The Deinstitutionalization (?) of the House of Representatives: Reflections on Nelson Polsby’s “Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives” at Fifty

Supplemental Appendix

Table A1. Decline in Percentage of First Term Members, U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–2017 (Update of “Institutionalization” Table 1)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Congress | Year of 1st Term | % 1st Term Members |  | Congress | Year of 1st Term | % 1st Term Members |  | Congress | Year of 1st Term | % 1st Term Members |
| 1 | 1789 | 100.0 |  | 40 | 1867 | 45.5 |  | 79 | 1945 | 15.2 |
| 2 | 1791 | 43.3 |  | 41 | 1869 | 47.3 |  | 80 | 1947 | 21.2 |
| 3 | 1793 | 54.3 |  | 42 | 1871 | 44.9 |  | 81 | 1949 | 21.8 |
| 4 | 1795 | 34.6 |  | 43 | 1873 | 50.3 |  | 82 | 1951 | 12.6 |
| 5 | 1797 | 36.8 |  | 44 | 1875 | 54.1 |  | 83 | 1953 | 18.6 |
| 6 | 1799 | 32.1 |  | 45 | 1877 | 43.0 |  | 84 | 1955 | 11.5 |
| 7 | 1801 | 37.4 |  | 46 | 1879 | 41.3 |  | 85 | 1957 | 9.7 |
| 8 | 1803 | 44.7 |  | 47 | 1881 | 30.0 |  | 86 | 1959 | 18.3 |
| 9 | 1805 | 33.1 |  | 48 | 1883 | 48.9 |  | 87 | 1961 | 12.6 |
| 10 | 1807 | 31.0 |  | 49 | 1885 | 36.3 |  | 88 | 1963 | 15.2 |
| 11 | 1809 | 30.3 |  | 50 | 1887 | 34.8 |  | 89 | 1965 | 19.1 |
| 12 | 1811 | 38.5 |  | 51 | 1889 | 35.2 |  | 90 | 1967 | 14.0 |
| 13 | 1813 | 48.9 |  | 52 | 1891 | 43.1 |  | 91 | 1969 | 8.5 |
| 14 | 1815 | 39.8 |  | 53 | 1893 | 38.5 |  | 92 | 1971 | 11.3 |
| 15 | 1817 | 56.5 |  | 54 | 1895 | 46.9 |  | 93 | 1973 | 15.7 |
| 16 | 1819 | 40.2 |  | 55 | 1897 | 37.5 |  | 94 | 1975 | 19.8 |
| 17 | 1821 | 44.9 |  | 56 | 1899 | 29.2 |  | 95 | 1977 | 15.2 |
| 18 | 1823 | 39.0 |  | 57 | 1901 | 24.6 |  | 96 | 1979 | 17.7 |
| 19 | 1825 | 34.7 |  | 58 | 1903 | 31.3 |  | 97 | 1981 | 16.8 |
| 20 | 1827 | 31.1 |  | 59 | 1905 | 20.6 |  | 98 | 1983 | 18.0 |
| 21 | 1829 | 39.9 |  | 60 | 1907 | 22.9 |  | 99 | 1985 | 9.3 |
| 22 | 1831 | 38.0 |  | 61 | 1909 | 19.4 |  | 100 | 1987 | 10.6 |
| 23 | 1833 | 48.5 |  | 62 | 1911 | 31.0 |  | 101 | 1989 | 7.6 |
| 24 | 1835 | 35.7 |  | 63 | 1913 | 34.3 |  | 102 | 1991 | 9.4 |
| 25 | 1837 | 45.4 |  | 64 | 1915 | 27.4 |  | 103 | 1993 | 25.3 |
| 26 | 1839 | 43.6 |  | 65 | 1917 | 16.8 |  | 104 | 1995 | 19.5 |
| 27 | 1841 | 36.8 |  | 66 | 1919 | 23.1 |  | 105 | 1997 | 17.6 |
| 28 | 1843 | 66.4 |  | 67 | 1921 | 23.9 |  | 106 | 1999 | 9.7 |
| 29 | 1845 | 47.3 |  | 68 | 1923 | 27.0 |  | 107 | 2001 | 10.9 |
| 30 | 1847 | 49.1 |  | 69 | 1925 | 16.1 |  | 108 | 2003 | 13.1 |
| 31 | 1849 | 51.3 |  | 70 | 1927 | 11.5 |  | 109 | 2005 | 10.3 |
| 32 | 1851 | 51.9 |  | 71 | 1929 | 14.0 |  | 110 | 2007 | 24.1 |
| 33 | 1853 | 59.7 |  | 72 | 1931 | 17.2 |  | 111 | 2009 | 15.2 |
| 34 | 1855 | 57.1 |  | 73 | 1933 | 34.9 |  | 112 | 2011 | 22.8 |
| 35 | 1857 | 44.3 |  | 74 | 1935 | 22.4 |  | 113 | 2013 | 18.9 |
| 36 | 1859 | 44.5 |  | 75 | 1937 | 20.5 |  | 114 | 2015 | 14.2 |
| 37 | 1861 | 50.3 |  | 76 | 1939 | 24.1 |  | 115 | 2017 | 12.2 |
| 38 | 1863 | 56.5 |  | 77 | 1941 | 13.8 |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | 1865 | 41.5 |  | 78 | 1943 | 21.8 |  |  |  |  |

Sources. Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62 (1968): 144–68; Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and McKibbin, Carroll. Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1997-07-29) (ICPSR Study No. 7803). <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07803.v10>; and data collected by the authors.

Table A2. Increase in Terms Served by Incumbent Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–2017 (Update of “Institutionalization” Table 2)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Congress | Beginning Term | Mean Terms of Service |  | Congress | Beginning Term | Mean Terms of Service |  | Congress | Beginning Term | Mean Terms of Service |
| 1 | 1789 | 1.00 |  | 40 | 1867 | 2.15 |  | 79 | 1945 | 4.65 |
| 2 | 1791 | 1.57 |  | 41 | 1869 | 2.09 |  | 80 | 1947 | 4.57 |
| 3 | 1793 | 1.67 |  | 42 | 1871 | 2.15 |  | 81 | 1949 | 4.55 |
| 4 | 1795 | 2.10 |  | 43 | 1873 | 2.09 |  | 82 | 1951 | 4.87 |
| 5 | 1797 | 2.16 |  | 44 | 1875 | 1.97 |  | 83 | 1953 | 4.80 |
| 6 | 1799 | 2.30 |  | 45 | 1877 | 2.10 |  | 84 | 1955 | 5.22 |
| 7 | 1801 | 2.34 |  | 46 | 1879 | 2.24 |  | 85 | 1957 | 5.67 |
| 8 | 1803 | 2.18 |  | 47 | 1881 | 2.60 |  | 86 | 1959 | 5.39 |
| 9 | 1805 | 2.46 |  | 48 | 1883 | 2.28 |  | 87 | 1961 | 5.72 |
| 10 | 1807 | 2.68 |  | 49 | 1885 | 2.43 |  | 88 | 1963 | 5.66 |
| 11 | 1809 | 2.89 |  | 50 | 1887 | 2.58 |  | 89 | 1965 | 5.30 |
| 12 | 1811 | 2.90 |  | 51 | 1889 | 2.78 |  | 90 | 1967 | 5.44 |
| 13 | 1813 | 2.45 |  | 52 | 1891 | 2.50 |  | 91 | 1969 | 5.78 |
| 14 | 1815 | 2.60 |  | 53 | 1893 | 2.64 |  | 92 | 1971 | 5.93 |
| 15 | 1817 | 1.99 |  | 54 | 1895 | 2.31 |  | 93 | 1973 | 5.64 |
| 16 | 1819 | 2.16 |  | 55 | 1897 | 2.61 |  | 94 | 1975 | 5.34 |
| 17 | 1821 | 2.21 |  | 56 | 1899 | 2.79 |  | 95 | 1977 | 5.06 |
| 18 | 1823 | 2.32 |  | 57 | 1901 | 3.10 |  | 96 | 1979 | 4.92 |
| 19 | 1825 | 2.56 |  | 58 | 1903 | 3.10 |  | 97 | 1981 | 4.74 |
| 20 | 1827 | 2.76 |  | 59 | 1905 | 3.50 |  | 98 | 1983 | 4.81 |
| 21 | 1829 | 2.59 |  | 60 | 1907 | 3.60 |  | 99 | 1985 | 5.24 |
| 22 | 1831 | 2.61 |  | 61 | 1909 | 3.88 |  | 100 | 1987 | 5.61 |
| 23 | 1833 | 2.34 |  | 62 | 1911 | 3.61 |  | 101 | 1989 | 5.91 |
| 24 | 1835 | 2.33 |  | 63 | 1913 | 3.14 |  | 102 | 1991 | 6.23 |
| 25 | 1837 | 2.22 |  | 64 | 1915 | 3.47 |  | 103 | 1993 | 5.26 |
| 26 | 1839 | 2.23 |  | 65 | 1917 | 3.81 |  | 104 | 1995 | 4.95 |
| 27 | 1841 | 2.34 |  | 66 | 1919 | 3.73 |  | 105 | 1997 | 4.83 |
| 28 | 1843 | 1.78 |  | 67 | 1921 | 3.69 |  | 106 | 1999 | 5.18 |
| 29 | 1845 | 1.93 |  | 68 | 1923 | 3.59 |  | 107 | 2001 | 5.51 |
| 30 | 1847 | 2.03 |  | 69 | 1925 | 3.98 |  | 108 | 2003 | 5.62 |
| 31 | 1849 | 2.00 |  | 70 | 1927 | 4.51 |  | 109 | 2005 | 6.00 |
| 32 | 1851 | 1.85 |  | 71 | 1929 | 4.77 |  | 110 | 2007 | 5.90 |
| 33 | 1853 | 1.72 |  | 72 | 1931 | 4.75 |  | 111 | 2009 | 5.93 |
| 34 | 1855 | 1.83 |  | 73 | 1933 | 3.88 |  | 112 | 2011 | 5.76 |
| 35 | 1857 | 2.10 |  | 74 | 1935 | 3.83 |  | 113 | 2013 | 5.46 |
| 36 | 1859 | 2.04 |  | 75 | 1937 | 3.98 |  | 114 | 2015 | 5.36 |
| 37 | 1861 | 1.87 |  | 76 | 1939 | 4.09 |  | 115 | 2017 | 5.65 |
| 38 | 1863 | 1.78 |  | 77 | 1941 | 4.36 |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | 1865 | 2.04 |  | 78 | 1943 | 4.39 |  |  |  |  |

Sources. Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62 (1968): 144–68; Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and McKibbin, Carroll. Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1997-07-29) (ICPSR Study No. 7803). <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07803.v10>; and data collected by the authors.

Table A3. Expenditures Made by the House of Representatives (Update of “Institutionalization” Table 6)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fiscal Year | Nominal Expenditures ($1000s) | Real Expenditures ($1000s, $2009) |  | Fiscal Year | Nominal Expenditures ($1000s) | Real Expenditures ($1000s, $2009) |
| 1967 | 76,006 | 538,414 |  | 1992 | 761,068 | 1,283,455 |
| 1968 | 81,833 | 556,370 |  | 1993 | 751,288 | 1,230,137 |
| 1969 | 90,564 | 583,854 |  | 1994 | 753,405 | 1,202,804 |
| 1970 | 108,279 | 660,279 |  | 1995 | 723,000 | 1,122,453 |
| 1971 | 118,204 | 690,545 |  | 1996 | 741,000 | 1,117,403 |
| 1972 | 128,830 | 729,215 |  | 1997 | 757,000 | 1,115,926 |
| 1973 | 141,648 | 754,818 |  | 1998 | 783,000 | 1,136,551 |
| 1974 | 158,093 | 758,718 |  | 1999 | 795,000 | 1,129,034 |
| 1975 | 178,988 | 787,148 |  | 2000 | 837,000 | 1,150,024 |
| 1976 | 197,525 | 821,343 |  | 2001 | 858,000 | 1,146,261 |
| 1977 | 267,015 | 1,042,504 |  | 2002 | 961,000 | 1,263,883 |
| 1978 | 289,245 | 1,049,622 |  | 2003 | 1,033,000 | 1,328,303 |
| 1979 | 303,721 | 989,813 |  | 2004 | 1,134,000 | 1,420,352 |
| 1980 | 324,569 | 931,954 |  | 2005 | 1,170,000 | 1,417,419 |
| 1981 | 347,721 | 905,069 |  | 2006 | 1,227,000 | 1,440,021 |
| 1982 | 375,241 | 920,021 |  | 2007 | 1,224,000 | 1,397,001 |
| 1983 | 399,800 | 949,726 |  | 2008 | 1,319,000 | 1,449,491 |
| 1984 | 442,414 | 1,007,461 |  | 2009 | 1,349,000 | 1,487,988 |
| 1985 | 462,677 | 1,017,373 |  | 2010 | 1,449,000 | 1,571,909 |
| 1986 | 470,741 | 1,016,216 |  | 2011 | 1,357,000 | 1,427,595 |
| 1987 | 493,604 | 1,028,052 |  | 2012 | 1,351,000 | 1,392,189 |
| 1988 | 567,102 | 1,134,204 |  | 2013 | 1,257,000 | 1,276,421 |
| 1989 | 549,127 | 1,047,770 |  | 2014 | 1,220,000 | 1,219,485 |
| 1990 | 585,073 | 1,059,130 |  | 2015 | 1,231,000 | 1,231,000 |
| 1991 | 654,857 | 1,137,586 |  |  |  |  |

Sources. Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62 (1968): 144–68; U.S. Government Publishing Office, *Public Budget Dataset, Budget of the United States, Fiscal Year 2017*, Outlays Data Set (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/pagedetails.action%3fcollectionCode%3dBUDGET%26granuleId%3dBUDGET-2017-DB-2%26packageId%3dBUDGET-2017-DB%26fromBrowse%3dtrue).

Table A4. Violations of Seniority in the Appointment of Committee Chairs, U.S. House of Representatives, 1861–2017 (Update of “Institutionalization” Table 7)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Avg. violations | |  |  |  | Avg. violations | |
| Congresses | Years | Polsby Data | Canon, Nelson, & Stewart Data |  | Congresses | Years | Polsby data | Canon, Nelson, & Stewart Data |
| 37–41 | 1861–69 | — | 16.5% |  | 77–81 | 1941–49 | 14.0% | 20.3% |
| 42–46 | 1871–79 | — | 22.3% |  | 82–86 | 1951–59 | 0.7% | 3.2% |
| 47–51 | 1881–89 | 60.4% | 21.8% |  | 87–91 | 1961–69 | — | 1.1% |
| 52–56 | 1891–99 | 49.4% | 27.0% |  | 92–96 | 1971–79 | — | 13.2% |
| 57–61 | 1901–09 | 19.0% | 19.8% |  | 97–101 | 1981–89 | — | 14.3% |
| 62–66 | 1911–19 | 30.8% | 6.6% |  | 102–106 | 1991–99 | — | 19.2% |
| 67–71 | 1921–29 | 26.0% | 17.7% |  | 107–111 | 2001–09 | — | 32.4% |
| 72–76 | 1931–39 | 23.0% | 28.3% |  | 112–115 | 2011–17 | — | 71.6% |

Sources. Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62 (1968): 144–68; Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1993); David T. Canon, Garrison Nelson, and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the United States Congress, 1789–1946,* 4 vols. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002); Garrison Nelson and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the United States Congress, 1993–2010* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010);and data collected by the authors.

Table A5. Contested Elections in the House by Decades, 1789–2010 (Update of “Institutionalization” Table 8)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Calculated by Polsby | | |  | Calculated by Jenkins (updated) | | |
| Congress | Number of Contested Seats | Mean Seats in House for Decade | % Seats Contested per Congress |  | Number of Contested Seats | Mean Seats in House for Decade | % Seats Contested per Congress |
| 1–5 (1789–1798) | 16 | 89.8 | 3.56 |  | 18 | 90.2 | 3.99 |
| 6–10 (1799–1808) | 12 | 126.6 | 1.90 |  | 10 | 127.8 | 1.56 |
| 11–15 (1809–1818) | 16 | 166.4 | 1.92 |  | 14 | 167.0 | 1.68 |
| 16–20 (1819–1828) | 12 | 202.6 | 1.18 |  | 9 | 202.4 | 0.89 |
| 21–25 (1829–1838) | 11 | 230.0 | 0.96 |  | 11 | 230.0 | 0.96 |
| 26–30 (1839–1848) | 17 | 231.8 | 1.46 |  | 36 | 233.0 | 3.09 |
| 31–35 (1849–1858) | 23 | 233.0 | 1.98 |  | 14 | 234.2 | 1.20 |
| 36–40 (1859–1868) | 73 | 196.4 | 7.44 |  | 50 | 204.8 | 4.88 |
| 41–45 (1869–1878) | 72 | 273.0 | 5.28 |  | 75 | 272.8 | 5.50 |
| 46–50 (1879–1888) | 58 | 312.2 | 3.72 |  | 60 | 312.2 | 3.84 |
| 51–55 (1889–1898) | 87 | 346.8 | 5.02 |  | 85 | 346.8 | 4.90 |
| 56–60 (1899–1908) | 41 | 374.4 | 2.20 |  | 34 | 375.4 | 1.81 |
| 61–65 (1909–1918) | 36 | 417.4 | 1.72 |  | 36 | 418.0 | 1.72 |
| 66–70 (1919–1928) | 23 | 435.0 | 1.06 |  | 29 | 435.0 | 1.33 |
| 71–75 (1929–1938) | 25 | 435.0 | 1.14 |  | 30 | 435.0 | 1.38 |
| 76–80 (1939–1948) | 15 | 435.0 | 0.68 |  | 17 | 435.0 | 0.78 |
| 81–85 (1949–1958) | 12 | 435.0 | 0.56 |  | 12 | 435.0 | 0.55 |
| 86–90 (1959–1968)\* | 8 | 437.0 | 0.90 |  | 15 | 435.8 | 0.69 |
| 91–95 (1969–1978) | — | — | — |  | 15 | 435.0 | 0.69 |
| 96–100 (1979–1988) | — | — | — |  | 9 | 435.0 | 0.42 |
| 101–105 (1989–1998) | — | — | — |  | 6 | 435.0 | 0.28 |
| 106–110 (1999–2008) | — | — | — |  | 8 | 435.0 | 0.37 |
| 111–112 (2009–2012) | — | — | — |  | 1 | 435.0 | 0.11 |

\*86th–88th Congresses (1959–1964) for Polsby

Sources. Nelson W. Polsby, “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives,” *American Political Science Review* 62 (1968): 144–68; Jeffery A. Jenkins, “Partisanship and Contested Election Cases in the House of Representatives, 1789–2002,” *Studies in American Political Development* 18 (2004): 112–35; and data collected by the authors.

<H1>Analysis of Party-Specific Career Patterns

The following text and accompanying figures contain analysis referred to in the main text of the article that examines career patterns in the House differentially by party.

In Figures A1 and A2 we take the data displayed in Figures 1 and 2 in the main text and divide the time series by parties beginning with the 37th Congress (1861). Because it is difficult to discern the divergence of time series in the mid-twentieth century by using raw data—especially the time series showing the percentage of members serving their first term—we also display the same time series using lowess (locally weighted scatterplot smoothing).

<Insert Figures A1 and A2 art and captions about here>

The lowess graph in Figure A1b shows that Republicans always had a slightly greater share of rookie members than Democrats throughout the twentieth century. However, in the immediate postwar years, this gap began to grow, to the point that in recent years the long-term average Republican contingent in the House has been about 20 percent new members, while the average Democratic contingent has been about 15 percent.

Even when Polsby was writing in the 1960s, Democrats were more likely to regard the House as a place to stay than Republicans. While this may be an artifact of the lack of two-party competition in the South, as Figure A3 illustrates, this was only part of the picture.

<Insert Figure A3 art and caption about here>

At the time Polsby was writing, the differences in career patterns among members of the “three parties” of the House—Northern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans—were well in evidence. (To assist in illustrating this point, the dashed vertical lines in Figure A3 are drawn right after the 89th Congress [1965], which was the cutoff for the career data reported in “Institutionalization.”) Starting with Reconstruction and moving into the 1950s, the average career lengths of all three party contingents grew secularly, with the rate of growth among Southern Democrats outpacing the other two for most of this period. The growth in the length of Republican House careers leveled off around 1950 (as discussed above), but the career lengths of Southern Democrats peaked almost precisely at the time Institutionalization was being written. Following a period in which the average career length of Southern Democrats collapsed, more recently the length of service of Southern Democrats has rejoined the upward march of Northern Democrats.

<FC>Figure A1. Decline in Percentage of First-Term Members, U.S. House of Representatives, by Party, 1861–2017.

a. Raw data



b. Lowess smoothing



Source. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and McKibbin, Carroll. Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1997-07-29) (ICPSR 7803). https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07803.v10; and data gathered by the authors.

<FC>Figure A2. Increase in Terms Served by Incumbent Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, by Party, 1861–2017.

a. Raw data



b. Lowess smoothing



Sources. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, and McKibbin, Carroll. Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1996: Merged Data. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1997-07-29) (ICPSR Study No. 7803). <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07803.v10>; and data gathered by the authors.

<FC>Figure A3. Increase in Terms Served by Incumbent Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, by Party and Region, 1861–2015.

a. Raw data



b. Lowess smoothing

