

Party Switching and the Procedural Party Agenda in the US House of Representatives, 1953 – 2002*

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Abstract

This paper builds on past analyses of the roll call behavior of party switchers in the United States Congress (Nokken, 2000; Nokken and Poole, 2004) to investigate how party affiliation constrains members' roll call behavior. Previous studies utilized aggregate roll call indexes to conclude party switchers exhibit statistically significant shifts in their roll call behavior at the time they switch parties. Significant behavioral changes resulting from party switching, though, tend to be concentrated in periods of high ideological polarization. In this paper, I calculate DW-NOMINATE scores for switchers and non-switchers on important subsets of roll call votes: final passage, amendment, and procedural votes. I hypothesize that party switchers should exhibit the greatest changes in procedural and amendment votes, and may exhibit little or no significant behavioral changes on final passage votes. My analyses show that while most switchers make noticeable changes in votes on final passage, larger changes tend to occur on amendment and procedural votes.

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Introduction – Party Defection in the United States Congress

The importance of party affiliation in the United States is a somewhat enigmatic concept. Legislative parties in the US are rather loose confederation of individuals sharing a common party label, but lacking the discipline and uniformly high levels of party cohesion of their counterparts in parliamentary systems. Likewise, the sizable portion of independent and unaligned voters in the electorate may contribute to the relatively weak legislative parties. Given the lack of discipline and the fluid nature of party identification in the electorate, one might expect to observe frequent instances of party switching among strategic political actors to try to capture the benefits associated with membership in the party that enjoys more support among the electorate. Somewhat surprisingly, shifts in party affiliation among House and Senate members rarely occur, even during those times when the mass electorate expresses strongly negative views of the two parties. Illustrative of the rarity of such an event is the fact that only 38 Senators and 160 House members switched parties over a 163 year period (Nokken and Poole, 2004).¹

The observed dynamic of party defection among members of the US Congress stands in marked contrast to switching in a number of other countries, the most obvious difference being the relative frequency of party switching. Party switching is rare in the US, but far more common in other countries. That differential in frequency greatly influences the focus of research on party switching across countries. The frequency with which party switching occurs outside the US allows scholars to exploit the relatively large numbers of observations and address questions of why and when legislators switch parties. The best predictive model of party

¹ Nokken and Poole (2004) define a party switch to include nearly any instance of a member adopting a new party label during three stable partisan eras in the House and Senate (1793 to 1813, 1827 to 1849, and 1877 to 1998). Using Martis's (1989) party codes, they utilized a program to identify all MCs whose party label changed during the course of their careers. Oppenheimer and Hatcher (2003) present an alternative list of switchers derived from the use of more restrictive definitions of party switching.

defection in the US, on the other hand, is a naïve model that predicts no one switches party.²

While the actual act of switching parties in American history is rare, the set of party defectors proves to be an analytically useful group of legislators with which to investigate how congressional party affiliation constrains member behavior.

Given that the vast majority of members retain a single party label throughout the entirety of their careers, switchers are a valuable group to utilize to evaluate how switching parties influences their behavior. A common approach to studying party switching in the American context is to utilize a quasi-experimental research design to assess the behavioral consequences of party switching. Members who switch parties comprise an experimental group of sorts that can be used to evaluate changes resulting from switching party affiliation in two ways. First, they allow one to compare the pre- and post-switch roll call behavior for individual party defectors. Second, one can compare the roll call behavior of party switchers to those members who do not change parties. The theoretical motivation for such analyses is that party affiliation is one of the primary factors that shapes or constrains the roll call behavior of MCs. Parties oftentimes provide a clear position for members within particular policy areas, thereby serving to place constraints on the positions their members can credibly take and still assert status as a loyal Democrat or Republican. If party affiliation does constrain the voting behavior of members of Congress (MCs) in a meaningful way, one would be more likely to observe significant shifts in behavior among party defectors than among those who do not change parties.

I exploit a natural experimental research design to discern how party affiliation influences roll call behavior. I use the DW-NOMINATE scaling procedure to calculate MCs' ideal points on final passage, amendment, and procedural votes from the 1953 to 2002 (83rd to 107th Congresses). I then utilize a technique implemented by Poole (2005), Goodman (2004), and

² I acknowledge Brian Gaines for helping to identify this point.

Nokken and Poole (2004) to evaluate both the magnitude and direction of ideological change in the voting behavior of party defectors to assess the significance of switchers' changes relative other members. I analyze change in the roll call voting behavior of party switchers in distinct categories of votes. The aggregate roll call measures typically used to evaluate the behavioral implications of party defection may mask significant changes within important subsets of roll calls. More specifically, some switchers may not exhibit dramatic behavioral changes on final passage votes in an effort to protect their ideological reputation among voters. They may, however, be more likely to exhibit notable changes in the less visible, but highly partisan procedural and floor amendment votes.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I discuss previous works investigating party defection in the United States, and derive a series of hypotheses regarding party switching and roll call behavior. Section 3, describes the natural experimental research design I use to analyze the behavioral consequences associated with party switching. I then offer a detailed explanation on the selection of the subsets of votes used to calculate the three sets of DW-NOMINATE coordinates. Section 4 concludes.

Studying a Rare Bird – Analyzing Party Defection in the US Congress

In the study of congressional party defection, scholars generally take one of two paths. The first path analyzes the act of switching itself and tries to identify the factors that cause individuals to switch parties. The varying fortunes of the parties among voters may potentially induce individuals to switch parties. Aldrich and Bianco (1992) use a formal model to identify settings in which incumbent legislators may have strong electoral incentive to switch parties. Grose and Yoshinaka (2003) devise an empirical test of the Aldrich and Bianco model. They find that party switchers face stiffer electoral competition and see a reduction in their share of the

vote in both the primary and general elections following their change in party affiliations. Grose (2004) extends the analysis and investigates the electoral consequences for members of state legislators who switch parties. With regards to the effects of party defection upon MCs' career trajectories within Congress, MCs who switched parties were more likely than non-switchers to be rewarded for their trip across the aisle as evident by the higher likelihood of benefiting from violations of seniority (Yoshinaka, 2005).

Other analyses seek to explain when and why members switch parties. King and Benjamin (1986) identify the MCs who switched parties from 1789 to 1984 and concluded that switches tended to coincide with changes in important macro-political conditions such as times of military conflict, changing economic conditions, and changes in partisan control of key political institutions. A member's ideological position relative to the two parties also appears to influence the decision to switch parties. Ideologically cross-pressured members – those who lie to the liberal (conservative) end of the distribution of Republicans (Democrats) – may find that their preferences are incongruent with the members of their current party and actually lie closer to members of the other party and switch parties to take advantage of a better ideological fit (Castle and Fett, 1996). Recognizing that many Southern Democrats fit that description, the Republican Party began actively recruiting Democratic office holders at all levels of government to switch affiliations and join the Republican Party (Cannon, 1992; Cannon and Sousa, 1992)

The second path of inquiry focuses on party switching and its consequences for roll call voting behavior. More generally, the set of party switchers serves as a useful analytical tool with which to study the effects of party on roll call behavior, and contribute to the party versus preferences debate. Traditionally, those studying congressional behavior simply asserted that party affiliation in part played a causal role in MCs' voting behavior. By virtue of affiliating

with a party, legislators could be led to support the party's stated position despite possessing policy preferences that diverge from the rest of their party. Krehbiel (1993) offers a forceful challenge to that conventional wisdom countering that preferences, not partisanship are the primary determinants of both individual level roll call voting behavior and partisan affiliation. Simply, if an individual tends toward the conservative side of the ideological spectrum, that person will likely opt to affiliate with the Republican Party *and* cast roll call votes that reflect *both* partisan and personal preferences. To prove the existence of strong party effects requires that partisanship, namely via the pressure of party leaders, causes MCs to support the party's position on roll call votes, even when doing so runs contrary to their own personal policy preferences.

Nokken (2000) addressed the question of how party affiliation influenced roll call behavior by analyzing the voting behavior of the set of 20 MCs (16 House members, 4 Senators) who switched parties while in office from 1947 to 1997. First, using member support scores on Democratic leadership and agenda votes (Cox and McCubbins, 1993), I compared the pre- and post- switch behavior of defectors to determine whether they changed their voting behavior and, if so, whether the change was gradual over time or transpired at the time of the party switch. Next, I compared the voting behavior of switcher to a control group comprised of members who compiled similar roll call records as switchers but who maintained their party affiliation I label proximates.³

I found that party switchers made dramatic shifts in their voting behavior at the time the switched parties, and that the direction of the shift was consistent with expectation (to the right for those joining the GOP, to the left for those becoming Democrats). Furthermore, such shifts

³ Proximates are members whose party affiliation does not change and whose leadership support scores lie within an interval of plus or minus five points of an individual switcher's score during that switcher's first term in Congress.

were limited to the party defectors, with proximates showing no evidence of statistically significant changes. Such changes in roll call behavior among party switchers suggest that party affiliation carries with it a code of conduct. Deviating from the party's stated course may result in recalcitrant members being sanctioned by the party leadership (Cox and McCubbins, 1993) or being punished by the party's faithful in the electorate, especially in primary elections (Brady and Schwartz, 1990; Grose and Yoshinaka, 2003; and Grose 2004).

Party switching does not, however, always lead to noticeable changes in roll call behavior. To determine how individual level behavior covaries with changes in party affiliation, Nokken and Poole (2004) treated party switchers as two separate members, and calculated pre- and post-switch DW-NOMINATE scores.⁴ They found that instances of significant behavioral shifts were concentrated in eras marked by high levels of ideological polarization. Oppenheimer and Hatcher (2003) also analyzed the roll call behavior of switchers over a long span of time, and arrived at similar conclusions. They also conducted interviews with a number of the switchers serving in Congress. When asked about the behavioral consequences of their party defection, a number of party switchers asserted that they made no significant changes to their roll call voting behavior, but that any observed shifts were likely the result of changing votes on procedural matters.⁵

Both conclusions are highly plausible implications of party switching. First, during polarized periods, switchers have no real options but to make dramatic changes in voting

⁴ DW-NOMINATE scores are generated from individual's roll call behavior using a multidimensional scaling procedure. The scores range from -1, the most liberal value, to +1, the most conservative. In those instances where a member switched parties during a legislative session, we split the member's roll call record at the time the party switch was announced, essentially treating them as a new member of Congress upon changing parties.

⁵ Procedural votes are especially important in the House of Representatives. A number of procedural hurdles must be cleared before a bill reaches the floor in the House. Most notably, the House must agree on the rule issued from the Rules Committee that lays out the parameters of debate such time for debate and the number and types of amendments that will be in order, for instance. In light of the importance of such procedural issues, my analysis will focus on the House. See, for instance, Rohde (1991) and Cox and McCubbins (1993; 2005).

behavior if they are to fit in with their new party. On the flip side, during periods of low polarization, we are likely to see a frequent instances of partisan overlap resulting from the presence of conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans. During times of such ideological dispersion, members can switch parties without having to alter their roll call behavior dramatically, because partisan labels are not necessarily congruent with a specific ideological predisposition. The Post WWII era is a classic example of just such a setting, evident by the strong presence of the Conservative Coalition, the alliance of Southern Democrats, known as “Boll Weevils” and Republicans who joined to oppose the more liberal Northern wing of the Democratic Party on a number of roll call votes. Most of the Southern Democrats of this era were conservatives whose ideology more closely matched their Republican colleagues, but who remained Democrats because they could never win reelection in the Solid South with a Republican Party label.⁶ In a similar vein, MCs may go to great lengths to construct an ideological reputation among constituents (Dougan and Munger, 1989) fearing that deviation from that well-defined vote history (Asher and Weisberg, 1978) and increase the likelihood of electoral defeat (Lott and Bronars, 1993). As a consequence, those members could choose to maintain a consistent voting record on final passage votes regardless of party affiliation since it is most likely constituents observe their decisions on final passage votes in particular and explaining obvious flip-flops on certain policies could lead to electoral difficulties for the member.

While final passage behavior may remain relatively stable for party switchers, especially during periods of intraparty heterogeneity, roll call behavior on the other categories of votes may change dramatically, consistent with the findings from Oppenheimer and Hatcher’s (2003)

⁶ The Republican variant of the Boll Weevils were a group of liberal Republicans from the Northeast commonly known as the Gypsy Moths.

interviews. To constituents, the party switchers continue to compile a consistent record on substantive policy proposals, the set of votes most salient to the electorate. It is less likely constituents take notice or care about members' votes on procedural matters, even though such votes ultimately have significant policy consequences. While constituents may fail to notice changes on procedural votes, a switcher's colleagues certainly will take note of such votes. Cox and McCubbins (2005) show that majority party leaders are highly successful at keeping the party cartel intact on crucial procedural votes, including those members who oppose the legislation on final passage. Switchers of all stripes, then, should be expected to exhibit significant behavioral shifts moving them toward their new party on procedural matters. One might conclude the party switchers enjoy the best of both worlds: they can please their new party colleagues with shifts on the more electorally innocuous procedural votes, while pleasing their constituents by maintaining a consistent voting record on final passage policy votes.

Party Effects and Party Switchers

Switchers' claims that changes in their voting behavior resulted from changes in procedural votes generates a series of questions about the nature of party influence on roll call behavior that lend themselves to empirical testing. The first and most obvious hypothesis is that members exhibit higher levels of party loyalty on procedural votes than on final passage votes. That suggests that switchers will make a dramatic move across the ideological spectrum on procedural votes *at the time they switch parties*. My analyses will allow me to determine whether switchers modified their roll call behavior when they switched, and whether changes are limited to MCs who switch parties. The second hypothesis posits that switchers' votes on final passage may be less likely to exhibit significant changes. If party affiliation is a key determinant of voting on procedural matters, it is plausible that ideology is a key determinant of policy votes.

Party switching might carry with it policy-based behavior changes to reflect the switcher's new party label, but one might expect smaller changes than on procedural votes. In particular, dramatic changes in policy-based final passage votes would correlate highly with levels of intraparty homogeneity and with interparty heterogeneity – or “the condition” in conditional party government (Rohde, 1991; Aldrich and Rohde 2001).

The bottom line expectation is that if party labels are substantively important signals about ideological type, changes in party affiliation should lead to changes in roll call voting behavior. That said, the behavioral effects of switching need not be constant across time, across members, or across vote types. I depart from most of the past work on the behavioral effects of party defection to determine how a change in party labels influences switchers' voting behavior on specific categories of votes. To investigate how changes in party affiliation influence roll call behavior I identify the set of House party switchers from the 83rd to the 107th Congress (1953 to 2002). I use David Rohde's roll call voting data set to categorize roll call into final passage, amendment, and procedural votes. Next, I use a modified version of Poole's DW-Nominate procedure to estimate ideal point coordinates for all House members for the three subsets of votes to replicate the analyses in Nokken and Poole (2004).⁷

I limit the analysis to House members from 1953 to 2002 for both theoretical and data related reasons. First, with respect to theory, the House, unlike the Senate, is a highly structured institution with a complex system of restrictive rules that require members to vote on a number of important procedural matters. For example, for a bill to reach the floor of the House via “normal” procedures, the House must first adopt the rule issued by the Rules Committee that specifies the terms of debate and the number and types of amendments (if any) that will be

⁷ See also Poole (2005) and Goodman (2004) for similar analyses analyzing the stability of roll call behavior in a variety of other settings.

allowed. Votes on rules are tremendously important for the majority party leadership because they help ease the way to passage of legislation they prefer, and erect barriers in the path of proposals they might oppose, and, for the most part, does so in a manner that remains outside of the purview of constituents. The second reason for selecting these Congresses is due to data limitations. Rohde's roll call voting data set only codes House roll calls by vote type from 1953 to 2002.⁸ Though somewhat limited with respect to time, the Rohde data set provides exhaustive and valuable categorizations of all House votes over a 52 year period.

Given these restrictions, I am left with a total of 25 instances of party switching, involving 24 individuals, listed in Table 1 (Virgil Goode of Virginia appears twice having switched from a Democrat to an independent in the 106th Congress, and then joined the Republican Party in the 107th Congress).⁹ Of the 25 observed switches, there were five instances of Republicans becoming Democrats, 15 instances of Democrats moving to the Republican Party, and the remaining five cases involving switches to/from minor parties or Independent status. Relative to the total number of members who served in the House over this time period, this is a very small percentage of members. Given my purpose of evaluating the behavioral implications associated with changes in party label, however, I do not believe the small number of observations of switchers is not problematic – as it surely would be if one were seeking to develop predictive models of party defection.

Table 1 About Here

After identifying the set of members who switched parties, I used the Rohde data set to disaggregate roll calls into final passage votes, procedural votes, and amendment votes. I list the

⁸ An updated version of the data was made available as of as of June 27, 2005, too recently to include in these analyses.

⁹ Ralph Hall of Texas left the Democratic Party for the Republican in 2004. Upon coding the data from the 108th, Hall will be included in the analyses.

categories of vote types included in each of the three categories in Appendix A.¹⁰ The total number of votes in each category are plotted in Figure 1. As the graph shows, there is significant variation in the frequency of the number of votes held over time, with evidence of a general upward trend over time.¹¹ Of some concern is the relative paucity of amendment and procedural votes from the earlier congresses in my data base. The 83rd to 91st Congresses all held less than 50 recorded roll call on amendment votes.¹² Starting in the 92nd Congress, when the House implemented a rule calling for recorded votes in the Committee of the Whole, the number of roll calls on amendments increased sharply (Bach and Smith, 1988). Generally, there are a sufficient number of votes within each category to scale to generate meaningful ideal point estimates.

Figure 1 About Here

Measuring the Effects of Party Switching

To determine the consequences of party switching on roll call voting, I utilized a procedure developed by Poole to evaluate how the magnitude of a switcher's change in voting behavior to a set of common members serving in the same Congresses to determine if the switcher exhibited larger variance in his DW-NOMINATE score than the non-switchers. I do not offer details on the scaling procedure in this paper, but point interested readers to Goodman (2004), Nokken and Poole (2004), and Poole (2005) for a detailed discussion of the scaling methodology.

¹⁰ Decisions on which vote types to include in the respective categories essentially mirrors the coding strategy of Crespin , Rohde, and Vander Wielen (2002).

¹¹ The mean number of final passage votes was just over 308, with a low of 73 and maximum of 629 votes. For amendment votes, the mean was just greater than 243 votes, with a low of 10 and a maximum of 590. The procedural vote mean was just greater than 138, and ranged from a minimum of 39 votes to a maximum of 259.

¹² Generating ideal point estimates with such a small number of votes may well produce scores with large standard errors, and questionable precision. (Personal communication with Keith Poole).

Table 1 identifies the House party switchers I use in my analysis. It lists the last Congress in which the switchers served in their original party, their DW-NOMINATE score from that Congress along with the Congress in which they switched parties and the corresponding DW-NOMINATE score.¹³ The previous section describes the hypothesized direction of changes in voting behavior exhibited by defectors – Democrats (Republicans) who leave to join the Republicans (Democrats) are expected to move to the right (left). Indeed, as Table 1 displays, 21 of the 26 switches shows the MC shifting in the direction of the party they join. Less clear, though, are party defections in which members leave a party, but do not formally align with the other party. The data set includes three individuals who trade their status as an Independent for a party label, Virgil Goode, who does so after leaving one party to serve as an Independent. If we ignore Virgil Goode’s (VA) service as an Independent and count him as defecting from the Democratic to the Republican Party, he certainly moves to the right as expected.¹⁴

The data from Table 1 are useful for illustrating that party defection appears to generate significant behavioral changes at the time a member crosses the aisle, as previous research has shown (Nokken, 2000; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2001; Nokken and Poole, 2004). What Table 1 fails to illuminate, though, is whether these changes can be considered significant. Granted many of the shifts are of such magnitude it is hard to imagine them not being significant. Table 2 provides information regarding the direction and significance of any shifts in the voting behavior of party switchers (Nokken and Poole, 2004). First, they identify those members who make a shift in the expected direction (signified with a +). Those names that appear in bold type

¹³ The data are available at: <http://www.voteview.com/dwnomin.htm>, file HL01108A1_PRES.DAT.

¹⁴ Characterizing Goode’s switch as a simple move from the Democratic to Republican Parties without considering his service as an Independent is not an outlandish assumption given that he caucused with and received his committee assignments from the Republicans while serving as an Independent.

are listed as exhibiting significant behavioral changes. To identify statistically significant shifts, Nokken and Poole (2004) calculated the change in a switcher's pre- and post-switch first dimension DW-NOMINATE score. Next, they compared the magnitude of the switcher's shift to the changes for all MCs in the corresponding Congresses (the N in Table 2 documents how many members served in the two Congresses), and then rank order the members by magnitude of change. They categorize a change as significant if the switcher's behavioral shift was in the proper direction and placed him in the 95th percentile of all MCs who served with the switching MCs. That value is denoted in the column labeled "PCT." As a clarifying example, Vincent Dellay shifts in the correct direction (to the left) as he moves from the Republican to the Democratic Party. Compared with the 351 members who served at the same time, the magnitude of his change on the first dimension was greater than 100% of those MCs.

Table 2 About Here

While a large proportion of the MCs included in this analysis exhibit significant behavioral changes along the first dimension when scaling all roll calls, not all members do. Additionally, some of the MCs who have a label of "Independent" attached to them (whether as a modifier for a party or as a party ID), and do not necessarily fit the expected pattern. My proposal to replicate Nokken and Poole's work will offer some additional insight to the nature of behavioral changes among those members. It will also help determine the "sources" of the significance in the changes exhibited by the other MCs. That is, it will allow us to discern whether MCs move across the aisle to adopt a new set of positions on both matters of procedure as well as matters of substantive policy. Identifying whether significant behavioral shifts take place across all roll call votes, or are concentrated among specific subsets of votes will help clarify the role party affiliation plays both in the legislative as well as in the electoral arena.

Policy or Procedure? Source of Behavioral Change Among Party Switchers

The conventional wisdom regarding the consequences of party defection in the recent past is that switchers make dramatic changes to their roll call behavior coincident with the change in party labels. What has yet to be addressed, though, is whether members make a wholesale change among all categories of votes or whether the changes are concentrated among a few types of roll calls. I present data that gets at this question by analyzing the pre- and post-switch behavior among three important categories of roll call votes: final passage votes, amendment votes, and procedural votes. Despite the risks associated with “flip-flopping” on important final passage votes, members may well exhibit large behavioral changes in their votes on amendments and procedural matters. Indeed the party leadership in the House often grants members the latitude to break from the party line on final passage votes, in return for supporting the party’s position on important procedural and amendment votes. In other words, parties are effective at asserting discipline on those votes that proceed final passage best characterizing the American legislative parties as procedural coalitions.

I analyze and compare the roll call behavior of party switchers with their non-switching colleagues to determine whether switchers make noticeable changes. Using a modified version of the DW-NOMINATE scores on final passage, amendment, and procedural votes. Given the nature of the behavioral changes of party switchers during the time frame analyzed here, one is likely to find noticeable shifts across all types of votes. That said, investigating the changes within the three subsets of votes is still informative. Levels of partisan polarization increased sharply over the 48 years allowing some evaluation of the effect of polarizing forces on roll call behavior. Once again, the switchers provide the analytic leverage to determine whether the parties are successful in guiding the voting behavior of their members on procedural matters, even if they are unable to convert them on substantive final passage votes.

My analysis of the changes in switchers' DW-NOMINATE scores across the three subsets of votes mirrors closely that of Nokken and Poole's (2004) of the aggregate scores. First, I used Rohde's roll call data set to code the specific votes, and scaled the votes using the modified DW-NOMINATE procedure. I then calculated the change in the scores for the switchers. For those who switched between Congresses, I simply used the difference between the scores in the first Congress with the new party label and the last Congress with the old party label. For those who switched during the course of a Congress, I essentially treat the individual as two distinct members and calculate the difference in the pre- and post-switch scores. To determine the relative magnitude of the changes in voting behavior for the switcher, I calculate the difference for all other members who served with the member across the two Congresses. I then rank order the set of members, and calculate the percentile score for each switcher for the three subsets of votes. Unlike Nokken and Poole (2004), I make no assertions about levels of significance, choosing simply to report the percentile value for each of the switchers. While I do not have a definitive critical test to "prove" the existence of parties as procedural coalitions, my expectation is that party switchers exhibit larger changes in their procedural and amendment voting than they do in their final passage voting.

The results for votes on final passage are listed in Table 3, for amendment votes in Table 4, and for procedural votes in Table 5. The first comparison I make across the three tables simply tabulates the number of major party switchers who move in the "correct" direction for each type of vote – those who switch from Democrat to Republican should move to the right, and those who switch from Republican to Democrat should move left. Of the 20 major party switchers, 17 move in the expected direction on final passage votes, 19 on amendment votes, and 18 on procedural votes. It is difficult to determine the "correct" direction of change for most of

the MCs who switch to or from Independent status, but the case of Virgil Goode (Democrat, Independent, and Republican of Virginia) is somewhat informative. Goode was elected to the House as a Democrat in the 105th Congress, left the party to serve as an independent who caucused with the Republicans during the 106th Congress, and who finally completed his partisan migration joining the Republicans in the 107th Congress. In Goode's case, the expectations about the direction of change are a bit clearer, he would be expected to move to the right. Indeed his move to Independent status led him to compile more conservative voting records in each of the three categories of votes. His subsequent shift to the Republican Party showed him continuing his rightward migration on final passage and procedural votes, which is not at all surprising since formal affiliation with Republican Party made him eligible for positions in the party leadership as well for committee and subcommittee chairs. Strong evidence of party loyalty, in this case a solidly conservative voting record, is an important prerequisite for advancement in committee and the party, something certainly not lost on Goode, nor upon his fellow Republicans.

Tables 3 – 5 About Here

In most instances, I find that the major party switchers exhibit changes to their voting records consistent with expectations. To determine whether such changes in roll call behavior are common among all members or tend to be concentrated among the switchers, I next turn to evaluating the magnitude of changes, the percentile score for the switchers. The expectation is that the largest changes take place on procedural and amendment votes. The first step in this process is to tabulate the number of switchers whose change in roll call behavior places them below the 50th percentile in terms of size of shift (that is, a majority of non-switching members exhibited larger changes in roll call behavior across the two Congresses than the switcher). On

final passage votes, 6 of the party switchers changed less than a majority of non-switching members, with Phil Gramm (TX) and Albert Watson (SC) located in the 7th and 9th percentile, respectively. On amendment votes, only 3 switchers fall below the 50 percent threshold (John Jarman (OK), John Moakley (MA), and Eugene Atkinson (PA)). Only two members, Thomas Alford (AR) and John Moakley (MA), fail to exceed the 50 percent mark on procedural votes. This finding weakly supports the hypotheses regarding greater changes in amendment and procedural votes among party switchers.

Taking a different cut at the data, I tabulate the number of switchers whose change in voting behavior placed them at or above the 90th percentile. On final passage votes, 12 of the 25 switchers' voting changes placed them at or above the 90th percentile. On amendment votes, that increased to 15 members, and 18 MCs on procedural votes. Finally, I compare each switcher's percentile rank on the final passage votes with those on amendment and procedural votes. Finding greater higher percentile ranks on amendment and procedural votes than on final passage votes would be consistent with a party as procedural coalition story. Indeed, the percentile ranks on final passage votes exceeds the change in amendment and procedural votes in six instances. In four cases, members' values were identical across categories. In fifteen instances, a members' percentile ranks on amendment and procedural scores exceeded that value for final passage votes. This result may well suggest that the important changes in roll call behavior associated with party defection take place on procedural and amendment votes. While not definitive evidence that parties are driving the changes in members behavior on the less visible but highly important amendment and procedural votes, but it certainly is consistent with the expectations of a party as procedural coalition perspective.

Discussion and Conclusion

A somewhat ironic aspect of quantitative studies of party switchers in the American context is that they focus squarely on the outliers in the data set. Investigating these seemingly anomalous individuals on their own is an interesting and worthwhile endeavor, it does not necessarily shed light on matters of more general theoretical importance. My primary purpose has been to explain why this small set of members of Congress is of theoretical interest to scholars of legislative politics. I argue that despite the “small n” problem, party switchers allow students of American politics to understand more fully how party labels and partisan structures within the legislative arena shape (or fail to shape) the behavior of individual members of Congress. Lacking individual-level variation on party affiliation makes it difficult to ascertain just how membership in a party may influence an individual. Even though switches are rare, I argue they are important events that offer insight into much broader topics in politics than simply detailing why Billy Tauzin left the Democratic Party to become a Republican in the 104th Congress.

In this paper, I extend my previous studies of the roll call behavior of party switchers to gain a better grasp on how of their roll call behavior changes when they change parties. Previous studies provided persuasive evidence that party switchers, especially those of more recent vintage, made significant changes to their roll call behavior upon joining a new party. Given the tendency for individual MCs to stake out ideological turf and strive to maintain a consistent voting record, such dramatic changes are somewhat surprising. The primary question I sought to answer was whether party switchers made noticeable changes in their roll call behavior across the board. That is, were they as likely to exhibit changes in their voting behavior on substantive policy votes as on more innocuous votes on procedural matters? By disaggregating roll call votes into specific categories, I take a first step toward answering that question. While the

switchers studied here exhibited sizable shifts in their voting behavior across all types of votes, I did find that the changes exhibited on amendment and procedural votes tended to be greater than the changes shown on final passage votes.

These results, though limited to a small subgroup of MCs, shed some light on some important topics that extend beyond just party switching. Legislative scholars have turned their attention to the construction of congressional agendas and the central role rules and procedures play in that process in an effort to understand the importance of partisan institutions. Party coalitions seek to gain a majority in the House in large part to allow them to create and implement rules and procedures. The parties fight bitterly to do so because they realize that by controlling procedure gives them an upper hand in winning on substantive policy matters. What they need to accomplish this feat, though, is a coherent majority on procedural matters. Scholars have noted the increasingly cohesive parties on procedural matters and illustrated how that cohesion can be translated into partisan victories on policy matters (Rohde, 1991; Cox and McCubbins, 2005). If such stories are correct and the American legislative parties are best characterized as procedural coalitions, parties may well start to welcome new members almost regardless of how those members vote on final passage matters, as long as they lend their enthusiastic support to the party's procedural positions. While I do not provide strong evidence to prove that is the case, my findings are consistent with that perspective and certainly suggest that investigating member behavior in the area of amendment and procedural votes is a useful area of inquiry.

Appendix A – Roll Call Vote Types
From Rohde’s Vote Type Codebook for Rohde/PIPC Roll Call Database (83rd to 107th Congress)

Final Passage

Amendments to the Constitution
Final Passage/Adoption of a Bill
Final Passage/Adoption of a Conference Report
Final Passage/Adoption of a *Bill*
Final Passage/Adoption of *Conference Report*
Final Passage/Adoption of *Resolution*
Final Passage/Adoption of *Joint Resolution*
Passage/Adoption of a *Bill* under Suspension of the Rules
Passage/Adoption of a *Joint Resolution* under Suspension of the Rules
Final Passage/Adoption of *Concurrent Resolution*
Passage/Adoption of a *Concurrent Resolution* under Suspension of the Rules
Passage/Adoption of a *Resolution* under Suspension of the Rules
Passage over Presidential Veto
Adoption of First Part of Resolution
Adoption of Second Part of Resolution
Suspension of Rules for Conference Report
Motion to Suspend the Rules and Concur

Amendment Votes

Straight Amendments (includes en bloc & amendments in the nature of a substitute)
Amendments to Amendments
Substitute (to an amendment)
Motion to Table Amendment
Amendment to Amendment to Substitute
Perfecting Amendment
Amendment to Substitute
Perfecting Amendment to Substitute
Suspension of Rules to Amend Bill
Amendment to Special Rule

Procedural Votes

Budget Waivers
Motion to End Debate
Motion to Rise from the Committee of the Whole
Motion to Disagree
Passage of Rules (Special Rule)
Motion to Recede
Motion to Order Previous Question (Note: Previous Question on Special Rule is 99)
Election of Speaker
Motion to Recommit (Note: Recommit to Conference is 72)
Motion to Instruct Conferees
Motion to Recede and Concur (also includes motion to concur)
Previous Question on Special Rules
Motion to Discharge
Motion to Go into Executive Committee

Unanimous Consent Motion to Table
Motion to Proceed
Appeal of the Chair's Ruling
Miscellaneous
Motion to Agree
Motion to Postpone
Motion to Delete
Motion to Commit
Motion to Consider
Motion to Permit to Read from Record
Motion to Refer
Motion to Strike
Vote to Approve House Journal
Motion to Adjourn
Motion to Table
Dispense with Further Proceedings with Quorum Call

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Table 1*
Party Defectors and Change in DW-NOMINATE Scores

Congress	Old Party Name	Old Party	DW- NOMINATE	Congress	New Party New Party	DW- NOMINATE
85	DELLAY	REP IND.	0.009	85	DEM	-0.318
86	ALFORD	DEM	0.012	87	DEM	0.197
89	WATSON	DEM	0.427	90	REP	0.377
92	REID	REP	-0.225	93	DEM	-0.432
93	JARMAN	DEM IND.	0.280	94	REP	0.251
93	MOAKLEY	DEM	-0.463	94	DEM	-0.415
93	RIEGLE	REP	-0.459	94	DEM	-0.399
94	PEYSER	REP	-0.125	96	DEM	-0.362
96	ATKINSON	DEM	-0.016	97	REP	0.090
97	FOGLIETTA	IND.	-0.406	98	DEM	-0.499
97	GRAMM	DEM	0.477	98	REP	0.602
97	STUMP	DEM	0.561	98	REP	0.714
98	IRELAND	DEM	0.153	99	REP	0.433
100	GRANT	DEM	-0.166	101	REP	0.232
100	ROBINSON	DEM	0.013	101	REP	0.284
101	WATKINS	DEM	-0.045	105	REP	0.395
104	DEAL	DEM	0.008	104	REP	0.381
104	HAYES	DEM	0.038	104	REP	0.365
104	LAUGHLIN	DEM	0.051	104	REP	0.510
104	PARKER	DEM	0.219	104	REP	0.438
104	TAUZIN	DEM	0.134	104	REP	0.350
106	FORBES	REP	0.111	106	DEM	-0.155
106	GOODE	DEM	0.263	106	IND.	0.529
106	MARTINEZ	DEM	-0.123	106	REP	0.397
107	GOODE	IND.	0.671	107	REP	0.822
108	HALL	DEM	0.144	109	REP	NA

Names in **BOLD** type indicate members whose roll call behavior shifted in the expected direction following their shift.

* DW-NOMINATE data in this table available at ftp://pooleandrosenthal.com/junkord/HL01108A1_PRES.DAT

Table 2*
House Party Defectors, 1953 - 2002

OLD PARTY		NEW PARTY			Name	N	Pct		
Last Yr	Last Cong	Old Party	1st Yr	1st Cong					New Party
1957	85	Republican	1957	85	Democrat	DELLAY, V	351	100	+
1959	86	Ind. Democrat	1961	87	Democrat	ALFORD, T	369	23	0
1965	89	Democrat	1967	90	Republican	WATSON, A	359	77	-
1971	92	Republican	1973	93	Democrat	REID, O	361	99	+
1973	93	Democrat	1975	94	Republican	JARMAN, J	339	9	-
1973	93	Ind. Democrat	1975	94	Democrat	MOAKLEY, J	339	41	0
1973	93	Republican	1975	94	Democrat	RIEGLE, D	339	99	+
1975	94	Republican	1979	96	Democrat	PEYSER, P	292	100	+
1979	96	Democrat	1981	97	Republican	ATKINSON, E	354	89	+
1981	97	Independent	1983	98	Democrat	FOGLIETTA	351	89	0
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	GRAMM, W	351	99	+
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	STUMP, B	351	89	+
1983	98	Democrat	1985	99	Republican	IRELAND, A	390	100	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	GRANT, B	395	100	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	ROBINSON, T	395	100	+
1989	101	Democrat	1997	105	Republican	WATKINS, W	168	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	DEAL, N	360	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	HAYES, J	360	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	LAUGHLIN, G	360	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	PARKER, M	360	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	TAUZIN, W	360	100	+
1999	106	Republican	1999	106	Democrat	FORBES, M	0		
1999	106	Democrat	1999	106	Independent	GOODE, V	0		
2001	107	Indepdent	2002	107	Republican	GOODE, V	0		

+ Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Proper Direction

- Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Wrong Direction

0 Switch to/from Minor Party

Names appearing in **BOLDFACE** exhibited significant behavioral changes in voting behavior following their party switch.

* Source: Nokken and Poole (2004, 555).

Table 3
House Party Defectors' Change in Final Passage Vote DWNOMINATE Scores, 1953 - 2002

OLD PARTY		NEW PARTY				Name	N	Pct	
Last Yr	Last Cong	Old Party	1st Yr	1st Cong	New Party				
1957	85	Republican	1957	85	Democrat	DELLAY, V	386	98	+
1959	86	Ind. Democrat	1961	87	Democrat	ALFORD, T	369	94	0
1965	89	Democrat	1967	90	Republican	WATSON, A	359	9	+
1971	92	Republican	1973	93	Democrat	REID, O	361	83	+
1973	93	Democrat	1975	94	Republican	JARMAN, J	340	38	-
1973	93	Ind. Democrat	1975	94	Democrat	MOAKLEY, J	340	79	0
1973	93	Republican	1975	94	Democrat	RIEGLE, D	340	89	-
1975	94	Republican	1979	96	Democrat	PEYSER, P	293	91	+
1979	96	Democrat	1981	97	Republican	ATKINSON, E	355	79	+
1981	97	Independent	1983	98	Democrat	FOGLIETTA	352	73	0
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	GRAMM, W	352	7	-
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	STUMP, B	352	47	+
1983	98	Democrat	1985	99	Republican	IRELAND, A	390	97	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	GRANT, B	397	99	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	ROBINSON, T	397	98	+
1989	101	Democrat	1997	105	Republican	WATKINS, W	171	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	DEAL, N	349	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	HAYES, J	349	96	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	LAUGHLIN, G	349	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	PARKER, M	349	53	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	TAUZIN, W	349	93	+
1999	106	Republican	1999	106	Democrat	FORBES, M	393	99	+
1999	106	Democrat	1999	106	Independent	GOODE, V	393	37	0
2000	106	Democrat	2000	106	Republican	MARTINEZ	393	100	+
2001	107	Indepdent	2002	107	Republican	GOODE, V	392	35	0

+ Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Proper Direction

- Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Wrong Direction

0 Switch to/from Minor Party

Names appearing in **BOLDFACE** exhibited significant behavioral changes in voting behavior following their party switch.

Table 4
House Party Defectors' Change in Amendment Vote DWNOMINATE Scores, 1953 - 2002

OLD PARTY		NEW PARTY				Name	N	Pct	
Last Yr	Last Cong	Old Party	1st Yr	1st Cong	New Party				
1957	85	Republican	1957	85	Democrat	DELLAY, V	386	98	+
1959	86	Ind. Democrat	1961	87	Democrat	ALFORD, T	369	94	0
1965	89	Democrat	1967	90	Republican	WATSON, A	359	78	+
1971	92	Republican	1973	93	Democrat	REID, O	361	93	+
1973	93	Democrat	1975	94	Republican	JARMAN, J	340	26	+
1973	93	Ind. Democrat	1975	94	Democrat	MOAKLEY, J	340	32	0
1973	93	Republican	1975	94	Democrat	RIEGLE, D	340	50	-
1975	94	Republican	1979	96	Democrat	PEYSER, P	293	96	+
1979	96	Democrat	1981	97	Republican	ATKINSON, E	355	38	+
1981	97	Independent	1983	98	Democrat	FOGLIETTA	352	89	0
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	GRAMM, W	352	66	+
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	STUMP, B	352	82	+
1983	98	Democrat	1985	99	Republican	IRELAND, A	390	100	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	GRANT, B	397	100	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	ROBINSON, T	397	100	+
1989	101	Democrat	1997	105	Republican	WATKINS, W	171	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	DEAL, N	349	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	HAYES, J	349	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	LAUGHLIN, G	349	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	PARKER, M	349	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	TAUZIN, W	349	96	+
1999	106	Republican	1999	106	Democrat	FORBES, M	393	91	+
1999	106	Democrat	1999	106	Independent	GOODE, V	393	75	0
2000	106	Democrat	2000	106	Republican	MARTINEZ	393	100	+
2001	107	Indepdent	2002	107	Republican	GOODE, V	392	76	0

+ Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Proper Direction

- Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Wrong Direction

0 Switch to/from Minor Party

Names appearing in **BOLDFACE** exhibited significant behavioral changes in voting behavior following their party switch.

Table 5
House Party Defectors' Change in Procedural Vote DWNOMINATE Scores, 1953 - 2002

OLD PARTY			NEW PARTY						
Last Yr	Last Cong	Old Party	1st Yr	1st Cong	New Party	Name	N	Pct	
1957	85	Republican	1957	85	Democrat	DELLAY, V	386	92	+
1959	86	Ind. Democrat	1961	87	Democrat	ALFORD, T	369	15	0
1965	89	Democrat	1967	90	Republican	WATSON, A	359	76	-
1971	92	Republican	1973	93	Democrat	REID, O	361	98	+
1973	93	Democrat	1975	94	Republican	JARMAN, J	340	85	-
1973	93	Ind. Democrat	1975	94	Democrat	MOAKLEY, J	340	28	0
1973	93	Republican	1975	94	Democrat	RIEGLE, D	340	75	+
1975	94	Republican	1979	96	Democrat	PEYSER, P	293	99	+
1979	96	Democrat	1981	97	Republican	ATKINSON, E	355	89	+
1981	97	Independent	1983	98	Democrat	FOGLIETTA	352	54	0
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	GRAMM, W	352	100	+
1981	97	Democrat	1983	98	Republican	STUMP, B	352	96	+
1983	98	Democrat	1985	99	Republican	IRELAND, A	390	98	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	GRANT, B	397	100	+
1987	100	Democrat	1989	101	Republican	ROBINSON, T	397	100	+
1989	101	Democrat	1997	105	Republican	WATKINS, W	171	98	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	DEAL, N	349	100	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	HAYES, J	349	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	LAUGHLIN, G	349	99	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	PARKER, M	349	92	+
1995	104	Democrat	1995	104	Republican	TAUZIN, W	349	95	+
1999	106	Republican	1999	106	Democrat	FORBES, M	393	99	+
1999	106	Democrat	1999	106	Independent	GOODE, V	393	97	0
2000	106	Democrat	2000	106	Republican	MARTINEZ	393	100	+
2001	107	Indepdent	2002	107	Republican	GOODE, V	392	100	0

+ Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Proper Direction

- Major Party to Major Party Shift, Behavioral Change in Wrong Direction

0 Switch to/from Minor Party

Names appearing in **BOLDFACE** exhibited significant behavioral changes in voting behavior following their party switch.

Figure 1

Total Roll Calls by Vote Type, 83rd to 107th Congress

