

**Consequences of Commitment: Withdrawing and
Reneging on Cosponsorship Pledges in the U.S. House** William
Bernhard

bernhard@illinois.edu

Tracy Sulkin

tsulkin@illinois.edu

Department of

Political Science

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

240 Computing Applications Building

605 E. Springfield Avenue

Champaign, IL 61820

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Legislators seeking to make policy through their introduced legislation face an uphill climb. Of the five to six thousand bills introduced in the House every Congress, only a small

number progress far in the legislative process. Success requires the assistance of colleagues, so

bill sponsors devote considerable time and effort to soliciting the support of other MCs, building

coalitions to promote their legislation. Assembling these coalitions involves making deals, compromising on key policy provisions, or trading support across bills. These deals, spanning

both time and issue area, are potentially fragile because MCs face a variety of competing electoral and policy goals. How can a bill sponsor, intent on shepherding her bill through the

legislative process, be sure that a fellow legislator will follow through on his commitment to support the measure? The transaction costs of legislative coalition-building can result in potentially suboptimal outcomes where desirable legislation does not get passed or even introduced. Legislators, therefore, must make their legislative horse-trading commitments credible so that bill sponsors can be confident that their colleagues will actually follow through.

We contend that cosponsorship of legislation provides a solution to the dilemmas of coalition-building by acting as a commitment device. A decision to cosponsor a bill represents a

public pledge to support the sponsor's bill should it come up for a vote on the floor. Given the

public nature of cosponsorship, a failure to follow through on this commitment will be noticed

not only by the bill's sponsor, but also by other legislators, as well as by interested observers in

the district, including potential challengers, affected interest groups, and journalists eager to

point out inconsistent behavior on the part of elected officials. An MC's decision to withdraw a

1 The theoretical literature on logrolling focuses primarily on trading of support on roll call votes (see, for example, Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Carrubba and Volden 2000; Ferejohn

1986; Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 1987).

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cosponsorship pledge or to vote no on final passage on a bill he or she had cosponsored could,

therefore, result in a loss of credibility with colleagues and with constituents. In turn, a reputation

for not honoring commitments could jeopardize both the ability to pass his or her own legislation

in the future and the possibility of reelection. This threat of punishment for backing out on a cosponsorship thus makes cosponsorship pledges more credible, allowing MCs to trade votes

more easily. Cosponsorship, therefore, is a vital institutional component of the broader system of

logrolling in Congress, facilitating vote trading across issues and over time.

We investigate the observable implications of cosponsorship as a commitment mechanism. Our analyses focus on the behavior of legislators on the 843,557 cosponsorships

made on the 44,799 bills introduced by members of the House of Representatives in the 101-

108th Congresses (1989-2004). Legislators have two ways to back out of their cosponsorship

pledges: withdrawing and reneging. Withdrawing occurs when an MC formally removes him- or

herself as the cosponsor for a bill. We define reneging as when an MC remains a cosponsor, but

votes against the bill at final passage. We expect, first, that if cosponsorship helps foster legislative deals, legislators will only rarely back out on their cosponsorship pledges. And when

they do, these choices should be systematic—a function of characteristics of the cosponsor, the

sponsor, and the relationship between them, as well as the context surrounding the bill. Second,

when MCs violate their cosponsorship agreements, we should see evidence of

punishment, both

in their ability to build coalitions in favor of their own introduced measures and in their electoral

prospects. Finally, we expect MCs with poor reputations for trustworthiness to face

repercussions in the chamber and on Election Day. We construct a measure of reputation based

on cosponsoring behavior and demonstrate its effect on coalition-building, legislative success,

and electoral performance. These dynamics have potentially far-reaching consequences for our

understanding of legislators' coalition-building strategies, the development and maintenance of

legislative reputations, and the nature of the electoral connection.

Cosponsorship and Commitment

Cosponsorship has been a regular component of legislative activity in the House since the late 1960s, when rules prohibiting it were relaxed and then formally lifted. Legislators today

average about 200 cosponsorships per Congress across a variety of issues. However, the importance of these activities remains a source of debate among congressional scholars. Early

arguments built on the (entirely correct) observations that cosponsorship is a relatively undemanding task for MCs and that most cosponsors are attached to legislation that never makes

it to a vote, and claimed, therefore, that cosponsorship represents a largely symbolic activity (see,

for example, Mayhew 1974).

In recent years, scholars have revised this view. Indeed, clear evidence indicates that cosponsorship matters to sponsors and to cosponsors in ways that affect the policymaking process. Sponsors of bills often tout the number of cosponsorships their measures attract, offering this as an indication that the bill has broad appeal and should be supported by other

members. Empirical support for such bandwagon effects exists, although it is conditional--all

other things equal, large numbers of cosponsors for a measure appear to increase the probability

of committee consideration, but not ultimate success on the floor (Browne 1985; Krutz 2005;

Wilson and Young 1997). More subtly, the ideological distribution of a bill's cosponsors and the

timing of their cosponsorship decisions can serve as a signal about its policy placement,

² The prohibition on cosponsorship ended in 1967, and, in 1978, limits on the number of cosponsors per bill were removed.

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providing other legislators with information about the content of the measure (Kessler and Krehbiel 1996).

Even if a particular bill fails to progress very far in the legislative process, cosponsorship can still have important policy consequences. Kingdon (1984) argues that new policies often go

through a prolonged “softening up” period, so what may appear to be wasted effort on an issue at

one point in time may actually lead to successful policy adoption down the road. And, even in

the short term, unsuccessful bills can be influential. As Koger notes, they can be “incorporated

into subsequent legislative proposals...stop another bill or class of bills...[or] send a signal of

congressional interest to the executive branch on some regulatory issue” (230). This is

particularly true for those with broad cosponsorship coalitions and/or support from prominent

legislators.

Cosponsorship therefore has a potential policy payoff, even if the policy impact of a measure is not always, or even often, direct. And, for the cosponsors themselves, engaging in this

activity offers the additional opportunity of an electoral payoff. Cosponsoring bills enables them

to pursue their policy interests and those of their constituents in a visible and concrete manner

(Campbell 1982; Koger 2003), and a record of cosponsorship on the “right” issues can help them

at the polls (Sulkin 2005, 2009). In fact, the proactive nature of cosponsorship provides more

opportunity for credit-claiming than many other legislative activities. As one of the MCs

interviewed by Koger explained:

“Cosponsorship means you recognized early on that the bill is good public policy and that

it has merit and should be acted on. If a member cosponsors, that implies he or she contributed to its success. If you just vote yes, you had no role in bringing the bill to the

floor. There’s more credit in cosponsoring a bill and then voting for it” (2003, 32).

Legislators thus have electoral incentives to cosponsor, as it offers a relatively easy way to promote their reelection. However, that the actual act of signing on to a bill as a cosponsor is a

simple task does *not* mean that legislators fail to devote thought and care to the decision. MCs

are clearly selective in their choices, with the typical legislator cosponsoring less than five percent of all introduced measures. Part of the explanation, of course, is time and information

constraints. It is also the case that the flip side of the “right” cosponsorships paying off is that the

“wrong” cosponsorships can hurt a legislator, both with his or her constituents and with fellow

legislators and coalition partners. As Krehbiel (1995) argues, the claim that cosponsorship is

costless makes sense “[only] if costless refers...to the effort required to take action” (909).

The trajectory of the literature on cosponsorship, therefore, recognizes that, far from being a merely symbolic activity, it is an important part of the legislative process. We go further

still, arguing that cosponsorship represents an institutional arrangement to facilitate deal-making

and coalition-building between legislators. What makes cosponsorship a credible commitment

device? Commitment requires both information on whether an MC has followed through on his

pledge and some sort of punishment mechanism for a failure to do so. The public nature of cosponsorship facilitates both of these, enabling MCs to monitor the behavior of their colleagues

and creating the possibility of meaningful consequences for failing to follow through on a promise to support legislation.

Without the institution of cosponsorship, a bill sponsor could still attempt to build a

coalition in favor of her bill, making deals with other MCs on an individual and private basis.

However, if an MC backs out on such a deal, he risks incurring the wrath of only the bill sponsor, since she is the only one who knows about the original pledge of support. Losing the

future support of a single MC might not represent a significant enough punishment to deter

renege. The sponsor could attempt to make backing out on the pledge public knowledge, but

other legislators are likely to view this as an uninformative conflict between the sponsor and the

cheating MC about “who promised what to whom.” Cosponsorship makes pledges of support

formal and visible, such that other MCs can easily observe the behavior of the cosponsoring MC.

Consequently, a cosponsor who fails to follow through may come to be viewed as an

untrustworthy coalition partner and hence should face potential punishment from other

legislators and from party leaders. Evidence of “waffling” is also likely to hurt an MC with his

constituents. Legislators thus have incentives to follow through on their commitments to protect

their reputations.

Accordingly, once legislators have made the decision to cosponsor a measure, they

should not back out lightly. This is not to say that there are not situations in which an MC might

want to withdraw or renege on a particular bill. One possibility is that during the course of the

legislative process (committee markups, amendments, and the like), the bill has changed enough

that the cosponsor is no longer in support, or that a competing bill now aligns more closely with

his or her preferences on that policy. Another is that the MC’s own preferences about the bill

remain constant, but that other considerations intervene. For instance, a legislator could learn that

his constituents are strongly against the measure, or there could be a credible threat of an

experienced, high-quality challenger on the horizon who could use the MC’s support for the bill

against him. Finally, a decision not to follow through on a cosponsorship pledge could be personal. Cosponsorships are inherently dyadic—the choice to cosponsor means support not just

for a bill, but for the sponsor of that bill. If that sponsor does something to displease a cosponsor

(e.g., by refusing to reciprocate and cosponsor one of his or her bills, by withdrawing or renegeing

on a previous pledge, by supporting a bill he or she opposes, etc.), the MC might want to withdraw his or her cosponsorship support to send a message.

Given the potential punishments for withdrawing or renegeing, though, the set of instances in which an MC *wants* to back out should be larger than the number of cases in which he or she

actually does. We expect withdrawing or renegeing to occur only when the legislator believes that

the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. As discussed in more detail below, such a decision is

most likely when the MC cares more about the outcome of the vote (and when his/her behavior

is more likely to be pivotal to that outcome), when the sponsor is less powerful, when the

relationship between the sponsor and cosponsor is weaker, and when the cosponsor is more

secure electorally and in the chamber. And, even then, we expect to observe legislative and

electoral consequences for the choice to back out on a pledge.

Patterns of Cosponsorship

Our analyses focus on cosponsorship activity on the 44,799 public bills and joint resolutions introduced in the 101st through 108th Congresses (1989-2004). This time period

extends across three presidencies and includes a change in partisan control of the House (the

switch to the Republicans in the 104 Congress) and so offers a sample of introduced measures

and cosponsorship decisions across a variety of contexts. We compiled data on cosponsorship

decisions and characteristics of bills from Fowler's cosponsorship network project (see 2006a,

2006b), Adler and Wilkerson's Congressional Bills Project, and the Library of Congress's

THOMAS site.

3 We limit our focus to these types of measures (i.e., excluding simple and concurrent resolutions) as they are the only categories of legislation that, if passed, have the force of law.

We use “bills” to refer to both bills and joint resolutions.

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Table 1 provides some descriptive data on cosponsorship patterns. Across the sample, 104th MCs introduced an average of 5600 measures per Congress (from a low of 4398 in the

104th Congress to a high of 6606 in the 102nd Congress). Each MC, therefore, has about 5600

opportunities to cosponsor in a term. Of all the potential cosponsorship decisions they face,

legislators choose to sign on only between three and five per cent of the time. Each bill, in turn,

averages around nineteen cosponsors, although this masks a wide range of variation across

measures, with some receiving hundreds of cosponsors and about one-third receiving no cosponsors at all.

The timing of the decisions made by these bills' cosponsors also varies. Members of the House may choose to sign on to a bill up until the time it is reported from committee, but a basic

distinction can be drawn between original cosponsors, who make the decision to cosponsor prior

to or coincident with the introduction of a bill, and post-introduction cosponsors, who sign on

after introduction. An original cosponsor is more likely to have learned about the measure from

the sponsor him- or herself (most likely through a Dear Colleague letter). Since the MC has

agreed to cosponsor before observing colleagues' reaction to the bill, we contend that original

cosponsorship indicates a stronger signal of support on the part of the cosponsor and so should

be less common. The results confirm this; as shown in the table, original cosponsorships are

more infrequent than post-introduction, comprising only between about one-fourth and

one-third

of cosponsorship decisions.

Insert Table 1 about here

In previous work, we explored the factors explaining cosponsorship and the choice to be an original vs. post-introduction cosponsor (Bernhard and Sulkin nd). Here, we focus on the

decision to back out on a cosponsorship pledge. As discussed above, this can happen in one of

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two ways: an MC can formally withdraw from a bill he or she had cosponsored, or he or she can

choose to remain a cosponsor but renege by voting no when that bill reaches a final passage vote.

Because any cosponsorship decision can be withdrawn, our analyses of that phenomenon focus

on the full set of 843,557 cosponsorships made in the 101st Congresses. 10th Reneging,

however, is only possible if a bill gets to a vote on the floor. Accordingly, our analyses there

target the 56,945 cosponsorship pledges made on bills that reached that stage.

The Prevalence of Withdrawing and Reneging

The first task is to identify when withdrawing and reneging occur. To do so, we obtained data on withdrawal from the Library of Congress's THOMAS site (which includes the date of

MCs' cosponsorship decisions and the date of any withdrawal of those decisions). We

constructed our measures of reneging using Poole and Rosenthal's roll call voting data and the

Congressional Bills Project's matches between roll call number and bill/resolution number. To

identify the final passage vote for each bill that progressed to that point (about 4% of all

introduced bills), we coded the description of each vote and then matched the yea-nay totals with

those reported on THOMAS. Reneging is defined as a "no" vote on a bill for which an MC

was a cosponsor, and where the sponsor voted yes.

Figure 1 presents some descriptive statistics on withdrawing and reneging. Across the congresses that we examine, there are a total of 1354 instances of withdrawing and 840 instances

of reneging. Because the denominator is smaller for the latter, reneging is actually more common

than withdrawing. Nonetheless, when viewed as a percentage of the total number of

4 There are several instances in which a sponsor of a bill actually votes no on final passage. This is most likely due to large changes in the bill occurring during the committee mark-up and amendment stages. We do not include these in our analyses of renegeing.

cosponsorships made, both occur infrequently. The first set of columns in each panel of the

figure shows that only a very small number of cosponsorship pledges are withdrawn (about .1-

.3%) or reneged upon when MCs cast their votes on final passage (about 1.5% of the time).

Insert Figure 1 about here

When we shift perspective a bit and calculate rates of withdrawing and reneging at the level of bills or MCs, the levels are higher. The second set of columns shows that between about

2-5% of all measures that receive cosponsors have at least one later withdraw his or her support,

and about one-fifth of bills that reach a final passage vote have at least one cosponsor renege to

5vote no. The third set of columns shows that in every Congress, between about one-fifth and

one-third of MCs withdraw at least one of their cosponsorships and about one-tenth to one-third

renege. And, if we aggregate across the entire time period (i.e., asking whether an MC withdraws

or reneges at least once across all of the Congresses in which he or she appeared in the sample),

we find that 48% of MCs reneged at least once and nearly 60% withdrew from at least one of

their cosponsorships.

Thus, withdrawing and reneging, though rare, are not unheard of. In fact, they appear to be a regular part of the legislative process. The patterns across bills suggest that these choices to

back out on cosponsorship commitments are driven by individual calculations--mass withdrawal

or reneging does not occur very often. Figure 2 demonstrates that of the group of

measures for

which there was a withdrawal of a cosponsor, 77% had only one cosponsor withdraw, and fewer

than 5% had more than four cosponsors withdraw. Similar results hold for renegeing—about half

of bills that were the subject of renegeing had only one reneger, and only one-fifth had more than

⁵ These calculations are limited to bills that had at least one cosponsor, since withdrawing and renegeing are not possible for bills that are not cosponsored.

four renegers. And, as with all of the measures of withdrawing and renegeing calculated here,

these rates are fairly steady across congresses.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Along the same lines, Figure 2 shows that instances of withdrawing and renegeing are spread across legislators. It does not appear to be the case that a few MCs are serial withdrawers

or renegers, responsible for the bulk of the decisions to back out on pledges.⁶ Of the 451st legislators in the sample who renege (out of a total of 937 unique members in the 101

Congress), 54% do so only once, and just 3% renege more than four times. Similarly, of the 557

who withdraw, 43% do so only once and only 6% do so more than four times. Therefore, the

patterns we explore in the analyses that follow are general and are not driven by just a few MCs

or a few bills.

Who Reneges?

What explains the decision to renege? The patterns above support our contention that the choice is complicated, a function of contextual factors and of characteristics of the MCs involved in a particular cosponsorship decision. More specifically, we expect to observe legislators

nd
Congress,

⁶ One interesting exception is Ronald Machtley (R-RI), who, in the 102

withdrew as a cosponsor on 68 bills, all introduced by Harris Fawell, his Republican copartisan

from Illinois. These bills nearly all dealt with rescissions to the budget on particular projects and

were introduced by Fawell “by request” (i.e., at the request of another person or entity). Thus,

Machtley's behavior appears to be more of a response to the broader political context than to an

action of Fawell's.

⁷ This logic should apply equally to both withdrawing and renegeing, though for our preliminary results, presented below, we focus solely on renegeing.

backing out on a cosponsorship pledge only when the benefits to them of doing so offset the

potential costs. This should be most likely when an MC cares enough about policy that he or she

is willing to prioritize the outcome of the vote over the risk of appearing to be untrustworthy or

indecisive, when a legislator is secure enough electorally and in the chamber to withstand any

negative consequences that may arise from the decision to back out on his or her support of a

measure, and/or when the relationship between the sponsor and cosponsor is weaker, so that the

MC feels less obligation to follow through on the pledge made to the sponsor.

Security of Cosponsor

Predictions about the effects of security are straightforward. We expect that the more secure the legislator, the more willing he or she will be to risk the intra-chamber and external

consequences that can come with reneging. Thus, seniority (number of years in office) and

electoral safety (the MC's proportion of the two party vote share in the previous election) should

both be positively associated with reneging. Along the same lines, if a lack of concern about

colleagues' and constituents' reactions frees legislators to renege, then those MCs who have

~~made the decision to retire~~ after their current terms (measured in our specifications as a dummy

variable coded 1 if the legislator retires and 0 otherwise) will also have a higher probability of

backing out on a pledge.

8 Of course, legislators make the final decision to retire at different points in the term, or even before it, and this is nearly impossible to pinpoint. However, since our “retire” indicator

likely includes some MCs who made the choice to retire late in the term, it should make it *more*

difficult for us to uncover a relationship between retirement and reneging.

Relationship between Sponsor and Cosponsor

Our theory of the dynamics underlying renegeing also suggests that features of the sponsor and the relationship between the sponsor and a cosponsor affect the renegeing decision. In general, cosponsors will be less willing to back out on pledges they have made to powerful colleagues, so, all else equal, we expect to observe a lower probability of renegeing if the sponsor

is very senior (as measured in years in office) or a leader (Speaker, majority/minority leader, or

whip). MCs should also be less likely to renege on a pledge if they have close connections to the

sponsor, so at the dyadic level, we expect to see lower rates of renegeing when the sponsor and

cosponsor share a party affiliation or come from the same state.

For similar reasons, we anticipate that members of the majority party will be less likely than those in the minority to renege, since bills that reach a final passage vote are most often

those that are supported by powerful members of the majority (or, at least, have been tacitly

approved of by the appropriate committee chairs). Voting no on these measures, especially after

having previously signed on in support of them, is therefore likely to be noticed and to elicit

disapproval from party leaders. In contrast, in most cases a renegeing minority MC will be

backing out on a pledge on a bill sponsored by a majority member, and so has less to lose from

renegeing.

The nature of the particular cosponsorship agreement between the sponsor and cosponsor should also be important. Specifically, was the MC an original or post-introduction cosponsor?

We have argued that the choice to be an original cosponsor indicates a stronger link to the

sponsor. Our previous work on cosponsorship provides empirical support for this claim. Our

◦ In the analyses that follow, we also directly test the effects of same-party/out-party reneging.

analyses showed that MCs' policy considerations drive both the decision to be an original and a

post-introduction cosponsor, but that a history of interaction between a sponsor and potential

cosponsor (i.e., if the sponsor been a cosponsor of a bill of the MC's in the past) is a much stronger predictor of the former than the latter (Bernhard and Sulkin nd). It follows, then, that

original cosponsors should be less likely to renege on a cosponsorship pledge than post-introduction cosponsors.

Policy Considerations

Finally, we predict that policy considerations should be central to the renegeing decision.

In short, if a legislator does not care very much if a bill passes or fails, it should not be worth

risking the consequences that can come with renegeing. Accordingly, renegeing is likely to be more common on more policy-relevant measures. One very rough proxy for this is whether a

measure is a bill or joint resolution. Both categories of legislation have the force of law if passed,

but taken as group, resolutions often deal with matters of less pressing importance. Therefore, we

include a dummy variable for "bill" in our models and anticipate that there will be more renegeing

on bills than on joint resolutions. We also control for the issue content of measures (i.e., whether

they are about agriculture, defense, health, taxes, etc.). We do not have theoretical expectations

about which issues should be the subject of the most renegeing, but expect that differences could

emerge, so in the analyses discussed below, we control for this with a series of nineteen dummy

10 variables for the issue content of a bill or joint resolution.

¹⁰ The scheme is exhaustive and mutually exclusive, such that each bill receives one and only one issue code (see Sulkin 2009). The categories include agriculture, budget, campaign

finance, children's issues, civil rights, consumer issues, corporate regulation, crime, defense &

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When making decisions about whether to renege, policy-motivated MCs will also consider the likelihood that their choice will make the difference between the measure passing or failing. If the outcome of a vote on a bill is a foregone conclusion, there is little incentive to back out, as it opens one up to the punishments that can come from renegeing without offering any policy benefit. We therefore expect to see a positive relationship between the closeness of a vote (measured as the absolute value of the yeas minus the nays) and the likelihood of renegeing.

We also anticipate that certain cosponsors may care more about policy than others and so be more willing to renege. In particular, if ideological extremity is correlated with the intensity of preferences, then the probability of renegeing should be higher among relatively extreme legislators (as measured by the absolute distance between their common-space NOMINATE scores and the chamber median) since they are more concerned about the specifics of the measures they support and more willing to place policy above other considerations.

Our independent variables include the features of bills and MCs described above, plus a number of controls. Because rates of renegeing could vary across congresses and within a term, we take time into account in two ways: by controlling for Congress (with a series of dummy variables) and by including a measure that taps the number of days that elapsed between the start of a term and the date of the vote on a bill. This “elapsed” variable runs from 0 (the vote took place on the first day) to 693 (the vote took place near the end of the second year of the Congress). We also control for the number of each MC’s cosponsored bills that made it to the

final passage stage in a particular Congress since this affects the number of opportunities to

renege. And, we include controls for the MC's party, for whether the legislator served a partial or

foreign policy, education, environment, government operations, health, jobs & infrastructure, Medicare, moral issues, Social Security, taxes, and welfare.

full term during a given Congress, and for the size of an MC's state delegation (because those

from larger states will have more opportunities to cosponsor with "same state" legislators).

Results

The results presented in Table 2 are from a model designed to test these hypotheses about the effects of cosponsor security, sponsor-cosponsor relations, and policy considerations on the

probability of reneging. Our unit of analysis is an MC's vote at final passage on each of his or

her cosponsored bills and joint resolutions that reached this stage. The dependent variable is

coded 1 if the legislator reneged (i.e., voted no) and 0 otherwise. We estimate the model using

probit and, because legislators can appear in the sample in multiple Congresses, cluster the

standard errors on the cosponsor.

Insert Table 2 about here

As shown, the results support our hypotheses about the factors driving reneging. We find that electoral safety is positively related to reneging—more secure legislators are more likely to

back out on their pledges, as are those who do not plan to run for reelection and will instead

retire. This suggests that MCs are cognizant of the potential ramifications of reneging and avoid

engaging in it if they are concerned about their electoral prospects.

Along the same lines, the choice to renege on a measure is linked to characteristics of the sponsor of that measure and a cosponsor's relationship with him or her. Reneging is less common when the sponsor-cosponsor dyad shares a party affiliation, and when the MC was an

original cosponsor. And, as expected, majority party cosponsors are less likely to renege than

minority members, even after controlling for party affiliation.

Finally, policy considerations appear to operate in the manner predicted. Reneging is more frequent for bills than for joint resolutions, occurs more often for some issues than for

¹¹others, and increases in probability the closer the vote. Relatively ideologically extreme

legislators are also more likely than their moderate colleagues to back out on a pledge.

Importantly, these effects are more than just statistical regularities; they are also substantively meaningful. To estimate the likelihood of renegeing in different scenarios, we used

CLARIFY (see Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) to calculate the probability of a “no” vote on

a bill cosponsored by an MC when characteristics of that MC, his or her relationship with the

¹²bill’s sponsor, and nature of the measure are varied. Recall that at the level of the

cosponsorship decision, renegeing is a rare event (comprising only about 1-2% of all decisions).

For instance, if we take a relatively safe and relatively ideologically extreme legislator from the minority party and calculate the likelihood that she would renege on a joint resolution

for which she was a post-introduction cosponsor and for which she shares no same-party or

same-state affiliation with the sponsor, the probability of renegeing is about 5.5%. In contrast, the

probability of a relatively vulnerable and moderate majority MC voting no on a bill for which he

was an original cosponsor and the sponsor comes from the same state and same party is virtually

¹¹ All else equal, MCs are significantly more likely to renege on education and health

measures and significantly less likely to renege on bills and resolutions dealing with children's

issues, moral issues, and civil rights.

¹² The results in Table 2 for these variables are very similar when the model is estimated without the dummies for Congress or issue category. Thus, for ease of interpretation and estimation, we omit these dummies from the calculations in this illustration.

13zero (.05%). Thus, common differences in the context of the voting decision can have a big

impact on the likelihood that a legislator will choose to renege.

The Consequences of Reneging

Our theory is predicated on the idea that cosponsorship represents a pledge of commitment and that backing out on this commitment has negative consequences. The results in

Table 2 indicate that MCs appear to be aware of the potential for such consequences and act only

when they feel confident they can withstand them, or when they value the policy effects of a

“no” vote on a bill enough that they are willing to risk the ramifications of reneging.

However, as is the case with other legislative activities that may yield a payoff or cost, it

is entirely possible that legislators are overly cautious, behaving *as if* there were a consequence

for failing to follow through on a pledge, even if in reality such punishments were rare. This

anticipatory response could produce the patterns of behavior we see in Table 2 in the absence of

an actual effect of reneging. As a next step, then, it is important to assess more directly the

consequences of reneging. We do so by examining the relationship between reneging and a

variety of indicators of legislative and electoral success, including MCs’ ability to assemble

cosponsorship coalitions for their own introduced legislation, the effects of their reputations for

trustworthiness on the likelihood that their measures pass, and the impact of reneging on their

vote shares in the next election.

13 For these calculations, we hold sponsor and cosponsor seniority, party, closeness of

the

vote, time elapsed, number of cosponsored bills, and delegation size at their means. We further

assume that the sponsor is not a leader and that the MC does not plan to retire and is not a partial

term. The differences in the probability of renegeing are even larger if we also allow these to

vary across their ranges.

Reneging and Cosponsorship Coalition Size

We start by investigating whether the choice to renege affects legislators' subsequent success at coalition-building. If, as we hypothesize, reneging is interpreted by other MCs as signaling a lack of trustworthiness, there should be a reputational effect, making the colleagues of reneging MCs more reluctant to support them, especially their efforts to promote their own legislation. More precisely, when we compare the size of the cosponsorship coalitions for an MC's introduced bills before and after a reneging incident, we expect to see fewer cosponsors after. We also predict that the magnitude of the punishment will vary depending on the type of MC and the nature of his or her reneging decision. For instance, the consequences should be harsher for members of the majority than members of the minority since their decisions to renege typically reflect backing out on a copartisan and are thus more likely to be looked upon with disapproval by their party leaders. Along the same lines, reneging on a copartisan should have more effect on future ability to construct coalitions than reneging on a bill sponsored by a member of the opposite party, regardless of whether one is in the majority or minority. And, we may also observe an effect of the type of cosponsorship on which one reneged--since an original cosponsorship typically signals a stronger link to a sponsor's bill, reneging on one could yield more of an effect than reneging on a post-introduction cosponsorship.

To test these hypotheses, we first conduct regression analyses, presented in Table 3,

where the units of analysis are MCs' bill introductions and the dependent variable is the number

of cosponsorships sponsors receive for these bills. (Standard errors are clustered on the MC.)

Because we are interested in assessing the effects of renegeing, we limit the sample to those

members who engaged in this behavior. This also provides a stricter test, since we are asking

whether the size of their coalitions *changes* after reneging (i.e., rather than just comparing the

average number of cosponsors for the bills of renegers and non-renegers).

Accordingly, our primary interest is in the act of reneging. We identified the date of an MC's reneging incident and built a "spell" around this of the five introductions preceding and

14following it. The coefficient on reneging thus reflects the difference in the number of

cosponsors for the measures introduced in the spell before and after the date of reneging. More

specifically, if it is negative, it means that the size of MCs' cosponsorship coalitions decrease

post-reneging.

These analyses are designed to compare within individuals, which reduces the need for controls. Nevertheless, the effects of reneging may be subtle and swamped by differences in

cosponsorship coalition size linked to characteristics of bills and MCs, so we do take into

account the type of measure (bill or joint resolution), whether the bill was referred to multiple

committees (since multiply-referred measures tend to receive more cosponsors), and its date of

introduction. At the level of sponsors, we include party, majority-minority and leadership status,

and seniority and ideological extremity. Finally, we include dummies for Congress and bill issue

category.

Results

Table 3 presents these results (minus the coefficients for the Congress, introduction date, and the issue category dummies, which we omit in the interest of space). The critical finding here

¹⁴ These spells often cross Congresses (for those for whom the volume of introductions in a Congress does not reach five preceding and/or following the reneging incident), but if we limit

them to a single Congress, the substantive conclusions are the same. Similarly, using slightly

larger or smaller spells does not substantially change the results.

is that backing out on a cosponsorship pledge does indeed have a negative effect on the size of

the coalitions for the reneging MC's subsequent bill introductions. A failure to follow through on

a cosponsorship commitment is associated with a decrease of three to four cosponsors on the

bills an MC introduces after the reneging incident. Because the average number of cosponsors

per bill is only about nineteen, this reflects a substantial difference. These results provide

evidence of the role of cosponsorships in facilitating logrolling deals. Legislators appear to take

cosponsorship pledges seriously, and those who fail to follow through on their commitments face

more difficulty in garnering support for their own initiatives.

Insert Table 3 about here

It is impressive that evidence of this effect shows up in aggregate analyses, especially

since we expect harsher consequences for some reneging MCs than others. Figure 3 summarizes

the results of a series of analyses designed to test our hypotheses about this variation. To assess

these differences, we replicated the analysis in Table 3, but with different models for each reneging situation. For the effects of majority status, we ran separate analyses for majority and

minority members. To determine whether there are differences in the extent of punishment for

reneging on a copartisan vs. a member of the other party, we again replicated Table 3, but included two indicators of reneging—"same party" reneging and "cross party" reneging. We

then used the same approach for comparing original vs. post-introduction cosponsorship—separate indicators of reneging for each. To illustrate these effects, we present just the

coefficients on the measures of renegeing (represented by the dots), along with the 95% confidence interval for each (represented by the lines). Low coefficients here represent more of

an effect, since they reflect the difference between the number of cosponsors for an MC's bills

pre- and post-renegeing.

Insert Figure 3 about here

As shown, all of the coefficients are negative, indicating that reneging generally decreases MCs' success at assembling cosponsorship coalitions. However, as expected, the consequences are more pronounced for members of the majority party and when an MC reneges against a copartisan. There appear to be no real differences for original vs. post-introduction cosponsorships, though it seems reasonable to assume that any effects for this would be more likely at the dyadic than aggregate level (i.e., a sponsor may be more displeased when an original cosponsor backs out than when a post-introduction cosponsor does, but his or her colleagues as a whole may not know about the nature of the particular cosponsorship choice or make a distinction between them).

The Reputational Effects of Reneging

These findings suggest that reneging behavior may affect an MC's reputation for deal-making. A strong reputation for following through on cosponsorship commitments may allow MCs to make deals with other legislators, enhancing the potential success of their sponsored bills. A good reputation should also pay off in the electoral arena, helping MCs to maintain or improve their vote shares. MCs who renege risk developing a reputation for being untrustworthy. A poor reputation, in turn, may hurt the ability of an MC to build a legislative coalition or to win reelection.

We measure reputation as the probability that an MC votes for a bill which he

cosponsored when it comes up for a roll call on the floor. We assume that other legislators have

¹⁵ The differences in punishment for same-party vs. cross-party and original vs. post-introduction reneging are larger for majority MCs than minority MCs. Combining them, as we

do in Figure 3, thus mutes the effects somewhat.

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The measure of reputation, therefore, is a probability that an MC will vote yea on a bill he cosponsored that comes up for a floor vote. Its value ranges from 0.3 to 0.99, with a mean of

0.92 and a standard deviation of .06.

Figure 4 illustrates the evolution of posterior beliefs concerning the probability of following through on a cosponsorship commitment should the bill get to a floor vote. The first

panel compares two MCs, Representative Karen Thurman and Representative Zoe Lofgren.

These legislators had a similar number of opportunities to renege (Thurman had 82 of her cosponsored bills reach a final passage vote and Lofgren had 83 of hers do so) and each reneged

three times. However, the timing of their reneging decisions varied. Thurman had one reneging

incident fairly early during the time period we study and two more very late. In contrast, Lofgren's three incidents are in closer proximity to one another. Note how cheating late, after

one has built up a reputation, results in a smaller loss of reputation than if one cheats early.

The second panel compares four representatives, each of whom had 68 potential opportunities to renege. Representative Virgil Goode never reneged, Representative Wes Watkins reneged once, Representative Jerry Moran reneged twice, and Representative Robert

Wexler reneged three times. The graph reveals how these choices affect their reputation scores.

As shown, repeated reneging lowers reputation (though the size of the effect is greatest for the

first reneging incident), but as we saw above, the timing of reneging choices matters as well.

Insert Figure 4 about here

We argue that perceptions of the relative trustworthiness of a bill sponsor shape the willingness of MCs to support that sponsor's bill. That is, before making a deal with a bill sponsor, other MCs evaluate his or her reputation. All else equal, we expect MCs to be more

willing to support the legislation of those sponsors that they view as trustworthy (i.e., who have

followed through on their own cosponsorship commitments). Thus, for example, all else equal,

legislators like Wexler should have more difficulty assembling cosponsorship coalitions for their

measures than legislators like Goode who do not renege.

Results

To test this hypothesis, we first examine the relationship between the reputation of the sponsor and the size of the cosponsorship coalition for his or her bills. In these analyses, the

number of cosponsors per bill is the dependent variable and the primary independent variable of

interest is the sponsor's reputation score at the time that the bill was introduced. The controls

include the same features of MCs and bills included in the analyses of cosponsorship coalition

size in Table 3.¹⁷ Standard errors are clustered on the sponsor.

The results, presented in Table 4, reveal that the reputation score, while positive, is not a significant predictor of overall cosponsorship coalition size. However, if we focus just on bills

introduced by majority members (which are more likely to become law and hence more likely to

~~be taken seriously in the chamber~~), the relationship is positive and statistically significant. Bills

sponsored by members with "good" reputations (i.e., who have not themselves reneged often in

the past) receive more cosponsors than those introduced by MCs with bad reputations.

Substantively, the difference between a sponsor with a reputation score of zero and one of one is

¹⁷ We exclude the 101st Congress from this analysis.

Because we use an uninformed prior

to calculate the reputation measure, an MC's initial votes are likely to produce significant updating. Nevertheless, MCs who served prior to the 101, when our data collection starts,

certainly had an established legislative reputation. Therefore, to prevent the results from being

distorted by the arbitrary cut-point of our sample, we used the data from the 101st to calculate a

reputational measure for all MCs in the 102nd Congress who also served prior to the 101st.

about 18-19 cosponsors. Although the reputation scores can theoretically run from almost zero to

almost one, the vast majority of observations fall in the .80-.99 range. Within this range, then, we

expect a difference of about 4-5 cosponsors, which is still impressive given that the average

number of cosponsors per bill is less than twenty. Once again, we see that renegeing can hurt

sponsors' abilities to promote their legislation.

Insert Table 4 about here

An even more difficult test of the importance of an MC's reputation is its effect on the probability that his or her measures pass in the chamber. Recall that, relative to the total number

of bills introduced in the chamber, only a handful of measures pass. To determine whether a

relationship exists between reputation and bill success, we conduct probit analyses where the

dependent variable is whether a bill passed in the House and the independent variables include

sponsor reputation and the controls described above. (Standard errors are again clustered on the

sponsor). Because bills can pass without receiving a formal final passage roll call vote, we also

include a dummy for whether or not that occurred for a particular bill. The results show that there

is indeed an effect of reputation; bills introduced by MCs with good reputations are significantly

more likely to succeed in the chamber. For example, if we set all of the controls at their means

and sponsor reputation at .8, we find that a measure has about a 6% chance of passing. When the

¹⁸ sponsor reputation is set at .99, that probability jumps to almost 10%.

The Electoral Effects of Reneging

The decision to back out on a pledge clearly has legislative consequences for the reneging MC. Does it also have electoral consequences? At first glance, a legislator's choice to renege on

¹⁸ If we include a control for the number of cosponsors a bill receives, the coefficient on reputation drops very slightly.

a particular cosponsorship pledge seems fairly remote from constituents' decisions about whether or not to support him or her in the next election. After all, most constituents are barely able to recall the name of their representatives, much less track the specifics of what they do in office.

However, when we take into account the behavior of strategic challengers and the manner in which legislators are covered by the news media, an effect seems more likely. Challengers are

always on the lookout for weaknesses they can exploit, and a record of flip-flopping or waffling

should provide them with ready ammunition. Reneging is therefore likely to attract their

attention. Similarly, local news coverage of MCs, while often sparse, tends to focus on performance-related matters like missed votes (Arnold 2004). The criticism is particularly harsh

when a member misses a vote on a measure in which he or she was involved. It seems likely that

reneging would elicit similar criticism, while also inviting critiques about inconsistency. In short,

reneging has the potential to affect the image that representatives have among elites in the district, and a bad image should translate into electoral consequences.

If this is the case, we expect that reneging in one term will affect vote shares in the next election. Given the centrality of the electoral connection in legislative studies, hypotheses about

the effects of in-office behavior on electoral prospects are common. However, actually finding

strong evidence of such effects has been rare, particularly after controlling for all of the other

factors that can influence vote shares. Accordingly, our expectation is that any relationship we do

uncover should be relatively small in magnitude.

Our approach to testing for electoral effects is to conduct regression analyses where an MC's performance in an election (measured as his or her percentage of the two party vote share)

is the dependent variable. Our independent variables include renegeing in the previous term and

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the appropriate controls. We incorporate two separate indicators of renegeing. The first is whether, by January of the election year (i.e., one year into an MC's term) he or she had renegeed

at least once. The second is his or her reputation score in that month. We choose January since

that typically marks the point in time where potential challengers are making the choice about

whether or not to run and when the next election is beginning to be discussed in the news and

considered more seriously by interested observers in the district.

Our controls include each MC's vote share in the *previous* election, whether he or she was unopposed in that election, whether he or she is unopposed in the current election, his or her

seniority and ideological extremity, and majority party status. To contextualize renegeing

behavior, we also include other indicators of legislative activity, such as the number of bills the

MC sponsored and his or her hit rate (the proportion of these bills that passed). Finally, we

incorporate measures of the political climate, including the president's approval in January of the

election year, the swing toward or away from the MC's party (measured as the average

percentage of the Democratic vote in the previous congressional election subtracted from the

average percentage of the vote in the current election), whether it is a midterm election, and

whether the MC's challenger is a "quality" one (measured by a dummy indicating whether he or

she has prior elected office experience). For ease of interpretation, the approval and swing

variables are all anchored on the Democrats (so if the President is a Republican, approval is

calculated as 100 - presidential approval) and we run separate models for Democrats and

Republicans.

Insert Table 5 about here

The results are presented in Table 5. As shown, there are no effects for Democrats, but¹⁹for Republicans, reputation does matter. Those with higher reputational scores (i.e., who have reneged less) do better in the next election. The coefficient on reputation for Republicans is about 6.4, but we must once again consider that most reputation scores fall between about .80 and .99. Across this range, then, those who score the highest have vote shares about 1-2% higher in the next race. This is on par with the magnitude of the effects found in other work on the electoral impact of legislative behavior (see, for example, Bovitz and Carson 2006; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Sulkin 2005) and so is impressive evidence of the potential electoral consequences of reneging. This is especially true given all of the other factors that we control for, particularly the quality of the challenger, which should also be a function of the legislator's performance in office.²⁰ In addition, although there is no significant effect of reneging once reputation is taken into account, if the reneging dummy alone is the only indicator of this behavior included, it is significant for Republicans (and negative, such that those who ~~renege receive vote shares~~ about 1.2% lower than those who do not).

Conclusions

These results tell us much about the motivations of legislators and the microfoundations of coalition-building and logrolling in the House. Theories of legislative behavior and

¹⁹ It is not clear why the effects would exist for Republicans but not Democrats, but it could be related to differing views about the importance of consistency among MCs' base

constituencies or to differences in patterns of party competition across this time period.

²⁰ The coefficient on reputation is indeed higher if challenger quality is omitted from the specification. We also conducted analyses examining the impact of reneging on challenger

quality, but find little evidence of a direct effect.

organization note that the transaction costs of legislating lead to the potential for suboptimal

outcomes, where desired bills are left unpassed. In turn, much of the literature focuses on the

institutions that MCs create to solve this problem, whether they be related to committee structure

(e.g., Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 1987) or party organization (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). We argue that cosponsorship performs a similar role, serving as an institutional arrangement to aid in making commitments credible. In particular, the institution of cosponsorship provides a mechanism for individual MCs to build reputations for being trustworthy and to monitor the actions of their colleagues. Cosponsorship facilitates deal-making

and thus enables legislators to achieve their policy goals.

Our results have shown that patterns of renegeing are consistent with the idea that cosponsorship functions as a commitment device. Legislators rarely back out on the pledges they

make, but when they do so, these choices are systematic. MCs are sensitive to their own status in

the chamber, to their standing with constituents, and to the context surrounding a particular bill

and so renege only when they can afford to and/or when they are willing to pay the potential

costs. And, even though this should dampen the observable effects of renegeing (i.e., because we

do not see the full range of behaviors—what the implications of renegeing would be if MCs backed out on a pledge whenever they felt so inclined), we still see clear effects on their legislative and electoral success. Legislators who renege harm their reputations and, as a result,

face difficulty in assembling coalitions in favor of their own legislation and in getting that

legislation passed. And, at least for Republicans, there is also a price to pay on Election Day.

In future research, we plan to further explore the patterns and consequences of cosponsorship behavior. We will begin by expanding the analysis to include both withdrawing

and reneging. Our expectation is that the same factors should drive both choices, but that the

repercussions of reneging are likely harsher than those for withdrawing, since the latter occurs at

a later, more consequential stage. We will also examine additional ramifications of a failure to

follow through on a cosponsorship commitment. For instance, we expect that an MC who reneges may be less likely to attain a preferred committee or subcommittee assignment or may

be blocked from moving up the party hierarchy. We also expect that the process of reward and

punishment for cosponsorship behavior will play out at the dyadic level. When an MC reneges

on a sponsor's bill, we anticipate that the sponsor will be displeased and will retaliate by failing

to cosponsor the MC's future bills, by withdrawing existing cosponsorships from the MC's bills,

or by reducing campaign contributions. Examining the interactions between MCs across time

will provide more insight into how relationships are built and how they evolve.

Cosponsorship has had underappreciated consequences for the development of the legislative process over the past thirty years. If cosponsorship helps legislators to trade support,

then it provides individual MCs with the power to create coalitions in favor of their preferred

policies. Thus, changes in the rules regarding cosponsorship in the 1960s and 1970s empowered

individual legislative entrepreneurs at the expense of House leaders and committee chairs, contributing to the decentralization of the House in the post-Watergate era. To the extent that our

investigations of reneging and withdrawing and of cosponsorship and bill success patterns over

time uncover systematic relationships, they will offer further confirmation that

cosponsorship

plays a central role in the lawmaking process. As a result, understanding the dynamics of cosponsorship has the potential to offer new insight into the most fundamental question underlying the study of Congress--how the strategic decisions of individual MCs interact with institutional structures to produce policy outcomes.

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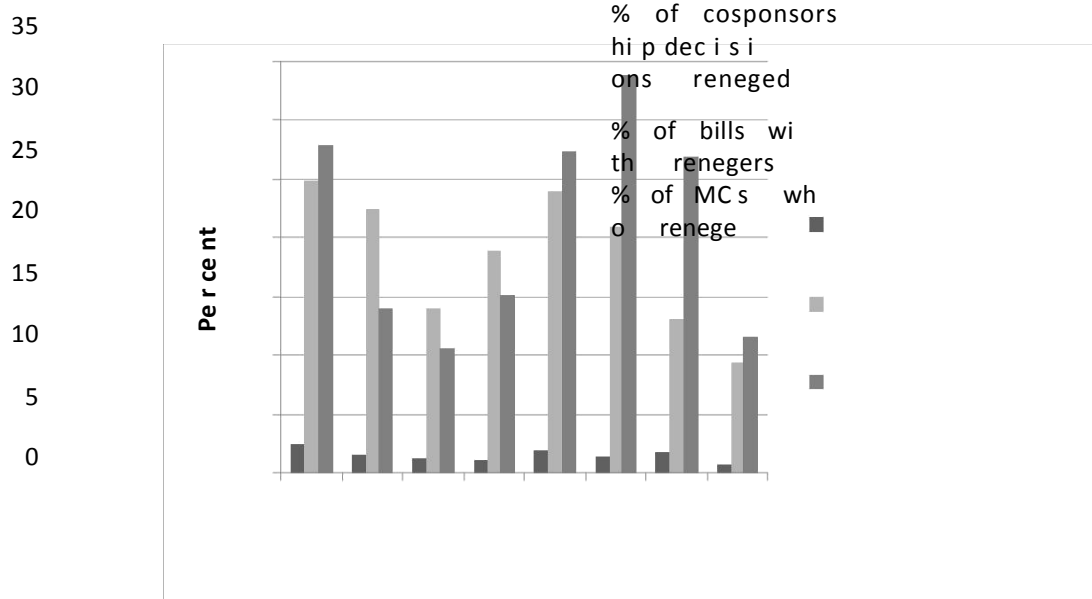
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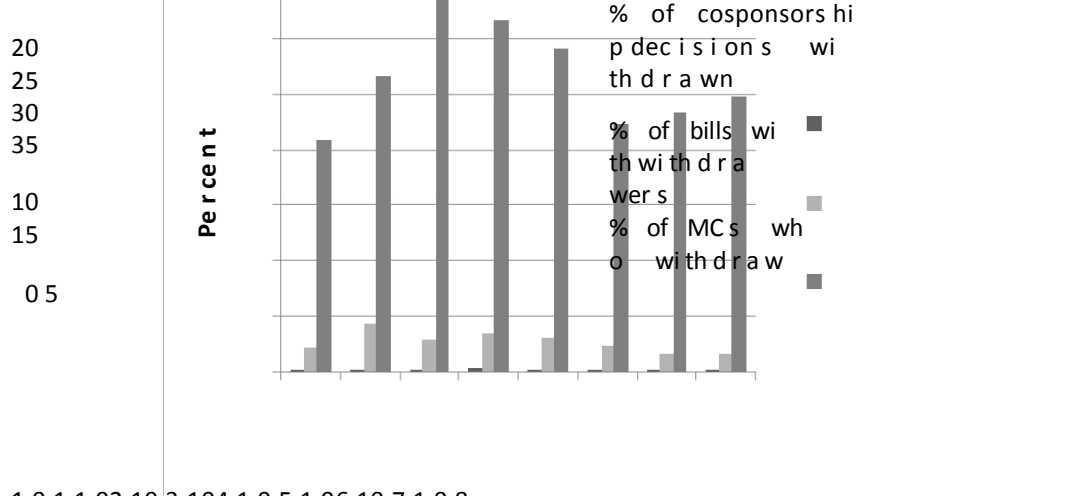
Figure 1. The Prevalence of Withdrawing and Reneging by Congress



1 0 1 1 0 2 1 0 3 1 0 4 1 0 5 1 0 6 1 0 7 1 0 8

Congress

Withdrawing



1 0 1 1 0 2 1 0 3 1 0 4 1 0 5 1 0 6 1 0 7 1 0 8

Congress

Figure 2. Distribution of Withdrawing and Reneging

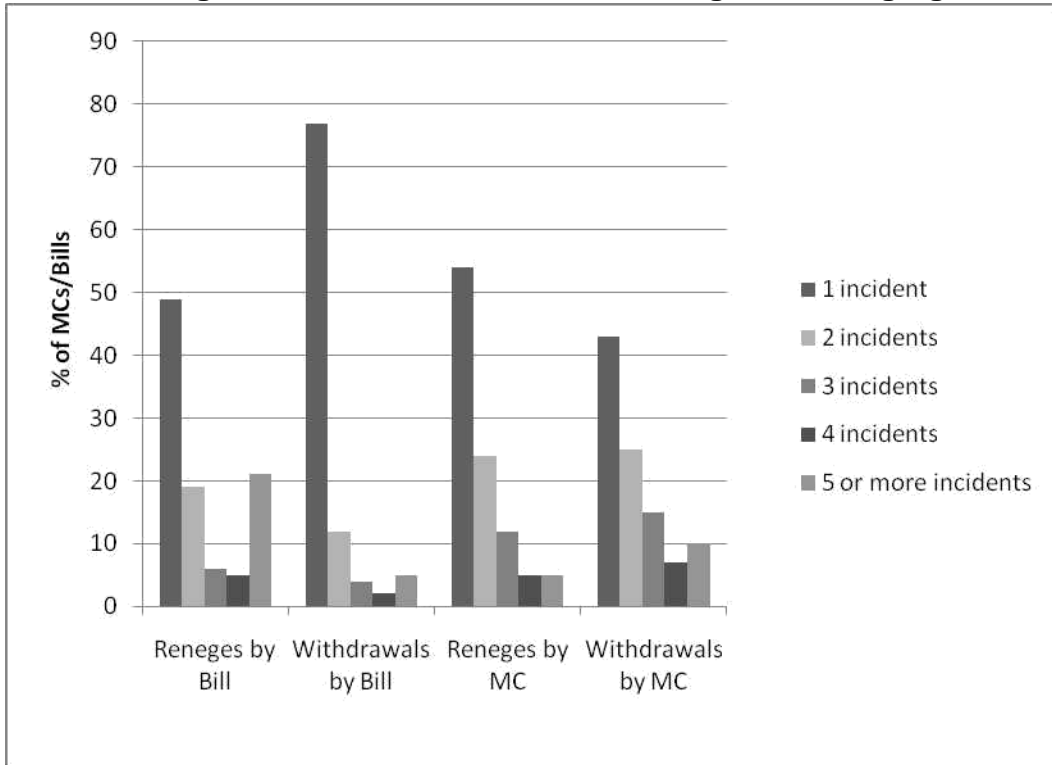


Figure 3. Differential Punishment across Types of Reneging

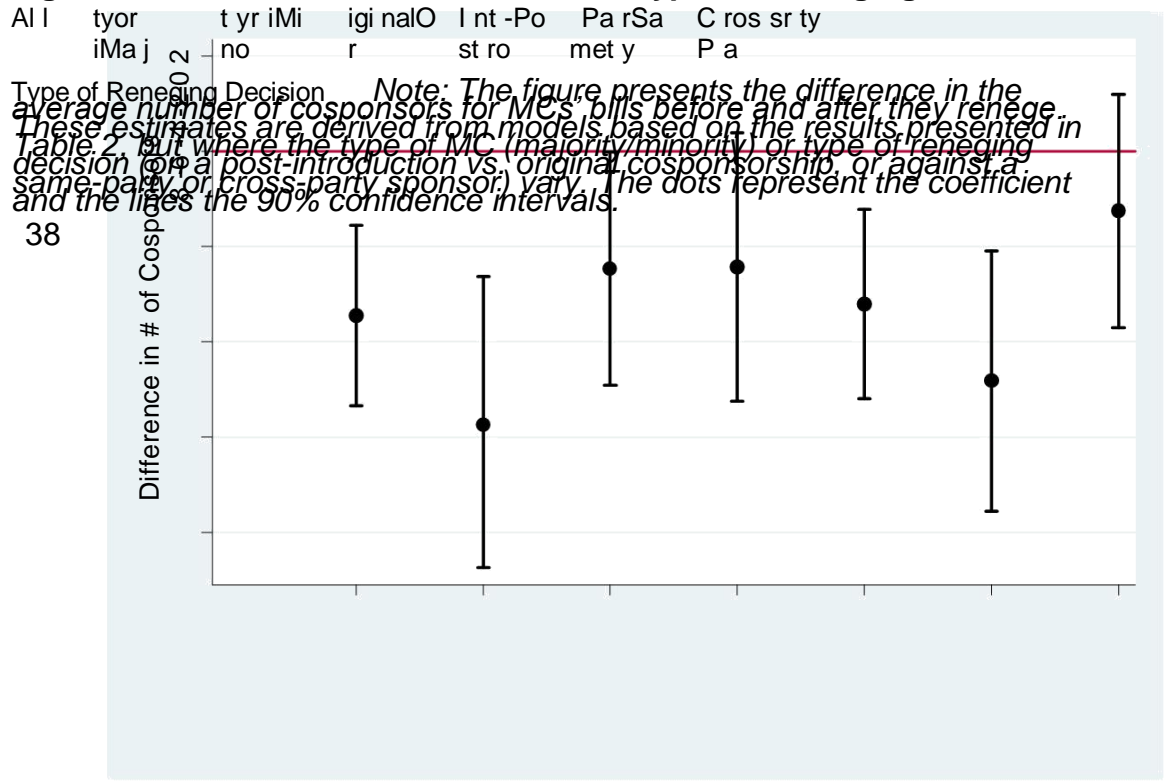
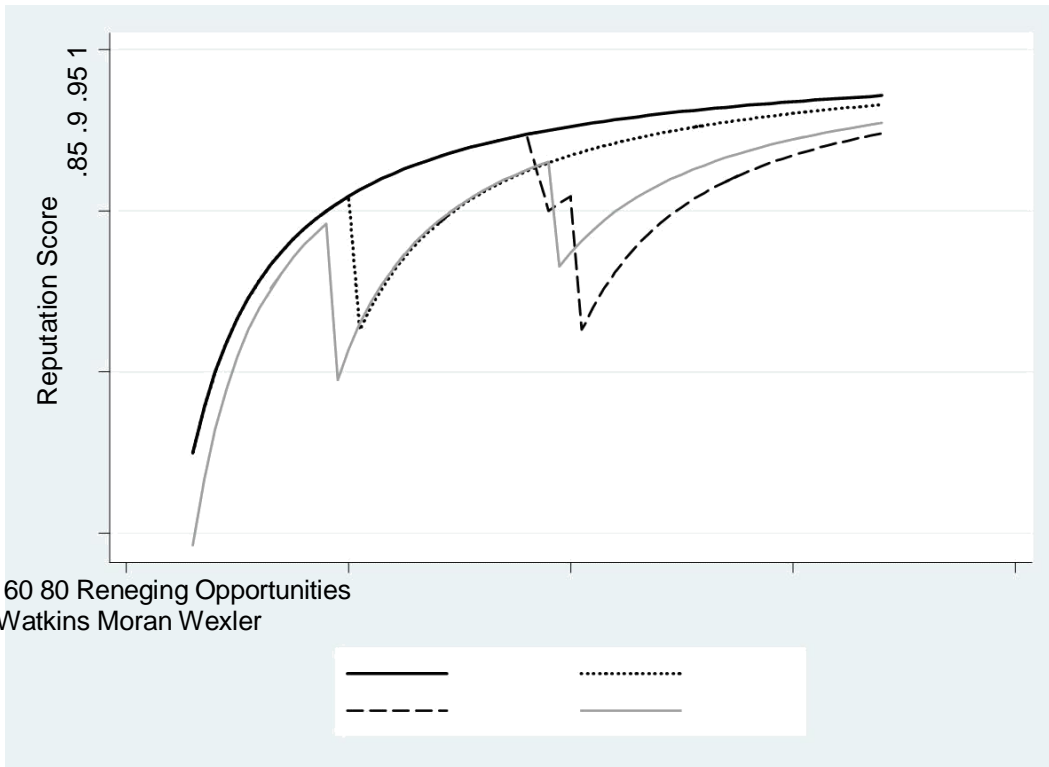
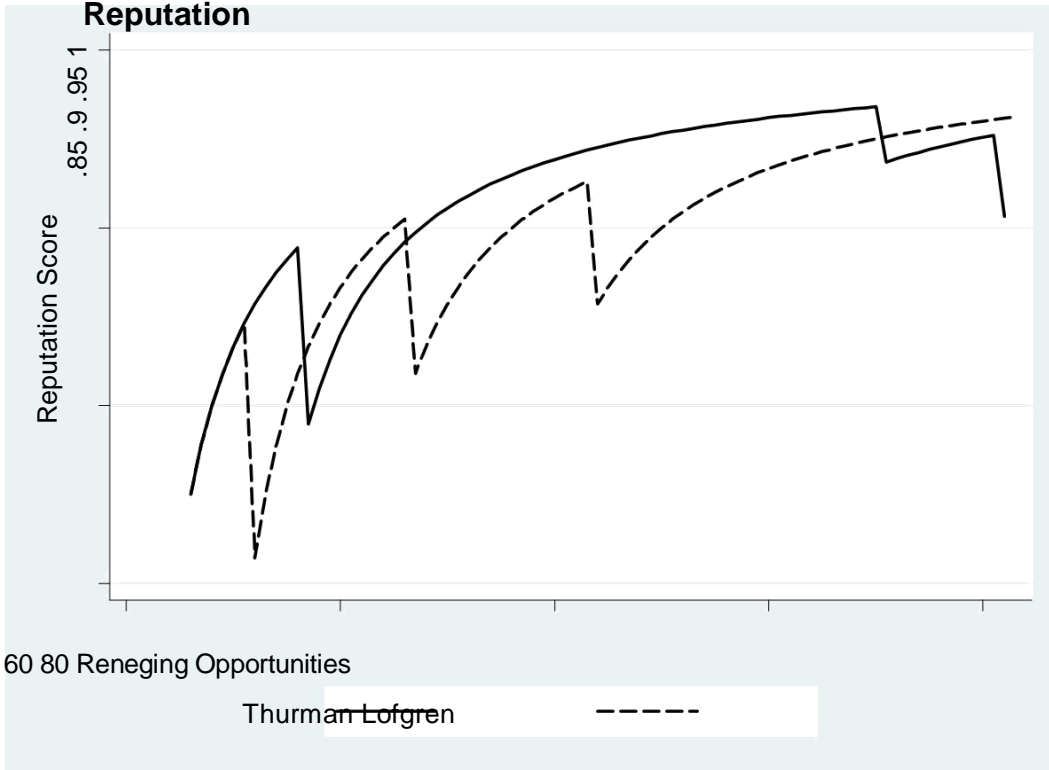


Figure 4. Reneging and Reputation



0 20 40 60 80 Reneging Opportunities

0 20 40 60 80 Reneging Opportunities

Table 1. Cosponsorship in the 101st Congress

101 st	102 ⁿ _d	103 ^r _d	104 ^t _h	105 ^t _h	106 ^t _h	107 ^t _h	108 ^t _h	
# of Bills Introduced	6438	6606	5550	4398	4891	5657	5787	5452
# of Introduced Bills with Cosponsors	4243	4163	3598	2827	3319	3898	4022	3983
Cosponsorships	146,269	135,490	101,000	65,112	84,949	105,027	103,793	101,917
Total % of obs	5.2%	4.7%	4.1%	3.4%	3.9%	4.3%	4.1%	4.3%
Cosponsor Type		23.6%	24.7%	34.8%	33.7%	34.7%	36.7%	37.2%
% Original	24.5%	76.4%	75.3%	65.2%	66.3%	65.3%	63.3%	
% Post-Intro	75.5%							

*Note: The table presents data on the number of bill introductions and cosponsorship decisions (# of bills * number of MCs) for each Congress between 1989 and 2004.*

Table 2. Who Reneges?

Renege? Cosponsor Vote Share	
Cosponsor	.003(.001)**
Seniority Retire?	.002(.002)
Majority Party?	.165(.068)*
Democrat?	-.290(.066)**
Ideological	.181(.040)**
Extremity Sponsor	.520(.131)**
Leader? Sponsor	-.005(.094)
Seniority Same	-.005(.003)
State? Same	-.123(.063)
Party? Bill?	-.360(.058)**
Original	.290(.066)**
Cosponsor?	-.071(.035)*
Closeness of Vote	.003(.000)**
Time Elapsed # of	.0003(.0001)**
Bills to Vote	.0001(.0004)
Partial Termer?	-.214(.149)
Delegation Size	.003(.001)*
Constant	-8.796(6.623)

N 56,943 Pseudo R-squared .18

Note:

The table presents the results of a probit analysis where the dependent variable is whether or not a legislator

or renege d on a cosponsorship decision and the indepen

dent
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MC. * =
p < .05;
** = p <
.01.

**Table 3. The Effects of Reneging on
Subsequent Cosponsorship Coalition Size**

Cosponsorship Coalition	Reneges?	
Bill? Multiple		-3.45(.96)*
Referral?		-36.47(5.93)*
Majority Party?		6.93(1.51)*
Democrat?		.45(1.49)
Seniority		1.92(1.53)
Leader?		.08(.13)
Ideological		32.61(13.96)
Extremity		5.87(5.23)
Constant		202.84(260.18)

²N 6377 R

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Cosponsorship Coalition Size Cosponsorship Coalition Size for Majority

Bill?	8.65(6.20)	18.53(9.07)*	.74(.38)*
Multiple	-34.39(3.45)**	-27.85(4.65)**	-.36(.09)**
Referral?	4.98(.73)**	6.09(.89)**	-.22(.03)**
Majority	1.34(.80)	---	.62(.04)**
Party?	-.36(.95)	.47(2.57)	-.04(.04)
Democrat?	.10(.07)	.08(.09)	.03(.00)**
Seniority	13.37(4.19)**	8.81(4.03)*	.12(.17)
Leader?	-2.29(3.11)	-5.93(3.66)	-.36(.14)**
Ideological	-3.30(1.89)	-1.54(2.45)	-.12(.13)
Extremity	---	---	2.86(.09)**
Partial Termer	245.86(140.62)	-112.86(172.50)	53.43(6.40)
Final			
Passage?			
Constant			

²/Pseudo/R .05 .06 .27

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B

ill Success Reputation

N 37,496 22,481 37,496 R

*Note: The table reports OLS and probit results, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the number of cosponsors for an introduced bill (columns 1 and 2) and whether or not a bill passed the House (columns 3). The number of observations = # of bills introduced in the 102 congresses. The models also include controls for time (Congress and introduction date) and bill issue category. Standard errors are clustered on the MC. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$.*

Table 5. The Electoral Consequences of Reneging Democrats Republicans

Reneged?	.46(.53)	-.99(.66)
Reputation Next	-5.17(3.74)	6.38(2.92)**
Challenger	-5.28(.58)**	-6.28(.62)**
Experienced? # of	.02(.02)	.01(.01)
Sponsored Bills Hit	.75(1.19)	.79(1.21)
Rate Seniority	-.10(.02)**	.04(.04)
Ideological Extremity	10.34(1.49)**	-.71(1.92)
Majority Party?	-1.47(.59)*	1.83(.90)*
Previous Vote Share	.59(.02)**	.04(.03)
Previous	-15.71(1.03)**	1.26(1.04)
Unopposed	29.21(.71)**	32.69(.37)**
Current Unopposed	.82(.52)	.36(.51)
Midterm Election?	.05(.01)**	-.001(.012)
Democratic	.68(.11)**	-.81(.12)**
Presidential	-166.11(46.84)	124.94(75.99)
Approval)
Democratic Vote		
Swing Constant		

N 1622 1476 R-squared .80 .82

*Note: The table reports OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is an MC's vote share. The number of observations = # of Democrats or Republicans who stood for re-election following each of the 101-108 Congresses. Standard errors are clustered on the MC. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01.*