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101 Chambers: Congress, State Legislatures, and the Future of Legislative Studies, Peverill Squire and Keith E. Hamm, The Ohio State University Press, 2005, ISBN 0814209386, \$44.95, cloth, 209 pages.

The legislative studies subfield of political science is thriving; however, as Squires and Hamm point out, the field is still lacking in comparative and cross-institutional research. The reasons for a lack of comparative research are unclear, although the authors mention legislative exceptionalism and the common assumption that legislatures, particularly the Congress, are unique institutions. Squires and Hamm argue that comparative and cross-institutional research is important and state legislatures offer numerous opportunities for comparing institutions and testing our current legislative theories. This volume seeks to serve as a “primer” for comparing Congress with state legislatures in terms of their historical evolution, fundamental structures and processes, professionalization, organization, and membership and careers.

The roots of organization and procedures in the U.S. Congress were significantly influenced by colonial and newly forming state legislatures. Despite these common roots, the authors argue that during the nineteenth century, legislatures developed into organizations with a variety of structures, rules, and procedures. One important difference for many state legislatures is that they have significantly limited their ability to change their decision-making procedures or structural components. State legislatures continued to develop into disparate institutions driven primarily by differences in state wealth. States with higher amounts of wealth possessed the capacity and likelihood that their legislatures would develop into more professionalized institutions.

One of the major reasons for undertaking comparative studies is the ability to test theories of legislatures. The current use of legislative theories is primarily Congress-centered in the literature and thus the explanatory power of these theories is limited. The authors argue that broadening the scope and number of legislatures used to test theories increases our ability to produce theories that are comprehensive in explaining behavior.

The real contribution of this book is the exploration of the various evolutionary paths of the development of legislatures and the disparate results of these organizations. Although the book couches itself as a primer for comparative legislative research, it provides more than simple comparisons. Squires and Hamm provide a ‘jumping off point’ from which researchers can attempt to test and build legislative theories.

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And I Haven't Had a Bad Day Since: From the Streets of Harlem to the Halls of Congress, Charles B. Rangel with Leon Wynter, Thomas Dunne Books, 2007, ISBN 9780312372521, \$19.96, cloth, 320 pages.

Charlie Rangel's memoir is as much a political as a personal review of his journey from Lenox Avenue in Harlem to Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The journey is an incredibly uplifting tale about the American Dream, although for Charles Rangel it entailed the move from being a high school drop out to becoming the fourth most senior member in the United States House of Representatives. From the day he set foot on the steps of the Capitol to replace the famous Adam Clayton Powell in 1971, Charles Rangel has not only witnessed but shaped the policy and history of this nation. His accomplishments are numerous and include the "bloody" Rangel Amendment that helped bring an end to apartheid in South Africa, the Watergate Hearings as a member of House Judiciary Committee, the Haiti Crisis, and Caribbean Basin Initiative, just to name a few.

Yet his personal accomplishments undeniably surpass his political ones. Hence, throughout his book, Charles Rangel repeatedly makes it clear that his political career and his policy proposals are a direct result of his own experiences as he unambiguously pinpoints the single-most important reason for his success: education. One of the strongest advocates of improving our education system and opening up more opportunities for everyone, Rangel is uniquely qualified to make that claim: he personally experienced the power of education. As he puts it, "at age twenty-two I was pushing a hand truck in the gutters of New York's garment district for a living ... by age thirty, I had acquired three degrees in six years, and was a newly minted lawyer admitted to the New York bar." Yet he also knows that he never would have been given the opportunities he had without government support, which explains his strong opposition to the Republican agenda in the 1990s. And this is where his memoir turns more political. Rangel, while never attacking anyone personally, appears incredibly disappointed by the Republican leadership after the Republican Revolution in 1994. As he puts it, "being in the minority ultimately bred a Gingrich-DeLay-type Republican culture in which seizing power and consolidating control – by any means necessary – is an end to itself." His anecdotes about his tense relationship with the now-retired Congressman Bill Thomas (R-Calif.) vividly illustrate his point as Rangel walked into one of Thomas' secret committee meetings about Medicare reform uninvited or as Thomas had Rangel removed from the House library by the sergeant-arms during the debate over the pension bill.

Today, as the current chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, Rangel continues to advocate for his long-held beliefs in social justice and education. Understanding that his rise to the chairmanship was only made possible through seniority, Rangel is a strong advocate of the congressional seniority system. Moreover, he sees the potential for other African-American lawmakers to benefit from it just as he did because they often come from minority-majority districts with limited political competition and hence serve longer. As a Korean War veteran decorated with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, Rangel is also not afraid to criticize the situation in Iraq. His steadfast opposition from the beginning combined with his personal experiences certainly add emphasis to his words. Yet Rangel throughout his book as well as his political career always remains cordial and respectful.

Ultimately, Charlie Rangel's memoir goes well beyond the confines of the political world. Rather, it is an encouraging testament to the opportunities that America offers. Rangel makes it clear that he sees himself as one of the most ardent defenders of these opportunities for all Americans. Yet Rangel also has one personal message for all of his readers: "get started early, set goals, have ambitions, stay out of trouble, and stay away from people who will get them in trouble ... go get an education."

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Branded Conservatives: How the Brand Brought the Right From the Fringes to the Center of Politics, Kenneth M. Cosgrove, Peter Lang Publishing Group, 2007, ISBN 9780820474656, \$36.95, paper, 376 pages.

Kenneth Cosgrove tells the story of how the Republican Party used the marketing concept of “branding” to build a national majority. The process was slow. It began with the Goldwater campaign in 1964 and culminated in the presidency of George W. Bush. The concept of branding is taken directly from the marketing field. Republican operatives sought to create a Republican brand and to market it to voters. There were two components to this effort. The first was the development of a positive brand identification of the Republican Party. The second was to develop a marketing strategy that relied upon the cooperation of interest groups, think tanks, and grass-roots Republican organizations.

This sustained effort congealed in the persona and presidency of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan brand became the symbol of Republicanism generally. It stood for a set of values with which average Americans could identify: freedom, national security, family values, Christianity, lower taxes, and less government. This brand identification provided the umbrella under which the three legs of the Republican Party – fiscal, national security, and values conservatives – could gather.

The Democratic Party was internally divided and produced no coherent alternative. This enabled the Republican marketers to impose a brand on the Democrats. The Democratic Party became identified in the public mind with elitism, 1960s liberalism, softness on national defense, personal profligacy, big government, “special interests,” and higher taxes. Republicans were able to draw upon this “negative” brand identification of the Democrats to rally base Republican voters.

Cosgrove offers as the best single example of branding the GOP “Contract With America” that presaged its victory in the 1994 elections. Newt Gingrich developed an entire vocabulary for service in differentiating Republicans and Democrats, casting the Democrats in a negative light. This vocabulary connected to the policies specified in the Contract and provided the new Republican majority with a governing platform sanctioned by the party brand. When George H.W. Bush deviated from the brand by embracing tax increases in 1990, he lost the 1992 election. George W. Bush wrapped himself in the party brand, did not deviate, associated the Democrats with the negative brand, and won two national elections.

Cosgrove has left some work to be done. Except for his discussion of the Contract With America, he does not devote much attention to the use of branding by congressional Republicans. This could be the subject of a separate yet closely related book. In spite of the Republican efforts to associate President Clinton with the negative brand, he won two national elections. Why was he able to transcend the Republican branding? And why was he unable to build a Democratic brand that might endure? And what happened to the Republican brand in 2006?

This book represents an important contribution to our understanding of how marketing techniques have come to shape our politics over the past few decades. Cosgrove makes it clear that he thinks this has had adverse consequences for the capacity of the government to engage in rational deliberation.

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Confirmation Wars: Preserving Independent Courts in Angry Times, Benjamin Wittes, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006, ISBN 9780742551442, \$22.95, cloth, 168 pages.

Since the (in)famous year of 1937, the American judiciary has faced an acute crisis of identity. Initially the courts seemed to jettison their previous reliance on substantive due process and to defer these types of judgments, at least with respect to Commerce Clause issues, to Congress. However, as a result of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, the courts soon realized that legislative deference on issues such as race, voting rights, and privacy necessitated a return, so to speak, of judicial inquiry into the substance of legislation affecting minorities, women, and suspect classes. Thus the modern court has operated under what Henry Abraham has called a “double standard”: legislative deference in Commerce Clause cases but elevated scrutiny on almost every other piece of legislation that affects race, privacy, and “fundamental rights.”

As the development of this double standard began to hit the ground running during the Warren Court (1953-1969), the political importance of judicial appointments became a salient political question. If federal judges were now able to give substantive content to ambiguous Constitutional clauses, such as due process, privileges and immunities, and liberty, over and against state and national legislation that sought to do the same, who should prevail? Increasingly, this question – and this “war” – has played out in the spectacle of the judicial confirmation process.

Benjamin Wittes’ contribution to this seeming political juggernaut is two-fold. First, he is able to split the difference between public law scholars who argue that judges have always been “political,” and scholars who, while acknowledging a political tendency in judges, nevertheless believe that judging has an independent and important Constitutional role apart from idiosyncratic policy preferences. Wittes does this by arguing that the increased politicization of the confirmation process is significantly shaped by congressional responses to the overall growth of judicial power over the last two-thirds of the twentieth century. Naturally, then, the Senate, independent of partisanship, seeks to rein in increased judicial power through the confirmation process, even if it is relatively unsuccessful. His account is thus one that emphasizes overall *institutional* response to the growth and power of the federal judiciary.

Wittes’ second contribution is a lucid and smart suggestion of how to reform the confirmation process. Here Wittes is concerned with reducing the public spectacle of the Senate Judiciary Committee’s public and “duplicative” interrogation of individual nominees, which does little to help either the Senate or the public understand or legitimize the process. Instead, he argues for a process that pits the Senate’s right to confirm with the president’s right to nominate. Because the public, televised confirmation process is more spectacle than democratic process, it should be eliminated, and presidents should simply refuse to let their nominees testify before such hearings. However, without forgetting the legitimate and important role that the Senate plays in the process as a whole, the Senate should work toward influencing the *nominating* process instead of wasting energy on the *confirmation* process. Interrogation of nominees could – and should – continue to be an integral part of the Senate’s role, but it could be done with more thoroughness without the circus-like atmosphere of the televised drama that we have come to know. The institutional integrity of the judiciary, as well as the institutional efficiency and success of both the presidency and the Senate, would increase.

Overall, Wittes’ arguments and analyses are refreshing, especially his institutional perspective that sees the current confirmation process as the concomitant reaction to the overall institutional growth of the Judiciary over the last fifty years. My only concern with his solution is that the judiciary’s power might in fact be so large now that any moderate, practical reforms – like those suggested by Wittes – are unlikely. If the spectacle of hearings is really the result of one institution of American government responding to the increase in another, why should we expect either of them to bend? Nevertheless, Wittes’s contribution to the study of the judicial selection process is an important one.

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Confrontation and Compromise: Presidential & Congressional Leadership, 2001-2006, Jason D. Mycoff and Joseph A. Pika, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, ISBN 9780742540606, \$26.95, paper, 282 pages.

This book offers a set of six case studies in presidential/congressional leadership. The issues addressed are No Child Left Behind, Intelligence Reform, Campaign Finance Reform, the Department of Homeland Security, Hurricane Katrina, and Social Security.

The book aims primarily at an undergraduate audience as a supplementary text for courses in American politics, the Congress, or the presidency. It develops the notion that complex issues require a matrix of leadership that will include the president and other administration officials, party leaders in Congress, and individual legislators. Less emphasis is given to the role of external leaders, although the 9-11 commission figures prominently in the chapter on intelligence redesign and reform. The case studies rely on governmental and published sources, and the authors appear to have conducted no interviews with participants.

A main purpose of the authors is to demonstrate that policy leadership comes from a variety of sources, and involves not only the top party leaders and the president, but also policy entrepreneurs emerging from within the Congress. The strength of this book lies in its focus on specific legislators who shaped the final legislative packages. Since the case studies cut across policy domains, the authors are positioned to draw some generalizations about the role of leaders in shaping policy. This they undertake in a concluding chapter that first offers a final case study of Social Security reform (which, unlike the other policies addressed in the book, produced no results), and then offers some generalizations about leadership.

I would have preferred that they use the full scope of this chapter to explain the abortive attempt to launch Social Security reform as a counterpoint to the other studies which did produce legislative results. Then, a final chapter could have drawn the lessons about when leaders succeed, which leaders are effective, and why leadership sometimes fails.

These case studies are, nonetheless, potentially quite useful as a supplement to texts that focus on one institution or the other, and might also be considered for use in courses on national policy making. The authors' attempt to explain leadership patterns and strategies that go beyond party leadership is very useful and might serve as the foundation of a research agenda that could produce a valuable scholarly contribution as well as a pedagogical tool.

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Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics, Earl Black and Merle Black, Simon & Schuster, 2007, ISBN 9780743262024, \$26.00, cloth, 286 pages.

Divided America examines the nature of political competition in contemporary American politics. It does so by noting two important aspects of the nature of that competition. First, the authors explore the substantial regional component to current political conflict. Second, they consider the high levels of competition over control of the U.S. presidency, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. This book traces the development of these patterns over the last fifty years or so. In most cases, the authors rely on exit polls and the American National Election Studies to create simple, straightforward, and generally effective evidence to support their arguments.

Earl Black and Merle Black have been, of course, among the leaders when it comes to understanding southern politics and its changes over the last couple of generations. Much of what they have done in the South, they now do for the rest of the nation by exploring how the South and the Mountain/Plains regions have become Republican strongholds and how the Northeast and Pacific Coast regions have become Democratic strongholds. They also explore the nature of what they call the divided Midwest. The obvious ideological dimension is found throughout their analysis, but the authors filter much of that understanding through a number of key variables (such as race/ethnicity, and religion, especially evangelicalism) looking at both how preferences and the size of various groups have shifted over time. In the latter part of their analysis, Black and Black explore how the patterns they previously uncovered are reflected in what they call a “power struggle” in the presidency, the House, and the Senate.

The strengths of this work are its comprehensive exploration of key issues in American politics and the accessibility of the analysis. The authors boldly reach across a wide terrain and do not hesitate to state their personal interpretations of both their data and historical events. The limitations of this work, then, should be obvious. It skates across so much territory that the analysis never goes very deep, and the more sophisticated readers will cry out for more critical analysis. The fact that there is not a lot new in their analysis somewhat ameliorates that concern because many of the points have been subject to more critical analysis elsewhere. In the end, many readers are likely to be impressed by their reach and their ability to make complex issues accessible even to less sophisticated readers.

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Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the U. S. Senate, Gregory J. Wawro and Eric Schickler, Princeton University Press, 2006, ISBN 9780691134062, \$29.95, paper, 328 pages.

Existing research considering the impacts of unlimited debate in the U.S. Senate have found significant evidence to demonstrate the need for legislative entrepreneurs to construct larger legislative coalitions in order to pass legislation in the Senate as compared to other legislative bodies (e.g. Krehbiel 1998). These supermajority requirements in the Senate have largely been attributed to the 60 senator majority requirement that is necessary to invoke cloture and stop attempts to kill bills through legislative debate, commonly known as filibusters. Yet, while the effects of unlimited debate in the Senate during the contemporary era are fairly well established, the impacts of unlimited debate prior to cloture invocation being an option for legislative majorities have never been systematically researched. Furthermore, the reasons behind the decision to create formal rules to limit debate in the Senate have also been understudied in the political science literature to date. In *Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the U.S. Senate*, Gregory Wawro and Eric Schickler excellently fill this dearth in the existing literature with a compelling account of lawmaking in the pre-cloture U.S. Senate that draws upon rational choice, historical analysis, and statistical data to produce explanations and findings that are relevant not only to scholars of congressional institutions, but also to those interested in the effects of informal norms and formal rules on individual political behavior in general.

Conventional wisdom would suggest that due to the lack of a formal mechanism to end debate in the pre-cloture Senate, legislative proposals would be very difficult to enact without universal support because any senator could conceivably filibuster a bill to its death. However, Wawro and Schickler argue that this conventional wisdom fails to take into account the significant costs in terms of resources in order to obtain and hold debate on the floor, physical exertion required to actually give lengthy speeches on a bill, and the loss of opportunities to take part in other legislative activities that pre-cloture senators had to endure in order to carry out a filibuster (30). Furthermore, pre-cloture senators who opposed a bill also had to be careful not to filibuster a particularly intense majority's position on a bill, as this majority could institute a "rules revolution" that would place limits on debate and remove filibusters as an option for legislative minorities in the future (37). Finally, due to informal norms of behavior that call for the maintenance of the institutional integrity of the Senate and that produce the expectation that obstructive actions will be retaliated against, senators would be reluctant to use the filibuster unless absolutely necessary (43).

Therefore, taking into account these costs, risks, and norms, senators in the pre-cloture era would only filibuster bills when the issue at hand was particularly salient to the minority and when the costs of filibustering a bill decreased, as would occur at the end of a Congress when less speech time was necessary to kill a bill (55). Thus, typically bare majorities were sufficient to pass most legislation in the pre-cloture era since filibusters were relatively uncommon (55). Only after the close relationships amongst senators that facilitated the communication necessary to maintain informal norms of behavior broke down around the turn of the century due to increased chamber size, workload, and turnover, did senators begin to abuse the filibuster, which resulted in the institution of the cloture rule in order to limit debate and abuse of the debate rules in the Senate (182).

Through the use of statistical analyses and historical case studies of bills during the pre-cloture and post-cloture time periods, Wawro and Schickler find convincing support for their theoretical expectations including the findings that, overall, legislative coalitions were typically smaller in the pre-cloture period than during the post-cloture period (chapters 4 and 6), bare majorities were typically able to pass legislation despite obstruction attempts (chapter 5), and one of the most likely groups to filibuster legislation in the pre-cloture period were southern legislators on slavery related bills due to the salience of that issue to these legislators (chapter 7). Furthermore, the authors also present evidence that the increase in the use of filibusters that brought about cloture reform was significantly related to increases in the size and workload of the Senate, both of which could be expected to lead to the breakdown of informal norms that once inhibited filibuster attempts (chapter 8).

Although some may argue that a book about the crafting of legislation in a peculiar institution during a time period that has long since passed may not have much significance for current political science, Wawro and Schickler succeed in producing a piece of political science that is not only relevant to current congressional scholars, but also to any political scholar interested in institutional change and the role of informal norms and formal rules on individual behavior. The authors' work demonstrates the factors that may need to be present for informal norms to work and the factors that may make formal rules necessary in order for a legislative institution, or possibly any political institution, to function. Wawro and Schickler's approach to studying filibusters demonstrates that much can be learned about political life by studying the past, which is a lesson that scholars should consider when conducting research in the future.

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Forty Years a Legislator: Elmer Thomas, edited by Richard Lowitt and Carolyn G. Hanneman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2007, ISBN 9780806138091, \$24.95, cloth, 178 pages.

Released in the year of the Oklahoma Centennial, *Forty Years A Legislator*, the memoir of Elmer Thomas, one of Oklahoma's most accomplished and influential politicians, sheds light on the history of the State of Oklahoma as well as the United States Congress in the first half of the twentieth century. Written in 1951 yet only recently released by the University of Oklahoma Press, Thomas's writing should provide insights for both the academic and the casual reader interested in gaining an inside look into a career that witnessed countless events of historic importance. Fittingly, Thomas begins his memoir with the opening of the Oklahoma Territories on a late Sunday afternoon in November 1900 in Oklahoma City. After securing some land in Lawton and getting married, Thomas quickly becomes aware of the pressing water problems of his new home state and sets out to shape the solution. A Bryan Democrat who is driven by the hope "to help, at least in a small way, those who came into being handicapped by poverty and lack of opportunity," Thomas begins his political career in 1907 when he is selected to serve as one of the first Oklahoma State Senators. As such he bears witness to the selection of Oklahoma City as the state capitol, a process riddled with financial and electoral problems which Thomas recounts lively. Yet he quickly moves on to the United States House of Representatives and ultimately the Senate, to which he was elected four times. His entire career is marked by his integrity, passion, and unrelenting fight for farmers, working people, and American Indians. His convictions are particularly reflected in his support for the veterans who moved on the capital in 1932, his filibuster for a "fair" oil price for domestic producers, and his fight for a more plentiful supply of currency during the Great Depression, which he labels "My Paramount Accomplishment." Moreover, Thomas shares with us many other interesting stories such as congressional contributions to the Manhattan Project as one of only four senators privy to the plans; his 30,000-mile 6-day journey to survey the American military in the 1930s; and his visit to the Nuremberg Trials.

Elmer Thomas, in his role as lawyer, businessman, and politician, provides us with a vivid account full of interesting yet often little-known anecdotes about a time with many of the same conflicts that we face today including oil, veteran compensation, water, poverty, and social justice. Yet as he rises through the ranks of Congress, Thomas also comes to realize that "there is no substitute for experience obtained through seniority and long service [because ...] it is the holders of such top positions who dictate and control the policies of government." The political career of Elmer Thomas certainly provides us with a new perspective of the influence of seniority in shaping policies in this nation.

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Governing the American State: Congress and the New Federalism, 1877-1929, Kimberley S. Johnson, Princeton University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780691119748, \$35.00, cloth, 226 pages.

For many scholars of modern federalism in the United States, the focus has centered on the New Deal and the policy leadership exercised by an active and powerful executive branch. Lost in the explosion of New Deal policy activism is an appreciation of the role of Congress in redefining national-state relations in the half century preceding the New Deal; however, Kimberley S. Johnson has ably and convincingly provided a valuable corrective.

Governing the American State analyzes the content of 131 policies and traces their political development during the period from 1877 to 1929. Calling this the “first New Federalism,” Johnson argues that the transformation of federalism was a reflection of the organization and partisan dynamics of Congress and not the executive-centered process that has come to dominate accounts of the New Deal and subsequent reform efforts of modern presidents.

Not only is Johnson’s thesis and argument intriguing and fresh in its approach, so too are her methods of analysis. The focus of her analysis is on the 131 congressional enactments, which she calls intergovernmental policy instruments (IPIs) and which range in content from regulatory, distributive, and redistributive policy across a variety of policy areas including agriculture, commerce, natural resources, transportation, and social welfare. She argues:

While the judiciary and reigning political beliefs during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era often endorsed a narrow dual federal system, actors and interests looked for ways to subvert these judicial limitations. Thus federalism, in the form of intergovernmental policy, became the means for these subversions (9).

Johnson creates indices to reflect the content of these IPIs in terms of their delegation or constraint of national and state discretion. For example, she notes that Congress, as a means of circumventing the Supreme Court, often included intrastate commerce exemption clauses into intergovernmental regulations, either allowing or preempting state standards or, conversely, imposing or limiting national authority (54-55). Her subsequent multivariate analysis of the politics of enacting IPIs shows that Congress considered a range of discretionary policies that often constituted a “zero-sum game” of trade-offs in state and national authority (78). The politics reflect the dynamics of shifting Republican fortunes in Congress along with party competition and sectionalism. She concludes:

Across time and across policy areas, Congress repeatedly made decisions about how to structure its relationship with the national bureaucracy and the state. Members of Congress cared intensely about this relationship because of the political and institutional risks and incentives that surrounded them (83).

Johnson bolsters her quantitative analysis with three in-depth case studies focusing on the nationalization of regulation of food and drugs production in 1906, the infusion of federal funding for roads and highways from the turn of the century to the New Deal, and the provision of child and maternal health care under the Sheppard-Towner Act on 1921.

Overall, Johnson has provided a valuable analysis and corrective to the American political development accounts of national-state intergovernmental relations. She has also added a convincing case for the role of Congress in structuring the first New Federalism.

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Leading Representatives: The Agency of Leaders in the Politics of the U. S. House, Randall Strahan, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780801886911, \$19.96, paper, 256 pages.

This book appears in an “Interpreting American Politics” series offered by Johns Hopkins Press and edited by Michael Nelson. As Nelson notes in his editor’s introduction, congressional leadership scholarship has for many years now tended to downplay the impact of individual party leaders as it has sought for systemic explanations of congressional behavior. Randall Strahan has been among a small number of congressional scholars who have argued that congressional leadership theories have underemphasized the latitude that individual leaders enjoy and the impact they can have on the legislative process.

To explore this important aspect of congressional leadership, Strahan offers a set of three case studies: Henry Clay, Thomas B. Reed, and Newt Gingrich. Strahan arrays and assesses the policy, institutional, and personal goals of these important Speakers, and argues that their impact on public policy and the institutional development of the House of Representatives cannot be explained in terms of their responsiveness to the demands of their party colleagues or even to the broader context in which their Speakerships played out. Each of these Speakers was willing to take risks to achieve major goals, and each left an imprint on the House of Representatives that endured beyond their tenure in office.

Here we observe three leaders, in three widely separated periods in congressional history, each aiming to attain specific objectives and each developing and implementing strategies to succeed. The strength of this book lies in the lively narratives through which Strahan reveals the calculated use of power by three assertive leaders. The Speakers we meet here are, as Nelson observes, the men that the publics of their day also observed. These leaders made a difference, were understood to have done so at the time, and were not the hostage of circumstance or academic theory.

Are the lessons they offer generalizable? Obviously, not all Speakers have had the impact that these three had. Strahan has selected the most compelling cases to demonstrate the leadership potential of the Speakership. Would an analysis of Sam Rayburn or Jim Wright suggest different lessons? How about the lesser lights of the pantheon of Speakers, those whose names are not household words? Sedgwick? Stevenson? Colfax? Gillette? The list of the obscure is far lengthier than that of the notables. But this is perhaps Strahan’s point.

Strahan offers a “conditional agency framework” to capture the potential and the limitations of the Speakership. The Speakership offers the potential for a Speaker to lead on policy and/or institutional reform under some conditions. Not all Speakers will choose to avail themselves of the opportunities presented and some Speakers with a disposition to lead will find themselves hostage to circumstances. Leadership theory suggests that a cohesive caucus is prerequisite to assertive leadership, and Strahan’s case studies show that this is not systematically the case for these three Speakers. Yet other factors might serve to constrain them.

If contemporary leadership theory inaccurately depreciates the potential of the Speakership, it would be equally as inaccurate to elevate the office above the capacities of those who come to serve in it. The Speakership is, like most positions in private and public life, what Speakers come to make of it. All Speakers should attend that lesson.

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Lines in the Sand: Congressional Redistricting in Texas and the Downfall of Tom Delay, Steve Bickerstaff, University of Texas Press, 2007, ISBN 9780292714748, \$34.95, cloth, 528 pages.

As the old saying goes, everything is bigger in Texas. Steve Bickerstaff's *Lines in the Sand: Congressional Redistricting in Texas and the Downfall of Tom Delay* provides a detailed account of a real whopper, one of the most outlandish stories in the history OF U.S. politics. The tale details the events surrounding an unprecedented partisan power grab through an equally unprecedented mid-decade redistricting. While one man, the former House majority leader, provided the greatest catalyst for the scheme, the parties involved in seeing it through could fill the room—if it were Texas sized, of course. Appropriately enough, much of the story unfolds in the largest of state capitol buildings, which yes, also has a dome that is 15 feet taller than the U.S. Capitol's.

This book provides much more than a mere description of the most recent Texas remap. Bickerstaff skillfully explores the strategies of the state and national parties, and attempts to explain why Republicans eventually prevailed. His exhaustive research draws a picture of Texas redistricting that includes powerful figures and offices far outside the borders of the Lone Star State. While legions of individuals eventually became involved, the plot was both hatched and brought to fruition by a small group of insiders. In addition to an assessment of partisan motivations and effects, Bickerstaff explores the relationship of the remap to racial and ethnic minorities in Texas, finding surprising discord in ways in which the effort was viewed by minority leaders, and perhaps less surprising negative effects on minority representation. And of course, the story is good too. In their efforts to derail the plan, Democrats pursued the most extreme of measures, fleeing the state twice—first to Oklahoma and then to New Mexico. Bickerstaff suggests that it was the national Democratic Party, in an effort to exploit the political chicanery occurring in Texas, that eventually brought Texas Democratic legislators back to the table, and to defeat.

Whether you study redistricting, representation, racial and ethnic politics, political behavior and elections, political parties, or public policy, there is something for everyone in the 2003 Texas remap. Certainly, a treasure trove of data capable of speaking to diverse questions in political science awaits the researcher. For those seeking to use the Texas redistricting as a window to their research questions, Bickerstaff's book provides a solid footing on which to build analysis.

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More than Money: Interest Group Action in Congressional Elections, Richard M. Skinner, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007, ISBN 9780742547209, \$75.00, cloth, 207 pages.

While there is no shortage of scholarly literature on interest group formation, membership maintenance, and political activity, relatively little has been written on the role of interest groups in congressional elections. In his book *More than Money: Interest Group Action in Congressional Elections*, Richard M. Skinner attempts to fill the literature gap and examines interest group activity in congressional elections using a theoretical framework that emphasizes membership incentives, interest group resources, and political and legal contexts. The book's case studies (AARP, AFL-CIO, AMA, ATLA, EMILY'S List, NARAL, NFIB, NRA, NRLC, and Sierra Club) were chosen to create a mixture of groups based on groups' membership size, nature of membership, issue area, and partisanship.

With respect to his first theoretical component (the incentives that groups offer to potential members), Skinner suggests that membership incentives affect the scope of groups' political involvement. Groups based on material incentives attract memberships that are heterogeneous, apathetic, nonideological, and relatively large, and, consequently, they focus their activity on members (163). In contrast, groups based on purposive incentives draw memberships that are homogeneous, motivated, ideological, and relatively small, and, therefore, they focus their activity on nonmembers (163).

In terms of their resources, interest groups can utilize money, membership, and/or expertise in a manner most likely to achieve their objectives. One of the surprising results of this study is that money is not the all-powerful resource. Money is more effective when it is used to capitalize on groups' other advantages (97). Membership is an important resource in winning elections as members can vote, volunteer, and donate money. Purposive groups with small but highly politicized memberships tend to mobilize their members as volunteers and donors rather than voters, whereas non-purposive groups with large but not necessarily highly politicized memberships focus on turning their membership numbers into votes (chapter 7). Expertise comes in four major forms: issue credibility, targeting voters, targeting races, and campaign services. Issue credibility, the ability to speak out on particular issues in a way that sways a significant number of voters, is the most important form of expertise available to "older" groups as a result of years of activity, public visibility, ties to other organizations, and spending money (124).

Finally, groups operate within changing political and legal contexts. Given the increasing partisan polarization in Congress, partisan/ideological groups have stronger incentives to increase their political involvement in elections as well as better opportunities to develop closer ties to one party (chapter 9). Thus, Skinner's work lends support to the proposition that interest groups can be part of broader party networks. In other words, interest groups can be the parties' allies rather than their rivals. Groups also have to adapt to changes in the legal environment. Supreme Court rulings (e.g. *Buckley v. Valeo*) and congressional statutes (e.g. Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act) can either expand or circumscribe the range of tools available to interest groups for political involvement.

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Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: a guide to good practice, David Beetham, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Genève, 2006, ISBN 9291422975, paper, 215 pages.

Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty First Century is an attempt to catalogue recent developments in parliamentary practices and procedures that have contributed to democracy. The framework for evaluating parliamentary developments is presented at the onset of the book. A two-page outline identifies the key values of democracy and each corresponding institutional practice which attempts to realize that value (10-11). For example, a basic objective of democracy is transparency and the procedural and institutional means for achieving this value are: open public proceedings, notifying the public of the parliamentary agenda, documentation available in relevant languages, laws on access to information (10). Using this framework as a touchstone, the book uses contributions from parliamentarians themselves to document changes in procedure and their relationship to the democratic character of legislatures.

According to *Parliament and Democracy*, a democratic parliament is one which is: representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective (7). In the chapter discussing representation, the book discusses changes made in electoral systems designed to improve the way respective parliaments represent their electorate. In examining the five different components of democratic parliaments, the book incorporates examples from all over the world and from many different types of legislatures. It notes that Monaco added a proportional representation element to ensure more diverse representation in their National Council (17), New Zealand issues an open invitation to individuals and organizations to submit legislation via their website (80), and Uganda allows for the mid-term recall of any member of parliament through petition by registered voters (97).

The aim of the book is to illustrate the myriad of creative ways parliaments are responding to modern challenges, whether the changes succeed or fail. It does not make any significant theoretical contributions to the discussion of parliament and democracy, rather it focuses on practical suggestions as the title would suggest. It is an attempt to begin a pursuit of parliamentary best practices because “good practical examples which have been tried and endorsed by parliaments are worth disseminating even if they may not have worked perfectly” (8). This book is intended for parliamentarians, concerned citizens and activists, international organizations involved in the work of legislatures, and academics. It succeeds in its stated aim and provides a useful update on comparative parliamentary practices.

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Party Affiliations in the State Legislatures: A Year by Year Summary, 1796-2006, Michael J. Dubin, McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2007, ISBN 9780786429141, \$45.00, paper, 223 pages.

This book provides a state-by-state breakdown of *all* party affiliations in state legislatures in the U.S. from 1796 to 2006. Moving beyond a statistical source for the partisan makeup of state legislatures, Dubin also supplies a brief overview of each state’s political system. The brief overview covers a variety of topics, including: the size and term of each legislature, the state’s electoral process, state constitutional constraints, and a variety of other details. In general, this compilation of information and data serves as a convenient source for state-level, legislative scholars.

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Party Influence in Congress, Steven S. Smith, Cambridge University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780521703871, \$22.99, paper, 254 pages.

I wish I could have taken a graduate seminar on Congress from Steve Smith. In fact, I wish I could take one now. Professor Smith has a true talent for fusing theoretical development from the scholarly literature with the empirical world of Capitol Hill. He also has a penchant for tying together seemingly disparate approaches and findings in the literature. In this excellent book, he showcases both of these gifts as he recasts the major scholarship published regarding political party influence in the Congress over the last two decades.

As stated in introductory chapter 1, Smith's thesis is that "congressional parties seek to advance both the electoral and the policy interests of their members" (5). The book consists of six core chapters. In chapter 2, Smith describes in an interesting manner several recent causal scenarios on Capitol Hill to provide support for his thesis. In chapter 3, he outlines the different causal pathways of party influence. Chapter 4 takes roll call vote studies and attempts to mold them into a broad theoretical account. In chapter 5, he reviews, critiques, and situates two very prominent party theories: Rohde's conditional party government and Cox and McCubbins' cartel theory. Smith takes on Keith Krehbiel's two-headed monster challenge to the role of parties in the legislature ("Where's the Party?", *British Journal of Political Science*, 1993; and *Pivotal Politics*, University of Chicago Press, 1998) in chapter 6. Smith re-analyzes Krehbiel's evidence and demonstrates "that party effects are readily discernible in Krehbiel's studies" (6). In chapter 7, Smith focuses on indirect party effects and comparisons between the House and Senate. Chapter 8 discusses the path of future research on party influence in Congress.

This book is a theoretical tour de force. Smith steps outside the familiar box of testing for party effects while controlling for ideological preferences. The key problem in controlling for preferences is the roll call data used to measure them, measures which contain latent party effects. Smith goes far beyond the party vs. preferences debate, which indeed is a welcome theoretical development. Two major contributions of the work are bringing the Senate more squarely into the equation and the asymmetric party effects model, which "assumes that there is a systematic difference between the two parties" (183). In this case, the two parties are the majority and minority parties.

Criticisms of this book are few and far between. Let me first quickly dispose of the "this book is just a literature review" critique. Some scholars will read this book and say that Smith falls short in offering a new theory or empirical test. Such a criticism, in my view, is unfair and unreasonable to lodge at every scholarly work. Smith is quite clear in introducing the reader to the book that it really consists of theoretical essays on party influence. He did not intend to utilize the conventional approach of subjecting a focused research question on a sub-topic of party influence to multiple empirical tests. The same critique was lodged at Frank Baumgartner and Beth Leech's literature review-oriented *Basic Interests: The Role of Interest Groups in Politics and Political Science* (Princeton University Press, 1998). I wish more senior scholars would do what Smith has done here. The book will help to advance the literature in this area of inquiry much more than would another cut on testing for party effects.

The only real criticism I would offer on the book is the fact that, in the haystack of new research examining party effects since Krehbiel (1993), Smith misses several works by younger scholars which attempt to explore party effects in the manner he desires. While I would not quibble much with Smith's review of the big-name authors in this area, he overlooks work such as that by Jonathan Bader (*Taking the Initiative*, Georgetown University Press, 1997) and Chuck Finocchiaro and his various co-authors. My own work (on party leader use of omnibus packages and party influence in the early legislative winnowing process) provides additional instances of research that seemingly carries out some of what Smith seeks in the literature. I speculate that his purpose was more in recasting the theoretical debate in light of work by senior scholars at the frontiers of legislative research.

In conclusion, all scholars and graduate students of American politics, legislative institutions, and political parties should read this book. It brings together an otherwise inchoate literature on parties in the legislature. Smith also offers a framework for the next generation of congressional scholars to test, much like David Mayhew did in 1974, with his classic *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Smith's *Party Influence in Congress* is already on the book list for my doctoral seminar in American politics for the fall semester 2008.

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Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress, Volume 2: Further New Perspectives on the History of Congress, edited by David W. Brady and Mathew D. McCubbins, Stanford University Press, 2007, ISBN 0804755914, \$34.95, paper, 505 pages.

I have heard scholars of comparative politics assert on occasion that American politics should not be considered a subfield of political science. Rather, they suggest, it is a big “case study” in the subfield of comparative politics.

If American politics is to be considered a case study, the insight it provides is certainly broad, detailed, and fragmented—both in terms of topics and in historical periods addressed. The same is true of research on Congress, probably our most studied institution. Missing from most individual pieces of research on Congress is any reference to internal and external forces shaping the historical development of the institution. While disparate contributions may be pulled together to make sense of continuing roles, rules, parties, policies, or inter-branch relationships over time, congressional scholars stand to benefit from a more collaborative effort to place the evolution of congress in the context of the internal and external forces that continue to shape and reshape the body after two centuries. To avoid missing the forest for the trees, approaches that take broader historical-institutional or political economy approaches to the study of Congress add some coherence to understandings of the institution. This is the effort of David Brady and Mathew McCubbins in *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress, Volume 2*.

The edited work is presented in three parts. Part I, in sections on the progressive era and postwar period, examines external influences on Congress. Chapters addressing progressive era change focus on the effects of an assortment of electoral reforms on representative behaviors and party dynamics. Chapters focusing on the postwar congress parse the causes of party polarization in the institution, dynamically measure conditional party government, and examine the interrelatedness of district and member ideologies and election patterns.

Part II turns inwardly, but time remains the ever-present theme underlying inquiry. Four sections devoted to nineteenth century change, Progressive era change, Postwar change and Postbellum trends focus on the effects of internal institutional reforms. The interplay and alternation of committee and party power during the nineteenth century is examined as a factor explaining institutional agenda setting, evolving electoral strategies revealed in roll call voting, committee composition, and leadership behavior. The impact of changing Senate cloture rules, of changing candidate characteristics and party configurations on house elections, and partisanship on leadership behavior are examined in studies of the Progressive era Congress. Postwar considerations focus on minority rights in the House in three chapters conceptualized around the motion to recommit and in a fourth chapter on the evolution of partisan collusion in conference committee. Finally, chapters set in the Postbellum Era examine the surprising success of congress in passing bicameral legislation and the mechanisms that facilitated this feat, and electoral linkages in an era of partisanship through a natural experiment that compares the roll call behaviors of departing lame-duck members to their earlier voting behaviors.

Part III briefly examines policy trends in relation to changes in internal and external influences. Chapters measure the passage of significant legislation between Reconstruction and WWII, argue that the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act served the instrumental purpose of revealing to southerners actual levels of support for, and opposition to, slavery policies, and explain that the passage of temporary pieces of bankruptcy legislation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by conservative Congresses reveals a continuation of support for business interests during economic downturns.

The collection of articles in *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress, Volume 2*, places the American Congress in temporal context that should be useful to scholars studying diverse topics related to the institution. Taken together, these articles also may help researchers conceptualize Congress as a historical case. For those concerned about bounded conclusions in time-bound studies, these authors provide assistance in taking the long view.

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Personal Roots of Representation, Barry C. Burden, Princeton University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780691134598, \$24.95, paper, 192 pages.

When legislators choose their own views over those of their constituents, should this independence only be understood as “shirking”? Taking a fresh look at why, when, and to what degree legislators follow or diverge from their constituents’ views on policy, Barry Burden provides a sound empirical case for how legislators’ personal experiences directly shape their policy preferences. In doing so, Burden contributes a significant case for the personal roots of representation.

Burden argues that the principal-agent understanding of elections and the delegate-trustee model of representation are inadequate to describe the relationship between legislators and constituents. Burden believes individual factors in the lives of legislators have significant influence on their policy preferences, while previous literature has assumed that legislators look only outward for policy cues especially on issues which are new or on which party positions have not solidified. In addition to party positions and constituent opinion, Burden suggests three other factors: the representative’s values, moral convictions, and principles; her information or prior expertise; and her self-interest.

The methodology underlying the research draws upon multiple sources of data and deploys that data in inventive ways. Burden uses interviews with former legislators to help develop his theory. In the three case studies of tobacco, education, and religious policy, he combines quantitative analysis and in-depth analysis of speeches made by representatives about the particular legislation. In each case study, Burden contrasts what he calls reactive behaviors (e.g. roll call voting) and proactive behaviors (e.g. speechmaking and bill sponsorship) to make his case for the influence of personal factors.

The lack of descriptive representation in Congress is a theme that runs throughout all three case studies as Burden tries to explain why legislators fail to represent their constituents’ policy interests. The cases involve tobacco regulation (smokers being underrepresented in Congress), vouchers and school choice (MCs disproportionately have children in private schools), and legislation on religious practices and bioethical issues (MCs’ personal religious views seemingly trump public opinion on issues like stem cell research.)

Burden concludes that “in the heightened partisan environment of the modern Congress, the strange bedfellows created when members cross the aisle are often only possible because of personal motivation” (137). After all, representatives are human beings who carry their experiences, values, and interests with them to Congress, a fact perhaps too long neglected by political scientists. Burden’s evidence is compelling though not always overwhelming, but certainly enough to warrant further investigation and careful consideration by legislative scholars.

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Representing America: The Citizen and the Professional Legislator in the House of Representatives, Rebekah Herrick and Samuel H Fisher III, Lexington Books, 2007, ISBN 9780739117279, \$50.00, cloth, 120 pages.

Driven by the current debate over term limits in the US Congress, Rebekah Herrick and Samuel Fisher examine whether the “professional” legislator, who chooses politics for a long-term career, provides fundamentally different descriptive or substantive representation to his or her constituents than does a “citizen” legislator, who does not intend to pursue a life-long career in politics, but rather plans to only stay for a few terms in office. The push for term limits was at its zenith at the time of the analysis, driven largely in part by disgust with a Congress perceived to be dominated by political and societal elites in service to specialized interests. Their analysis has significant implications for this perception and the push for term limits in the US Congress.

The authors use data from a six-year (1992 – 1998) period of the House of Representatives, examining 271 new members of the House, 28 of whom signed pledges to limit their terms in office. They utilize a variety of methods, from qualitative interviews to logit regression on roll call voting and interest groups contributions to determine whether citizen legislators provide different representation than professional legislators.

Some findings challenge assumptions about citizen legislators. In terms of descriptive representation, the assumption that citizen legislators would be more reflective of the constituent demographics does not hold, as citizen legislators are predominately more elite than both the full American population and the district from which they are elected, a finding they attribute to the considerable amounts of time, money and skill it takes to run for office. They also find little differences in the amount of time spent by citizen and professional legislators staying in contact with constituents in the district. There is also very little difference in the citizen and professional legislators’ relationships with interest groups.

In terms of where citizen legislators differ from professional legislators, the authors’ findings have consequences for substantive representation. They find that there are significant differences in terms of ideology as citizens are more extreme than professional legislators (although this may be a reflection of the district leanings). More importantly, the citizen legislator is less successful than the professional in seeing their bills and resolutions passed and getting assigned to powerful committees. Citizen legislators are then less effective in securing their policy goals through traditional means. Instead, they must resort to blocking tactics to secure policy goals. The authors give little evidence, though, whether or not these tactics are successful in advancing the policy concerns of the district. Competitive elections make both citizen and professional legislators more responsive to their districts.

In sum, the book’s strength is advancing factual knowledge of the (few) differences between the citizen and the professional legislator and linking the findings to ambition theory. The findings suggest that it is not the ambitions of the representative that matter, but rather competitive elections that tend to make the representative provide more substantive representation.

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Rules and Restraint: Government Spending and the Design of Institutions, David M. Primo, The University of Chicago Press, 2007, ISBN 0226682609, \$20.00, paper, 216 pages.

David Primo is motivated by the puzzle of why federal budgetary levels are unaffected by rules designed to restrain spending, and he wonders if rules can ever be effective. To answer this question, he develops a theoretical model of the rule design and enforcement process and tests it under various conditions using a game theory approach to predict the likelihood of rule effectiveness (operationalized as spending restraint). He finds that the impact of a rule depends both on its procedural details and on its enforcement (4).

This book effectively argues "...that the conditions required for effective budget rules – an appropriate design and appropriate enforcement mechanism – will rarely be met in practice" (4). The biggest stumbling block to effectiveness, not surprisingly, is the political arena in which these rules must be passed and enforced. While macro level and long-term outcomes are often the impetus for rule-making, they are often sacrificed in the face of the costs in particular policy areas in the short-run. In the substantive chapters of the book, Primo explains the basics of rule design and enforcement by institutions where repeated interactions occur and there is heavy reliance on norms (informal rules) to guide social –welfare interested rather than self-interested behavior (chapter 2). Given the difficulty of this task, suboptimal outcomes and violations of rules can be expected, and do, in fact, occur with regularity. He offers one possible solution in chapter 3, concluding that external enforcement will be most effective if the enforcer is truly independent of the rulemaking body. Thus elected judges who have official rule review power will be more effective at limiting spending than constituents who can levy costs for self-interested behavior only at the ballot box. Chapter 4 presents the question of internal enforcement and concludes with some counterintuitive findings on why we should prefer closed rules to control the agenda setter and resultant spending levels. The following chapter on state reforms concludes with the observation that "rules designed in the modern era, when many interests have a stake in how the rules are constructed, are unlikely to reach the level of effectiveness that rules initiated in an earlier era have achieved (103). The problem, he suggests in chapter 6, is the institutional environment of rulemaking and rule enforcement at the federal v. the state level.

The main body of the text offers a readable explanation and interpretation of his theoretical model and empirical testing. There are also around 20 pages of technical materials for those who want the mathematical proofs. The historical review of attempts at budget reform will be familiar to the readers of this review. However, the discussion of the balanced budget requirements at the state level and analysis of the outcome provides a useful counterpoint to the discussion of what has been attempted and has failed at the federal level. Those seeking a study of legislative activity framed from an economic theory perspective may find this account quite useful for graduate classroom adoption. The presentation of the theoretical model and statistical results will, however, require careful reading from those not familiar with this style of analysis.

There are many questions that arise as a consequence of Primo's argument. He diligently addresses many of these in the last chapter of the book (127-130). The biggest question left unanswered, in this reviewer's mind, is how can his model inform legislative rulemaking from a more practical (perhaps even pragmatic) perspective? Two practical puzzles emerge from his argument: How can we improve rule design? How can we structure enforcement mechanisms that are effective at overcoming self-interest and unintended, but predictable, incentives to set rules aside when they are inconvenient? Primo's analysis cogently argues why rules and restraint are somewhat of an oxymoron at the congressional level, but leaves readers with little insight into how his model of the institution, actors, and processes associated with rulemaking and fiscal control can benefit from the conclusions he has so effectively argued.

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The House: The History of the House of Representatives, Robert V. Remini and the Library of Congress, Harper Collins, 2006, ISBN 0060884347, \$34.95, cloth, 624 pages.

In 1999, Public Law 106-99 (the History of the House Awareness and Preservation Act) directed the Library of Congress to complete an entire narrative history of the U.S. House of Representatives. For this task, renowned Jacksonian-era historian Robert V. Remini was chosen.

The eventual product, *The House: The History of the House of Representatives*, is a compelling and sweeping narrative account of our most democratic legislative institution. Covering the figures, events, important votes, scandals, and developments from colonial times through 2001, the more-than-500-page *House* nevertheless more than adequately passes through the history of the House of Representatives with speed and skill.

Utilizing primary and secondary documents, as well as personal interviews, especially in the last sections on reform and the “Conservative Revolution,” Remini is able to interweave institutional, policy, and interpersonal developments into a grand portrait of the House. Remini also makes adroit use of the appropriate anecdote. For example, in recounting the struggle for post-Civil War civil rights, Remini highlights the powerful clash between African-American representatives and former Confederates and the powerful benefits of equal rights in democratic government. Robert B. Elliott is powerfully depicted challenging former Vice-President of the Confederacy and current post-Civil War Representative Alexander H. Stephens who was trying to impede passage of the eventual Civil Rights Act of 1875. Elliott stated that those who “kept their allegiance true to freedom and the Union” were now there “to meet him in debate” (213). As an unfortunate example of pre-reform chairmanship intransigence, Remini recounts how chairman F. Edward Hébert (LA) told Representatives Pat Schroeder and African-American Ron Dellums “that women and blacks were worth only half of one ‘regular’ member, so he added only one seat to the committee room” (445).

The House is intended for a more general audience and the prose is occasionally terse, stilted, and awkward. Nevertheless, a more important issue Remini’s account raises is if the House ever has, is now, or ever will live up to the high esteem associated with the comments of one foreign reporter, who, after sitting in the Speaker’s chair during a tour of the chamber, said, “I have sat at the center of freedom” (503). Given the highs of statesmanship and the lows of gag rules, scandal, and discrimination over the course of the history of the House of Representatives, this is a question well worth remembering.

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The Presidential Agenda: Sources of Executive Influence in Congress, Rogert T. Larocca, The Ohio State University Press, 2006, ISBN 0814210333, \$58.95, cloth, 344 pages.

The Presidential Agenda: Sources of Executive Influence in Congress is a powerful work that advances the current understanding of presidential influence on the congressional agenda both theoretically and empirically. Larocca explores how the president manages to influence the congressional agenda without any formal power to do so. By merging bounded rationality theories of agenda setting with “going public” perspectives of presidential power, Larocca formally models and empirically tests how the president is able to influence the issue agenda in Congress via public addresses and the process of “legislative clearance.” Via the public’s retrospective ability to access the outcomes of public policy (and therefore Congress), and the ability of presidential administrations to introduce draft legislation via “legislative clearance”, Larocca finds that presidents are able to indirectly influence which issues receive attention within various stages of the legislative process in Congress.

Chapter 1 begins with examples of Presidents Clinton and H.W. Bush successfully moving low priority policy issues to the front of the congressional agenda. The following sections review existing theories of agenda setting and presidential influence, highlighting the immense theoretical hole which Larocca effectively fills. Chapter 1 ends with an outline of the theoretical and empirical progression of the book. In chapter 2, Larocca introduces a “two-dimensional spatial model” explaining the problem of issue level agenda setting in the political arena.

Chapters 3 and 4 represent Larocca’s primary theoretical contribution. Chapter 3 develops a formal model of the president’s ability to influence the congressional issue agenda by providing policy information to voters, through public addresses, highlighting the “most urgent policy issues facing the country. Chapter 4 develops a formal theory of presidential agenda setting grounded in the president’s ability to provide Congress with policy expertise in the form of draft legislation introduced by executive agencies. With these well developed theories in hand, the following chapters empirically investigate the implications of chapters 3 and 4.

In chapter 5, Larocca argues against studying the agenda setting process via bill level analysis. Arguing this practice is inadequate, Larocca discusses the advantages provided by studying the agenda setting process at the issue level. Additionally, chapter 5 delves into the complicated nature of the legislative process, using issue level data to identify hearings, markup, and the floor as the most important agenda stages. Chapters 6 and 7 provide empirical tests of the formal theories presented in chapters 3 and 4, utilizing original data regarding the pre-floor legislative process.

In chapter 6, the author analyzes an original issue level dataset on all issues in the House Energy and Commerce Committee to test the formal models presented in chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 7 expands the empirical tests to the Senate. Here, original data is drawn from all issues referred to the Senate Commerce Committee. Each dataset covers more than 20 years of congressional activity from 1979-2002. The book ends with a final discussion of political implications of presidential agenda power in chapter 8.

The Presidential Agenda is a masterfully complete work leaving few stones unturned. Larocca derives original theories of presidential agenda setting in Congress, which he then tests in both the House and Senate. With exceptional rigor, Larocca masterfully utilizes formal modeling, original data, and advanced quantitative techniques to make a substantive theoretical and empirical advancement in the study of presidential agenda setting in Congress. Overall, Larocca makes a valuable contribution that should be noticed by scholars of Congress, the presidency, and agenda setting alike.

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To Enlarge the Machinery of Government: Congressional Debates and the Growth of the American State, 1858-1891, William James Hull Hoffer, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780801886554, \$55.00, cloth, 258 pages.

William James Hull Hoffer has taken on what many would consider an undeniably dreary and uninspiring task: to comb *thousands* of pages of daily congressional procedures and proceedings in the *Congressional Globe* and *Congressional Record* from 1858-1891. Fortunately for those who choose to read this work and for those who appreciate members of Congress for their more virtuous capacities (agency, diligence, abnormal intelligence), *To Enlarge the Machinery of Government* will not disappoint.

Hoffer's thesis is that there was a critical shift over time from our "first state" (minimalist "government of states" governmental philosophy) to the "third state" (the administrative state crystallized by the Progressive Era). This subtle change was not linear, was not pronounced in executive decrees or singular and dramatic congressional oration, and cannot be said to begin or end at any particular event in our collective history. Instead, by analyzing these debates, one can detect the paradigm shifts taking place over time as war, Reconstruction, sectional, partisan, and philosophic changes take place within the collective political mentality of the nation.

Hoffer illustrates this thesis by analyzing legislative acts and debates surrounding land grant colleges, agriculture, freedmen, civil war refugees, education, law enforcement, civil service, labor, commerce, and the court system. A path that begins in pre-war 1858 ends much differently in 1891 and encompasses the Morrill Acts, Freedmen's Bureau, the Department of Agriculture, The Evarts Act, the Blair bill, the Interstate Commerce Commission and others. In terms of the debates, Hoffer illuminates how frames of rationale and argumentation initially were made in terms of classic republican virtues (a national commitment to education to meet the need of democratic republics for an educated, and thus virtuous, citizenry; a national commitment to agriculture because of the virtues of the yeoman farmer) and yet were the basis for much further and more involved national commitments harkening forward to an administrative state led by experts rather than back to a philosophy of minimalist government. The commitments of the federal government went from "sponsorship" and "supervision" to "standardization".

Hoffer argues this second state era offers valuable insight into how conceptions of American uniqueness contributed to the shape of the federal government. For example, he writes, "[b]ut the final act of the debate on the Morrill Act, like the debates on the Department of Agriculture, proved that out of the back and forth of debate, pressed on by the needs of a wartime nation, congressmen could think the unthinkable and approve the novel. The act encouraged all states to found agriculture and mechanical arts colleges. From that foundation sixty-eight universities arose, providing the United States with a substantial system of federally aided, state-run higher education facilities that later became the most open and vibrant educational industry in the world" (60-61). As he enticingly points out in his introduction, it is quite a leap from Horace Greeley (In 1870 Greeley wrote that government should consist of "good laws, thoroughly enforced. . . Cheap and simple government, low salaries, light taxes. . . Impartial justice to every one regardless of caste, or color, secured by an upright judiciary. . . Making the state too hot for blacklegs, duelists, harlots, rum-sellers, etc." Above all, he said, "avoid public debt." [vii-viii]) to Felix Frankfurter's "Great State" and the administrative state of the twentieth century. Hoffer writes, "[t]hus, the second state was not a physical entity so much as a state of mind, a way that members of Congress began reconceptualizing the powers and limitations of government and were willing to explore, in the debates on specific measures, how those powers and limitations applied to a series of increasingly complex and novel demands. . . Nor was the invention of the second state the conspiratorial plot of a few nationalist centralizers – big government men yearning for expensive, extensive, professional administrative rule. . . the second state mentality also came about through a punctuated evolution of ideas, a series of questions whose answers led, bit by bit, to further and often unexpected explorations of old notions. Often, older terms, gained new meanings in the course of the debates, and subtle shifts in political alignments produced new ways of looking at older assumptions" (xii).

As he mentions in his acknowledgments, Hoffer is writing at the intersection of history, political science, and law. This writer would argue such interdisciplinary emphasis is a virtue, not a vice. As such, Hoffer has written a lively and engaging account that brings attention not just to the few events that *maybe* some outside the scholarly world know of from that great expanse of blurriness (Reconstruction through the Cleveland Administrations), but to the consistently important work that Congress undertook those sixty-three intriguing years of growth, change, and development in our political universe: arguing, persuading, debating, and fighting over the policies that shaped, and continue to shape, our collective American lives, and the philosophic, constitutional, and theoretical propositions upon which such policies and such views rested.

His concluding paragraph is possibly too assertive ["In a way it was destined to happen. A legalistic and antibureaucratic political culture could not fathom a different kind of state. Conceptual persistence is a part of human psychology" [203], and too cryptic ["(t)he politics of post-9/11 America may or may not be new, but the supposed dilemma is perennial. Opinion shapers in Congress and outside of those halls will always pose the issue as a choice between freedom and tyranny. As long as that preconception exists, we will see these debates again, along with the crises that provoke them" (203)]. Still, Hoffer has provided an excellent work that may help explain our important shift in "states" and provide important analysis of American "exceptionalism." Furthermore, for all those who care about said policies and presuppositions, abstracting about them without consulting those who wrestled with them in real time is no longer an option.

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While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers, William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse, Princeton University Press, 2007, ISBN 9780691134628, \$27.95, paper, 360 pages.

Scholars of U.S. foreign policy have accurately depicted the president as the preeminent actor in decisions to use military force due to his ability to act alone in crafting foreign policy and the informational advantages in the international realm he holds over other U.S. governmental actors, most notably the members of the U.S. Congress (7-10). Indeed, in light of the significant advantages that the president holds over other actors in foreign policy, many scholars have exclusively focused on the acts of the president as the sole determinant of the timing and the decision to deploy U.S. military forces in other countries. However, in their book, *When Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*, William Howell and Jon Pevehouse present evidence to suggest that while the president is rightfully considered the preeminent actor in decisions to use military force, other domestic actors like members of the U.S. Congress can have a powerful effect on the president's decision to use force, and, therefore, should not be ignored when studying American foreign policy.

Howell and Pevehouse argue that when presidents make the decision to use military force, they must be ever mindful of how the use of force will be received by members of their own country because lack of public support for a use of force can signal to foreign allies and enemies of the United States that it lacks the resolve to stay the course in a particular foreign engagement (27-28). Additionally, presidents must also be cognizant of the risk that other branches of government in the political system will overturn their foreign policy decisions once they have undertaken them. By influencing the tone of media coverage about military deployments and having the power to subsequently overturn, amend, or deny funding to presidential military deployments, members of Congress in many ways have the greatest opportunity for substantial effects on presidential foreign policy decisions (47-49). However, due to the significant costs involved with taking action to affect presidential foreign policy outputs, members of Congress cannot always challenge the president on every single foreign policy decision he makes. Howell and Pevehouse argue that members of Congress decide to challenge the president only when their preferences are not in line with those of the president and when sizable troops are committed to a military mission, which increases the risks of high American casualties, alienation of key allies, disruption of foreign trade, and thus, the danger of the military mission in the eyes of Congress (42).

Using statistical data and case studies on American uses of force, Howell and Pevehouse ultimately find that when sizable percentages of members of Congress are members of the party opposing the president and sizable troops have been deployed, Congress can have a powerful effect on the decision to deploy troops in another country by decreasing the frequency of troops deployed (chapter 3), decreasing the likelihood that force will be used when the opportunity presents itself (chapter 4), and increasing the amount of time between the opportunity to use force presenting itself and the president actually making the decision to deploy troops (chapter 4). Furthermore, using evidence from the lead up and aftermath of President Bush's 2003 decision to use military force in Iraq, Howell and Pevehouse also find that members of Congress had a powerful impact on the tone of the local media coverage of the Iraq War (chapter 5), which in turn had a substantial effect on the public opinion concerning the war (chapter 6).

Howell and Pevehouse's research is an excellent addition to a stream of literature that has left woefully unconsidered the effects of domestic politics in general and the institution of Congress in particular on the international relations process. Their work clearly and effectively exposes the fallacy of American foreign relations scholars in exclusively focusing on presidents as the only actors that can shape American foreign policy and the miscalculations of realist international relations scholars in completely ignoring as irrelevant the domestic factors that may influence decisions to use force in international relations. Their book shows that Congress can, and apparently does, have substantial effects on how the president crafts foreign policy. Future scholars would be well advised to continue to walk down the path paved by this well crafted addition to the American foreign policy literature by considering the effects of other institutions like the judiciary on the foreign policy process.

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