Political Research Quarterly
2017, Vol. 70(1) 82–97

DOI: 10.1177/1065912916674605
journals.sagepub.com/home/prq
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From Rolls to Disappointments: Examining the Other Source of Majority Party Failure in Congress

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Abstract

Much of the literature on partisan agenda setting in Congress focuses on the majority's ability to exercise negative agenda control. As a result, the empirical emphasis has been on "rolls," or how often the majority of the majority party opposes legislation that nonetheless passes. Although interesting, rolls are only one source of majority party failure. The other source, largely unexplored in the literature, is when the majority of the majority party supports legislation that is subsequently defeated. These cases represent "disappointments," and are a means to determine how effective the majority party is at exercising positive agenda control. Making some basic modifications to a standard spatial model of agenda setting, we articulate why and where we might expect the majority party to fail to exercise positive agenda control effectively. We then derive hypotheses regarding (1) which members should vote "no" on roll calls that result in a disappointment and (2) why disappointments vary on a Congress-by-Congress basis across time, and test them using a dataset of final-passage votes on House bills in the post-Reconstruction era.

Keywords

majority party power, U.S. House, positive agenda control

Introduction

In recent years, legislative scholars interested in studying majority party power in Congress have increasingly shifted their attention from the floor to the pre-floor stage. Specifically, they have spent less time looking for evidence of "arm twisting"—wherein party leaders would pressure members to vote against their true preferences on the floor—and more time considering the partisan benefits associated with agenda setting. With the advent of Cox and McCubbins' (2002, 2005) "cartel agenda model" (CAM), the central focus has been to study the degree to which majority party leaders can exercise *negative agenda control*, or prevent legislative outcomes from occurring that would harm a majority of their co-partisans. From an empirical perspective, scholars have sought to determine how effective majority leaders have been in their "gatekeeping" efforts by assessing how often the majority has been "rolled" on some category of votes (usually final-passage votes)—or, more plainly, how often a majority of the majority has opposed legislation that has gone on to pass.

Thanks to the growing popularity of the CAM, the "roll" has become a widely used metric in scholars' search for significant party influence. This has been true not only in terms of work on the House of Representatives,[1] the legislative setting in which the CAM was explicitly designed, but also the Senate,[2] U.S. state legislatures,[3] and legislatures in other countries.[4] And whereas the attention devoted to negative agenda control and rolls has generated a windfall in terms of our collective knowledge of majority party power in a legislative setting, it has also led to a somewhat narrow view of agenda power and majority party effectiveness more generally.

In this paper, we focus on a different aspect of agenda power, by examining whether majority party leaders exercise *positive agenda control*, or produce legislative outcomes that a majority of their co-partisans support. In so doing, we move beyond rolls, the standard metric of majority party failure, and look instead at "disappointments," a *different* metric of majority party failure. A disappointment occurs when a majority of the majority supports legislation that subsequently goes down to defeat. A disappointment is thus a failure of positive

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Table 1. Typology of Agenda-Setting Outcomes.

		Proposal outcome	
		Pass	Fail
Agenda setter position	Support	Success	Disappointment
	Oppose	Roll	Block

Source. Jenkins and Monroe (2016).

agenda control, making it an analog to a roll, which is a failure of negative agenda control.

Because disappointments are relatively unknown, we focus first on introducing the concept, and do so by positioning disappointments within the broader class of agenda-setting outcomes. Then, we develop a special case of Krehbiel, Meirowitz, and Wiseman's (2015; hereafter, KMW) competitive theory of lawmaking as a means of understanding the theoretical tenets of disappointments' occurrence—that is, why and where might we expect the majority party to fail to exercise positive agenda control effectively and thus suffer disappointments. We then derive two hypotheses regarding disappointments from our theoretical extension of KMW's work—which majority party members should vote "no" on roll calls that result in a disappointment, and why disappointments vary on a Congress-by-Congress basis across time—and test them using data on final-passage votes on House bills in the post-Reconstruction era. Finally, we conclude with a summary of our argument and a discussion of future directions for this line of research.

From Rolls to Disappointments

As suggested, legislative scholars have focused considerable attention on rolls when analyzing roll-call voting outcomes to search for majority party effects. This is understandable, given the influence that Cox and McCubbins' procedural cartel theory has had in the agenda-setting literature. But the emphasis on negative agenda control (which underlies procedural cartel theory), and the failure of the majority to exercise it, significantly limits our understanding of agenda power and the full range of (potential) outcomes that result at the roll-call stage.

Jenkins and Monroe (2016) seek to address this limitation by developing a typology of agenda-setting outcomes, which is derivative of two pieces of information: (1) whether a relevant actor/group supports or opposes a given proposal and (2) whether the proposal passes or fails. This yields four distinct agenda-setting outcomes—"success," "disappointment," "roll," and "block"—which are illustrated in Table 1. Outcomes associated with positive agenda control (successes and disappointments) are in the top row, whereas outcomes associated with negative agenda control (rolls and blocks) are in the bottom row.

The theoretical circumstance and usefulness of rolls—where an agenda setter opposes a proposal that nonetheless passes—are well known. A roll indicates a *failure* to effectively exercise negative agenda control. The other three agenda-setting outcomes, by comparison, are much less understood. For example, other than the analysis found in Jenkins and Monroe (2016), successes have received little attention (see only Jenkins and Nokken 2008a), whereas blocks have been ignored entirely. Disappointments have been referenced—mostly in passing to note that they constitute a different type of "loss" than rolls (Carson, Monroe, and Robinson 2011; Cox 2006; Cox and McCubbins 2011)—but have not been examined in any kind of systematic way. Stated simply, the literature's over-focus on rolls has largely crowded out the study of the other three agenda-setting outcomes and associated measures. This leaves an especially large gap with respect to positive agenda control outcomes.

If a proposal supported by the agenda setter gets to the floor and passes—resulting in a success—this indicates the effective exercise of positive agenda control. But, to get a complete picture of positive agenda power, one must also look at disappointments, those cases in which an agenda setter supports a proposal that subsequently goes down to defeat. Disappointments—which are in fact nearly as common as rolls in the modern era—often arise on major issues. A scan of the online appendix, which lists all majority party disappointments in the House on chamber-originating (H.R.) bills from the 45th through the 113th Congresses, reveals numerous controversial and important policy areas: appropriations, debt limit increases, foreign aid, budget reform, farm aid, and energy policy.[5]

Our focus in the remainder of this paper is to analyze disappointments systematically, which will reveal more about the "other" source of majority party failure in Congress and thereby shed light on the majority's ability to exercise positive agenda control. Although disappointments may not occur often in the modern U.S. House, where party leaders rarely move forward on a proposal unless they know in advance that they have the votes, the House majority may have had a different tolerance for being disappointed in previous eras, something that can only be assessed by an across-time analysis. Moreover, the incidence of disappointments may vary based on factors such as ambition or perceived opportunity for success on the part of the majority party.

To conduct our analysis of disappointments, we will follow Cox and McCubbins (and others) and examine final-passage votes in the U.S. House in the post-Reconstruction era. Before turning to the data, however, we first provide some theoretical foundations for disappointments—specifically, articulating why and where disappointments should

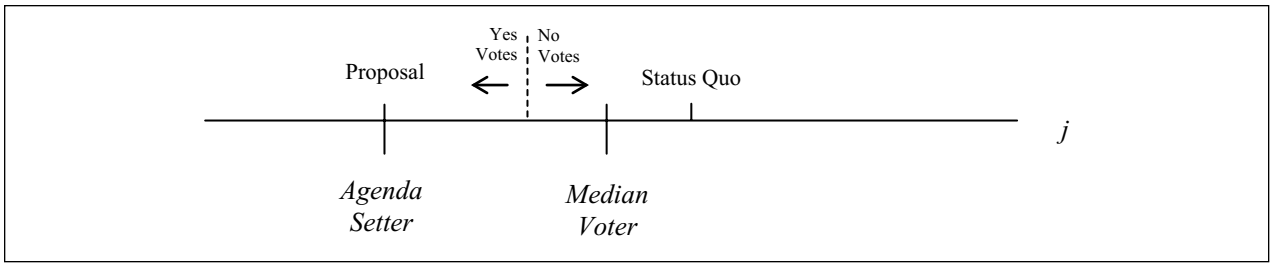

Figure 1. A spatial example of a disappointment.

occur using a standard, but slightly modified, spatial model of agenda setting.

A Spatial Theory of Disappointments

An agenda setter's success in passing a proposal or her disappointment in its failing is predicated on a spatial theory of positive agenda power. The agenda setter's ability to advance proposals with a high likelihood of passing (resulting in a success), and alternatively a small likelihood of failure (ending in a disappointment), depends on the location of the status quo in a one-dimensional policy space. Below we state the basics of this theory and elaborate on how disappointments can result.

The theory we articulate here is a special case of the "monopartisan" condition of KMW's (2015) theory of competitive partisan lawmaking. KMW describe the monopartisan iteration of their game as

> the baseline case in which the majority party monopolizes both procedural rights and transferable resources. This game is a close analytic approximation of Cox and McCubbins's (2005) verbal discussion of a "procedural cartel," and is analytically identical to Snyder's one-sided vote-buying model with an endogenous proposal (1991, Proposition 2). An empirical manifestation of the procedure is the US House of Representatives' closed rule, that is, a single up or down vote on a proposal that was generated by a centralized majority party leadership. (428)

The implication that we derive here is a special case of KMW (and, as they note, Snyder 1991), in that we consider vote-buying *failures*, whereas KMW consider only the equilibrium conditions in which vote-buying attempts are successful. Still, though we adopt slightly different notation here, we view the following theoretical exercise to be an extension of KMW and Snyder.[6]

To begin, consider the scenario in Figure 1. In this single-dimensional policy space, j, a median voter is pivotal in passing legislation. A status quo lies to the right of the median voter, and an agenda setter (who is to the left of the median) proposes a new policy near her ideal point. However, the distance between the new policy and the median voter is greater than the distance between the median voter and the status quo, and thus the new policy (proposed at this location) would fail if we assume that legislators have single-peaked, symmetric preferences and vote sincerely based solely on policy distance.

Another way to conceptualize this failure is that the "cut point"—the dotted line denoting the location where an imaginary legislator would be indifferent between the new policy and the status quo—is to the left of the median voter. To successfully pass a new policy, the median voter must reside on the "yes votes" side of the cut point. So how might the agenda setter achieve this?

One way would be to do a better job of placing the proposal. In this example, the agenda setter would need to move the proposal just close enough to the median voter to elicit a "yes" vote from that legislator based on sincere policy-distance preference. A second option is for the agenda setter to buy votes. In our Figure 1 example, that would mean that the agenda setter would need to use side-payments (of some form) to persuade all of the legislators from the cut point through the median voter to vote "yes" instead of "no" (and thus vote against their sincere policy preferences). These two tools for legislative success lay the foundation for thinking about positive agenda control generally and disappointments specifically; that is, unsuccessful attempts to exercise positive agenda control occur because of a failure to properly place new policy proposals or a failure to successfully buy votes, or both.

Given these assumptions as to *why* disappointments occur, we consider a more general model of positive agenda power to understand *where* they are likely to occur. Figure 2 takes our previous policy space, with an agenda setter and a median voter, and breaks it into five regions.[7] We depart from the standard CAM by assuming that the agenda setter can do more than simply block proposals at the pre-floor stage or face an open rule on the floor—specifically, following KMW, we assume that the agenda setter can both (1) place proposals and (2) buy votes.

First, consider status quos in Region 1. Here, risk of failure for the agenda setter is negligible—as she could simply allow these status quos to move to the median voter's ideal

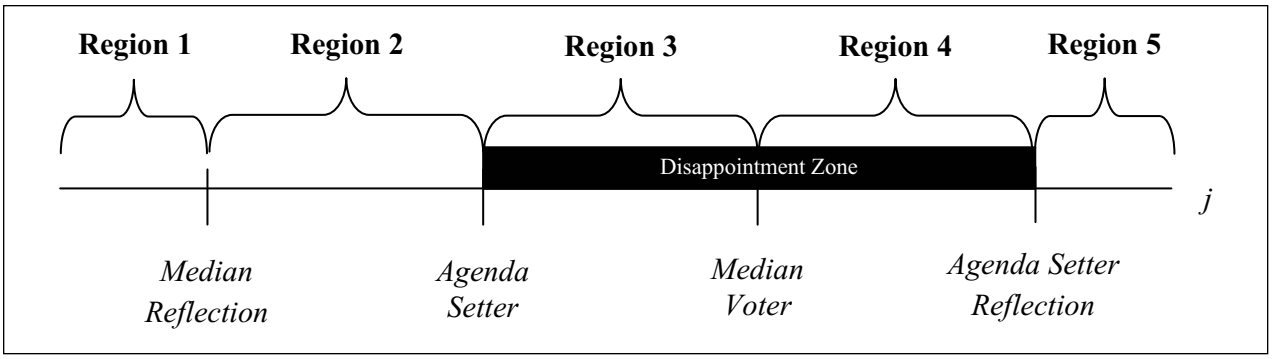

Figure 2. Locating disappointments in one-dimensional space.

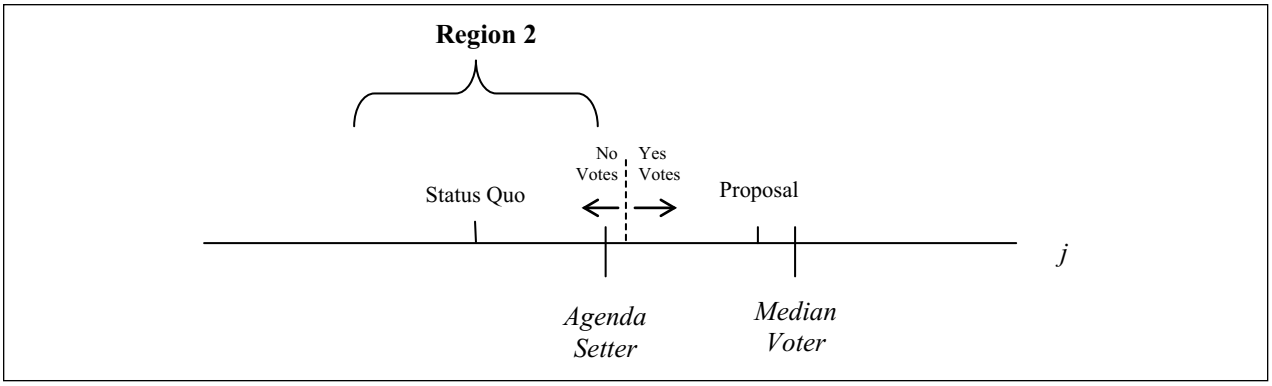

Figure 3. An example of agenda-setting failure for a status quo in Region 2.

point, where they would pass (with her support). A more aggressive agenda setter might attempt to temper the policy shift, by proposing a new policy at her ideal point. But this proposal—or, in fact, any proposal that would make the agenda setter better off—would *also* make the median voter better off, and thus there is no need for vote buying or risk of a failed proposal. In other words, status quos from Region 1 should not result in disappointments.

The same basic logic applies to Region 2, with one difference: the agenda setter prefers every status quo in this region to a new policy at the median voter's ideal point. Thus, in a basic negative agenda control model, where the agenda setter's only options are to block proposals or to allow policy to move to the median voter's ideal point, the agenda setter would block any proposals that address status quos in this region. However, given the options to propose policy and/or buy votes, more can be done with status quos in Region 2, namely, as in Region 1, the agenda setter can try to moderate the shift in policy by making a proposal at or near her ideal point. By bringing a status quo in Region 2 to the floor, however, the agenda setter risks losing control of the proposal and having it moved too far toward the median voter and passed. In Figure 3, we show an example of this scenario. Note, however, that this failure will result in a *roll*, not a disappointment; that is, the agenda setter is on the "no votes" side of the cut point, so the new policy will pass in spite of her opposition. Thus, any attempts to place policy or to buy votes to avert failure for status quos in Region 2 will be attempts to avoid rolls, not disappointments.

Next, consider Region 3. Here, status quos are in perfect tension between the agenda setter and the median voter; that is, any move toward the agenda setter will be rejected by the median voter, and thus will fail. But the agenda setter will not propose (or will block) any move toward the median voter, as she would prefer the status quo in that case. Thus, to generate a success in this region, the agenda setter would have to propose to move policy away from the median voter, but persuade the median (and some individuals to his left) to vote for the proposal, and against their sincere policy preferences.

In Figure 4, we show an example of this scenario. Here, the agenda setter targets a status quo just to the left of the median voter, and proposes a new policy that would move it significantly to the left, close to the agenda setter's ideal point. As depicted, the agenda setter will need to buy all of the votes between the cut point and the median voter to generate a success. A failure to buy these votes will result

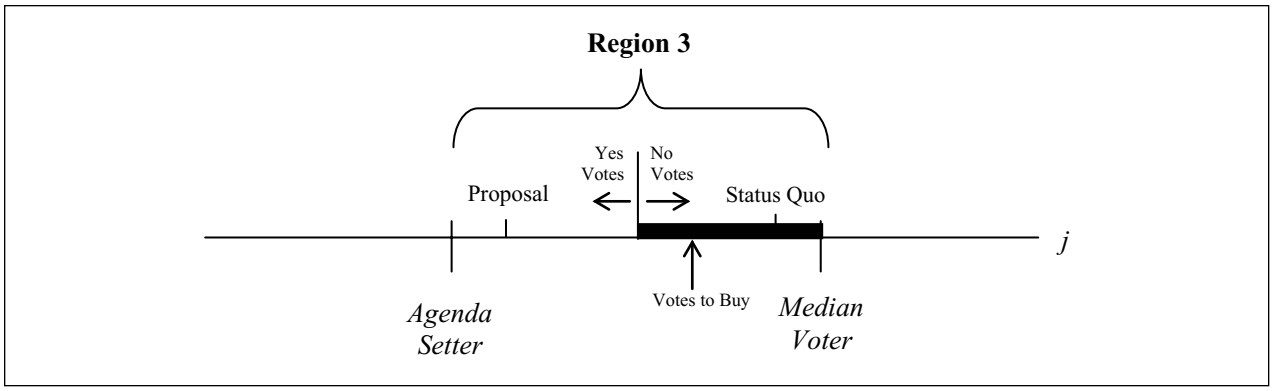

Figure 4. An example of agenda-setting failure for a status quo in Region 3.

in a disappointment: the proposal will fail, despite the support of the agenda setter. This example illustrates the more general opportunity for disappointments in Region 3, as a result of vote-buying failures.

In Region 4, status quos are on the opposite side of the median voter from the agenda setter, but still closer to the median voter's ideal point than the distance between the median voter and the agenda setter (i.e., between the median voter and the agenda setter's reflection point). Here, every status quo would be a "success" for the agenda setter under the basic negative agenda control model; that is, if the agenda setter simply allowed these status quos to be moved to the median voter's ideal point, they would pass with her support. However, a more enterprising agenda setter might attempt to "leap frog" policy over the median voter (Monroe and Robinson 2008; Romer and Rosenthal 1978). In this case, the agenda setter could take a status quo from Region 4 and make a proposal in Region 3, to extract maximum policy gain. This more aggressive approach, however, opens up the agenda setter to disappointments.

For an example of this scenario, see Figure 1. Recall that in that example, the agenda setter proposed a policy at her own ideal point and (as in Figure 4) needed to buy the votes of the legislators from the cut point to the median voter. A failure to buy those votes—and thus to persuade those legislators who would sincerely vote "no" to vote "yes" instead—would result in a disappointment. Certainly, this "leap frogging" strategy will not be viable for all—or even many—status quos in Region 4.[8] However, where an agenda setter is particularly aggressive, Region 4 represents an opportunity for disappointments.

Region 5, however, does not. Here, status quos are so far from the median voter that even the most aggressive move by the agenda setter—proposing new policy at her ideal point—would have the sincere support of the median voter. As a result, like Region 1, failures are not (theoretically) possible in Region 5.

Thus, our spatial model predicts that disappointments will only occur from positive agenda control failures vis-à-vis status quos located in Region 3 or 4. These two regions, combined, represent what we will call the "disappointment zone" (see Figure 2).

From this spatial prediction, we are able to derive two separate hypotheses to test, one at the individual level and one at the aggregate level. The first involves how individual legislators located in the various spatial regions should vote on roll calls that result in a disappointment. The second involves the variation in disappointments on a Congress-by-Congress basis across time, and when (i.e., under what conditions) disappointments are more likely to arise. We discuss these hypotheses in more depth, and test them, in the following two sections.

Explaining the Source of "No" Votes on Disappointments

Based on our spatial model of disappointments, and its prediction that disappointments will only occur from positive agenda control failures vis-à-vis status quos located in Region 3 or 4 (the disappointment zone), we have clear expectations as to how individual legislators in the aforementioned spatial regions should vote on roll calls that result in a disappointment. Specifically, we expect that legislators who vote "no" should reside primarily in the disappointment zone (Regions 3 and 4) and Region 5. We discuss the logic of this below, and do so by working backward from Region 5. And as we are primarily interested in (and eventually testing) how members of the *majority party in the House* vote on roll calls ending in a *majority disappointment*, we replace the generic terms used in the model with context-specific references. Thus, "legislators" are majority party members, the "median voter" is the chamber median, and the "agenda setter" is the majority party median.[9]

Majority party members in Region 5 are relatively heterodox, as they are located on the "minority side" of the chamber median. Those members in Region 5 will contribute to a positive agenda control failure (i.e., a roll call ending in a disappointment) by sincerely voting against any efforts to move policy toward the majority party median—as any such efforts would entail movements away from their ideal policy. Moreover, the extreme location of their ideal points also renders vote-buying efforts prohibitively expensive, leading us to expect relatively consistent opposition to ambitious positive agenda-setting efforts.

Although majority party members in Region 5 appear to be unequivocal "no" votes, the same is not true with regard to majority party members in Regions 3 and 4 (the disappointment zone); that is, the agenda setter (majority party median), in her attempt to exercise positive agenda control and move policy toward her ideal point, will (1) win the sincere support of some majority party members and (2) successfully buy the votes of some other majority party members in Regions 3 and 4. As a result, majority party members in the disappointment zone will provide many of the "no" votes necessary to generate a disappointment, but they will do so less consistently than those in Region 5.

By contrast, we do not expect to see majority party members in Regions 1 or 2 systematically vote against positive agenda-setting proposals that result in disappointments. This is because the majority party median, in attempting to move the status quo away from the chamber median and toward her own ideal point, *by definition* also works to move policy toward majority party members in Regions 1 and 2. In other words, the majority party median's attempts to make herself better off will also lead to members in Regions 1 and 2 being better off. Thus, majority party members in Regions 1 and 2 will provide strong, sincere support of bills that eventually result in disappointments.

These expectations, taken together, produce the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Majority party members will be more likely to vote "no" on a roll call that results in a disappointment if they reside in either the disappointment zone or Region 5, with those residing in Region 5 being the most likely.

To test this hypothesis, we first identify the universe of disappointment votes on chamber-originating bills in the House of Representatives from 1877 through 2014. We begin with Cox and McCubbins' (2005) post-Reconstruction data, which includes all final-passage votes on House (H.R.) bills from the 45th (1877–1879) through 105th (1997–1998) Congresses. We then extend the data forward by adding the relevant final-passage votes for the 106th (1999–2000) through 113th (2013–2014) Congresses, via the Political Institutions and Public Choice House Roll-Call Database (Rohde 2010) and our own hand coding.[10] We code "majority party disappointments" as those final-passage votes in which a majority of the majority party supports a House (H.R.) bill but it subsequently fails to pass.

A total of 72 majority party disappointments have occurred from 1877 to 2014, with a per-Congress mean of 1.04 and standard deviation of 1.39. Many Congresses conclude without any such instances of positive agenda control failure, and no Congress has produced more than six. An exhaustive list, complete with majority and chamber vote totals, appears in the online appendix.

Note that in all subsequent analyses, Region 1 represents the reference category (β_0), and following our theoretical expectations, we have combined Region 3 and Region 4 into a single indicator variable, labeled *Disappointment Zone*.[11] In total, we analyze 15,103 individual votes, and the unit of analysis is member disappointment.

To test our hypothesis, we specify the following linear regression model:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{"}No\text{" } Vote\ on\ Disappointment_{it} = \\ &\beta_0 + \beta_1 Region\_2_{it} + \beta_2 \\ &Disappointment\ Zone_{it} + \\ &\beta_3 Region\_5_{it} + v_t + \varepsilon_{it}, \end{aligned}$$

where

"*No*" *Vote on Disappointment*$_{it}$ is a dichotomous variable for the vote cast by a majority party member of the House, *i*, on a disappointment, *t*. "No" votes are coded as 1, and "yea" votes are coded as 0.

Region_2$_{it}$ is an indicator variable coded 1 if majority party member *i*'s first-dimension DW-NOMINATE score (Poole and Rosenthal 2007) falls between the majority party median and the chamber median reflection point in the Congress containing disappointment *t*, and 0 otherwise.

Disappointment Zone$_{it}$ is an indicator variable coded 1 if majority party member *i*'s first-dimension DW-NOMINATE score falls between the majority party median and the majority party median reflection point (i.e., Region 3 + Region 4) in the Congress containing disappointment *t*, and 0 otherwise.[12]

Region_5$_{it}$ is an indicator variable coded 1 if majority party member *i*'s first-dimension DW-NOMINATE score falls on the minority party (far) side of the majority party median reflection point in the Congress containing disappointment *t*, and 0 otherwise.

v_t signifies time-fixed effects in the form of a Congress indicator variable, a vote indicator variable, or both.

Table 2. Location of Majority Party Member and the Probability of Voting "No" on a Disappointment Vote.

Variables	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
Region_2	0.002	0.03***	0.03***	0.03***
(β_1)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Disappointment Zone	0.21***	0.23***	0.23***	0.23***
(β_2)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Region_5	0.52***	0.53***	0.53***	0.53***
(β_3)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.19***	0.21***	0.11***	0.11***
(β_0)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Congress fixed effects		✓		✓
Vote fixed effects			✓	✓
R^2	.08	.14	.17	.17
N	15,103	15,103	15,103	15,103
p for H^0: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
p for H^0: $\beta_1 = \beta_3$	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
p for H^0: $\beta_2 = \beta_3$	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Linear probability model is provided with robust standard errors clustered by legislator. *Dependent variable*: "No" vote on disappointment (0, 1). *p < .1. **p < .05. ***p < .01 (one-tailed tests).

The time-series cross-sectional nature of our data provides an opportunity to address the influence of omitted variable bias common to all House members through the use of time-fixed effects. We include both Congress and vote fixed effects to isolate variation between House members and identify *which* of them are most likely to vote "no" on a disappointment. Finally, we cluster standard errors by House member.

The results, presented in Table 2, are not reliant on these modeling decisions. Although we present linear probability models for ease of interpretation, results from a logistic regression specification are virtually identical.[13]

As Region 1 serves as our reference category, we anticipate positive and significant coefficients on the *Disappointment Zone* and *Region_5* variables. We also expect the coefficient on *Region_5* to be significantly larger than the coefficient on *Disappointment Zone*. Stated differently, we expect $\beta_2 > 0$, $\beta_3 > 0$, and $\beta_3 > \beta_2$. We find strong support for these predictions, per Table 2 and the accompanying marginal-effects plots in Figure 5.

Although our theory predicts no meaningful difference between majority party members located in Regions 1 and 2, we find that members in Region 2 are marginally (i.e., 3 percentage points) more likely to vote "no" on a disappointment than those in Region 1. However, these results are also our least consistent. The coefficient for Region 2 (β_1) is indistinguishable from zero when we omit fixed effects; the magnitude of our coefficient is very close to zero across model specifications, and we have higher levels of uncertainty around these estimates relative to the other variables in the analysis.

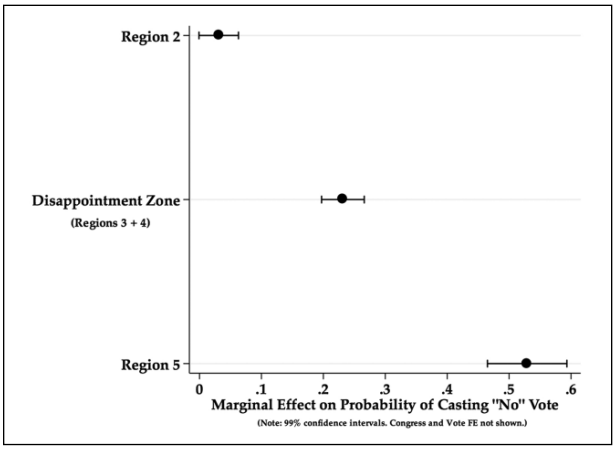

Figure 5. The marginal effect of region location on the probability of "no" vote, 45th–113th Congresses.
99% confidence intervals are given. Congress and Vote Fixed Effects are not shown.

By contrast, the effect of our *Disappointment Zone* variable is quite robust. Across all four columns of Table 2, the predicted probability of voting "no" on a disappointment for majority party members with ideal points in the disappointment zone is positive and statistically significant. The effect is also substantively significant, as members residing in the disappointment zone are 23 percentage points more likely to vote "no" on a disappointment than those in Region 1.[14]

Finally, majority party members in Region 5 are the most consistent source of dissension on disappointment votes. Across all four columns of Table 2, the predicted

probability of voting "no" on a disappointment for majority party members with ideal points in Region 5 is positive and statistically significant. These members are 53 percentage points more likely to vote "no" on a disappointment than those in Region 1, and are significantly more likely (and, substantively, roughly twice as likely) to vote "no" than members in the disappointment zone.

Overall, these individual-level results provide validation of our theoretical model.[15] Given that we now feel confident we know *where* disappointments will occur—vis-à-vis status quos in the disappointment zone (Regions 3 and 4)—we now turn to an examination of *when* they will occur; that is, we now explore the variation in disappointments on a Congress-by-Congress basis across time, and investigate the conditions that explain this variation.

Explaining the Variation in Disappointments across Time

The exercise of positive agenda control will be unsuccessful if the majority party median (i.e., the agenda setter) fails to properly place new policy proposals, falls short of successfully buying a set of key votes, or both. Our spatial model indicates that only two of five regions of status quos are theoretically capable of producing a disappointment, and the preceding individual-level analysis supports this. So *when* are we more likely to observe disappointments? We answer this question by building off the logic in Cox and McCubbins (2005), as applied to rolls. In short, we argue that disappointments will be more likely to occur when two conditions are met simultaneously.

The first condition is that there must be an agenda setter in place who aggressively pursues the revision of status quos. This is because no matter how much Regions 3 and 4 might grow, or how many status quos fall in these regions, no disappointments will occur unless the agenda setter is actively working to change a status quo—that is, making aggressive proposals and buying votes to effect a policy change. Therefore, we will only see an increase in the number of disappointments when the agenda setter is aggressive, but (at least occasionally) fails to buy the votes necessary to pull the status quos away from the median voter.

However, the ambitious behavior of an agenda setter is not sufficient to increase disappointments. For disappointments to occur, we must also see an expansion of the disappointment zone, the combination of Regions 3 and 4 from Figure 2. An expansion of Region 3 occurs when the distance between the agenda setter and the median voter increases. As this distance grows, the number of status quos that fall in this region will also increase. And because Region 4 is defined by the "reflected" distance between the agenda setter and the median voter, the expansion of Regions 3 and 4 go hand in hand, at precisely the same rate.[16] This region-expansion condition is very similar to the one that Cox and McCubbins (2005, chap. 3) derive for the *minority* party (and operationalize through the concept of the *minority party roll zone*).

Taken in conjunction with an expanding disappointment zone, pursuing status quo revision aggressively can lead to an increase in the occurrence of *both* successes and disappointments. When an agenda setter pursues a larger agenda, she willingly accepts the risk of a higher number of disappointments due to uncertainty, which is the cost of passing a larger number of agenda items. Therefore, we should see disappointments rise as the number of successes rises.

We can imagine a number of reasons why an agenda setter will be properly motivated to be aggressive. Perhaps, most importantly, the agenda setter must expect that any desired policy change she can effect will have a good chance of becoming law. Thus, the agenda setter must be sophisticated in the sense of looking beyond the legislative context of her own chamber, and recognize what the larger lawmaking environment looks like. Here, again, we build off the logic in Cox and McCubbins' (2005, chap. 6) work, and argue that factors external to the agenda setter's chamber—namely, *whether the agenda setter's party controls the other chamber and the presidency*—will condition her actions.

Specifically, we assume that the primary factor that motivates the agenda setter to be aggressive is if the government is *unified under one party*. From the agenda setter's perspective, if her party does not control *both* the other chamber and the presidency—and thus potentially faces legislative defeat in the other chamber and/or a presidential veto—then the likelihood of being able to generate a new law is small. So whereas Cox and McCubbins (2005, chap. 6) argue that majority party *rolls* are more likely under conditions of *divided government*, we argue that majority party *disappointments* are more likely under conditions of *unified government* (in combination with an increasing disappointment zone).

The basic logic of this relationship between unified government and aggressive agenda setting can be illustrated spatially.[17] In Figure 6, we take the vote-buying example from Figure 4 and build in additional complexity by introducing two different (potential) "veto actors"—*U* (for the unified case, where the veto actor and the agenda setter are ostensibly of the same party) and *D* (for the divided case, where the veto actor and the agenda setter are of different parties).[18] First, consider the scenario where *Veto Actor U* is the external gatekeeper, and thus the veto actor is located on the same side of the median voter as the agenda setter (and is sufficiently extreme).[19] Here, the agenda setter's successful buying of votes will be welcomed by the veto actor; that is, if the agenda setter buys enough votes to move the status quo to the left, *Veto Actor*

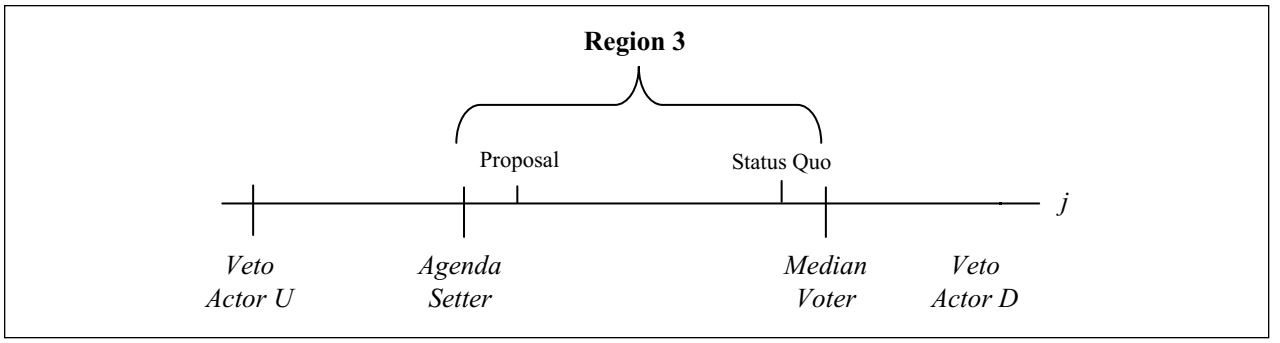

Figure 6. An example of vote buying under unified versus divided government.

U will accept the policy change, as it makes him better off relative to the status quo. Thus, in this unified scenario, the agenda setter has an incentive to be aggressive, as successful vote buying will lead to a tangible benefit—the actual movement of policy. However, the agenda setter's aggression in this case will *also* increase the likelihood of a disappointment (should she fail to buy enough votes).

Conversely, consider the scenario where *Veto Actor D* is the external gatekeeper. Here, at least in terms of actual policy change, the agenda setter's vote-buying efforts would be in vain; that is, even if the agenda setter is successful in buying enough votes, the movement of policy to the left would leave *Veto Actor D* worse off—and thus he would reject (veto) the move and maintain policy at the status quo. As a result, in this scenario, the agenda setter will not be willing to run the risk of a disappointment, given that the "value" of a potential success is entirely symbolic. Stated differently, the cost of being aggressive in the disappointment zone relative to the benefit (in the broader lawmaking sense) will be too high.

The aforementioned logic implies the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** There will be more majority party disappointments under unified government, increasing with the size of the disappointment zone, all else equal.

That is, in a context that incentivizes aggressive agenda setting—unified government—the agenda setter will increasingly target status quos in the disappointment zone, and some of these attempts will fail, leading to disappointments. Thus, under unified government, as the number of available status quos in the disappointment zone increases (or, alternatively, as the zone itself expands), the number of status quos *available to target* will increase, and majority party disappointments should therefore go up. In other words, the unified government condition is the key treatment implied in this hypothesis, and the expansion of the zone simply offers more opportunities (but does *not* change the probability that any given targeted status quo fails and yields a disappointment).

To test this hypothesis, we begin with the same data described previously, but focus on the attributes of each Congress rather than individual legislators. Our outcome of interest is the number of disappointments in a given Congress. We then estimate the following linear model:

$$\begin{aligned} &Majority\ Disappointments_t \\ &= \alpha + \beta_1 Unified\ Govt_t + \beta_2 Size\ of Disappointment \\ &\quad Zone_t + \beta_3 Majority\ Successes_t \\ &\quad + \beta_4 Unified\ Govt \times Size\ of \\ &\quad Disappointment\ Zone_t + \varepsilon_t, \end{aligned}$$

where

Majority Disappointments$_t$ are the total number of H.R. final-passage votes in a given Congress, *t*, that fail to pass, despite receiving support from a majority of the majority party.

Unified Govt$_t$ is the dichotomous "treatment" variable, coded 1 if a party controls the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the presidency in Congress *t*, and zero otherwise. About 55 percent of our data (thirty-eight Congresses) operated under conditions of unified government, and the party split for these periods was about even.[20]

Size of Disappointment Zone$_t$, the conditioning variable, is twice the absolute difference in the majority party median and the floor median's DW-NOMINATE scores for Congress *t.* The size of our disappointment zone varies from 0.07 in the 75th (1937–1938) Congress to 0.68 in the 65th (1917–1918) Congress, and averages around 0.34 for our extended time series.[21]

Majority Successes$_t$ is a count of the total bills (H.R.) passed with a majority of the majority party's support in Congress *t*. We expect ambition (aggression) to be positively related to (increasing in) both types of positive agenda power outcomes and the political environment that encourages ambitious agenda-setting behavior; that

Table 3. The Effect of Unified Government on Disappointments as the Size of the Disappointment Zone Expands.

	Congresses	
Variables	45th–105th	45th–113th
Unified Govt	−0.24	−0.22
(β_1)	(0.57)	(0.56)
Size of Disappointment Zone	−2.81**	−2.63**
(β_2)	(1.29)	(1.29)
Majority Successes	0.02***	0.02***
(β_3)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Unified Govt × Size of Disappointment Zone	2.93**	2.28*
($\beta_4 > 0$)	(1.67)	(1.62)
Constant	0.48	0.53
(β_0)	(0.44)	(0.43)
R^2	.50	.43
N	61	69
Post-estimation test	2.69**	2.05**
($\beta_1 + \beta_4 > 0$)	(1.24)	(1.19)

Ordinary least squares point estimates are given with robust standard errors in parentheses. *Dependent variable*: The number of disappointments in a given Congress.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$ (two-tailed tests, except where directional hypothesis is indicated).

is, we believe successful and unsuccessful attempts to capitalize on this political environment will be correlated with our interactive treatment condition.[22] Consequently, we control for majority successes.

Unified Govt × Size of Disappointment Zone$_t$ is an interaction between Unified Gov and the Size of Disappointment Zone in Congress *t*.

We expect that the interaction between unified government and a large disappointment zone will result in more disappointments. Stated differently, we have a directional prediction ($\beta_1 + \beta_4 > 0$) for the conditional effect of unified government as the Disappointment Zone expands. We run our model using both Cox and McCubbins' original dataset (45th through 105th Congresses), and the data extending through the 113th Congress.[23] The results, as estimated using ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors, are presented in Table 3.[24]

The results support our key theoretical prediction. The effect of unified government, as the size of the disappointment zone increases, is both positive and statistically significant.[25] For ease of interpretation, following Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), we present the marginal effects of our interaction term.[26] The results, which appear in Figure 7, demonstrate a clear, significant, and positive effect of unified government conditioned by the disappointment zone.

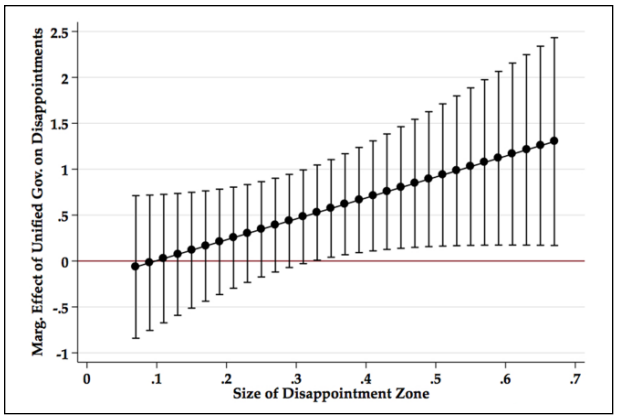

Figure 7. The effect of unified government as the disappointment zone expands, 45th–113th Congresses.
Estimates from ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors and one-sided confidence intervals (95%).

When the disappointment zone is small, the effect of unified government is statistically indistinguishable from zero. As the size of the disappointment zone grows, however, the effect of unified government becomes both positive and statistically significant. At a disappointment zone of about 0.7, the effect of unified government is an additional 1.3 disappointments, and for an average-sized disappointment zone, we can expect unified government to increase the number of disappointments, relative to periods of divided government, by about 0.6. Put another way, periods of unified government consistently have at least one disappointment, though the same cannot be said for periods of divided government.

The remaining results in Table 3 do not directly address our hypothesis, but they do provide indirect support for our theory. The constitutive effect of unified government (β_1) is both statistically indistinguishable from zero and of little theoretical importance to us.[27] The size of the disappointment zone (β_2) does not predict an increase in the number of disappointments under conditions of divided government. And finally, the number of majority successes (β_3) has a significant effect on the number of disappointments in a given Congress.

In short, we find strong empirical support for our hypothesis. When a single party controls the three primary levers of legislative influence *and* the number of status quos in the vote-buying region increases, the likelihood of positive agenda control failure (i.e., a disappointment) increases. An agenda setter considering the fate of any proposal to pass through her chamber may be inclined to exercise greater positive agenda control under conditions of unified government, but this ambition is likely to be accompanied by more opportunities for disappointments as the disappointment zone expands.

Conclusion

In this paper, we depart from the typical focus on negative agenda control, and instead undertake and examine whether majority party leaders exercise *positive agenda control*, or produce legislative outcomes that a majority of their co-partisans support. In so doing, we investigate "disappointments," a *different* type of majority party failure that occurs when a majority of the majority supports legislation that subsequently goes down to defeat.

Using a slightly modified spatial model of agenda setting, we show that a "disappointment zone" (located between the agenda setter's ideal point and her reflection point through the chamber median) exists, wherein the majority party can fail to exercise positive agenda control. From our model, we predict that disappointments will arise due to unsuccessful attempts by the agenda setter to buy off moderates and move policy toward her own ideal point (and away from the center of the chamber). We test this prediction by looking at patterns of individual votes by majority party House members on roll calls that end in a disappointment, and find that—as the model predicts—individual "no" votes occur at the highest rates in the disappointment zone (Regions 3 and 4) and the adjacent extreme region (Region 5).

Another upshot of the model, we argue, is that disappointments should arise from instances in which an agenda setter is especially aggressive in her vote-buying efforts. This is because an aggressive agenda setter—one who is willing to take chances—will sometimes come up short (i.e., fail to buy enough votes), and thus bills will be defeated on the floor. We theorize—and show empirically—that two key conditions interact to increase the incidence of majority party disappointments: the presence of unified government, which properly incentivizes majority party agenda setters to be aggressive (because a "success" will result in the actual movement of policy), and the size of the disappointment zone, which is the area where status quos are ripe for movement away from the median of the chamber.

Looking ahead, there are a number of areas for future research that could be explored. We note two here. First, expanding the analysis beyond the U.S. House, to include the Senate, U.S. state legislatures, and legislative chambers around the world, could prove fruitful. By examining other legislative bodies, we can leverage the procedural variation and policy-making contexts to further examine positive agenda control. Jenkins and Monroe (2016) have already used disappointments to better explain agenda setting in U.S. state legislatures, but this represents just the tip of the iceberg. Many additional, theoretically rich questions remain. For example, the Senate lacks a Rules Committee that can structure the flow of debate and decision making on legislation. How does this apparent limitation affect positive agenda control and the presence of disappointments?

Second, assessing whether positive agenda control and disappointments vary on amendment and procedural votes could also be illuminating. Final-passage votes are the most conspicuous of roll calls, and one might expect the majority party's likelihood of being disappointed may differ on less observable votes. For example, vote buying may be easier when the direct policy impact (to constituents) is less visible or clear. This would suggest, perhaps, that the incidence of disappointments should be lower on procedural votes, which even the most attentive of citizens often ignores. Whether this is true or not requires greater theorization, along with the appropriate data collection and testing. But the larger point holds: great opportunities exist if one moves beyond the standard means of case selection (i.e., final-passage votes).

Appendix:

Disappointments on HR Bills, 45th-113th Congresses

CONG.	MAJ. PARTY	BILL #	MAJ. PARTY VOTES (Y-N)	CHAMBER VOTES (Y-N)	SUBJECT
45	Dem	HR 1895	76-25	98-112	Compensation for private claim
45	Dem	HR 325	62-52	94-127	Establish a permanent form of government for D.C.
47	GOP	HR 55	73-10	82-87	Compensation for private claim
48	Dem	HR 5682	80-54	89-130	Repeal Sec. 22 of the Act to Incorporate the TX Pacific Railroad Co.
51	GOP	HR 4539	98-41	128-142	Supplying deficiencies caused by gov. defalcations

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

CONG.	MAJ. PARTY	BILL #	MAJ. PARTY VOTES (Y-N)	CHAMBER VOTES (Y-N)	SUBJECT
51	GOP	HR 2390	79-34	101-128	Compensation for private claim
51	GOP	HR 1003	87-15	93-107	Regulate sailing vessels
54	GOP	HR 5210	135-63	138-147	D.C. appropriations
55	GOP	HR 10807	105-29	105-152	Support for recommendations of the Internat. American Conference
59	GOP	HR 5281	101-75	113-169	Regulate sailing vessels
64	Dem	HR 19359	176-23	177-196	Agriculture appropriations
68	GOP	HR 3318	166-1	169-178	Add judges for District Court in southern district of New York
70	GOP	HR 8141	162-32	170-181	Authorize additional employees for the Federal Power Commission
74	Dem	HR 5161	139-119	145-211	Permit retirement of Supreme Court Justices at continuing pay
74	Dem	HR 11047	144-113	170-182	Taxation of stock, capital notes, and banks
76	Dem	HR 7551	99-88	142-168	Payment for land ceded by San Carlos Apache Indians
76	Dem	HR 5939	104-93	108-241	Procedures for judgment on judicial misbehavior
77	Dem	HR 968	125-77	154-177	Regulate cotton
77	Dem	HR 4228	113-60	150-157	Amendment to the judicial code to permit wire-tapping
81	Dem	HR 5330	171-63	197-198	Aid to Republic of Korea
81	Dem	HR 874	174-55	193-196	Provide for demonstration of public library service
81	Dem	HR 7570	149-49	156-169	Add judge for District Court in northern district of Ohio
82	Dem	HR 1545	175-48	181-238	Amend the Reorganization Act of 1949
83	GOP	HR1432	92-86	120-222	Support for 1952 crop of Maryland tobacco
86	Dem	HR 12261	169-101	179-244	Farm Surplus Reduction Act of 1960
88	Dem	HR 8986	156-89	191-229	Raise salaries of federal judges and members of Congress
89	Dem	HR 5374	165-106	192-216	Increase salaries of Chief Justice and Associate Justice of S.C.
90	Dem	HR 10328	204-37	206-217	Raise public debt limit
90	Dem	HR 13025	125-81	173-202	Allow D.C. council to regulate liquor in D.C.
90	Dem	HR 16948	126-77	163-205	Remove buildings destroyed in riots at the expense of D.C.
90	Dem	HR 10564	120-53	134-185	Regulate pears

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

CONG.	MAJ. PARTY	BILL #	MAJ. PARTY VOTES (Y-N)	CHAMBER VOTES (Y-N)	SUBJECT
91	Dem	HR 2777	135-82	180-207	Potato research and promotion
92	Dem	HR 6417	138-77	178-200	Regulate D.C. alcohol licenses
92	Dem	HR 11628	134-75	161-201	Authorize grants and loan guarantees for medical facilities in D.C.
92	Dem	HR 13853	174-63	200-214	Amend Title VII of the Housing and Urban Development Act
93	Dem	HR 12473	112-108	162-233	Provide for Eisenhower Memorial Bicentennial Civic Center
93	Dem	HR 14747	136-95	184-218	Amend the Sugar Act of 1947
93	Dem	HR 15888	102-70	117-191	Establish D.C. Community Development and Finance Corporation
94	Dem	HR 6676	196-82	199-221	Maximize availability of credit for national priority uses
94	Dem	HR 1287	174-109	200-221	Halt importation of Rhodesian chrome
94	Dem	HR 7222	159-116	182-235	Increase gov. contribution to employees' group life insurance
94	Dem	HR 10049	148-134	191-230	Raise public debt limit
94	Dem	HR 4634	163-99	188-207	Federal firefighting personnel regulations
95	Dem	HR 4250	193-91	207-220	Regulate unions
95	Dem	HR 8655	171-92	187-208	Raise public debt limit
95	Dem	HR 1037	149-134	167-260	Energy Transportation Security Act of 1977
95	Dem	HR 6805	178-106	196-234	Establish federal agency for consumer protection
95	Dem	HR 11180	161-117	170-253	Raise public debt limit
95	Dem	HR 12641	174-102	179-241	Raise public debt limit
96	Dem	HR 1894	195-74	198-225	Raise public debt limit
96	Dem	HR 4390	162-109	190-235	Appropriations for legislative branch
96	Dem	HR 5229	198-71	201-216	Raise public debt limit
96	Dem	HR 2222	151-101	170-230	Amend the National Labor Relations Act
96	Dem	HR 3927	125-124	139-249	Amend the National Visitor Center Facilities Act of 1968
96	Dem	HR 2551	158-96	187-221	Protection of agriculture land
97	Dem	HR 3518	128-97	169-230	Appropriations for Dep. of State and more
98	Dem	HR 1398	138-116	201-214	Energy conservation
101	Dem	HR 2442	199-48	205-213	Anti-drug abuse funding
101	Dem	HR 4636	155-95	172-246	Supplemental Assistance for Emerging Democracies Act of 1990

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

CONG.	MAJ. PARTY	BILL #	MAJ. PARTY VOTES (Y-N)	CHAMBER VOTES (Y-N)	SUBJECT
102	Dem	HR 3732	186-76	186-238	Amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974
103	Dem	HR 51	151-105	152-277	Admission of the state of New Columbia into the union
104	GOP	HR 2770	190-42	210-217	Prohibit funds for deployment of troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina
104	GOP	HR 3820	162-68	162-258	Amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971
105	GOP	HR 2621	151-71	180-242	Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act of 1997
105	GOP	HR 4570	117-107	123-301	Public land management
106	GOP	HR 2122	137-82	147-208	Mandatory Gun Show Background Check Act
106	GOP	HR 853	153-63	166-250	Comprehensive Budget Process Reform Act
108	GOP	HR 4663	146-71	146-268	Amend Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act
110	Dem	HR 2237	169-59	171-256	Redeployment of troops from Iraq
110	Dem	HR 5349	191-34	191-230	Extend the Protect America Act of 2007
112	GOP	HR 2278	144-89	180-238	Defund Libyan intervention
113	GOP	HR 1947	171-62	195-234	Revisions to Farm Bill

CONG. = congress; MAJ. = majority; Gov. = government.

Acknowledgments

We thank Josh Franco and Stephanie Nail for valuable research assistance and Jason Roberts for his many helpful comments.

Authors' Note

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Roberts (2005), Gailmard and Jenkins (2007), Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008), Jenkins and Nokken (2008b), Wiseman and Wright (2008), Carroll and Kim (2010), and Carson, Monroe, and Robinson (2011).
2. Campbell, Cox, and McCubbins (2002), Gailmard and Jenkins (2007), and Den Hartog and Monroe (2011).
3. Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins (2010), Anzia and Jackman (2013), Clark and Wright (2014), and Jackman (2014).
4. Cox, Masuyama, and McCubbins (2000), Amorim Neto, Cox, and McCubbins (2003), Jones and Hwang (2005), Chandler, Cox, and McCubbins (2006), Cox, Heller, and McCubbins (2008), and Akirav, Cox, and McCubbins (2010).
5. Several of these bills may qualify as "must-pass" legislation. We argue that exogenously imposed policy proposals illustrate, rather than contradict, the logic put forward in our spatial theory of disappointments—*precisely* because aggressive agenda setting (a concept we will discuss in more detail later in the paper) is a necessary condition for the occurrence of disappointments. Consider the outcome of proposals to update status quos in each of the five regions with a passive agenda setter, as illustrated in Figure 2 later in the article. Regions 1 and 5 will not produce disappointments. Instead, policy will successfully move to the chamber median. Regions 2 and 3 produce rolls, rather than successes, as these status quos are opposed by a majority of the majority party. Finally, proposals to revise policies in Region 4 will be successful *unless* the agenda setter attempts to move policy closer to her position than the chamber median; that is, disappointments cannot occur without an ambitious agenda setter

that actively works to distort the median voter model of legislative politics, *regardless* of whether the status quo was put on the floor because of "must-pass" pressure or not.

6. Note also that our theory is fundamentally rooted in Romer and Rosenthal's (1978) setter model—the original model of positive agenda power—in that it is built around a scenario where an agenda setter can make a take-it-or-leave-it offer.
7. Here, again, we assume that legislators have single-peaked, symmetric preferences and vote sincerely (based solely on policy distance).
8. In this example, where the proposal is located at the agenda setter's ideal point, vote buying will become more difficult (in the sense that more legislators will need to be bought and at increasing prices) as the status quo is located farther from the median voter's ideal point (and closer to the agenda setter's reflection point). For a model of vote buying along these lines, see Snyder (1991).
9. Most models of partisan agenda setting assume that the agenda setter is the median member of the majority party (or, more generally, majority party leaders acting on behalf of the median majority party member). See, for example, Aldrich and Rohde (2000), Cox and McCubbins (2005), and Jenkins and Monroe (2012a, 2012b, 2016).
10. Because the Political Institutions and Public Choice data (at the time of this writing) only run through part of the 112th, we hand-coded the 112th and 113th Congress using data from voteview.com.
11. For descriptive statistics on the percentage of votes cast from each region, see Online Appendix A (Figure A1).
12. See Online Appendix B (Table B1) for the same model with the *Disappointment Zone* variable disaggregated into two distinct region indicators (*Region_3* and *Region_4*). We observe a strong and monotonic relationship across these regions, as we would expect.
13. See Online Appendix B (Figure B1).
14. For simplicity, we only discuss the predicted probabilities and marginal effects of the fourth column of results.
15. In contrast to a straight left-right, ideological prediction of disappointments, we argue that the probability of "no" votes should roughly approximate a step function. Whereas a linear expectation anticipates effect sizes to steadily increase from one extreme to the other, our theory suggests a large increase in the probability of voting "no" on disappointments on entering the disappointment zone and another spike on entering Region 5.
16. We do not require a uniform status quo distribution for this condition to hold. In strictest terms, we only require the assumption that the new policy space covered by the expanded Region 3 is not entirely empty. As long as there is a status quo at any point in that newly incorporated space, the prediction holds. Thus, the result is robust to a range of distributional assumptions, including all of the typical (and virtually all atypical) distributions.
17. Note that our auxiliary assumptions about agenda-setting ambition and unified government take us beyond our initial special-case model, as a means of deriving testable empirical implications.
18. For simplicity, we have removed the vote-buying graphical representation in this figure; however, it is the same scenario presented in Figure 4.
19. A "same side" veto actor would only constrain the agenda setter if she were sufficiently moderate such that the distance from a moderate status quo to the veto actor's ideal point is less than the distance between the veto actor and agenda setter's ideal points.
20. Twenty-five percent (17) of our observations were unified, Republican congresses, and 30 percent (21) were Democratic.
21. The median size of the disappointment zone is 0.33, and the standard deviation is 0.14.
22. Pairwise correlation tests provide some face validity for this expectation in our data. The correlation between successes and disappointments was higher than any other pair of agenda-setting outcomes (i.e., disappointments, successes, blocks, and rolls): 0.59 ($p < .01$).
23. Given the time-series nature of our analysis, we run a series of tests to detect whether or not serial correlation biases our results. As Online Appendix C shows, we consistently fail to reject the null hypothesis of no serial correlation. We have also rerun the analysis using Newey–West standard errors. The results are nearly identical. Consequently, we maintain our ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model with robust standard errors, which is the equivalent of a Newey–West estimator with 0 lags specified in the autocorrelation structure.
24. We have rerun the model using a negative binomial regression. The statistical and substantive interpretation of our results is generally robust to this alternative specification. See Online Appendix C for negative binomial results.
25. See the post-estimation tests for $\beta_1 + \beta_4$ at the bottom of Table 3.
26. Following Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2016), we also conduct a series of diagnostics to evaluate the linearity of our interaction effect. Binned estimations, kernel smoothing estimators, and Wald tests suggest the effect of Unified Government is roughly linear as we move across the full range of disappointment zone values.
27. It is possible that the day-to-day ambition of an agenda setter under unified government is qualitatively different from the urgency that accompanies that ambition in the first year of unified government. In another model, we include an indicator variable for the first year of unified government. Our primary results remain unchanged, and this new variable is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Supplemental Materials

Replication data for this article can be viewed at prq.sagepub.com/supplemental/.

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