	2.0	James Garfield (Ohio)	Unknown	No report	
45	1877	155	136	8	6.4	Samuel Randall (Penn.)	1	1.7	James Garfield (Ohio)	Unknown	No report	
46	1879	141	132	20	3.1*	Samuel Randall (Penn.)	1	2.2	James Garfield (Ohio)	1	1	
47	1881	128	151	14	7.8	Samuel Randall (Penn.)	1	1	J. Warren Keifer (Ohio)	16	4.1	
48	1883	196	117	12	24.3	John Carlisle (Ky.)	1	2.4	J. Warren Keifer (Ohio)	1	1.6	
49	1885	182	141	2	12.6	John Carlisle (Ky.)	1	1	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	2.0	
50	1887	167	152	6	4.6	John Carlisle (Ky.)	1	1	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	1	
51	1889	152	179	1	8.1	John Carlisle (Ky.)	1	No report	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	2	3.2	
52	1891	238	86	8	45.8	Charles F. Crisp (Ga.)	30	3.5	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	1	
53	1893	218	124	14	26.4	Charles F. Crisp (Ga.)	1	1	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	1	
54	1895	93	254	10	45.1	Charles F. Crisp (Ga.)	1	1	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	1	
55	1897	124	206	27	23.0	Joseph W. Bailey (Tex.)	1	2.6	Thomas B. Reed (Me.)	1	1	
56	1899	161	187	9	7.3	James D. Richardson (Tenn.)	6	3.9	Thomas B. Henderson (Iowa)	1	1	
57	1901	151	200	6	13.7	James D. Richardson (Tenn.)	1	1	Thomas B. Henderson (Iowa)	1	1	
58	1903	176	207	3	8.0	John B. Williams (Miss.)	1	1	Joseph G. Cannon (Ill.)	1	1	
59	1905	135	251	0	30.1	John B. Williams (Miss.)	1	1	Joseph G. Cannon (Ill.)	1	1	
60	1907	167	223	1	14.3	John B. Williams (Miss.)	1	1	Joseph G. Cannon (Ill.)	1	1	
61	1909	172	219	0	12.0	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	Joseph G. Cannon (Ill.)	1	1.3	
62	1911	230	162	2	17.3	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	James R. Mann (Ill.)	1	1	
63	1913	291	134	10	36.1	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	James R. Mann (Ill.)	1	1	
64	1915	230	196	9	7.8	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	James R. Mann (Ill.)	1	1	
65	1917	214	215	6	0.2*	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	James R. Mann (Ill.)	1	1	
66	1919	192	240	2	11.1	Champ Clark (Mo.)	1	1	Frederick H. Gillett (Mass.)	1	2.1	

Cong.	Year	Democrats					Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates	Republicans				
		D	R	Oth.	Margin pct.	Nominee				Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates		
67	1921	131	302	2	39.3	Claude Kitchen (N.C.)	1	No report	Frederick H. Gillett (Mass.)	1	1			
68	1923	207	225	3	4.1	Finis J. Garrett (Tenn.)	1	1	Frederick H. Gillett (Mass.)	1	1.3			
69	1925	183	247	5	14.7	Finis J. Garrett (Tenn.)	1	1	Nicholas Longworth (Ohio)	1	1.9			
70	1927	194	238	3	10.1	Finis J. Garrett (Tenn.)	1	No report	Nicholas Longworth (Ohio)	1	1			
71	1929	164	270	1	24.4	John Garner (Tex.)	1	1	Nicholas Longworth (Ohio)	1	1			
72	1931	216	218	1	0.5	John Garner (Tex.)	1	1	Bertrand L. Snell (N.Y.)	8	2.0			
73	1933	313	117	5	45.1	Henry T. Rainey (Ill.)	1	1.3	Bertrand L. Snell (N.Y.)	1	1			
74	1935	322	103	10	50.3	Joseph W. Byrns (Tenn.)	1	1	Bertrand L. Snell (N.Y.)	1	1.0			
						William B. Bankhead (Ala.)	No caucus		No nominee					
75	1937	334	88	13	56.6	William B. Bankhead (Ala.)	1	1	Bertrand L. Snell (N.Y.)	1	1			
76	1939	262	169	4	21.4	William B. Bankhead (Ala.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	1			
						Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	No caucus							
77	1941	267	162	6	24.1	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
78	1943	222	209	4	3.0	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
79	1945	242	191	2	11.7	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
80	1947	188	246	1	13.3	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	1			
81	1949	263	171	1	21.1	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	1			
82	1951	235	199	1	8.3	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
83	1953	213	221	1	1.8	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	1			
84	1955	232	203	0	6.7	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
85	1957	234	201	0	7.6	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	No report	Joseph W. Martin (Mass.)	1	No report			
86	1959	283	153	1	29.7	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Charles S. Halleck (Ind.)	2	2.0			
87	1961	263	174	0	20.4	Samuel Rayburn (Tex.)	1	1	Charles S. Halleck (Ind.)	1	No report			
						John W. McCormack (Mass.)	1	1	Charles S. Halleck (Ind.)	1	No report			
88	1963	259	176	0	19.1	John W. McCormack (Mass.)	1	1	Charles S. Halleck (Ind.)	1	No report			
89	1965	295	140	0	35.6	John W. McCormack (Mass.)	1	No report	Gerald R. Ford (Mich.)	1	2.0			
90	1967	247	187	0	13.8	John W. McCormack (Mass.)	1	1	Gerald R. Ford (Mich.)	1	No report			
91	1969	243	192	0	11.7	John W. McCormack (Mass.)	1	1.6	Gerald R. Ford (Mich.)	1	1			
92	1971	255	180	0	17.2	Carl Albert (Okla.)	1	1.2	Gerald R. Ford (Mich.)	1	1			
93	1973	242	192	1	11.5	Carl Albert (Okla.)	1	1.2	Gerald R. Ford (Mich.)	1	1			
94	1975	291	144	0	33.8	Carl Albert (Okla.)	1	1	John Rhodes (Ariz.)	1	1			
95	1977	292	143	0	34.3	Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (Mass.)	1	1	John Rhodes (Ariz.)	1	1			

Cong.	Year	Democrats					Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates	Republicans		
		D	R	Oth.	Margin pct.	Nominee				Nominee	Ballots	Effective no. of candidates
96	1979	277	158	0	27.4	Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (Mass.)	1	1	John Rhodes (Ariz.)	1	1	
97	1981	242	192	1	11.5	Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (Mass.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	2.0	
98	1983	269	166	0	23.7	Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (Mass.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
99	1985	253	182	0	16.3	Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (Mass.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
100	1987	258	177	0	18.6	James Wright (Tex.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
101	1989	260	175	0	19.5	James Wright (Tex.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
					0.0	Thomas Foley (Wash.)	1	No report	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	No report	
102	1991	267	167	1	23.0	Thomas Foley (Wash.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
103	1993	258	176	1	18.9	Thomas Foley (Wash.)	1	1	Robert H. Michel (Ill.)	1	1	
104	1995	204	230	1	6.0	Richard A. Gephardt (Mo.)	1	1.7	Newt Gingrich (Ga.)	1	1	
105	1997	206	228	1	5.1	Richard A. Gephardt (Mo.)	1	1	Newt Gingrich (Ga.)	1	1	
106	1999	211	223	1	2.8	Richard A. Gephardt (Mo.)	1	1	Robert Livingston (La.)	1	1	
					0.0				Dennis Hastert (Ill.)	1	1	
107	2001	212	221	2	2.1	Richard A. Gephardt (Mo.)	1	1	Dennis Hastert (Ill.)	1	1	
108	2003	204	229	1	5.8	Nancy Pelosi (Calif.)	1	1.3	Dennis Hastert (Ill.)	1	1	
109	2005	202	232	1	6.9	Nancy Pelosi (Calif.)	1	1	Dennis Hastert (Ill.)	1	1	
110	2007	233	202	0	7.1	Nancy Pelosi (Calif.)	1	1	John A. Boehner (Ohio)	1	1.3	

*Plurality

Note: Names in **bold** indicate the eventual House choice for Speaker.

Table 7-2. Speakership nomination ballots in the Republican caucus, 47th Congress

	December 3, 1881															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Keifer (Oh.)	52	55	55	55	56	54	51	51	56	56	55	56	59	58	61	93
Hiscock (N.Y.)	44	41	38	35	32	34	34	34	35	38	40	39	37	35	34	18
Kasson (Ia.)	15	16	19	20	19	18	16	17	19	17	16	16	16	17	16	10
Reed (Me.)	13	12	12	15	18	18	20	18	13	14	14	11	13	13	13	11
Burrows (Mich.)	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	11	1
Orth (Ind.)	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	8	9	8	8	8	8	8	7	8
Dunnell (Minn.)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3
Total	146	145	145	146	146	145	145	142	146	146	146	142	147	145	145	144

Source: *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 1881, p. 1.

Note: Thirteenth ballot thrown out, as there was one vote in excess of the total number of members present.

Table 7-3. Caucus support for Democratic Speaker candidates, 48th Congress.

State	Carlisle	Randall	Cox
Alabama	3	4	1
Arkansas	5	0	0
California	2	1	3
Connecticut	0	3	0
Delaware	1	0	0
Florida	1	0	0
Georgia	8	1	0
Illinois	7	0	1
Indiana	7	1	1
Iowa	3	0	1
Kentucky	8	0	0
Louisiana	4	1	0
Maryland	0	4	0
Massachusetts	1	0	2
Michigan	6	0	0
Mississippi	5	0	0
Missouri	11	0	2
Nevada	1	0	0
New Jersey	0	3	0
New York	0	7	13
North Carolina	4	2	0
Ohio	2	6	5
Pennsylvania	0	11	0
South Carolina	4	2	0
Tennessee	5	2	1
Texas	10	0	0
Virginia	1	3	0
West Virginia	2	1	0
Wisconsin	5	0	0
Total	106	52	30

Sources: *BG*, Dec. 2, 1883, p. 1; *NYT*, Dec. 2, 1883, p. 1; *WP*, Dec. 3, 1883, p. 1.

Table 7-4. First ballot caucus support for Republican Speaker candidates, 51st Congress.

	Burrows	Cannon	Henderson	McKinley	Reed	Total
California	0	1	0	1	1	3
Colorado	0	0	0	1	0	1
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	3	3
Illinois	0	13	0	0	0	13
Indiana	0	1	0	1	1	3
Iowa	0	0	9	0	0	9
Kansas	0	3	0	0	4	7
Kentucky	0	0	1	1	0	2
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	1	1
Maine	0	0	0	0	4	4
Maryland	0	0	1	1	0	2
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	10	10
Michigan	9	0	0	0	0	9
Minnesota	0	2	0	1	2	5
Missouri	0	0	0	3	1	4
Montana	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nebraska	0	0	1	0	2	3
Nevada	0	1	0	0	0	1
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	2	2
New Jersey	0	0	1	1	1	4
New York	0	0	1	0	18	19
North Carolina	0	0	0	1	2	3
North Dakota	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ohio	0	0	0	16	0	16
Pennsylvania	0	0	0	6	15	21
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	2	2
South Dakota	0	1	1	0	0	2
Tennessee	0	0	0	2	0	2
Vermont	0	0	0	0	2	2
Virginia	1	0	0	1	0	2
Washington	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wisconsin	0	0	0	1	6	7
Total	10	22	16	39	78	165

Source: *CT*, Dec. 1, 1889, p. 1.

Table 7-5. Speakership nomination ballots in the Democratic caucus, 52nd Congress.

	December 5, 1891																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Crisp (Ga.)	84	89	91	93	95	95	94	94	95	94	93	92	94	93	92	94	94
Mills (Tx.)	78	80	82	87	89	89	91	91	91	90	89	89	91	89	89	91	91
Springer (Ill.)	32	28	24	20	20	20	18	17	16	17	16	19	16	17	19	17	19
McMillin (Tenn.)	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	20	19	20	19	17	19	17
Hatch (Mo.)	14	11	11	8	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Stevens (Mass.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	---	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	227	227	227	227	227	227	227	227	227	225	224	225	227	224	223	227	227
	December 7, 1891																
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
Crisp (Ga.)	94	94	92	94	95	100	101	101	101	101	103	104	119				
Mills (Tx.)	90	91	90	91	93	95	95	95	95	95	96	94	105				
Springer (Ill.)	17	17	17	17	15	13	12	12	12	12	8	9	4				
McMillin (Tenn.)	19	19	17	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	---				
Hatch (Mo.)	5	5	5	5	4	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---				
Stevens (Mass.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Total	226	227	222	227	227	228	228	228	228	228	227	227	229				

Source: *NYT*, Dec. 8, 1891, p. 2.

Table 7-6. Speakership balloting on the House Floor, 68th Congress

	Dec. 3, 1923					Dec. 4, 1923			Dec. 5
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Frederick H. Gillett (R-Mass.)	198	195	195	197	197	195	198	197	215
Finis J. Garrett (D-Tenn.)	195	193	196	196	197	197	198	198	197
Henry A. Cooper (R-Wisc.)	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	—
Martin B. Madden (R-Ill.)	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	2

Source: *NYT*, Dec. 4, 1923, p. 1; Dec. 5, 1923, p. 1; Dec. 6, 1923, p. 1.

Table 7-7. Progressive House Republicans and Committee Assignments, 68th and 69th Congresses

Member	68th Congress: Committee (Rank)	69th Congress: Committee (Rank)
Joseph D. Beck (Wisc.)	Labor (2) Railways and Canals (3) Claims (5) Expenditures in Dept. of Agriculture (3)	Labor (8) Railways and Canals (6) Claims (9)
Edward E. Browne (Wisc.)	Foreign Affairs (4)	Alcohol Liquor Traffic (4) Civil Service (8) Expenditures in the Dept. of State (3)
Henry A. Cooper (Wisc.)	Foreign Affairs (7)	Foreign Affairs (13)
James A. Frear (Wisc.)	Ways and Means (5)	Expenditures in the Dept. of Justice (4) Flood Control (9) Indian Affairs (13)
Fiorella H. La Guardia (N.Y.)	Post Office and Post Roads (8)	Alcohol Liquor Traffic (Third-1) Public Buildings and Grounds (Third-1) Public Lands (Third-2) Woman Suffrage (Third-1)
Florian Lampert (Wisc.)	Patents (Chair) Coinage, Weights, and Measures (2) District of Columbia (3) Expenditures in Dept. of Navy (2)	Patents (7) Coinage, Weights, and Measures (9) District of Columbia (13) Territories (10)
John M. Nelson (Wisc.)	Rules (5) Invalid Pensions (3) Roads (3)	Expenditures in the Dept. of Interior (4) Invalid Pensions (8) Roads (13)

Member	68th Congress: Committee (Rank)	69th Congress: Committee (Rank)
Hubert H. Peavey (Wisc.)	Rivers and Harbors (11)	Expenditures in the Post Office Dept. (4) Mileage (4) War Claims (9)
John C. Schafer (Wisc.)	Coinage, Weights, and Measures (8) Insular Affairs (10) Expenditures in the Dept. of War (4)	Railways and Canals (8) Woman Suffrage (3) Expenditures in the Dept. of War (4)
George J. Schneider (Wisc.)	Post Office and Post Roads (12)	Expenditures in the Dept. of Interior (3) Railways and Canals (7)
James H. Sinclair (N.D.)	Agriculture (8)	Alcohol and Liquor Traffic (5) Expenditures in the Dept. of State (4) War Claims (8)
Edward Voight (Wisc.)	Agriculture (4)	Census (10) Expenditures in the Dept. of Agriculture (4) Pensions (8) Revision of Laws (8)

Source: Canon, Nelson, and Stewart (2002)