119. "Pulling Strings from Afar," *AARP Bulletin Online*, February 3, 2003, at *http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/departments/2003/consumer/0205_consumer_1.html* (May 16, 2003).

120. For detailed analysis of this complicated piece of legislation, see Campaign Finance Institute, "Campaign Finance eGuides," at *http://www.cfinst.org/eguide/index.html*.

121. Derek Willis, "Critics Say Political Groups Formed to Evade New Fundraising Rules," *CQ Weekly* (November 30, 2002):3112–3113.

Chapter 5
Congressional Voters

Virtually every issue raised in the previous two chapters was examined from the perspective of some implicit notions about how congressional voters operate. Discussions of the sources of the incumbency advantage, the importance of campaign money, and House–Senate electoral differences, to mention a few examples, were all grounded in particular assumptions about voting behavior in congressional elections. So, too, are the campaign and career strategies of congressional candidates. Their activities are guided by beliefs about what sways voters and, at the same time, help to define what voters' decisions are supposed to be about. An adequate understanding of voting behavior in congressional elections is important to congressional scholars and politicians alike.

Neither scholars nor candidates have reason to be fully satisfied; voters continue to surprise them both on election day. Studies over the past two decades have produced a great deal of fresh information about congressional voters, however, and we know much more about them than we did just a few years ago. This chapter examines voting behavior in congressional elections and how it relates to the other phenomena of congressional election politics. It begins with a discussion of voter turnout and then turns to the fundamental question of how voters come to prefer one candidate over another.

Turnout in Congressional Elections

Voting requires not only a choice among candidates but also a decision to vote in the first place. A majority of adult Americans do not, in fact, vote in congressional elections (see Figure 5–1). Obviously, participation in congressional elections is strongly influenced by whether there is a presidential contest to attract voters to the polls; turnout drops by an average of 15 percentage points when there is not. Even in presidential election years, House voting is about 4 percentage points lower than presidential voting. To be sure, these percentages underestimate turnout by 3 or 4 percentage points because the denominator includes voting-age adults ineligible to register or vote (noncitizens and former felons).[1] Nonetheless, turnout has fallen off since the 1960s, and it remains rare for more than half the eligible electorate to cast House votes.

The question of why turnout declined has been the subject of intensive investigation, but political scientists have yet to agree on a definitive answer.[2] The mystery is all the deeper because the single demographic factor most strongly linked to participation—level of education—has been increasing in the population at the same time that voting participation has been stagnant or dropping. The most thorough examination of the question to date, undertaken by Steven Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, places most of the blame on a decline in grassroots efforts by parties and other organizations (e.g., unions, social movements) to get voters to the polls.[3] A full review of the question would take us too far afield; it is enough for our purposes to recognize that members of Congress

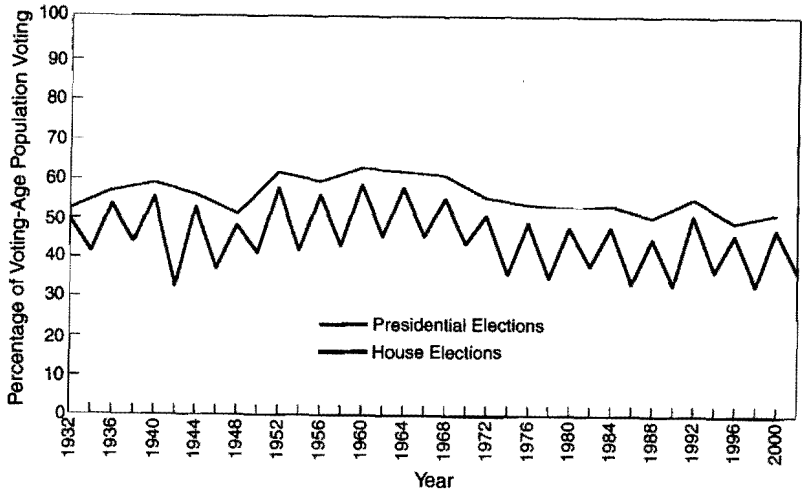

FIGURE 5–1 Voter Turnout in Presidential and Midterm Election Years, 1932–2002
Sources: Norman J. Ornstein, Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J.Malbin, *Vital Statistics on American Congress 2001–2002* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 2002), Table 2–1. Data for 2002 are from Michael P. McDonald, reported at *http://elections.gmu.edu/VAP_VEP.htm.*

are elected by an unimpressive proportion of eligible voters. In midterm elections, little more than one-third of the adult population shows up at the polls.

Who Votes?

The low level of voting in congressional elections raises a second question: Who votes and who does not? This question is important because politicians wanting to get into Congress or to remain there will be most responsive to the concerns of people they expect to vote. If voters and nonvoters have noticeably different needs or preferences, the former are likely to be served, the latter slighted.

The question of who votes and who does not has been studied most thoroughly by Raymond Wolfinger and Stephen Rosenstone. They report that turnout is affected most strongly by education; the more years of formal education one has, the more likely one is to vote. Voting also increases with income and occupational status, but these are themselves strongly related to education and have only a modest influence on turnout once education is taken into account.[4] Voting also increases with age, and some occupational groups—notably farmers and government workers—show distinctly higher levels of participation than their other demographic characteristics would lead us to expect. Other things equal, turnout is about 6 percentage points lower among people living in the South, a residue of the era when one-party rule was fortified by formal and informal practices that kept poor whites as well as African-Americans from the polls.[5]

Wolfinger and Rosenstone's demonstration that turnout varies most strongly with education comes as no surprise because every other study of American voting behavior has found this to be the case. The accepted explanation is that education imparts knowledge about politics and increases one's capacity to deal with complex and abstract matters such as those found in the political world.[6] People with the requisite cognitive skills and political knowledge find the cost of processing and acting on political information lower and the satisfactions greater. Politics is less threatening and more interesting. Similarly, learning outside of formal education can facilitate participation. People whose occupations put them in close touch with politics or whose livelihoods depend on governmental policy—government workers and farmers, for example—vote more consistently, as do people who simply have longer experience as adults.

Curiously, the connection between education and voting participation does not hold in most other Western-style democracies. Western Europeans of lower education and occupational status vote at least as consistently as the rest of the population. The reason, according to Walter Dean Burnham, is that the strong European parties of the left provide the necessary political information and stimuli to their chosen clientele. The sharply lower turnout at the lower end of the American socioeconomic scale can thus be interpreted as another consequence of comparatively weak parties interested mainly in electoral politics and patronage.[7]

Better educated, wealthier, higher-status, and older people are clearly overrepresented in the electorate. When their preferences and concerns substantially differ from those of nonvoters, governmental policy will be biased in their favor. Wolfinger and Rosenstone, citing survey data from the 1970s, argued that the views of voters were not very different from those of the population as a whole, so differential participation did not impart any special bias.[8] In the 1980s and 1990s, policy issues that divided people according to economic status became more prominent, and the underrepresented groups suffered. Cuts in government spending to reduce federal budget deficits hit welfare recipients far harder than they hit senior citizens or business corporations. Yet research continues to show that the policy preferences of voters and nonvoters are not very different and that few, if any, election results would change if every eligible person voted.[9]

Another question posed by the turnout data is whether congressional electorates differ between presidential and midterm election years. Do the millions of citizens who only vote for congressional candidates because they happen to be on the same ballot with presidential candidates change the electoral environment in politically consequential ways? One prominent study, based on surveys of voters taken in the 1950s, concluded that they did. The electorate in presidential years was found to be composed of a larger proportion of voters weakly attached to either political party and subject to greater influence by political phenomena peculiar to the specific election, notably their feelings about the presidential candidates. At the midterm, with such voters making up a much smaller proportion of the electorate, partisanship prevailed. This resulted in a pattern of "surge and decline," in which the winning presidential candidate's party picked up congressional seats (the surge), many of which were subsequently lost at the next midterm election when the pull of the presidential candidate was no longer operating. The theory of surge and decline explained why in every midterm election between 1934 and 1998, the president's party lost seats in the House.[10]

Aggregate shifts in congressional seats and votes from one election to the next will be examined at length in Chapter 6. At this point, suffice it to say that the view of electorates underlying this theory has not been supported by subsequent evidence. More recent research suggests that midterm voters are no more or less partisan than those voting in presidential years and that the two electorates are demographically alike.[11] The addition or subtraction of voters drawn out by a presidential contest does not seem to produce significantly different electorates.[12]

These observations about turnout refer to the electorate as a whole, but congressional candidates are, of course, much more concerned about the particular electorates in their states and districts. As noted in Chapter 2, turnout is by no means the same across constituencies; it varies enormously. One obvious source of variation is the demographic makeup of the district: average level of education, income, occupational status, age distribution, and so on. These factors are, at least in the short run, fairly constant in any individual state or district; but turnout also varies in the same constituency from election to election (quite apart from the presidential year–midterm difference), and these variations are, for our purposes, the most interesting.

The generally low level of voting in congressional elections means that a large measure of the fundamental electoral currency—votes—lies untapped. This affects campaign strategy in several ways. Even incumbents who have been winning by healthy margins recognize that many citizens did not vote for them (even if they did not vote against them) and that they could be in for trouble if an opponent who can mobilize the abstainers comes along. This is not an idle worry. Generally, the higher the turnout, the closer the election; the lower the turnout, the more easily the incumbent is reelected.[13] Successful challengers evidently draw to the polls many people who normally do not bother to vote. The wisdom of defusing the opposition and discouraging strong challenges is again apparent. Experienced campaigners know that getting one's supporters to the polls is as important as winning their support in the first place; as we saw in Chapter 4, well-organized campaigns typically devote a major share of their work to getting out the vote. One important source of the Republicans' triumph in 1994 was their more effective mobilization of supporters. Superior mobilization also contributed to the Democrats' pick-up of House seats in the 1998 elections and the Republicans' winning control of the Senate in 2002.

The effort to get out the vote presupposes that there is a vote to be gotten out, that people brought to the polls will indeed support the candidate. After all, what finally matters is what voters do in the voting booth. And this raises a question of fundamental interest to politicians and political scientists alike: What determines how people vote for congressional candidates? What moves voters to support one candidate rather than the other? The entire structure of congressional election politics hinges on the way voters reach this decision.

■ Partisanship in Congressional Elections

The first modern survey studies of congressional elections identified partisanship as the single most important influence on individuals' voting decisions, and it has remained so despite a detectable decline in party influence from the 1960s through the 1970s that has since largely reversed. The pioneering survey

studies of voting behavior in both presidential and congressional elections conducted in the 1950s found that a large majority of voters thought of themselves as Democrats or Republicans and voted accordingly. Particular candidates or issues might, on occasion, persuade a person to vote for someone of the other party, but the defection was likely to be temporary and did not dissolve the partisan attachment.[14]

Alternative Interpretations of Party Identification

The leading interpretation of these findings was that voters who were willing to label themselves Democrats or Republicans identified with the party in the same way they might identify with a region or an ethnic or religious group: "I'm a Texan, a Baptist, and a Democrat." The psychological attachment to a party was rooted in powerful personal experiences (best exemplified by the millions who became Democrats during the Depression) or was learned, along with similar attachments, from the family. In either case, identification with a party was thought to establish an enduring orientation toward the political world. The result, in aggregate, was a stable pattern of partisanship across the entire electorate. Thus, from the New Deal onward, the Democrats enjoyed consistent national majorities. Individual states or congressional districts were, in many cases, "safe" for candidates of one party or the other.

This did not mean that the same party won every election, of course. Some voters did not think of themselves as belonging to a party, and even those who did would defect if their reactions to particular candidates, issues, or recent events ran contrary to their party identification strongly enough. But once these short-term forces were no longer present, the long-term influence of party identification would reassert itself and they would return to their partisan moorings. For most citizens, only quite powerful and unusual experiences could inspire permanent shifts of party allegiance.

This interpretation of party identification has been undermined from at least two directions since it was developed. First, the electoral influence of partisanship diminished steadily throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Fewer voters were willing to consider themselves partisans, and the party attachments of those who did were likely to be weaker. The percentage of people declaring themselves to be strong partisans fell from 36 in 1952 to 23 in 1978; the percentage declaring themselves to be weak or strong partisans fell from 75 to 60 over the same period. Even those who still admitted to partisan attachments were a good deal more likely to defect to candidates of the other party than they had been earlier.[15]

Although no definitive explanation for the period of decline in electoral partisanship has been developed, it is no doubt related to political events of the 1960s and 1970s. Each party brought disaster upon itself by nominating a presidential candidate preferred only by its more extreme ideologues, the Republicans with Goldwater in 1964, the Democrats with McGovern in 1972. In 1968, the Vietnam War and the civil rights issue split the Democrats badly and fostered the strongest third-party showing since 1924. Republicans suffered in turn as the Watergate revelations forced their disgraced president from office. Jimmy Carter's inept handling of the economy and troubles with Iran laid the Democrats low in 1980. More generally, the political alliances formed in the battle over

the New Deal were fractured along multiple lines as new problems and issues—most notably social issues concerning abortion, crime, and sexuality—forced their way onto the political agenda.

Voters responded to these political phenomena as they were expected to respond to short-term forces, defecting when their party preferences were contradicted strongly enough. As defections become more widespread and partisanship, in general, continued to decline, an interpretation of party identification that, among other things, more easily accommodated change gained plausibility. The alternative interpretation emphasizes the practical rather than psychological aspects of party identification. It has been presented most fully by Morris P. Fiorina, who argues that people attach themselves to a party because they have found, through past experience, that its candidates are more likely than those of the other party to produce the kinds of results they prefer.

Because it costs time and energy to determine the full range of information on all candidates who run for office, voters quite reasonably use the shorthand cue of party to simplify the voting decision. Past experience is a more useful criterion than future promises or expectations because it is more certain. Party cues are recognized as imperfect, to be sure, and people who are persuaded that a candidate of the other party would deal more effectively with their concerns vote for him or her. More importantly, if cumulative experience suggests that candidates of the preferred party are no longer predictably superior in this respect, the party preference naturally decays.[16] Party ties are subject to modification, depending on the answer to the proverbial voters' question "What have you done for me lately?"[17]

The virtue of this alternative interpretation is that it can account for both the observed short-run stability and the long-run lability of party identification evident in individuals and the electorate. For example, it offers a plausible explanation for the evidence of a significant shift in party identification away from the Democrats and toward the Republicans during the 1980s. According to National Election Studies data, the 52–33 advantage in percentage share of party identifiers held by Democrats in 1980 had, by 1994, shrunk to 47–42.[18] The biggest change took place in the South, where the proportion of voters identifying themselves as Republicans grew from less than 32 percent in 1980 to 54 percent in 2002.[19] Moreover, self-described Republicans turned out to vote in higher proportions than did Democrats in 1994, so that for the first time in the forty-two-year history of the National Elections Studies, Republicans enjoyed a lead in party identification among voters, 48–46.

The Republicans' gains in party identification were not fully sustained, however. The Democrats' advantage expanded to 52–38 in 1996 and to 53–37 in 1998, as House Republicans' missteps on the budget in 1995 and the unpopular attempt to impeach and convict Bill Clinton in 1998 cost their party public support (see Chapter 6). Republicans closed the gap slightly in 2000 (50–38 Democratic advantage) and even more so in 2002 (although the change cannot be measured precisely with National Election Studies data because of changes in the survey's sampling technology[20]). The Democrats still hold a small lead, but it is narrower than it was before the Reagan administration, and because Republican identifiers tend to turn out at higher levels and to vote more loyally for their party, the national partisan division remains closely balanced.[21] These swings show that party identification can change in response to political experiences far less earthshaking than the Great Depression; and partisanship appears to be rather more sensitive to short-term influences than the psychological model would predict.[22]

Partisanship and Voting

The issue of which interpretation makes more empirical sense (or which combination of the two views—they are by no means irreconcilable) will not be settled here. What matters most for our purposes is that however party identification is interpreted, it remains an important influence on congressional voters, although that influence has varied in strength over time. Figures 5–2 and 5–3 display the trends in partisan voting in House and Senate elections since 1956. Notice that despite the common perception that voters have become increasingly detached from parties, the share of the electorate composed of voters who label themselves as pure independents, leaning toward neither party, has not grown. What did grow for a time was the proportion of voters who vote contrary to their expressed party affiliation. By the end of the 1970s, defections in House elections were typically twice as common as they were in the 1950s. Since the 1970s, party loyalty has recovered most of the lost ground. In elections since 1994, about 78 percent of House voters have been loyal partisans, about 17 percent, partisan defectors. The trends for Senate electorates have been similar, with a visible increase in party loyalty over the past three decades; the proportion of loyal partisans in the 2002 Senate electorate, 83 percent, was exceeded only in 1958.

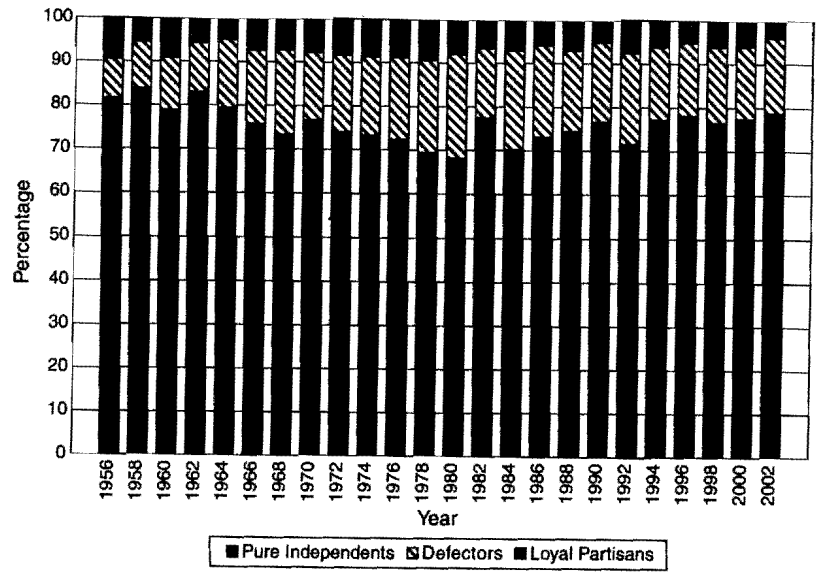

FIGURE 5–2 Party-Line Voters, Defectors, and Independents in House Elections, 1956–2002

Source: National Election Studies.

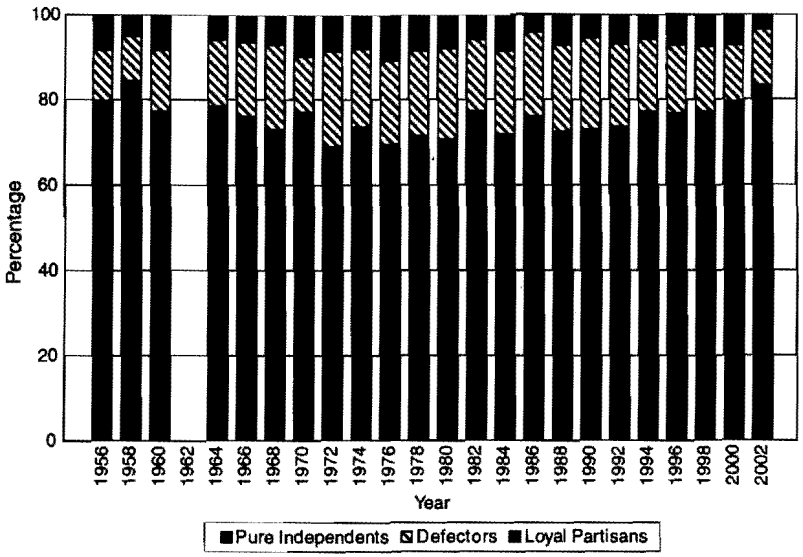

FIGURE 5–3 Party-Line Voters, Defectors, and Independents in Senate Elections, 1956–2002
Source: National Election Studies; data not available for 1962.

The decline of party loyalty had important consequences for House elections, because, as Figures 5–4 and 5–5 show us, the growth in defections was entirely at the expense of challengers. The crucial evidence is from the 1956–1976 surveys; from 1978 to 1998, the vote question was asked in a way that exaggerates the reported vote for the incumbent (typically by about 8 percentage points). The actual rate of defections to incumbents has thus been lower—and has almost certainly fallen further since the mid-1970s—than the figure suggests.[23] Voters sharing the incumbent's party are as loyal now as they ever were. Voters of the challenger's party have become much less faithful (even discounting for exaggeration), generally defecting at very high rates from the 1972 through 1992 elections. Only beginning in 1994 do we see a sustained reduction in defections to incumbents. Defections also clearly favor Senate incumbents, but by a considerably narrower and, in the 1990s, decreasing margin.

Figures 5–4 and 5–5 display, at the level of individual voters, the change in the vote advantage of House incumbents that was evident in the aggregate figures discussed in Chapter 3. They also reiterate the familiar House–Senate differences in this regard. But they do not explain either phenomenon. As Albert Cover has pointed out, there is no logical reason weaker party loyalty could not produce defections balanced between incumbents and challengers or even favoring the latter.[24] After all, voters are about as likely to desert their party in Senate elections as in House elections, but the defections are considerably less likely to favor incumbents. Other factors must be involved.

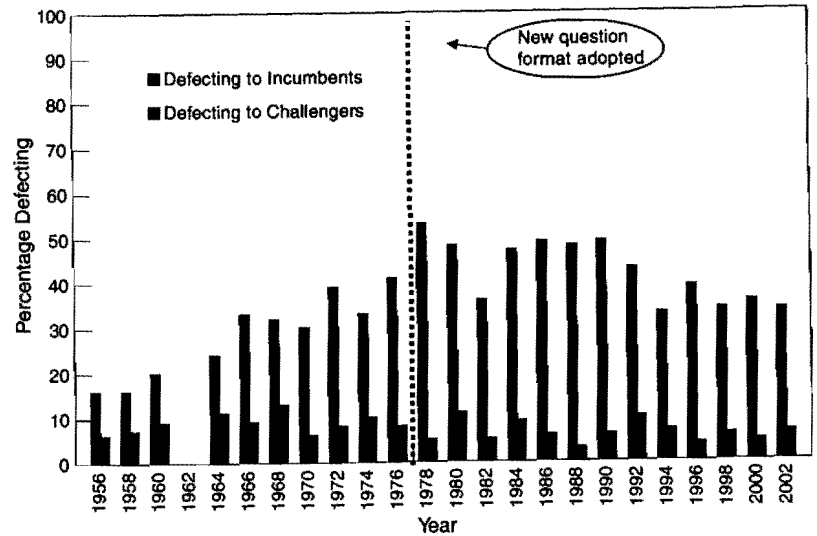

FIGURE 5–4 Partisan Voters Defecting to Incumbents and Challengers in House Elections, 1956–2002
Source: National Election Studies; data not available for 1962.

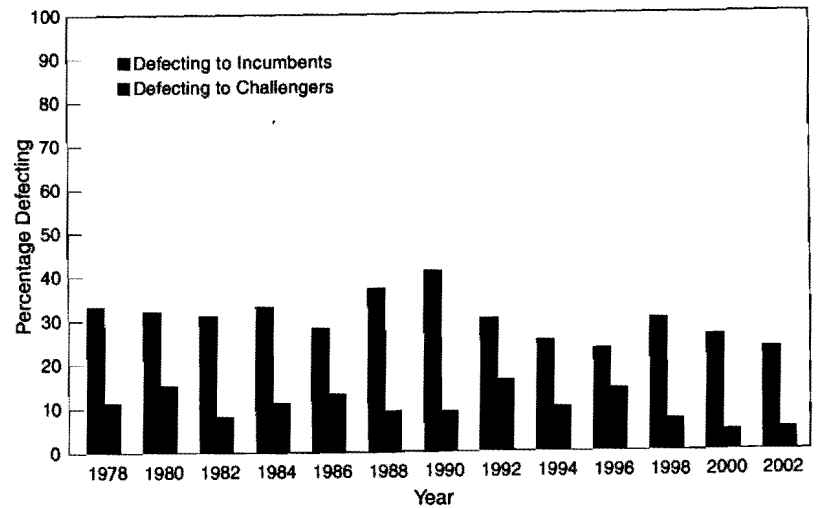

FIGURE 5–5 Partisan Voters Defecting to Incumbents and Challengers in Senate Elections, 1978–2002
Source: National Election Studies.

Information and Voting

One important factor in voting is information. At the most basic level, people hesitate to vote for candidates they know nothing at all about. Among the most consistent findings produced by studies of congressional voters over the past generation is that simple knowledge of who the candidates are is strongly connected to voting behavior. Prior to the 1978 National Election Study, knowledge of the candidates was measured by whether voters remembered their names when asked by an interviewer. Very few partisans defect if they remember the name of their own party's candidate but not that of the opponent; more than half usually defect if they remember only the name of the other party's candidate; defection rates of voters who know both or neither fall in between. The pattern holds for Senate as well as House candidates.[25]

This suggested one important reason that incumbents do so well in House elections: Voters are much more likely to remember their names. In surveys taken during the 1980–2000 period, for example, from 41 to 54 percent (average, 46 percent) could recall the incumbent's name, but only 10 to 26 percent (average, 16 percent) that of the challenger. If only one of the two candidates is remembered, it is the incumbent 95 percent of the time. But understanding the effects of differential knowledge of the candidate's names does not clear up all the basic questions.

First, it does not explain the growth in partisan defections to incumbents. Beyond question, incumbents are comparatively much better known, through both past successful campaigns and vigorous exploitation of the abundant resources for advertising themselves that come with office. But as campaign spending and official resources have grown, their familiarity among voters has not; indeed, it has declined, as Figure 5–6 illustrates.[26] Voters' familiarity with House challengers declined even more, but the difference was not enough to contribute much to the rising value of incumbency. Second, voters favor incumbents even when they cannot recall either candidate's name, so there must be more to the choice than simple name familiarity.[27] Voters are, in fact, often willing to offer opinions about candidates—incumbents and challengers alike—even without remembering their names.[28]

Recall and Recognition of Candidates

Such discoveries forced scholars to reconsider what is meant by "knowing" the candidates. Thomas Mann was the first to show that many voters who could not recall a candidate's name could recognize the name from a list—information always available in the voting booth.[29] Beginning in 1978, the National Election Studies have thus included questions testing the voter's ability both to recall and to recognize each candidate's name. The studies have also included a battery of questions designed to find out what else voters know about the candidates, what sort of contact they have had with them, and what they think of them on a variety of dimensions. The data collected since 1978 allow a much more thorough examination of voting behavior in congressional elections than was possible previously and are the focus of the rest of this chapter. Unfortunately, however, these newer data cannot cast much light on what changes have occurred in patterns of congressional voting because comparable data from earlier elections do not exist.[30]

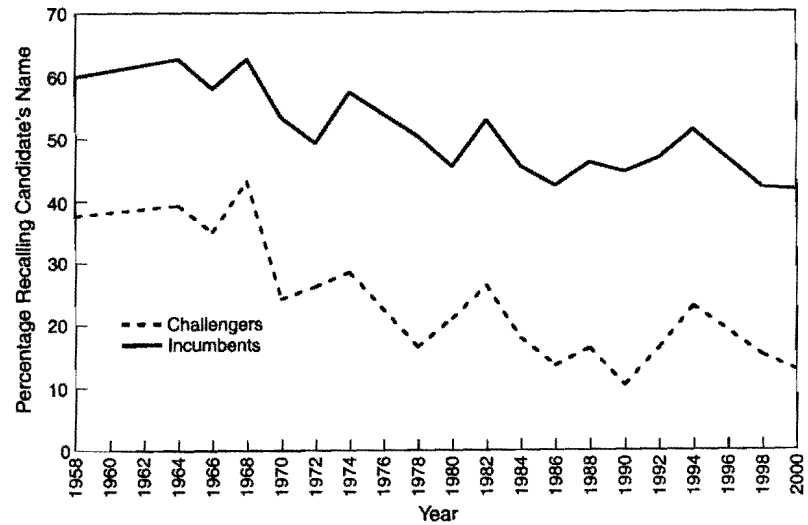

FIGURE 5–6 Name Recall of House Challengers and Incumbents, 1958–2000 (Voters Only)
Source: National Election Studies. Comparable data are not available for 1960, 1962, 1976, 1996, and 2002.

The more recent studies of congressional voters leave no doubt that voters recognize candidates' names much more readily than they recall them.[31] Table 5–1 shows that voters are twice as likely to recognize as to recall House candidates in any incumbency category. The same is true for Senate candidates, except in the case of incumbents and candidates for open seats, whose names are already recalled by more than half the voters. These figures also leave no doubt that the House incumbent's advantage in recall is matched by an advantage in recognition. More than 90 percent of voters recognize the incumbent's name. The shift in focus from name recall to recognition nicely resolves the apparent anomaly of voters favoring incumbents without knowing who they are. Many more voters also recognize the challenger than recall his or her name, but these voters still amount to little more than half the electorate. Candidates for open seats are better known than challengers but not so well known as incumbents; indeed, the data show that they fall between incumbents and challengers on almost every measure. This is exactly what we would expect, knowing the kinds of candidates and campaigns typical of open-seat contests.

Senate candidates are better known than their House counterparts in each category, and Senate incumbents are clearly better known than their challengers (though the more populous the state, the lower the proportion who can recall the senator's name[32]). But the gap is smaller than it is for House candidates. Again, this is the kind of pattern we would anticipate, owing to the distinctive circumstances of Senate electoral politics outlined in Chapter 4.

Familiarity is supposed to matter, of course, because of its connection to the vote; Table 5–2 displays the connection for some recent elections.[33] In both

TABLE 5–1 Incumbency Status and Voters' Familiarity with Congressional Candidates, 1980–2002 (in Percentages)

	INCUMBENTS		CHALLENGERS		OPEN SEATS	
Year	Recalled Name	Recognized Name[a]	Recalled Name	Recognized Name[a]	Recalled Name	Recognized Name[a]
House Elections						
1980	46	92	21	54	32	82
1982	54	94	26	62	29	77
1984	45	91	18	54	32	80
1986	42	91	13	46	43	84
1988	46	93	16	53	33	71
1990	45	93	10	37	26	78
1992	43	87	15	56	23	79
1994	51	93	22	57	36	82
1998[b]	42	91	15	45	52	83
2000	42	91	13	57	29	80
2002[d]	—	95	—	58	—	90
Mean	*46*	*92*	*17*	*53*	*34*	*81*
Senate Elections						
1980	61	99	40	81	47	89
1982	61	97	37	78	73	95
1986[c]	61	97	41	77	61	94
1988	51	96	30	74	73	97
1990	57	98	31	69	31	86
1992	55	96	33	82	59	93
1994[d]	—	98	—	84	—	92
1998[b,d]	—	96	—	71	—	77
2000[d]	—	93	—	73	—	90
2002[d]	—	99	—	84	—	97
Mean	*58*	*97*	*35*	*77*	*57*	*91*

[a]Includes only respondents who reported voting and who could recognize and rate the candidates on the feeling thermometer or, if they could not rate the candidates, could recall the candidates' names.
[b]Comparable data are not available for 1996.
[c]Data are not available for 1984 Senate candidates.
[d]Recall question not asked.

House and Senate elections, the more familiar voters are with a candidate, the more likely they are to vote for him or her, with the effect also depending, symmetrically, on the degree of familiarity with the other candidate. Defections are concentrated in the upper-right corner of each table; party loyalty predominates in the lower-left corner. Only about 3 percent of House voters and 13 percent of Senate voters defected to candidates who were less familiar than their own; more than half of both Senate and House voters defected to candidates who are

TABLE 5–2 Familiarity with Candidates and Voting Behavior in Congressional Elections (Percentage of Voters Defecting)

	FAMILIARITY WITH OWN PARTY'S CANDIDATE		
	Recalled Name	Recognized Name	Neither
House Elections (2000)			
Familiarity with other party's candidate:			
Recalled name	13	34	84
Recognized name[a]	5	22	43
Neither	0	7	10
Senate Elections (1988–1992)			
Familiarity with other party's candidate:			
Recalled name	20	49	75
Recognized name[a]	9	30	63
Neither	8	7	25

[a]Recognized name and could rate candidate on the thermometer scale but could not recall candidate's name.
Sources: National Election Study, 1998, and Senate Election Studies, 1988, 1990, and 1992.

more familiar. Independent voters, omitted from this table, voted for the better-known candidate 84 percent of the time in House races and 82 percent of the time in Senate contests.

Why is familiarity of so much benefit to congressional candidates? The answer proposed by Donald Stokes and Warren Miller, that "in the main, to be perceived at all is to be perceived favorably," has not found much support in later work.[34] It does not work so simply. Since 1978, surveys have asked respondents what they liked and disliked about House candidates; the same questions were asked about Senate candidates in the 1988–1992 Senate Election Studies. As the numbers in Table 5–3 indicate, the more familiar voters are with candidates, the more likely they are to find things they both like and dislike. Familiarity by no means breeds only favorable responses. More importantly, the benefits of incumbency obviously extend well beyond greater familiarity. Incumbents are better liked—by a wide margin—as well as better known than challengers. At any level of familiarity, voters are more inclined to mention something they like about the incumbent than about the challenger; negative responses are rather evenly divided, so the net benefit is clearly to the incumbent. Voters tend to favor Senate as well as House incumbents on this dimension, though the difference is smaller; Senate candidates tend to attract a higher proportion of negative responses, reflecting the greater average intensity of these contests.

Another survey question allows further comparison of voters' feelings about House and Senate candidates. Respondents were asked to rate candidates they recognized on a "thermometer" scale of 0 to 100 degrees, with 0 as the most unfavorable, 100 as the most favorable, and 50 as neutral. The mean temperatures for House and Senate candidates in different incumbency categories are shown in Figures 5–7 and 5–8.

TABLE 5–3 Incumbency Status and Voters' Likes and Dislikes of House and Senate Candidates (in Percentages)

	RECALLED NAME		RECOGNIZED NAME[A]		NEITHER		MARGINAL TOTALS	
Year	Like Something	Dislike Something	Like Something	Dislike Something	Like Something	Dislike Something	Like Something	Dislike Something
House 1978–2000								
Incumbents	71	32	49	15	11	7	56	22
Challengers	43	35	28	15	2	2	16	13
Open seats	59	37	33	21	6	3	37	23
Senate 1988–1992								
Incumbents	67	43	50	22	17	3	59	34
Challengers	52	49	26	26	4	3	31	29
Open seats	56	48	36	27	4	3	43	35

[a]Includes only respondents who reported voting and who could recognize and rate the candidate on the feeling thermometer or, if they could not rate the candidate, could recall the candidate's name.
Sources: National Election Studies, 1978–2000, and Senate Election Studies, 1988, 1990, and 1992.

House and Senate challengers are, on average, rated about the same (the important difference lying in the proportion of voters who could rate them at all), as are candidates for open seats. But House incumbents are more warmly regarded than Senate incumbents, and so the average gap between House incumbents and their challengers (13.6 degrees) is larger than that between Senate incumbents and their challengers (7.9 degrees). Notice that the House incumbents' advantage has shrunk in recent elections, averaging 11 degrees 1992–2002 compared to 16 degrees in the earlier years covered.

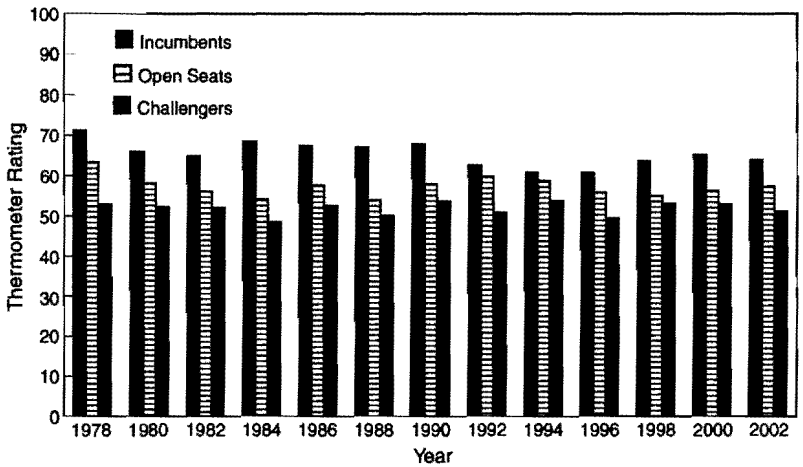

FIGURE 5–7 Voters' Ratings of House Candidates on the 100-Point Thermometer Scale, 1978–2002
Source: National Election Studies.

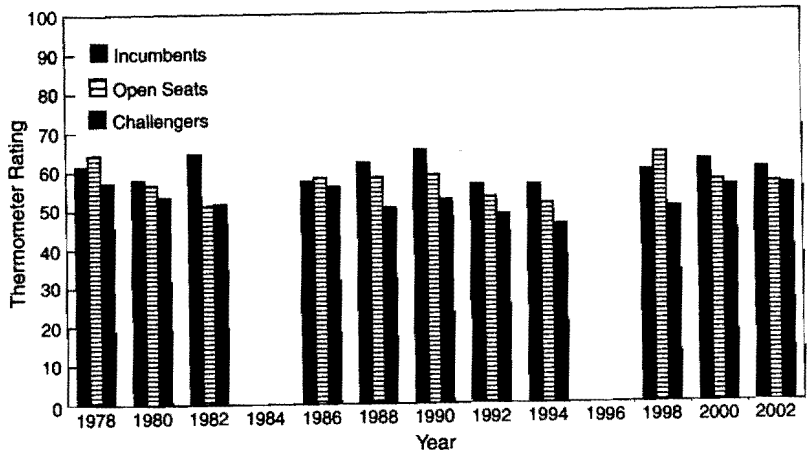

FIGURE 5–8 Voters' Ratings of Senate Candidates on the 100-Point Thermometer Scale, 1978–2002
Source: National Election Studies. Comparable data not available for 1984 and 1996.

The Senate figures tend to mirror aggregate election results. Recall from Table 3–1 that more than one-quarter of Senate incumbents lost general elections in 1980 and 1986, two years in which the Senate incumbents' advantage in thermometer ratings was much narrower than usual. Indeed, Democratic challengers in 1986 were, on average, rated higher (60.6 degrees) than their incumbent Republican opponents (57.7 degrees), an indication of unusual weakness among the Republican Senate class of 1980 (the Democrats retook control of the Senate in 1986).

Contacting Voters

Why are House incumbents so much better known and liked than their opponents? Why are Senate challengers more familiar to voters than House challengers? One obvious explanation is based on the frequency with which messages about members of the various categories reach voters. The percentages of voters reporting contact with House and Senate candidates are listed in Table 5–4. The table lists entries for two separate House election years so that we may compare the frequencies of contacts reported in a year with unusually obscure and underfinanced challengers (1990) with those reported in a year with a relatively high proportion of well-financed and successful challengers (1994).[35] Voters were twice as likely to report contact of every kind with incumbents as with challengers in House races. Almost every voter was reached in some way by the incumbent, while even in a year with unusually vigorous challenges, barely half the voters reported contact of any kind the challenger. Still, the two election

TABLE 5–4 Voters' Contacts with House and Senate Candidates (in Percentages)

Type of Contact	INCUMBENT 1990	INCUMBENT 1994	CHALLENGER 1990	CHALLENGER 1994	OPEN SEAT 1990	OPEN SEAT 1994
House Candidates						
Any	92	90	29	52	81	80
Met personally	20	15	2	4	10	7
Saw at meeting	19	14	3	3	10	7
Talked to staff	13	14	2	5	4	7
Received mail	70	63	12	25	48	49
Read about in newspaper	67	65	20	34	59	55
Heard on radio	30	33	7	18	20	27
Saw on TV	51	61	16	34	58	57
Family or friend had contact	38	32	7	9	21	16
Senate Candidates (1988–1992)						
Any	99		85		96	
Met personally	25		9		10	
Saw at meeting	26		9		11	
Talked to staff	21		7		12	
Received mail	83		51		66	
Read about in newspaper	93		75		85	
Heard on radio	60		45		55	
Saw on TV	94		75		85	

Sources: National Election Studies, 1990 and 1994, and Senate Election Studies, 1988–1992.

years look quite different for challengers, with much higher levels of contact reported in 1994.

Senate incumbents had a substantially smaller advantage over their challengers in frequency of reported contacts. The differences between House and Senate challengers were sharpest in the area of mass media publicity. Notice especially the difference in the proportion of voters reached through television. Richard Fenno's observations of senators and Senate candidates led him to conclude that a major difference between House and Senate elections is the much greater importance of the mass media in the latter. The news media are much more interested in Senate candidates than in House candidates because they are much more interested in senators.[36] As noted in Chapter 4, Senate campaigns are also wealthier and can use paid television more extensively and more efficiently than can House campaigns. The consequences are evident in the survey data; both factors enhance the Senate challenger's ability to catch the attention of voters, an essential ingredient of electoral success.

Although it is no surprise that senators and Senate candidates reach a larger proportion of voters through the mass media, it is certainly a surprise that more voters report meeting them personally and talking to their staffs than report

equivalent contacts with their counterparts in the House. We would expect that the much larger constituencies represented by senators would make personal contacts less common. Part of the reason these data show the opposite pattern is that the Senate Election Study has equal size samples from every state, so voters from smaller states are overrepresented. But even adjusting for state size, House members and candidates evidently have no advantage in personal contacts. Only in the very largest states—those with voting-age populations in excess of five million—do voters report significantly fewer personal contacts with Senate candidates than with House candidates.[37]

The main House–Senate difference, then, is in mass media contacts. For Senate incumbents, the news media's greater interest is a mixed blessing. Senators are accorded more attention but are also subject to higher expectations. A House member running for the Senate explained it to Fenno this way:

> People don't treat me differently. They don't see any difference between the two jobs. Maybe they think it's a higher office, but that doesn't make any difference. But the media hold me to a much higher standard than they did as a House member. They expect me to know more details. Am I treated differently running for the Senate? By the people, no; by the media, yes.[38]

House incumbents normally do not attract much attention from the news media. This means that, except during campaigns, they produce and disseminate much of the information about themselves that reaches the public. To a large extent, they control their own press; no wonder it is a good press, and no wonder voters tend to think highly of them.[39] In most cases, only a vigorous campaign by the challenger spreads information critical of the incumbent's performance, with effects that are analyzed later in this chapter.

Table 5–4 also reinforces the vital point that not all nonincumbent candidates are alike. Voters report more contact of all sorts with candidates for open seats than with challengers. The figures for open-seat candidates are sometimes closer to those for incumbents than to those for challengers. House incumbents hold a wide advantage over challengers in these categories, but not simply because they are incumbents and their opponents are not. Their opponents are, rather, much weaker candidates than they might be—or than appear when no incumbent is running. This is a natural consequence of the strategies followed by potential House candidates and their potential supporters, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Incumbents benefit from their superior ability to reach voters because the more different ways voters come into contact with a candidate, the more likely they are to remember the candidate and to like (but also dislike) something about him or her. To see this, we will examine the results of some probit equations estimating the effects of contacts on voter awareness and evaluations of House candidates. Probit analysis is a standard procedure for estimating the effects of independent variables on a categorical dependent variable—that is, one that takes only a small number of discrete values. Here, all the dependent variables happen to be dichotomous; that is, each takes only two values. For example, a voter either recalls the candidate's name or does not; the voter either likes something about the candidate or does not.

Probit allows us to estimate how changes in the independent variables affect the probability of one outcome as opposed to the other. The procedure is

analogous to regression analysis, with the important differences being that the estimated probability is constrained to take a value between 0.0 and 1.0 (and so always makes sense as a "probability") and that the relationships are nonlinear: The effect of any independent variable depends interactively on the current levels of the other independent variables.[40] This makes it difficult to interpret the coefficients directly, so the results are also displayed in tables that show the estimated probabilities at various settings of the independent variables. All this will be clearer with specific examples. The variables used in this and subsequent analyses here and in the next chapter are listed in Table 5–5.

The connection between various kinds of contact (combined into four basic modes[41]) and voters' knowledge and evaluations of the candidates is shown in Tables 5–6 and 5–7.[42] Table 5–6 lists the probit coefficients (with their standard errors) estimating the effects of each mode of contact on the likelihood that a voter would recall, recognize, and like or dislike something about a House challenger or incumbent in 1988. Although weakly intercorrelated, each of these modes of contact is independently related to the probability that voters know and like or dislike something about both types of candidates. All but a handful

TABLE 5–5 Definitions of Probit Equation Variables

VARIABLE	DEFINITION
Respondent's House vote	1 if Democratic, 0 if Republican
Recall candidate/ recognize candidate	1 if respondent recalled (recognized) candidate, 0 otherwise
Type of contact:	
Personal	1 if respondent has met candidate, attended a meeting where candidate spoke, or had contact with staff, 0 otherwise
Mail	1 if respondent received anything in the mail about the candidate, 0 if not
Mass media	1 if respondent learned about candidate by reading newspapers, listening to the radio, or watching television, 0 otherwise
Indirect	1 if respondent's family or friends had any contact with the candidate, 0 if not
Party identification	1 if strong, weak, or independent Democrat, 0 if independent-independent, –1 if strong, weak, or independent Republican
Democrat is incumbent	1 if Democrat is incumbent, 0 otherwise
Republican is incumbent	1 if Republican is incumbent, 0 otherwise
Familiarity with Democrat Familiarity with Republican	1 if respondent recalls candidate's name, .5 if name is recognized but not recalled, 0 if name is not recognized or recalled
Likes something about candidate/ dislikes something about candidate	For each variable, 1 if respondent mentions anything liked (or disliked) about the candidate, 0 otherwise
Clinton vote	1 if for Al Gore, 0 if for George W. Bush

TABLE 5–6 Probit Equations Estimating the Effects of Contacts on Voters' Knowledge and Evaluations of House Candidates, 1994

Independent Variable	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Recall		Recognize		Like Something		Dislike Something	
Challengers								
Intercept	–1.53	(.10)	–.51	(.07)	–1.90	(.13)	–1.83	(.12)
Personal	42	(.21)	.90	(.40)	.76	(.21)	–.09	(.23)
Mail	.25	(.14)	30	(.16)	.39	(.15)	.27	(.15)
Mass media	1.03	(.13)	1.30	(.12)	1.04	(.16)	.92	(.16)
Indirect	.47	(.20)	1.34	(.41)	.81	(.21)	.38	(.22)
Incumbents								
Intercept	–.82	(.13)	.58	(.14)	–.70	(.13)	–1.17	(.14)
Personal	.24	(.13)	.60	(.40)	.70	(.13)	.11	(.13)
Mail	.55	(.11)	.72	(.19)	.44	(.11)	.28	(.11)
Mass media	.44	(.14)	.66	(.18)	.27	(.13)	.47	(.15)
Indirect	.26	(.12)	.68	(.35)	.40	(.12)	.00	(.12)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; any coefficient larger than twice its standard error is statistically significant at $p<.05$.

of the coefficients are larger than twice their standard errors and so achieve at least a .05 level of statistical significance.

A comparison of the coefficients suggests that, in general, mass media contact has the strongest effect on these probabilities for challengers. This is confirmed by Table 5–7, which interprets the probit equations for various combinations of the independent variables. The table lists the probability of each response, depending on the modes of contact individually and in combination. Note that respondents are twice as likely to recognize, recall, and evaluate challengers if they report contact with them through the mass media. For incumbents, each type of contact has about the same size effect. Notice the significant effect for both incumbents and challengers of indirect contact (word-of-mouth contact through experiences of family or friends), confirming politicians' faith in the ripple effects of their work to reach voters.

The effects of different modes of contact are cumulative. The more contacts voters have had with a House candidate, the more likely they are to know and like or dislike something about the candidate. Voters who were reached through all four modes are far more likely to be aware of candidates and to offer evaluative comments about them than voters not reached at all, and among such voters, the incumbent's advantage in recognition and affect disappears. Note also that the probability of both liking and disliking something about a candidate increases with contact but that the increase is greater for positive comments. The net effect of successful attempts to reach voters is clearly helpful to candidates.

TABLE 5–7 The Effects of Contacts on Voters' Knowledge and Evaluation of House Candidates, 1994

Type of Contact	PROBABILITY OF VOTER'S RESPONSE TO CANDIDATE			
	Recall	Recognize	Like Something	Dislike Something
Challengers				
None	.17	.37	.13	.14
Personal	.25	.60	.24	.13
Mail	.22	.45	.18	.17
Mass media	.38	.69	.30	.29
Indirect	.26	.70	.25	.13
Any two[a]	.30–.49	.66–.89	.32–.49	.16–.36
Any three[a]	.40–.59	.88–.95	.52–.67	.22–.43
All four	.60	.96	.75	.41
Incumbents				
None	.30	.64	.33	.24
Personal	.36	.63	.50	.26
Mail	.43	.79	.44	.29
Mass media	.40	.78	.39	.33
Indirect	.36	.78	.42	.24
Any two[a]	.42–.54	.86–.88	.49–.61	.26–.40
Any three[a]	.53–.60	.93–.93	.60–.70	.31–.42
All four	.65	.96	.75	.42

[a]Range of values listed because the probability depends on pair or trio chosen.
Source: Probit equations in Table 5–6.

The Effects of Campaign Spending

The impact of contacts on familiarity and evaluations—and the importance of these to the vote choice—help to explain why campaign money is so important to challengers. The connection between a House challenger's level of campaign spending and the probability that a voter will report having had contact with the candidate (through each of the basic modes, or any of them) is shown in Table 5–8. The likelihood of every kind of contact increases with expenditures, though at a decreasing rate. For example, as spending goes from $30,000 to $300,000, the probability of any contact at all increases from .42 to .66, the likelihood of contact through mass media goes from .39 to .61, and the probabilities of personal contact, contact via mail, and indirect contact through family and friends all increase as well.

Notice, however, that the incumbent retains a lead in every measure of contact except personal, even if the challenger spends $500,000. This is not merely a consequence of the incumbent's usual financial advantage; the incumbent's level of spending has only a modest and often statistically insignificant effect on these variables. Rather, it is a consequence of past campaigns and the district-oriented activities engaged in by House members whether or not an election is imminent.

For challengers, greater spending produces greater familiarity among voters as well; a high-spending campaign can cut the incumbent's lead in voter recall

TABLE 5–8 Campaign Expenditures and Voters' Contacts and Familiarity with Challengers, 1994

Campaign Expenditures	TYPE OF CONTACT					Recall Name	Recognize Name
	Any	Personal	Mail	Mass Media	Indirect		
$ 10,000	.32	.13	.20	.29	.12	.18	.36
$ 30,000	.42	.16	.26	.39	.16	.24	.47
$ 50,000	.48	.18	.29	.44	.18	.27	.52
$ 80,000	.52	.19	.32	.48	.19	.30	.57
$100,000	.55	.20	.34	.50	.20	.32	.59
$150,000	.59	.21	.37	.54	.22	.35	.63
$200,000	.62	.22	.39	.57	.24	.37	.65
$250,000	.64	.23	.40	.59	.25	.39	.67
$300,000	.66	.24	.42	.61	.26	.40	.69
$400,000	.68	.25	.44	.64	.27	.42	.71
$500,000	.70	.26	.46	.66	.28	.44	.73
Incumbents[a]	*.90*	*.27*	*.63*	*.81*	*.32*	*.51*	*.94*

Note: Table entries are probabilities derived from probit estimates. The intercepts, the probit coefficients on campaign expenditures (natural log of expenditures), and standard errors from the probit equations are:

Type of Contact	Intercept	Coefficient	Standard Error
Any	–4.58	.41	.03
Personal	–3.78	.21	.05
Mail	–4.25	.31	.04
Mass Media	–4.47	.39	.03
Indirect	–4.47	.27	.05
Recall	–4.48	.32	.04
Recognize	–4.21	.40	.03

[a]Mean for all incumbents; voters' contacts with incumbents vary little or not at all with the incumbent's campaign expenditures.

and recognition by more than half.[43] The data in Table 5–8 help to explain why campaign money is crucial to challengers and other nonincumbent House candidates. Without it, they cannot reach voters, they remain obscure, and so they are swamped by the opposition. Similar data for incumbents show that they receive comparatively little benefit from campaign expenditures; the campaign adds little to the prominence and affection they have gained prior to the campaign by cultivating the district and using the many perquisites of office.

The same situation holds among Senate candidates, although the analysis is more complicated because state populations vary so widely.[44] Controlling for the voting age population of the state, the probability of a respondent's recalling a 1988–1992 Senate challenger rises from .18 to .75 as the challenger's per-voter spending rises from its lowest to its highest observed level; the probability of a respondent's recognizing the challenger rises from .34 to .94. For incumbent

Senate candidates, the equivalent increases are much smaller: from .53 to .61 and from .91 to .94, respectively. Again, campaign spending has a bigger payoff to challengers than to incumbents; if they spend enough, Senate challengers become as well known as incumbents.

Models of Voting Behavior

How well voters know and like the candidates matters, finally, because familiarity and evaluations are directly related to the vote. The series of probit equations reported in Table 5–9, based on analysis of data from recent House and Senate

TABLE 5–9 Probit Models of the Voting Decision in Recent House and Senate Elections

	HOUSE			SENATE
	1996	1998	2000	1988–1992
Equation 1				
Intercept	.31 (.18)	–.11 (.18)	–.16 (.16)	.00 (.05)
Party identification	1.05 (.06)	.86 (.07)	1.01 (.06)	.69 (.02)
Democrat is incumbent	.27 (.20)	.78 (.21)	.79 (.18)	.56 (.06)
Republican is incumbent	–1.17 (.19)	–.61 (.20)	–.48 (.18)	–.51 (.07)
Equation 2				
Intercept	.41 (.21)	–.55 (.24)	–.04 (.20)	–.10 (.08)
Party identification	1.04 (.06)	.86 (.07)	1.00 (.07)	.69 (.03)
Democrat is incumbent	.07 (.20)	.63 (.23)	.23 (.20)	.41 (.07)
Republican is incumbent	–1.02 (.20)	–.15 (.21)	–.30 (.19)	–.37 (.08)
Familiarity with Democrat	.83 (.18)	1.54 (.21)	1.50 (.21)	.95 (.08)
Familiarity with Republican	–.95 (.19)	–.93 (.25)	–1.46 (.21)	–.79 (.09)
Equation 3				
Intercept	.51 (.26)	–.60 (.26)	.01 (.23)	–.12 (.10)
Party identification	.95 (.08)	.73 (.08)	.85 (.07)	.59 (.03)
Democrat is incumbent	.03 (.26)	.64 (.27)	.05 (.23)	.31 (.08)
Republican is incumbent	–1.04 (.25)	–.07 (.24)	–.27 (.21)	–39 (.08)
Familiarity with Democrat	.38 (.23)	1.30 (.24)	1.15 (.25)	.79 (.11)
Familiarity with Republican	–.64 (.24)	–.82 (.30)	–1.09 (.24)	–.57 (.11)
Likes something about Democrat	1.53 (.17)	1.14 (.19)	1.07 (.17)	1.09 (.06)
Dislikes something about Democrat	–1.25 (.19)	–1.00 (.23)	–.78 (.20)	–.82 (.07)
Likes something about Republican	–1.20 (.16)	–.59 (.18)	–1.07 (.17)	–1.15 (.06)
Dislikes something about Republican	1.09 (.19)	.51 (.19)	.72 (.20)	.86 (.07)

Note: The dependent variable is vote for Democrat. Standard errors are in parentheses. A coefficient that is at least twice its standard error is statistically significant at $p<.05$.

Sources: National Election Studies, 1994, 1996, and 1998, and Senate Election Studies, 1988, 1990, and 1992.

elections, suggest how these relationships work. More importantly, they make a fundamental point about the electoral effects of incumbency.

The first equation treats the vote choice as a function of party identification and incumbency status. Not surprisingly, these variables have a strong impact on the vote. Estimates of the size of the impact appear in Table 5–10, which interprets the equations in Table 5–9 by showing how much the probability of voting for the Democrat varies between the most pro-Democratic and pro-Republican setting on the independent variable of interest, with the values of the other variables set at their means. For example, the first equation indicates that in 2000, the probability of voting for the Democrat in a House race was .47 higher when the respondent identified with the Democratic rather than the Republican party. Incumbency has a large effect as well in these elections, the probability of voting for the Democrat being, for example, .31 higher if the Democrat rather than the Republican was the incumbent in 2000. In the other election years, party identification has a somewhat larger effect on the vote, although incumbency remains a potent factor as well.

The second equation in Table 5–9 adds a composite familiarity variable for each candidate to the set of explanatory variables. The effect of partisanship is unchanged, but the impact of incumbency shrinks; the probit coefficients are

TABLE 5–10 Probit Estimates of the Effects of Party Identification, Incumbency and Candidate Familiarity, and Affect in Congressional Elections

	HOUSE ELECTIONS			SENATE ELECTIONS
	1996	1998	2000	1988–1992
Equation 1				
Party identification	.47	.40	.47	.33
Incumbency	.35	.33	.31	.26
Equation 2				
Party identification	.47	.40	.46	.33
Incumbency	.27	.19	.13	.19
Familiarity	.42	.55	.63	.41
Equation 3				
Party identification	.44	.34	.40	.29
Incumbency	.26	.17	.08	.17
Familiarity	.25	.48	.61	.33
Likes/dislikes	.85	.65	.72	.75

Note: Entries are the difference in the probability of voting for the Democrat between the most pro-Democratic and the most pro-Republican settings on the indicated variables, with the other variables in the equation set at their mean values. For example, in Equation 2 for the Senate elections, a respondent who recalled the Democrat but did not even recognize the Republican would, other things being equal, have a probability of voting for the Democrat .41 higher than would one who recalled the Republican but did not recognize the Democrat.

Source: Estimated from the equations in Table 5–9.

smaller, and four of the six are statistically insignificant. The entries in Table 5–10 indicate that the difference made by incumbency status (when familiarity and party identification are set at their mean values) now ranges between .13 and .27, depending on the year and office. Familiarity has a large effect, far larger than that of incumbency; it would seem that a substantial portion of the incumbency advantage derives from the greater familiarity incumbents enjoy—the conventional hypothesis. But the third equation suggests further that the incumbency variables are, in part, surrogates for voters' evaluations of the candidates.

Each of the four evaluative variables derived from the likes/dislikes questions has a strong impact on the vote. Cumulatively, these evaluations make an enormous difference; a respondent who likes something about the Democrat and dislikes something about the Republican (without also liking something about the Republican and disliking something about the Democrat) has a probability ranging from .65 to .85 higher of voting for the Democrat than a respondent who takes the opposite position on all four variables. That is, voters who have only good things to say about one candidate and bad things to say about the other are almost certain to vote for the favored candidate, regardless of party identification or incumbency status. Clearly, some of this effect may be rationalization; respondents, when prodded, will come up with reasons for their vote preference. Even discounting for rationalization, however, the impact of candidate evaluations measured in this way is still very impressive.

Two points are clear from this analysis. The first is that voters are not strongly attracted by incumbency per se, nor does the incumbency advantage arise merely from greater renown. Of greater proximate importance are the very favorable public images most House members acquire and the relatively negative images—if any—projected by their opponents.[45] The second is that there is little difference in the patterns for House and Senate elections. In particular, the effect of incumbency is no smaller in Senate than in House elections, confirming the point that the greater vulnerability of Senate incumbents derives not from the behavior of voters but from the context of the elections (e.g., a more even partisan balance, more talented and better-funded challengers).

Evaluating Incumbents

Voters respond positively to House and Senate incumbents for a variety of reasons. Survey respondents since 1978 have been asked a number of general and specific questions about the incumbent's performance in serving the state or district and as a legislator in Washington. Table 5–11 presents data on some of the responses from recent House and Senate election surveys. The left-hand columns in the table list the percentage of voters who were able to offer a response to each question. For example, 20 percent had asked the House incumbent for assistance or information, received some reply, and therefore were able to indicate their level of satisfaction with it (Item 3). The distribution of responses on this question shows that 56 percent of those who could respond on this question were very satisfied, and the right-hand column in the table indicates that 90 percent of those who were very satisfied with the incumbent's response voted for the incumbent. Dissatisfied voters were much less likely to vote for the incumbent. Notice the *absence* of a House–Senate difference on this and

TABLE 5–11 Evaluations of the Incumbent's Performance and the Vote in House and Senate Elections (in Percentages)

Criterion	RESPONDING House	RESPONDING Senate		RESPONSE House	RESPONSE Senate	VOTE FOR INCUMBENT House	VOTE FOR INCUMBENT Senate
General job performance	91	90	Approve	85	80	88	86
			Disapprove	15	20	12	8
District Services							
1. How good a job of keeping in touch with people	95	94	Very good	33	29	88	87
			Fairly good	46	53	80	72
			Fairly poor	12	11	41	40
			Very poor	9	7	24	21
2. Expectations about incumbent's helpfulness in solving voters' problems	91	93	Very helpful	29	35	95	90
			Somewhat helpful	53	47	67	70
			Not very helpful	14	5	29	24
			It depends	4	3	58	54
3. Level of satisfaction with response to voter-initiated contact	20	19	Very satisfied	56	55	90	90
			Somewhat satisfied	35	30	63	70
			Not very satisfied	8	9	18	40
			Not at all satisfied	11	7	13	26
4. Level of friend's satisfaction with response to voter-initiated contact	19	23	Very satisfied	57	53	88	88
			Somewhat satisfied	32	34	62	75
			Not very satisfied	5	8	57	37
			Not at all satisfied	6	5	13	14
5. Could voter recall anything special incumbent did for the district?	27	32	Yes	27	32	77	78
			No	73	68	63	64
6. General agreement or disagreement with incumbent's votes	46	56	Agreed	55	50	96	92
			Agreed, disagreed about equally	36	34	79	64
			Disagreed	9	16	16	11
7. Agreed or disagreed with vote on a particular bill	18	—	Agreed	71	—	93	—
			Disagreed	29	—	43	—
8. Which candidate would do a better job on the most important problem?	26	—	Incumbent	72	—	97	—
			Challenger	28	—	11	—

Sources: The Senate data are from the pooled 1988–1992 Senate Election Studies. The House data are from the 1998 National Election Study for general job performance for Question 1; from the 1994 National Election Study for Questions 3, 4, and 5; from the 1990 National Election Study for Questions 2, 7, and 8; and from the 1988 National Election Study for Question 6. In every case, I include the most recent responses available for the particular question.

all the other questions. Again, voters respond to senators and representatives in the same way.

It is apparent from the left-hand columns that a large majority of voters could evaluate incumbents' general job performance and diligence at keeping in touch and could offer an opinion on whether they would be likely to help with

a problem if asked to do so. Forty-six percent were able to determine whether they generally agreed with the way the House incumbent voted, 56 percent, with the way the Senate incumbent voted. Fewer—from 18 to 32 percent—were able to respond in terms of more specific personal and district services and voting and policy items. But most voters could respond in terms of at least one of them. That is, a majority of voters were able to evaluate incumbents in other than broad, general terms.

Reactions to incumbents, both general and specific, were largely favorable. Four-fifths of the voters offering a response approved of the incumbents' performance in both offices. Despite a modest decline in the level of approval enjoyed by House incumbents in recent years (it averaged 88 percent from 1980 through 1990, 83 percent from 1992 through 2000), they still attract far more approval than does the body in which they serve. More than 80 percent of respondents thought that the incumbent would be helpful or very helpful if they brought him or her a problem. Satisfaction with the incumbents' response to voter requests ran very high indeed; most were "very satisfied," as were friends who made similar requests. Far more voters generally agreed with the incumbent's votes than disagreed with them, although most agreed with some and disagreed with others. In 1990, 72 percent of respondents thought the incumbent would do a better job dealing with what they considered to be the most important problem facing the nation, though this figure was well below the 93 percent who thought so in 1988.

The significance of these positive responses is apparent from their association with the vote. On every question, the more positive the reaction to the incumbent, the more likely the respondent was to vote for him or her. The pattern is very similar for both House and Senate candidates. Naturally, respondents' assessments of incumbents on these dimensions were overlapping and interrelated, but they had a cumulative effect as well. If the positive and negative responses are summed up, the greater the number of positive responses, the more frequently the respondent reported voting for the incumbent; the greater the number of negative responses, the more inclined respondents were to vote for the challenger.

The payoffs reaped by members of both houses from attention to constituents and emphasis on their personal character and performance are also evident in voters' responses to open-ended survey questions about what they like and dislike about candidates. These responses also reveal an important shift over time in the way voters typically respond to these questions. As many as five responses are coded for each question. Their distribution by type for House incumbents, challengers, and candidates for open seats in six selected elections from 1978 to 2000 are shown in Table 5–12.

Issues pertaining to job performance, experience, and district and individual services are mentioned most frequently as qualities voters liked about incumbents. Such issues are mentioned much more rarely for nonincumbents, which is not much of a surprise. A plurality of positive comments about candidates of all kinds have to do with personal characteristics, which frequently seem, at least on the surface, empty of political content. This is probably an illusion; experimental research has shown that voters form affective evaluations of candidates based on campaign information and then often forget the information but remember the affective evaluation. When later asked why they like or dislike a

TABLE 5–12 Voters' Mentions of Things They Liked and Disliked about House Candidates, Selected Years, 1978–20 0 (in Percentages)

	YEAR							CHANGE
	1978	1984	1988	1994	1996	1998	2000	1978–2000
Things Liked about Incumbents								
Personal	39	40	31	28	31	37	32	–7
Performance/experience	19	16	12	17	18	14	17	–2
District service/attention	25	22	26	22	17	15	19	–6
Party	1	3	3	4	7	5	6	5
Ideology/policy	12	12	19	23	22	24	21	9
Group associations	5	7	9	5	5	4	5	0
Number of respondents	749	969	846	694	905	394	809	
Number of mentions	859	1,106	925	875	1,160	537	1,021	
Mentions per respondent	1.15	1.14	1.09	1.26	1.28	1.36	1.26	.11
Things Disliked about Incumbents								
Personal	40	41	32	28	23	27	37	–13
Performance/experience	15	7	6	17	10	8	10	–5
District service/attention	9	7	13	5	8	1	6	–3
Party	7	10	11	12	17	14	14	7
Ideology/policy	22	29	35	35	38	43	27	5
Group associations	6	5	4	3	3	6	6	0
Number of respondents	749	969	846	694	905	394	809	
Number of mentions	190	243	171	332	412	211	289	
Mentions per respondent	.25	.25	.20	.48	.46	.53	.36	.11
Things Liked about Challengers								
Personal	58	57	45	35	36	40	43	–15
Performance/experience	6	6	4	7	10	15	5	–1
District service/attention	3	5	7	3	5	5	4	1
Party	4	5	8	13	13	12	17	13
Ideology/policy	27	21	26	38	34	25	24	–3
Group associations	3	5	10	3	3	4	6	3
Number of respondents	749	969	846	694	905	394	809	
Number of mentions	139	298	189	254	360	179	217	
Mentions per respondent	.19	.31	.22	.39	.40	.45	.27	.08

(continued)

TABLE 5–12 Continued

	YEAR							CHANGE
	1978	1984	1988	1994	1996	1998	2000	1978–2000
Things Disliked about Challengers								
Personal	44	38	53	20	22	23	29	–15
Performance/experience	7	7	3	11	12	12	12	5
District service/attention	0	11	1	1	5	3	0	0
Party	7	11	21	23	25	39	28	21
Ideology/policy	42	32	23	42	33	18	23	–19
Group associations	1	4	0	3	3	6	8	7
Number of respondents	749	969	846	964	905	394	809	
Number of mentions	122	188	78	143	307	102	133	
Mentions per respondent	.16	.19	.09	.22	.34	.26	.16	0
Things Liked about Candidates for Open Seats								
Personal	55	55	57	35	36	44	43	–12
Performance/experience	8	9	15	14	8	6	4	–4
District service/attention	6	4	1	4	6	1	1	–5
Party	4	11	12	10	13	15	24	20
Ideology/policy	18	16	14	34	31	32	26	8
Group associations	9	6	1	3	6	1	2	–7
Number of respondents[a]	232	228	152	308	172	128	89	
Number of mentions	143	172	86	221	112	118	95	
Mentions per respondent	.61	.75	.56	.72	.65	.92	1.07	.46
Things Disliked about Candidates for Open Seats								
Personal	42	34	41	20	17	23	26	–16
Performance/experience	12	3	5	14	4	6	2	–10
District service/attention	3	0	2	3	2	0	0	–3
Party	5	9	34	29	39	28	43	38
Ideology/policy	35	45	15	32	39	40	26	–9
Group associations	3	6	3	2	0	4	4	1
Number of respondents[a]	232	228	152	308	172	128	89	
Number of mentions	60	67	59	113	52	53	47	
Mentions per respondent	.26	.29	.39	.37	.30	.41	.53	.27

Note: Some columns do not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: National Election Studies for years listed.
[a] Number of respondents is doubled for the Open Seat Category because they comment on two candidates.

candidate, they give some reasons that rationalize their feeling, but they are not necessarily the reasons that led to the feelings in the first place.[46]

The reasons voters give for liking or disliking candidates depend on what is on their minds at the time they are asked, and that, in turn, is determined by whatever campaign messages have caught their attention.[47] Campaigns frame the decision differently in different years. Notice that between 1978 and the mid-1990s,

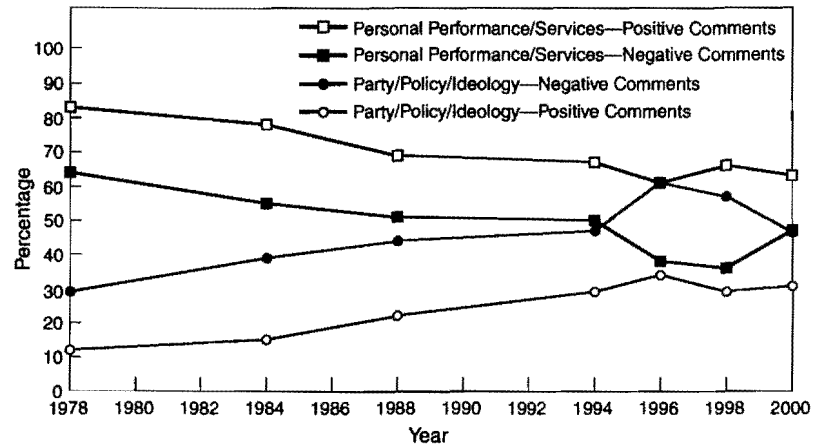

FIGURE 5–9 Criteria for Evaluating House Candidates, Selected Years, 1978–2000
Source: National Election Studies.

the proportion of both positive and negative comments about candidates' personal characteristics, performance, and district services fell, while the proportion of comments concerning party, ideology, and policy grew. These trends, summed across all three types of House candidates, are displayed in Figure 5–9. Clearly, the content of electoral politics, at least as it is refracted through the minds of voters, has become less personal, and more explicitly political, since the 1970s. Although personal criteria continue to predominate among positive comments, political criteria now tend to predominate among negative comments. In 1978 whereas 83 percent of positive comments concerned the candidate's personal characteristics, experience, service, or performance, only 12 percent concerned party, policy, or ideology. In 2000, the respective figures were 63 percent and 31 percent. Similarly, the percentage distribution of negative comments between these categories changed from 29–64 to 57–36 in 1998 before falling back to a 47–47 tie in 2000. Notice also that party, ideology, and policy are invariably more commonly mentioned as things disliked than as things liked about candidates.

These changes in the frame have worked to the detriment of incumbents. House members thrive when voters focus on their personal virtues and services to the district and its inhabitants. They become more vulnerable when the focus is on their party, ideology, or policy stances, for these repel as well as attract voters. Notice that the incidence of negative comments about House incumbents was much higher in the 1990s (negative mentions per respondent were twice as frequent as in earlier elections). The ratio of likes to dislikes for incumbents was also much smaller in the 1990s (an average of 2.6:1, compared with more than 4.5:1 for each of the earlier election years). The changes first registered in the 1994 election were not, then, merely an artifact of the strong anti- (Democratic) incumbent sentiments prevailing that year, for they were sustained through the next two elections.

The distribution of evaluative comments about Senate candidates, displayed in Table 5–13, is not very different from the distribution of comments about House candidates during the same period. The incidence of personal comments

TABLE 5–13 Voters' Mentions of Things They Liked and Disliked about Senate Candidates, 1988–1992 (in Percentages)

	INCUMBENTS	CHALLENGERS	CANDIDATES FOR OPEN SEATS
Things Liked about Candidates			
Personal	31	42	33
Performance/experience	26	13	17
District service/attention	15	4	8
Party	4	10	8
Ideology/policy	19	27	29
Group associations	5	3	3
Number of respondents	3,142	3,142	1,298
Number of mentions	3,573	1,700	1,047
Mentions per respondent	1.14	.54	.81
Things Disliked about Candidates			
Personal	34	29	28
Performance/experience	10	11	11
District service/attention	8	3	2
Party	13	27	23
Ideology/policy	29	29	34
Group associations	5	2	4
Number of respondents	3,142	3,142	1,298
Number of mentions	1,662	1,435	699
Mentions per respondent	.53	.46	.54

Note: Some columns do not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: Senate Election Studies, 1988, 1990, and 1992.

is about the same; references to performance and experience are more common for senators, references to services and attention less common. References to party, ideology, and policy are also distributed similarly. In general, it appears that the patterns for House candidates have become more like the patterns for Senate candidates in recent elections. Once again, voters do not think much differently about House and Senate candidates. They do, however, have more thoughts about Senate candidates; the number of comments per respondent is generally larger for Senate candidates, particularly nonincumbents.

Although there has been measurable decline from the remarkably high levels of regard for incumbents found in the late 1970s, survey evidence continues to confirm that all the actions members of Congress are purported to undertake in pursuit of reelection still pay off in some way. Individual voters respond, for example, to the advertising (familiarity, contacts), credit-claiming (personal and district services), and position-taking (general and specific agreement with members' votes and issue stances) that David Mayhew identified as the characteristic means by which incumbents pursue reelection.[48] On the other hand, the

home styles developed by the House members whom Fenno observed no longer seem quite so effective as they once did. Fenno found that, in the 1970s, members typically worked to project images devoid of partisan or even programmatic content, presenting themselves instead as trustworthy, hardworking people who deserve support for their experience, services, and personal qualities more than for their political beliefs or goals.[49] Partisan, policy, and ideological considerations have clearly become more prominent since Fenno did his research, and the strategy he described conspicuously failed a number of House Democrats in 1994.

Finally, it is also apparent that the electoral strategy of discouraging the opposition before the campaign begins is effective and often effectively pursued. Even amid the upsurge in competition in the early 1990s, most incumbent House members continued to face obscure, politically inexperienced opponents whose resources fell far short of what it takes to mount a serious campaign. It is obvious from the survey data how this would ease the incumbent's task of retaining voters' support. House incumbents appear to be doubly advantaged compared with their Senate counterparts. They are more highly regarded (compare the thermometer ratings in Figures 5–7 and 5–8) and more likely to face obscure opponents (compare the figures on familiarity in Table 5–1). These are not separate phenomena. Not only do popular incumbents discourage serious opposition, but in the absence of vigorous opposition, information that might erode the incumbent's popularity seldom reaches voters.

■ Winning Challengers

The connection between the vigor of the challenge and the popularity of the incumbent is evident when we observe how voters respond when incumbents are seriously challenged. The most serious challenges are, by definition, the successful ones. Voters' responses to the survey questions about both challengers and incumbents in districts where the challenger won are sharply different from those in districts where the incumbent won. This is evident from the data in Table 5–14, which lists responses to selected questions about winning and losing challengers and incumbents in the 1994 House elections and 1988–1992 Senate elections.

Winning challengers are much better known by voters than are losing challengers. Half the electorate can recall their names and nearly all can recognize them and rate them on the thermometer scale. Incumbents are also better known in these races—a full-scale campaign generates more information all around—but their advantage over the challenger in familiarity practically disappears. So does their advantage in voter evaluations. Not only are winning challengers better known, they are also rated significantly higher on the thermometer scale. The incumbents they have defeated are rated significantly lower, leaving the challenger with a clear advantage.

The same is true of the incidence of voters' liking or disliking something about the candidates. The data indicate that successful challengers do two things: They make voters aware of their own virtues and they make voters aware of the incumbent's shortcomings. The frequency of both positive and negative comments is significantly higher for winning than for losing challengers, but the jump in positive comments is much greater. For losing incumbents, the frequency of positive

TABLE 5–14 Voters' Responses to Winning and Losing Challengers and Incumbents (in Percentages)

	1994 CHALLENGER (HOUSE)		1988–1992 CHALLENGER (SENATE)	
	Won (N = 92)	Lost (N = 609)	Won (N = 303)	Lost (N = 2,106)
Familiarity with Candidates				
Recalled challenger's name	55[a]	18	51[a]	30
Recognized challenger's name	97[a]	52	98[a]	82
Neither	3[a]	48	2[a]	18
Recalled incumbent's name	63[a]	49	59	55
Recognized incumbent's name	98	93	99	99
Neither	2	7	1	1
Contact with Challenger				
Any	90[a]	46	97[a]	84
Met personally	7	3	10	9
Received mail from challenger	54[a]	21	58	50
Read about challenger	64[a]	30	86[a]	74
Saw challenger on TV	80[a]	27	91[a]	73
Family or friends had contact with challenger	25[a]	7	—	—
Evaluations of Candidates				
Challenger's thermometer rating[b]	61[a]	52	57[a]	48
Incumbent's thermometer rating[b]	45[a]	63	51[a]	65
Likes something about challenger	49[a]	14	53[a]	29
Dislikes something about challenger	24[a]	11	38[a]	29
Likes something about incumbent	38[a]	56	45[a]	61
Dislikes something about incumbent	47[a]	26	45[a]	32

[a]Difference in responses to winning and losing challengers is significant at $p<.05$.
[b]Measured in degrees, not percentages.
Sources: National Election Study 1994 and Senate Election Studies, 1988, 1990, and 1992.

comments is significantly lower, while the incidence of negative comments is significantly higher. Again, winning challengers enjoy a clear advantage on this dimension. Finally, we observe a sharply lower job approval rating for losing compared to winning incumbents of both houses of Congress.

When I examined the equivalent data from earlier elections for the previous editions of this book, I found that losing incumbents had *not* been rated lower than winning incumbents on most of these evaluative dimensions. Voters were just as inclined to like something about the losers as about the winners; they were also just as likely to approve of the incumbents' general job performance, to think that the incumbents would be of assistance if asked, and to remember something specific the incumbents had done for the district.[50]

In the past, incumbents did not lose by failing to elicit support on grounds of general performance and services to constituents. They lost when challengers were able to project a positive image of their own and to persuade voters that incumbents have liabilities that outweigh their usual assets. In 1994, however, voters in districts that rejected incumbents were far more critical of the incumbent's performance on all these dimensions—another indication that their circumstances had changed for the worse.

As we would expect, voters are much more likely to report contacts with winning challengers than with losing challengers, though the differences are considerably larger for House than for Senate challengers. The most important differences for House challengers show up in contacts through the mass media: mail, newspapers, and television. In fact, winning challengers are encountered as often as incumbents via these media; compare the figures in Table 5–4. The differences that tend to remain between incumbents and winning challengers are in the modes of contact associated with holding office over a period of years: personal and staff contacts and, of course, the mail.

It is no mystery why winning challengers reached so many voters and were so much more familiar to them. They ran much better-financed campaigns than did the losers. The winning House challengers in the districts covered by the survey spent more than $600,000 on average, compared to less than $140,000 for the losing challengers. The winning Senate challengers also spent significantly more money on the campaign than the losers.

In general, voters react to winning House challengers very much as they do to candidates for open seats and to most Senate challengers.[51] Competitive challengers also make it possible for more voters to make ideological and policy distinctions between House candidates, again producing contests that are more like Senate elections, in which policy issues and ideology usually play a larger role.[52] This is further evidence that differences between House and Senate elections, and among the varieties of House contests, must be attributed primarily to varying characteristics of House and Senate challengers and their campaigns. To say this is to reiterate that differences among candidacies, rather than differences in patterns of voting behavior, are what distinguish House from Senate elections.[53]

Issues in Congressional Elections

A broader implication of this argument is that congressional voters behave the way they do because politicians behave the way they do. We have seen, for example, how well voters' reactions to House incumbents fit the strategies they follow to win reelection. One explanation is that members of Congress simply understand what appeals to voters and act accordingly. However, the deviant cases (that is, challenger victories) and senatorial elections suggest that the matter is not so simple. Voters react differently, depending on the style and content (not to mention volume) of appeals that candidates make to them. Political strategies are based on assumptions about how individual voters operate; but voting behavior is constrained by the electoral context created by strategic decisions.

It is a classic case of mutual causation. As Fiorina has pointed out, converging patterns of electoral strategy and electoral behavior typical of congressional elections in the 1960s and 1970s conspired to crowd national issues out of electoral

politics.[54] But this trend was not immutable. As challengers (Republicans in 1980, Democrats in 1982, Republicans in 1994, Democrats in 1996) found that they could win votes by linking the incumbent to national policy failures and unpopular leaders, national issues reentered the electoral equation—at least in those contests where active, well-funded challengers worked to inject them into the campaign.[55] Even in the 1970s, when issues seemed to have little measurable impact on individual voting once other variables were taken into account, congressional elections had a profound impact on national policy, partly because the results were interpreted by politicians to reflect voters' preferences on policy matters. They could point to solid evidence that, in aggregate, congressional election results are highly sensitive to national issues and conditions and therefore justify such interpretations. A resolution to this curious paradox, along with an examination of how national issues enter congressional election politics, is pursued in Chapter 6.

ENDNOTES

1. Michael P. McDonald and Samuel Popkin, "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter," *American Political Science Review* 95 (2001):963–974.
2. Ibid.; Eric R.A.N. Smith and Michael Dolny, "The Mystery of Declining Turnout in American National Elections" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Salt Lake City, March 30–April 1, 1989); Ruy Teixeira, *The Disappearing American Voter* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992); and Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 509–514.
3. Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 215.
4. Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 24–26.
5. Ibid., p. 94.
6. Ibid., p. 18.
7. Walter Dean Burnham, "Shifting Patterns of Congressional Voting Participation," in *The Current Crisis in American Policies*, ed. Walter Dean Burnham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 166–203; see also Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy*, pp. 211–248.
8. Wolfinger and Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* pp. 104–114; see also Stephen D. Shaffer, "Policy Differences Between Voters and Non-Voters in American Elections," *Western Political Quarterly* 35 (1982):496–510.
9. Teixeira, *Disappearing Voter*, pp. 86–101; and Benjamin Highton and Raymond E. Wolfinger, "The Political Implications of Higher Turnout," *British Journal of Political Science* 31 (2001):179–223.
10. Angus Campbell, "Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change," in *Elections and the Political Order*, eds. Angus Campbell et al. (New York: John Wiley, 1966), pp. 40–62.

11. Except that midterm electorates are somewhat older. See Raymond E. Wolfinger, Steven J. Rosenstone, and Richard A. McIntosh, "Presidential and Congressional Voters Compared," *American Politics Quarterly* 9 (1981):245–255; see also Albert D. Cover, "Surge and Decline Revisited" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 1–4, 1983), pp. 15–17; and James E. Campbell, *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1993), pp. 44–62.
12. This does not mean that presidential elections do not affect congressional elections in other ways, of course; that issue is taken up in Chapter 6.
13. Gregory A. Caldeira, Samuel C. Patterson, and Gregory A. Markko, "The Mobilization of Voters in Congressional Elections," *Journal of Politics* 47 (1985):490–509; Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., "Influences on Voter Turnout for U.S. House Elections in Non-Presidential Years," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 10 (1985):339–352; and Robert A. Jackson, "A Reassessment of Voter Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly* 49 (1996):331–349. The anticipation of a close election itself increases turnout; see Stephen P. Nicholson and Ross A. Miller, "Prior Beliefs and Voter Turnout in the 1986 and 1988 Congressional Elections," *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (1997):199–213.
14. See Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley, 1960), Chapter 6.
15. Warren E. Miller and Santa A. Traugott, *American National Election Studies Data Sourcebook 1952–1986* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 81; see also Figure 5.2.
16. Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981).
17. Samuel L. Popkin, John W. Gorman, Charles Philips, and Jeffrey A. Smith, "Comment: What Have You Done for Me Lately? Toward an Investment Theory of Voting," *American Political Science Review* 70 (1976):779–805.
18. This figure includes independents who lean toward one party or the other as partisans; excluding leaners, the Democratic advantage falls from 41–23 to 35–31 from 1980 to 1994.
19. This change was the extension of a long-term trend that has seen the Republicans grow from less than 20 percent of the southern electorate in the 1950s to a majority after 1998; see Gary C. Jacobson, "Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection," in *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era*, eds. Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000), p. 16.
20. Republicans are substantially overrepresented among the respondents who were interviewed for the 2000 study and included as a panel in the 2002 study.
21. Alan I. Abramowitz, "The End of the Democratic Era? 1994 and the Future of Congressional Election Research," *Political Research Quarterly* 48 (1995):873–889; and Gary C. Jacobson, "Terror, Terrain, and Turnout: