At What Price? Party Taxation and Member Advancement in the U.S. House

Lawrence S. Rothenberg Kevin Wu

Abstract

How do members of Congress secure influential committee assignments or leadership roles? While scholars have extensively examined the determinants of congressional advancement, the role of financial contributions to party organizations—what we term a "party tax"—has received comparatively limited recent attention. We revisit this mechanism using new data and updated empirical approaches, treating member contributions as indicators of willingness and capacity to advance party goals. Our findings show that such contributions are particularly consequential for members occupying elite committee and leadership positions, consistent with theories emphasizing the concentration of institutional power. We further find asymmetric influences across parties, with stronger effects among Republicans. Addressing causal concerns, we apply coarsened exact matching, showing that members ascending to more powerful positions subsequently increase their party contributions–reinforcing a feedback loop where financial supporters are rewarded with desirable placements. Collectively, our results underscore a strategic process by which monetary contributions facilitate access to institutional power and deepen partisan resource flows.

Keywords: party tax, committee assignment, fundraising

1 Introduction

"Committee assignments, then, are less about qualifications than they are about cash—or, to put it another way, cash is the chief qualification you need."

— Ken Buck (2017), Republican Congressperson from CO

That legislative committees play pivotal roles in the careers of members of Congress (MCs) is well-established. Based on this premise, scholars have long assumed that MCs actively seek committee assignments they deem valuable, as such positions offer opportunities to take positions, claim credit, and secure particularized benefits for constituents (Fowler, Douglass, & Clark Jr, 1980; Frisch & Kelly, 2006). Although recent developments have revealed the vulnerability of party leadership power, logic still suggests that party leaders, who control these assignments, occupy strategically advantageous positions. This authority should be valuable, with leaders capable of extracting rents from aspiring committee members and leaders. Accordingly, committee assignment allocations should be understood as the outcome of bargaining between party leaders and rank-and-file members.

Scholars have long identified multiple motivations driving legislators to pursue specific committee assignments, including leadership roles. These motivations often stem from geographical, electoral, and personal considerations (Masters, 1961; Fenno, 1973; Shepsle, 1978; Deering & Smith, 1997; Frisch & Kelly, 2006). Geographically, members whose districts house firms or workers affected by a committee's jurisdiction may seek positions allowing them to best represent these constituent's interests. Electorally, legislators—especially those facing competitive races—may pursue those committee assignments offering the greatest

visibility and media exposure.[1] Personally, MCs may gravitate toward committees aligned with their professional experience—for instance, lawyers seeking Judiciary Committee seats or accountants aiming for Ways and Means—where prior expertise reduces workload and enhances effectiveness (Frisch & Kelly, 2006; Francis & Bramlett, 2017). Regardless of specific motivations, strategic committee placements can serve as instruments through which MCs pursue broader political and career objectives.

In line with these motivations and anticipating our empirical approach, recent studies emphasize that MCs prefer assignments on intensively lobbied committees. A key incentive is enhanced support through campaign contributions and related assistance from interest groups (on interest group engagement and issue alignment, see Powell and Grimmer (2016)). At a minimum, relevant committee members tend to receive more targeted financial support from aligned groups. For instance, Fouirnaies and Hall (2018) find that state legislators joining new committees experience notable increases in contributions from interests tied to the committee's jurisdiction. Moreover, high-profile committee placements may facilitate lucrative post-congressional career opportunities through the "revolving door"(Bertrand, Bombardini, & Trebbi, 2014).

Although members' preferences over committee assignments vary, demand for certain committees clearly exceeds supply. Under these conditions, party leaders may play a pivotal role in determining who secures desirable placements. Prior to 1994's Republican Revolution, seniority overwhelmingly governed committee assignments, particularly during the era of powerful committee chairs, with deviations from this norm uncommon (Cann, 2008).

[1]In a similar vein, many MCs aspire to leadership positions or even higher offices, what Schlesinger (1966) long ago termed progressive ambition. Committee positions can be a key means of such advancement.

Post-1994 saw a shift toward prioritizing party loyalty over seniority, as the House became characterized by narrower majorities and heightened partisan conflict. Both parties have emphasized unity and internal cohesion to advance their legislative agendas. This elevated the influence of party leaders, such as the House Speaker, who reasserted their authority and increasingly prioritized party unity and loyalty to advance their legislative agendas. Many studies have concluded that rank-and-file self-selection plays a limited role in determining committee assignments, while party leaders exert substantial influence (Westefield, 1974; Shepsle, 1978; Cox & McCubbins, 2007; Peters & Rosenthal, 2010; Jenkins, 2022).

Party leaders, in turn, have strategic motivations when allocating influential committee positions and leadership opportunities. Research highlights two especially salient considerations: supporting electorally vulnerable members—particularly when chamber control is at stake—and rewarding or encouraging loyalty to the party's agenda (Pearson, 2015; Adler & Cayton, 2021). By using committee assignments as tools for electoral support and internal discipline, party leaders can simultaneously advance the collective interests of the caucus and strengthen their individual standing.

This presents a challenge in analyzing the roles of vulnerability and loyalty for committee assignments. While measuring electoral vulnerability is relatively straightforward, capturing legislative loyalty is not. The most common proxy used by scholars has been party unity, the frequency that a member votes with party leaders. For instance, Leighton and Lopez (2002) argue that members who consistently vote with party leaders are more likely to be rewarded with high-value committee assignments. Similarly, Asmussen and Ramey (2018) demonstrate that members siding with leadership in their roll-call voting—even at the potential cost of alienating constituents—are often compensated with desirable committee seats.

However, these studies highlight a major inferential limitation: the cost of loyalty differs between members. Some represent electorates whose policy preferences closely align with leadership positions, making party-unity voting relatively cheap. Others have constituencies with divergent preferences, where loyalty entails meaningful electoral risks. Roll-call–based loyalty measures risk conflating sincere constituency representation with strategic demonstrations of allegiance. Ideally, a measure of willingness to incur political or personal costs on behalf of party leaders should not confound alignment of district and party preferences.

In the contemporary Congress the extent to which legislators kick up money to the party for its collective efforts is a potential alternative party loyalty measure. This is particularly the case because fundraising ability has seemingly become increasingly important. Peters and Rosenthal (2010) observe that fundraising became more important to both political parties–with the Republican Party first placing strong emphasis on fundraising, and then the Democratic Party following suit, expecting substantial financial contributions from committee and subcommittee chairs. In a similar vein, Currinder (2008) found that party leaders doling out desirable committee positions looked favorably on MCs with fundraising prowess,and Meinke (2016) notes that party leaders have incorporated financial loyalty into the traditional emphasis on voting loyalty over time.[2]

Put differently, party leaders have become incentivized to procure resources from their members, especially those electorally secure, to induce financial support for the party's electoral goals. This dynamic enables what we term a "party tax," whereby members willing and able to pay substantial dues may be rewarded with valuable committee (or even party lead-

[2]Green and Harris (2007) even argued that campaign contributions played an important role in the Republican race for House majority leader as the candidates directed funds to allies to secure support.

ership) positions. Importantly, unlike roll-call support, monetary contributions to the party are unlikely to precipitate an electoral backlash, as they do not entail visible policy trade-offs or direct conflicts with constituency preferences. Monetary support offers a tangible and less politically risky act of loyalty to party.

Such financial transactions between committee members and party leaders have been recognized by the political community. Notably, the group Issue One (https://issueone.org) has trumpeted that holders of desired committee seats pay de facto party taxes (Beckel (2017); see also Burgat (2017)).[3] Lawmakers interested in seats on those influential committees are expected to raise sufficient monies to help fund party efforts:

> We are here to let you in on a dirty secret in Washington: To serve on the most influential committees in the U.S. House of Representatives, lawmakers are expected to raise a certain amount of money for their respective political parties. The sums involved have become astronomical–more than $1,000,000 for the most coveted spots. And neither party can claim the moral high ground: Democrats and Republicans alike expect this of their members.

Yet, after initial scholarly recognition, further analytic treatment of the linkage between member party support and advancement has been limited. Although studies identified various factors influencing committee assignments, there are issues that are understudied and others that should be reexamined given the passage of time, especially given real world changes and the availability of better methodological techniques.

[3]As we will discuss, in more recent years members are assessed explicit dues once in a given position (regardless of specific committee); undiagnosed issues are whether ex ante giving matters for allocating positions, whether explicit dues increase giving, and whether unfulfilled assessments risk committee seats and leadership positions.

Previous work often examined things statically, isolating associations between financial contributions and committee positions rather than exploring broader temporal dynamics (Heberlig, 2003; Larson, 2004; Heberlig & Larson, 2012). This largely overlooks a possible recursive process by which campaign contributions help secure influential committee assignments, which, in turn, enhances a member's fundraising appeal. Similarly, limited attention has been paid to findings that committee leaders disproportionately reap the benefits of the assignment process, potentially weakening the leverage party leaders hold over rank-and-file committee members. Even in instances where a party tax is thought to exist, this claim has not been adequately reconciled with the rarity of overt punishments, such as revoking committee seats. Although observing informal sanctions is more difficult, stable committee memberships could suggest that most members either comply with their dues obligations or contribute more than they otherwise would. But, as we will detail, evidence—though not comprehensive—suggests that many members fail to meet their assigned fundraising goals. Some, such as Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or members of the Republican Freedom Caucus, publicly reject the legitimacy of such demands. These cases raise questions about the efficacy of the party tax system. Low compliance need not imply an ineffective system, but it does indicate that effective party taxes must operate primarily through incentives for advancement rather than explicit punishments.

As for real world change, that the system became more formalized after these initial studies were conducted suggests a need to reexamine the relationship between contributions and advancement. Although these formal actions may have just ratified the status quo, they may reflect the increasing importance of party support. Our study provides an important update, examining if and how the dynamics of congressional advancement evolved, while

applying updated methods in doing so.

Specifically, we analyze the existence, scope, and consequences of a party tax in Congress for 2003–2022—a period after the reorganization of the campaign system and spanning before and after the apparent institutionalization of formal dues. We begin in 2003 because the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) reshaped the campaign finance environment by eliminating soft money and elevating the centrality of hard-money contributions. This produced a stable and comparable institutional setting in which member-to-party fundraising expectations became fully observable. We consider members' financial contributions to their parties' campaign arms as an operationalization of this tax.

Our results show that financial contributions are strong determinants of advancement in the contemporary Congress. The party tax meaningfully affects all committee members: the prospect of obtaining or retaining valued committee positions induces elevated contributions. Consistent with the distinction between "cardinals" and "clerics," committee leaders contribute more in absolute terms *and* a larger share of their total fundraising to the party. Party leaders themselves contribute significantly, indicating that they must put their money where their collective mouths are. Evidence is found for the dynamic mentioned earlier: Results from OLS and matching both show that members who ascend to high-value positions subsequently attract more contributions—unsurprisingly—and respond by increasing their financial support to party institutions. There is a reinforcing cycle by which members contribute more to secure influential posts, which enhances their fundraising, which enables even greater contributions to the party. This cycle appears to boost a member's political capital both within the party and in the broader legislative arena. We also show that institutionalizing formal dues did more than codify preexisting norms; it shifted financial burdens

more heavily onto non-leadership MCs.

Finally, we demonstrate partisan differences. Dues bind Republican members more: Republican leaders appear to place greater emphasis on party fundraising as a marker of loyalty and organizational discipline. This corresponds to committee assignment processes differing by party (Thakur, 2025), and is consistent with evidence of the Republican Party functioning as an ideologically unified organization and the Democratic Party operating as a coalition of groups (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016).

The remainder of our analysis begins with background on the mechanisms through which parties accrue campaign funds from MCs. We then articulate and then evaluate empirically hypotheses concerning how imposing a party tax may influence the relationship between party leaders and rank-and-file members. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for theories of party organization, leadership power, and intra-party bargaining.

2 Parties and Campaign Dollars

Parties receive contributions from multiple sources: individuals, corporations, political action committees (PACs), and their MCs. Per the latter, there is a long anecdotal history of legislators contributing to their party or copartisan MCs to forge ahead in Congress.[4] How Representative Henry Waxman became chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee's health care subcommittee in 1978 might be the first well-known example. At a time when directing internal contributions to achieve personal goals was uncommon, and both parties mainly decided committee leadership via seniority, a two-term representative contributing

[4]We focus on giving to parties; for an analysis of member-to-member giving see Powell (2015).

$24,000 to committee colleagues vaulted over senior colleagues (Baker, 1989).[5] Canon (1989) highlights the early development of the connection between financial activity and leadership advancement, particularly among Republican leaders. The rise of leadership PACs illustrates how GOP elites institutionalized money's use as a vehicle for expressing and advancing political ambitions.

After the 1994 election ushered in the Republican Revolution, patterns thought set in stone changed. First, seniority was no longer the sole criterion determining committee leadership. In 1995, the Republicans led by newly installed Speaker Gingrich, weighed other factors in assigning chairs and committee slots for several committees (Appropriations, Energy, Commerce, and Judiciary) (Cox & McCubbins, 2007). Loyalty to party leaders appeared much more important than previously for securing critical positions (Maltzman, 1997; Cox & McCubbins, 2007).

Second, both parties prioritized collecting campaign funds more efficiently.[6] The GOP's securing the House majority after four decades in the minority implied future electoral uncertainty (Bonica & Cox, 2018; Hopkins, 2018). Chamber control has been up for grabs, with partisan switches in 2006, 2010, 2018, and 2022. For each party, accruing campaign funds

[5]Waxman represented a safe, prosperous, Hollywood district-winning 17 elections without serious competition-and had ready access to campaign dollars despite not needing them for reelection.

[6]Indeed, party fundraising's ascending role may partially explain heightened House polarization. One claimed reason for party leaders no longer needing to be in the party's ideological middle is that MCs are incentivized to select non-median leaders capable of providing more funds to the rank and file (Heberlig, Hetherington, & Larson, 2006). Speaker Nancy Pelosi, long-time Democratic leader, is a well-known example. Although NOMINATE scores showed Pelosi's ideology left of her party's median, she proved an outstanding fundraiser. Pelosi, who became Speaker in 2007, helped the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) achieve a better than 11 to 1 cash advantage over its Republican counterpart that year (Currinder, 2008). Her Democratic Leader successor, Hakeem Jeffries (also to the party's left), followed in her path: In his first year at the helm in 2023, he gave the DCCC $99,000,000. In turn, this party fundraising focus provides interest groups with a channel to influence the policy process. Group leaders likely have reason to believe that they are giving to someone who can impact outcomes.

became increasingly important. Previously, members raising substantial monies preferred hoarding excess cash rather than following party leaders' suggestions to share their wealth (Jacobson, 1985; Kolodny & Dwyre, 1998).

Although pre-1994 parties were seemingly insufficiently incentivized or able to induce MCs to relent, subsequently each developed programs more strongly encouraging members to loosen their purse strings (Heberlig & Larson, 2012). Thus, for instance, there is evidence not only that members began using their monies to give to others with whom they were ideologically aligned, but that they considered the electoral needs to whom they gave consistent with party interests (Kanthak, 2007). The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) started a "pay-to-play" system for committee chairs (Currinder, 2008; Zeleny, 2006; Peters & Rosenthal, 2010).[7] The DCCC also began setting explicit fundraising targets that varied by member status, with higher expectations placed on committee chairs and party leaders. For the 2019–2020 cycle, targets ranged from $150,000$ dollars for freshmen and members with limited fundraising capacity to $1,000,000$ dollars for the Speaker.[8]

To promote compliance, party leaders introduced penalties for members falling short of their financial obligations. For example, the DCCC withheld access to institutional resources, including phone services and other amenities (Eilperin, 2006). Pelosi, who was the House Democratic leader, also sent pointed messages to "encourage" members of Congress not yet meeting the contribution requirements (Peters & Rosenthal, 2010). In contrast,

[7]Not all leaders were publicly enthusiastic. Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) stated that Republicans were "not going to get in the business of members buying seats" (O'Connor, 2008). Ironically, our results suggest that Republicans more closely approximate this exchange-oriented model of advancement than Democrats.

[8]Party leaders' own contributions are notable, as it is unclear who would enforce penalties if a leader fails to meet expectations. Presumably, reactions by fellow party leaders or by members generally for failure to contribute sufficiently could threaten a shirking leader.

members achieving or exceeding their targets were reportedly rewarded, either through committee leadership appointments or legislative favors, such as advancing their sponsored bills (Heberlig, 2003; Hasecke & Mycoff, 2007; Cann, 2008; Pearson, 2015).

In summary, party fundraising emerged as a key indicator of loyalty in the 1990s and became formally institutionalized in the following decade. As Heberlig and Larson (2012) document, by the 2007–2008 election cycle both parties had established explicit financial contribution expectations for their members. This institutional shift contrasts with the prevailing scholarly tendency to measure party allegiance primarily through roll-call voting (Krehbiel, 1993; Frisch & Kelly, 2006; Cox & McCubbins, 2007; Asmussen & Ramey, 2018).

Although we elaborate several caveats below, party fundraising may be a more appropriate loyalty metric than party unity voting in the current context of heightened polarization and persistent uncertainty over chamber control. It can also serve as a signal of both the willingness and capacity of potential party leaders to commit themselves to collective party goals. Under conditions of insecure majorities, members of Congress expect their leaders to play central roles in fundraising and message coordination. Consequently, candidates who can demonstrate these abilities are more likely to be selected for leadership positions (Lee, 2016). On the other hand, unity voting is often constrained by constituency preferences (Grier & Munger, 1991; Krehbiel, 1993), particularly for members representing swing districts or electorates whose policy preferences greatly diverge from the party line. Financial support for the party—whether by directly contributing to party committees or assisting electorally vulnerable colleagues-should present fewer political costs. MCs can align their votes with district preferences, which mechanistically positions some closer to the party than others, while signaling party loyalty through monetary contributions. For party lead-

ers, these contributions are a valuable resource that can be leveraged to promote cohesion and discipline (Cann, 2008; Cann & Sidman, 2011). Members offering financial support may, in turn, find their individual goals—such as securing or retaining desirable committee or leadership posts—more attainable.

To determine whether this logic holds, we must establish if such allocations reflect a system of incentives and sanctions and, critically, identify for whom the party tax carries the greatest force. However, research on how the distribution of positions has changed under this newer regime is limited. Earlier work noted the importance of internal financial activity. For instance, Herrnson (1997) and Sorauf (1994) described the emerging role of money in party organizations, Heberlig (2003) found that contributions to party committees or fellow candidates aided advancement to prestige committees, and Larson (2004) showed that members with leadership roles or surplus funds were more likely to support party campaign committees. But these studies predated the formalization of explicit fundraising requirements. Whether these obligations shaped advancement patterns and whether they intensified, moderated, or transformed earlier relationships are open questions.

We fill this gap by examining the fully developed post-BCRA era, extending the temporal scope of analysis from the beginning of this period, 2003, until 2022. BCRA, by banning soft-money contributions and raising hard-money limits, reshaped the fundraising environment and redirected party operations toward hard-money sources (Peters & Rosenthal, 2010; Heberlig & Larson, 2012). The post-BCRA period is a distinct time in which hard-money fundraising became the dominant, readily measurable, form of party financial activity. Although the broader fundraising ecosystem continued to evolve through 527 and 501(c)(4) organizations, joint fundraising committees, and party-aligned Super PACs, these

channels do not generate systematic, member-level data that can be compared over time or between parties. Admittedly, our measures may understate certain forms of fundraising activity—particularly during periods when Democratic networks made heavier use of soft-money and joint fundraising mechanisms. Nonetheless, hard-money contributions and formal dues obligations provide the most consistent and comparable indicators of member-level fundraising behavior in this era and were what party leaders themselves tracked and potentially enforced.

3 Hypotheses

Prior research has not fully examined the influence and broader implications of member party contributions, particularly for later years, or systematically contrasted the pre- and post-institutionalization periods. Here, we advance a set of hypotheses capturing these dynamics.

To do so, we consider several features. One is whether members' financial contributions to their parties increase their likelihoods of securing more valuable institutional positions—whether as rank-and-file committee members, committee chairs, or legislative party leaders. Another is whether obtaining such positions enhances members' abilities to raise campaign funds, thereby enabling them to contribute even more to the party.

More specifically, with the caveat that a compelling research strand emphasizes committee leaders accruing most rewards, there is reason to believe that MCs making higher party contributions will more likely be named to high-lobby intensity committees or chosen as committee leaders. If true, they can use the influence attached to these jobs to procure

additional contributions, facilitating greater party giving to bolster their positions.

To reiterate, this suggests a potential feedback loop by which financially capable and strategically inclined members translate monetary support into increased party influence. Donations would not only signal loyalty, but would facilitate access to valuable committee or party positions that, in turn, improve members' fundraising capacities and overall influence within the party hierarchy.

This logic implies five hypotheses, some admittedly more controversial than others:

Hypothesis 1: *MCs contributing more to their party have higher likelihoods of getting more valuable positions.*

Hypothesis 2: *Procuring more valuable positions (e.g., as committee or party leaders) requires MCs to donate more to their party.*

Hypothesis 3: *Those with valuable positions raise more campaign funds prior to their next election.*

Hypothesis 4: *MCs holding more influential positions—such as committee or party leadership—raise more campaign funds ahead of their next election.*

Hypothesis 5: *Upon ascending to more valuable positions, MCs provide more campaign funds to their parties as they share their improved fundraising positions with them.*

Support for these hypotheses would underscore the importance of legislative parties and suggest that individual MC fundraising ability is of paramount importance. Alternatively, we may find other factors condition when parties exercise influence, mitigating the role of fundraising prowess.

Finally, although we lack a corresponding hypothesis, we examine whether the two parties

are equally effective in using the dues system to generate resources. Relevant literature often suggests that internal party operations differ markedly; we examine whether this is realized in what we observe.

4 Data and Methods

For our data, covering 2003-2022 (the 108$^{\text{th}}$–117$^{\text{th}}$ Congresses), operationalizing most key concepts is straightforward. The exception is identifying high–lobby-intensity committees. To do so, we initially match individual report-level expenditure data (inflation-adjusted into 2020 dollars) from LobbyView (Kim, 2018), along with the stated lobbying issues on which the monies were spent, to the corresponding committee using Bertrand et al. (2014)'s jurisdiction list. This produces a lobbying expenditure number for each Congress-committee pair.[9] Ranked by intensity, except for the Education Committee in the 108th Congress, the top five committees are identical by Congress, with slightly different orderings (Table 1).[10] We then link this lobbying intensity to individual committee memberships (Stewart, 2021).[11]

[9]Alternatively, we could measure intensity by number of lobbyists or lobbying presence as calculated by aggregating in-house and outside lobbyists (Drutman, Grossmann, & LaPira, 2014). However, expenditures constitute the most fine-tuned measure.

[10]Our list is similar to Open Secrets' (Beckel, 2017) "A" committees (Appropriations; Energy & Commerce; Financial Services; Rules; and Ways & Means), indicating that popular committees are more heavily lobbied.

[11]For reasons that should be obvious, we also collect data on whether MCs are party leaders.

Table 1: Most Intensively Lobbied Committees—108$^{\text{th}}$ to 117$^{\text{th}}$ Congresses

Ranking/Congress	108	109	110	111
1	Energy (1.78 B)	Energy (1.86 B)	Energy (2.16 B)	Energy (2.76 B)
2	Ways (649 M)	Ways (728 M)	Ways (798 M)	Ways (962 M)
3	Financial (517 M)	Financial (592 M)	Judiciary (764 M)	Appropriations(822 M)
4	Appropriations(447 M)	Appropriations(579 M)	Financial (621 M)	Financial (747 M)
5	Education (300 M)	Judiciary (439 M)	Appropriations(476 M)	Judiciary (578 M)

Ranking/Congress	112	113	114	115
1	Energy (3.09 B)	Energy (2.82 B)	Energy (2.65 B)	Energy (2.54 B)
2	Ways (1054 M)	Ways (1082 M)	Ways (1.16 B)	Ways (1.07 B)
3	Financial (915 M)	Financial (794 M)	Judiciary (939 M)	Financial (664 M)
4	Appropriations(810 M)	Appropriations(651 M)	Financial (730 M)	Appropriations(546 M)
5	Judiciary (545 M)	Judiciary (493 M)	Appropriations(558 M)	Judiciary (543 M)

Ranking/Congress	116	117
1	Energy (2.51 B)	Energy (1.95 B)
2	Ways (1.16 B)	Ways (734 M)
3	Financial (655 M)	Financial (490 M)
4	Appropriations(559 M)	Appropriations(397 M)
5	Judiciary (504 M)	Judiciary (343 M)

Notes: Committees are Education, Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Financial Services, Judiciary, Education and Labor, and Appropriations; numbers in parentheses are aggregated lobbying expenditures in billions (B) and millions (M) of 2020 dollars (BLS CPI-U annual average adjustment).

Given our interest in whether members on high-intensity committees give more to their parties, we collect data on members' relevant campaign finance donation activities (Federal Election Commission, 2023). We include MCs' campaign contributions to (1) national party committees from individual campaign committees (including MCs' principal campaign committees and other affiliated committees); (2) House colleagues from their principal campaign committees and other affiliated committees; (3) House colleagues from their leadership PACs (LDs); and (4) member parties from their LDs.

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics by contribution types, while Figure 1 depicts temporal changes in mean donations for these contribution types. With MC by Congress as our

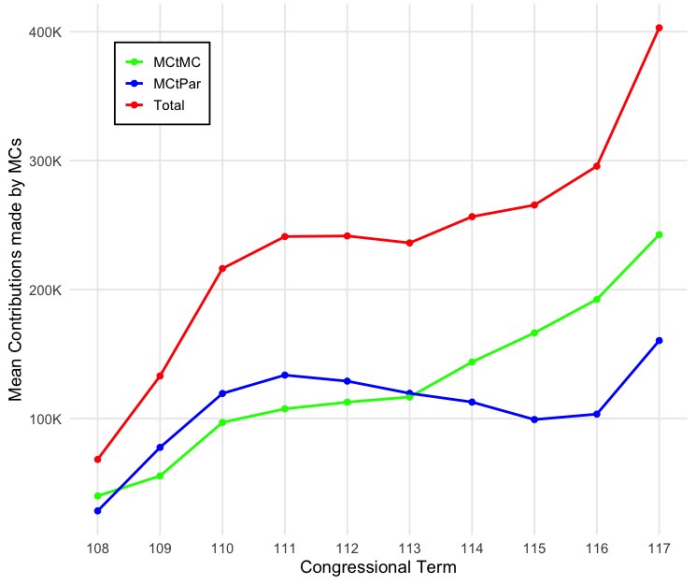
unit of analysis, we have 4161 observations. Average total contributions made by MCs to other MCs and their own parties, contributions made by MCs to other MCs, and contributions made by MCs to their parties increase over time. Consistent with the years where parties were seemingly stepping up efforts to encourage MC contributions, there was a huge jump for every contribution category between the 108th and 110th Congresses.

Table 2: MCs' Direct and Leadership PAC Contributions to Parties and Fellow MCs

Type of Contribution	**N**	**Mean**	**St. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
MCs to Parties	4,161	117,849	300,783	0	11,385,414
MCs to MCs	4,161	25,749	52,307	−2,567	991,000
MCs' LD to Parties	4,161	6,160	22,673	−6,165	587,900
MCs' LD to MCs	4,161	115,755	339,349	0	4,671,376

Notes: Contributions in the first two rows are from campaign and affiliated committees; those in the last two rows are from leadership (LD) PACs. All contributions are in 2020 dollars.

Figure 1: Mean Contributions Made by MCs to Parties and other MCs (108th to 117th)



Contributions (in 2020 dollars)

Although available for isolated cases, we lack comprehensive data on expectations for

each member's party contribution.[12] As an alternative, we calculate the "revealed tax rate," the total contributions to parties by an MC/total funds raised by an MC (Table 3). The observed range is huge, from 0% to 94%, with a mean of 8%. Some MCs make no party contributions (e.g., certain first-term legislators trying to secure their initial reelections), others transfer almost all funds to the party.[13] Reporting on the dues systems depicts a complicated situation. For example, in 2016 the House Republican Freedom Caucus was said to be boycotting the NRCC to the tune of $10,000,000; the reaction was claimed to be both House leadership pleas to reconsider and sanctions, such as lack of invitations to party events.[14] Overall, "Getting politicians to fork over their hard-raised cash is a recurring problem for the NRCC and DCCC" (Bade & Caygle, 2016). The taxation system seemingly works less smoothly than critics depict.

Table 3: Revealed Tax Rate and its Components

Contribution	**N**	**Mean**	**St. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Average Total Money to Parties	4,161	124,008	305,523	0	11,400,414
Average Total Money to Other MCs	4,161	141,503	367,561	−2,567	5,079,984
Average Total Contributions	4,161	265,512	592,939	−1,954	14,221,414
Average Contributions Received by MCs	4,161	2,033,549	2,547,201	7	81,084,464
Tax Rate	4,161	0.08	0.12	0.00	0.94

Notes: The revealed tax rate is calculated as the ratio of total contributions made by each member to parties or other MCs to the total contributions received by that member. All contributions are in 2020 dollars.

[12]DCCC lists have been made public for 2012 (Schweizer, 2013), 2014 (BuzzFeed), 2020 (The Intercept), and 2022 (Politico). Interestingly, as we examine shortly, despite some strident claims, only about one-fifth of members in these years provide at least 90% of their dues goals. Those with higher goals (i.e., further up the hierarchy), who are more senior, and who are less electorally vulnerable tend to give higher percentages. We cannot assess whether the same patterns characterize Republicans or hold in other cycles.

[13]To reiterate, the party sets an absolute member amount, not a tax rate. While reporting and available data make it clear that certain MCs fall short, others meet and even exceed their targets, and for many legislator-Congress pairs we are uncertain if they meet their obligations given we do not know their designated target.

[14]The Caucus continues to rail against their party's leadership and how it demands member funds. For example, see the document that it prepared for incoming Republican members in 2022 (Caucus, 2022).

We can employ this revealed tax rate to distinguish what a member holding valuable positions–be it as party leader, chair or minority ranking member on any House committee, or sitting on either a Top 3 or Top 5 lobbying intensity committee—gives versus others. We measure party leadership broadly, as a dummy variable scored one if the MC is Speaker, majority/minority leader, whip, deputy whip, campaign/steering/policy committee chair, caucus secretary, or assistant Speaker, and use dummy variables for committee chair or ranking member status ("CMTE Chair & Ranking"), and membership on either the 3 or 5 most intensively lobbied committees ("Top 3 CMTE" and "Top 5 CMTE"). We also define an encompassing variable, "All Positions."

These tax rate differences (Table 4),[15] comparing the group being considered (treatment mean) to all others (control mean), show that MCs holding valuable positions transfer significantly higher percentages of campaign funds to parties than others. Differences are particularly striking for party and committee leaders, while also significant for those on top committees.[16] Our results are consistent with party leaders being strongly vested in party success (or at least maintaining their party positions) and committee leaders funneling to parties a good deal of the considerable extra perks of their positions.

Table 4: Tax Rates: Leaders and Key Committee Members Relative to Other MCs

	Party Leadership	**Chair and Ranking**	**Top 3 CMTE**	**Top 5 CMTE**	**All Positions**
Treatment Mean	0.16	0.16	0.09	0.09	0.10
Control Mean	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05
t-value	-8.37	-10.95	-4.44	-9.13	-15.68
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Notes: Means are measured as the percentage of campaign dollars contributed. Control groups consist of all other members of Congress not holding the specified positions.

[15]We return to this table in evaluating Hypothesis 5.

[16]Patterns are analogous when we substitute contribution amounts.

5 Analysis and Results

We examine our hypotheses by initially running a trio of regressions that relate three sets of variables:

1. MCs' lagged total contributions ($Contributions_{it-1}$) and whether they currently hold valuable positions ($Positions_{it}$), where i is the member and t is the term.[17];

2. (2) Holding valuable positions and MCs' electoral contributions received ($Recipient_{it}$); and

3. (3) Holding valuable positions and MCs' contemporary contributions to their parties and party colleagues ($Contributions_{it}$).

In measuring contributions for the first regression, we distinguish giving overall, to parties, and to party members. Giving to parties primarily serves collective electoral goals, while giving to party members more readily generates personal credit. We further separate party member contributions between transfers to incumbents and to challengers and open-seat candidates, as the former should mainly advance individual career goals and the latter should principally advance party majority-building.

Specifications for these analyses are:

$$Positions_{it} = \alpha + \beta Contributions_{it-1} + \delta Positions_{it-1} + \lambda X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

$$Recipient_{it} = \alpha + \beta Positions_{it} + \delta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (2)$$

$$Contributions_{it} = \alpha + \beta Positions_{it} + \delta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}. \quad (3)$$

[17]MCs may provide support and prove their loyalty through means besides furnishing hard money. They may make primary endorsements, appear at fundraisers, and engage in other consequential activities. However, hard money is salient and, as the most intuitive and measurable indicator of loyalty, is tracked by party leaders.

The control variables in each equation, X_{it}, have six common measures:

1. *Seniority*, measured in terms;
2. *Majority*, coded one for majority party MCs and zero otherwise;
3. *Freshman*, coded one if a new House member and zero otherwise;
4. *Marginal District*, coded one if the election margin is less than 10% and zero otherwise;
5. *Party Unity*, how frequently legislators vote with their parties (Kelly & Lesniewski, 2025; Lewis et al., 2025); and
6. *Lagged (LES) Legislative Effectiveness Score*, as measured by Volden and Wiseman (2014).

For equation (1) we additionally include *Nontop Committee Leaders* (1 = chair/ranking on committees outside the high-lobby group), as such members may prefer their current leadership roles to rank-and-file slots on top-intensity committees. For equations (2) and (3), we add *Number of Committees* to account for portfolio breadth and exposure. Given the dependent variables, we use logit to estimate equation (1) and OLS for equations (2) and (3).

We strengthen our causal claims by taking two additional steps. First, for the analysis of equation (1), we follow best practices from similar studies and methodological guidance on robust estimation strategies (Wilkins, 2018) by including a lagged dependent variable. *Previous* is coded one if the MC held the same valued position in the prior term, and zero otherwise. Given the institutional stability of valued positions, especially for more

senior MCs, the association between *Previous* and *Positions* should be strong and positive. Table 5, which presents the number and percentage of MCs retaining valued positions across congressional terms, as well as the frequency and proportion of MCs who transition into such positions from one term to the next, shows the expected relationship.

Second, we reestimate Equation (2) with coarsened exact matching. Given that the nonrandom assignment of valued positions makes inferring causality problematic even when controlling for covariates, matching is a viable alternative. It does not fully eliminate potential omitted variable bias, but it reduces possible bias from nonrandom assignment relative to OLS (Dehejia & Wahba, 1999; Imai & van Dyk, 2004). Specifically, matching improves covariate balance between treatment and control groups (Imai & van Dyk, 2004) and reduces vulnerability to model misspecification (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007). Coarsened exact matching produces superior covariate balance and has advantageous statistical properties relative to alternatives (Iacus, King, & Porro, 2012). Within the matched pairs, we compare the effect of holding valued positions on both received contributions and subsequent donations. The trade-off of matching's minimization of confounding influences from other characteristics that might interfere with causal inference is that our number of observations is dramatically reduced.

Table 5: Movements to High Value Positions

	Party Leadership	**Comm. Leaders**	**Top 3 CMTE**	**Top 5 CMTE**	**All Positions**
Number of MCs	215 (5.2%)	419 (10.1%)	1,469 (35.3%)	2,436 (58.5%)	2,675 (64.3%)
Movements	85 (2.0%)	128 (3.1%)	469 (11.3%)	445 (10.7%)	533 (12.8%)

Notes: The number of members of Congress (MCs) and corresponding percentages are calculated relative to the total of 4,161 cases.

Results for equation (1), using total contributions for the time being, are consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2 (Table 6; see the complete results in Appendix Tables A1-A3.

Relationships between party contributions and acquiring valuable positions are positive. Findings also correspond to influence being concentrated higher in the hierarchically.

Per Hypothesis 1, getting on highly lobbied committees even as a rank-and-file member requires MC financial sacrifice. Nor, contrary to Hawkings (2017), are assignment outcomes consistent with providing positions to electorally vulnerable MCs (who should not be expected to provide large sums to their parties).

As for Hypothesis 2, results for committee leaders and extended House leadership are substantively stronger. Increasing contributions tenfold is associated with an 18% increase in the odds of holding any valuable position. For MCs, such an increase corresponds to 15% and 12% higher odds of being on a Top 3 or a Top 5 committee, respectively; for committee and party leaders, these odds are 36% and 251% higher. Collectively, our findings underscore the financial expectations placed on those seeking institutional power and their rewards, and that monetary support to the party is a key currency for advancement.

Table 6: Effect of Total Contributions on Advancement by Party

	Variables	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
All	Log(Contributions)	1.15***	1.12***	1.36**	3.51**	1.18***
		[1.08, 1.22]	[1.05, 1.19]	[1.09, 1.70]	[1.51, 8.15]	[1.13, 1.24]
	Party Unity	1.01	1.02	1.00	1.04	1.01
		[1.00, 1.03]	[1.00, 1.03]	[0.97, 1.03]	[0.96, 1.13]	[1.00, 1.03]
	Seniority	0.97	0.91***	1.11***	0.91**	1.00
		[0.94, 1.01]	[0.86, 0.96]	[1.07, 1.15]	[0.85, 0.97]	[0.95, 1.05]
Democrats	Log(Contributions)	1.07	1.05	1.11	2.69	1.12*
		[0.96, 1.19]	[0.95, 1.16]	[0.89, 1.38]	[0.88, 8.23]	[1.02, 1.24]
	Party Unity	1.01	1.01	0.98	0.99	1.01
		[0.99, 1.03]	[0.99, 1.03]	[0.94, 1.02]	[0.95, 1.04]	[0.99, 1.03]
	Seniority	1.00	0.92	1.17***	0.93	1.04
		[0.96, 1.04]	[0.83, 1.00]	[1.13, 1.22]	[0.86, 1.01]	[0.95, 1.13]
Republicans	Log(Contributions)	1.20***	1.17**	1.73	5.67***	1.22***
		[1.08, 1.34]	[1.06, 1.28]	[0.97, 3.09]	[2.18, 14.78]	[1.09, 1.37]
	Party Unity	1.01	1.02	1.03	1.26**	1.02
		[0.97, 1.05]	[0.99, 1.04]	[0.96, 1.10]	[1.09, 1.46]	[1.00, 1.05]
	Seniority	0.92*	0.86***	1.08***	0.80*	0.97
		[0.86, 0.99]	[0.82, 0.91]	[1.03, 1.12]	[0.68, 0.95]	[0.91, 1.02]

Notes: Odds ratios reported, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates from logistic regressions with term fixed effects; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Disaggregating contributions to examine whether different recipients are associated with more individualist or a party-centered strategies (Deering & Wahlbeck, 2006), we find that donations to party committees are most strongly associated with career advancement. Figure 2 shows that contributions to challengers (include open seat runners) or incumbents remain positive but show weaker or statistically insignificant effects (see Appendix Table A4). This suggests that financial support directed toward the party organization rather than to individual candidates is more effective in facilitating promotion within the congressional hierarchy. Contributions serving collective party goals, such as fulfilling party requirements or assisting vulnerable colleagues in frontline races, matter more for advancement than those aimed at building connections with safe incumbents or achieving transactional gains. As members move up the hierarchy, individualistic financial support becomes increasingly important. While meeting the party's fundraising targets is typically the key to securing a prestigious committee assignment, advancement to higher-level leadership positions—such as committee chairs or party leadership—often depends on cultivating strong personal networks. Figure 3 indicates that the most pronounced partisan difference appears in contributions directed to the parties' congressional campaign committees, where the GOP shows a significantly stronger association between contributions and advancement across all types of positions (see Appendix Tables A5). In contrast, the more individualistic forms of contributions (donations to challengers or incumbents) display little variation across parties, suggesting that the GOP has more fully institutionalized a party-oriented mechanism within its internal promotion process.

Figure 2: Effect of MC's Contributions to Different Recipients on Advancement (All Parties)

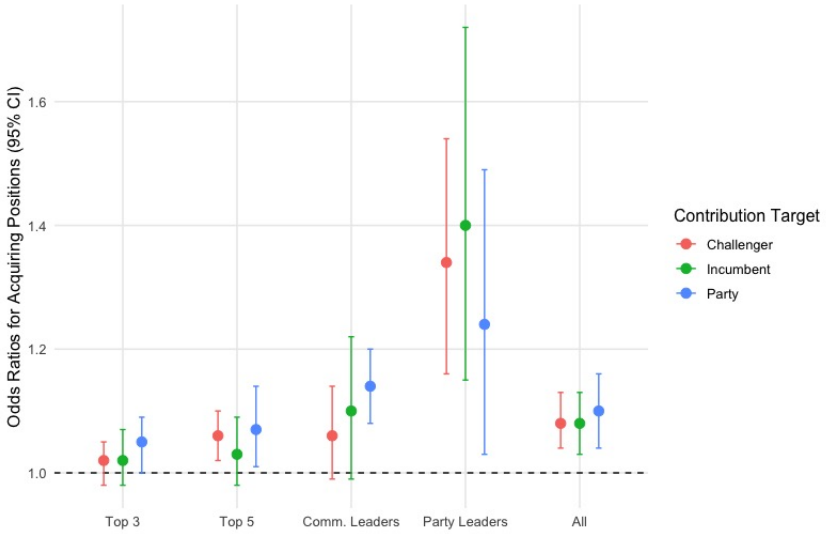
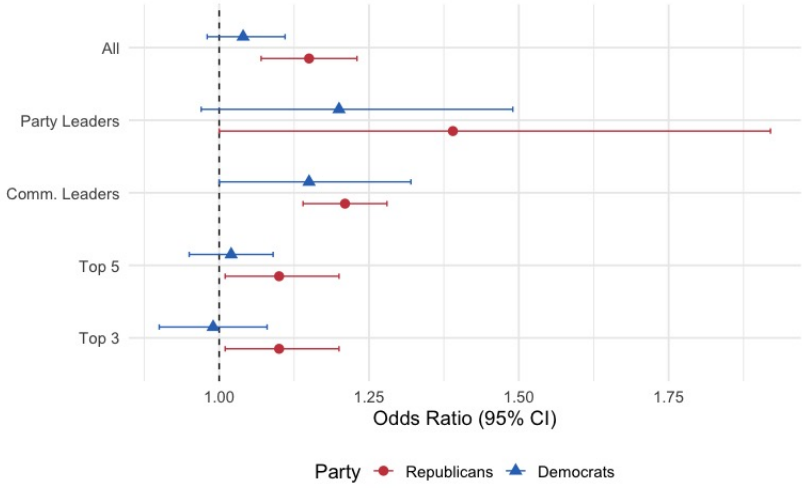


Figure 3: Effect of MCs' Contributions to Party CCC on Advancement by Party



Some may be concerned that the observed relationship between fundraising and advancement merely reflects members' strategic responses to anticipated shifts in majority control, implying that fundraising levels are driven by partisan turnover rather than institutional incentives. To address this concern, we estimate two interaction specifications: (1) between contributions and an indicator for majority switches; and (2) between contributions and

the chamber's majority margin. Across all models, the interaction terms are statistically insignificant, indicating that fundraising's effect remains stable across partisan transitions, varying margins of control, and party status. This consistency suggests that fundraising functions as a persistent mechanism of intra-party advancement rather than a short-term reaction to political turnover. In addition, when restricting the analysis to a relatively stable period, from the 112th to the 115th Congress when Republicans held the majority, the coefficients for total contributions and for contributions to party campaign committees remain positive and significant, which further confirms the robustness of the relationship between fundraising and advancement (see Appendix Tables A6-A9).

Hence, the results refine Heberlig and Larson (2012)'s theory: whereas prior research emphasized that the value of contributions depends on electoral vulnerability or majority status, our analysis shows that fundraising now consistently predicts advancement across contexts. It has become an institutionalized signal of party commitment, a standing expectation for ambitious legislators rather than a contingent response to electoral conditions.

Also, our results are not a function of subsets of prestigious positions. We conduct subgroup analyses of committee leadership by examining each of the top five committees individually—Ways and Means, Appropriations, Financial Services, Energy and Commerce, and Judiciary—and combining all remaining (non–top five) committee leaders into a sixth group.[18] Across all committee-specific comparisons, fundraising is a consistently significant predictor of advancement (see Appendix Table A10).

[18]For example, in the Ways and Means subgroup analysis, we compare all members who served on the Committee to those who held no valuable positions. This allows us to assess the effect of fundraising on advancement within a more homogeneous institutional setting, contrasting committee insiders with outsiders under comparable advancement opportunities.

Although not central to assessing our hypotheses, several ancillary results merit note. One is that other features previously emphasized, seniority and party unity, are less important than might be expected. Seniority is only positively and significantly associated with committee leader positions. Unlike advancement to party leadership positions or prestigious committee assignments, a strong positive association between committee leaders appointments and seniority remains, even among Republicans. Elsewhere it is insignificant or negative, implying further erosion of the seniority norm compared to previous findings (Cann, 2008). This suggests that, although the party increasingly values financial contributions and loyalty in many areas, the committee leaders selection process remains a hybrid system. Seniority no longer guarantees advancement, but it remains an important credential weighed alongside other factors. This partial persistence of seniority norms is consistent with earlier research (Deering & Wahlbeck, 2006) finding that institutional reforms weakened-but not entirely eliminated-the informal expectation that more experienced members are more suitable candidates for key committee leadership positions.

Another key distinction between our study and earlier work (Pearson, 2015; Heberlig & Larson, 2012) involves loyalty voting. Although prior research finds that roll-call loyalty consistently contributes to advancement, albeit without increasing over time, our results from the 108th to 117th Congresses indicate that its influence has become minimal. Across multiple types of positions, party loyalty voting is either statistically insignificant or substantively negligible. This suggests that, in the contemporary House, campaign contributions have not only surpassed legislative loyalty, but have effectively displaced it as the dominant criterion for political advancement.

Thus, with respect to our first two hypotheses, our findings suggest that financial contri-

butions have become the central currency for securing desirable committee and leadership positions in Congress. These results echo prior research (Heberlig, 2003; Heberlig et al., 2006; Heberlig & Larson, 2007), which shows that members more likely to obtain prestigious committee assignments tended to make larger financial contributions to their parties and colleagues. Compared with the relatively stable majorities of the pre–Republican Revolution era, today's heightened electoral competitiveness has raised the stakes for parties seeking chamber control (Pearson, 2015).

Our observed partisan differences are consistent with prior research showing that the structure of political advancement differs between the Democratic and Republican parties (Heberlig & Larson, 2012; Pearson, 2015; Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016; Thakur, 2025). As Pearson (2015) notes, Democrats continue to rely more heavily on seniority and caucus deliberation, whereas Republicans—especially since the 1995 reforms—have increasingly emphasized fundraising performance and partisan loyalty, often at the expense of seniority norms. This divergence is also institutionalized: for instance, Republicans impose a six-year term limit on committee chairs and ranking members, a rule that weakens the seniority system and may incentivize GOP members to prioritize fundraising capacity to a greater extent than their Democratic counterparts.

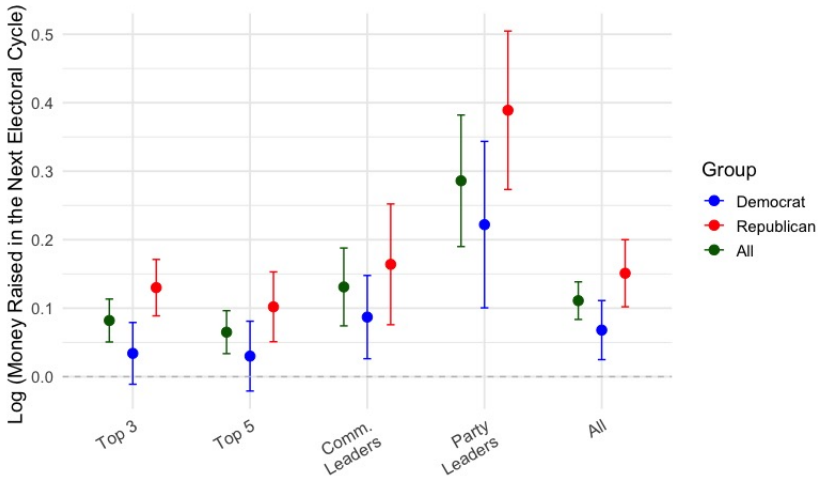
Turning to Hypotheses 3 and 4, Figure 4 shows that occupying valuable positions is associated with larger next-term receipts (see Appendix Tables A11–A13). The results are broadly consistent, positive, statistically significant, and robust across specifications. The magnitude of the coefficients follows a clear hierarchy: the largest effects are observed for party leaders, followed by committee chairs and ranking minority members, then members of Top 3 committees, and finally members of Top 5 committees. Consequently, the aggregate

position measure falls in the middle of this distribution. This pattern reinforces the inference that influence and value across congressional roles are distributed highly asymmetrically.

Results for some control variables are also notable. For example, those who are senior, ideologically extreme, and are on more committees receive fewer contributions. One possible explanation is that such members are less easily persuaded and influenced by interest groups, making them worse "investment" targets (Adler & Cayton, 2021). The negative result for number of committees shows that holding a position on exclusive committees or in the leadership can yield more contributions than holding several nonexclusive committee seats. On the other hand, freshmen and marginal district MCs receive more contributions, which can be explained by party-sponsored "Frontline" programs designed to help those considered vulnerable.

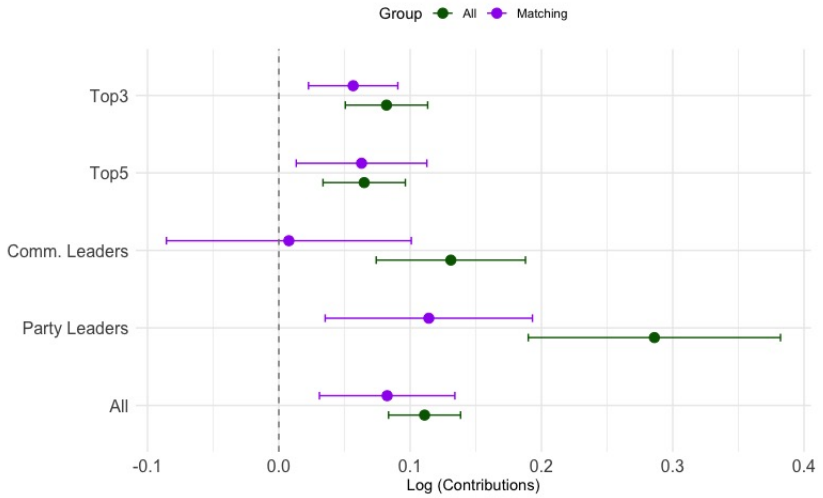
Figure 4 also illustrates the estimated effects of holding different positions on money raised in the subsequent electoral cycle (see Appendix Tables A14–A16). Across all models, party leaders exhibit the largest fundraising advantage, followed by committee leaders, members of top committees (Top 3 and Top 5), and the composite all positions category. While all effects are positive, their magnitudes differ substantially across parties. Coefficients associated with Republican members are consistently larger than their Democratic equivalents for each position type. This suggests that institutional advancement within the GOP is more strongly tied to campaign fundraising advantages. Estimates for the full sample lie between the partisan-specific values, consistent with averaging across asymmetric partisan dynamics. These results support the hypothesis that influence and value associated with congressional positions are highly uneven, and that parties differ in how effectively they translate institutional roles into fundraising advantages.

Figure 4: Holding Positions on Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle by Party



Our matching results (Figure 5), which account for the potential misattribution of greater fundraising to advantageous positions, are generally robust. After matching, prestigious committee assignments, leadership roles, and major positions continue to significantly boost members' fundraising. In contrast, committee chairs and ranking members do not exhibit a fundraising advantage. A plausible explanation is that members with characteristics similar to chairs and ranking members may simultaneously hold other positions that are more conducive to fundraising. Compared to the full sample estimates, the matched sample results are generally more conservative.

Figure 5: Future Received Contributions: Comparisons between OLS and Matching



Examining Hypothesis 5, the results shown in Figure 6 provide suggestive evidence, as those in valuable positions not only gained additional dollars but allocated larger percentages of their funds to the parties and colleagues.[19] Again, moving further up the hierarchy appears to be associated with substantial behavioral differences. Distinguishing by party, all coefficients are positive and significant but Republican relationships are once more stronger (see Appendix Tables A8–A10). It is worth noting that the coefficients for Democratic chairs and ranking members appear smaller. This is consistent with earlier evidence suggesting that seniority remains a stronger factor for Democrats. Consequently, Democratic MCs holding these positions may have less incentive to contribute compared to their GOP counterparts, as they recognize that their advancement is less closely tied to financial contributions. In summary, we have support for the contention that party taxes have bite, with effects conditioned by hierarchical position and party.

[19]To reiterate, the calculated tax rate is a function of money given to the parties relative to the money the MC raises; the party sets expectations about the absolute amount to be provided.

Figure 6: Holding Positions on Money Donated in the Next Electoral Cycle by Party

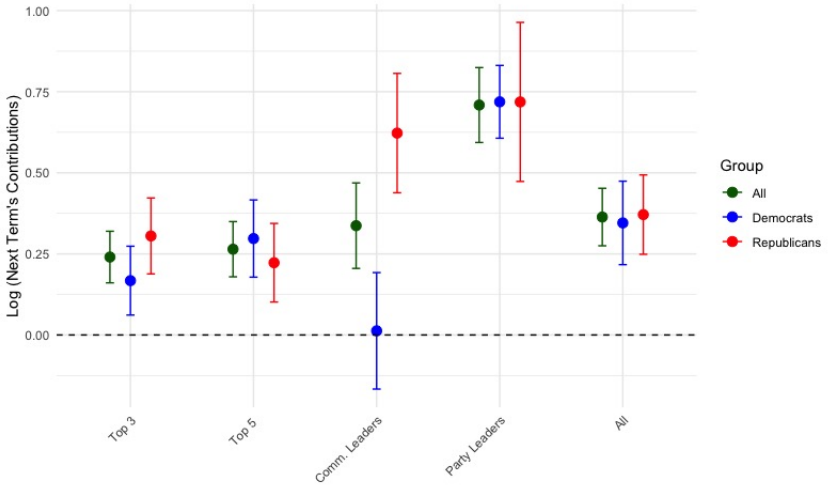
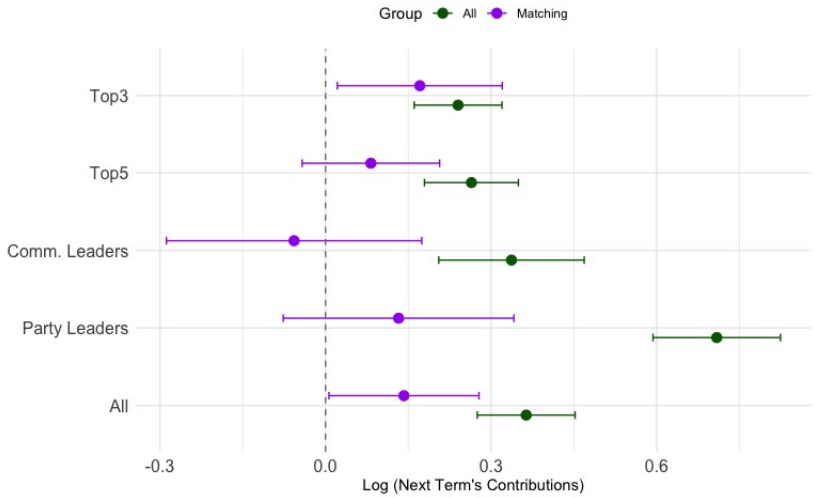


Figure 7 compares the results between the OLS and matching methods. The positive relationship between current positions and future contributions remains consistent across most positions. Notably, MCs holding valuable positions donate significantly more. For other positions, however, only MCs serving on the Top 3 committees show a significant increase in contributions to their party. The generally insignificant coefficients for other positions likely suggest that, once MCs secure a position, they have less incentive to continue donating to the same extent. This is consistent with incumbents, especially when majority control remains stable, facing a lower risk of losing their positions due to insufficient financial contributions as compared to procuring them in the first place. In the next section, we present supporting evidence for this claim using internal party documents from the Democrats.

Figure 7: Future Donated Contributions: Comparisons between OLS and Matching



5.1 Evidence From Internal Party Documents

We ideally would have party taxes assigned for all members for all years, but such information is unavailable. Various media outlets have provided these numbers via "Member Dues Reports" in a few instances for Democrats (Schweizer, 2013; Grim & Chávez, 2019). Such reports actually include information about several kinds of money that MCs were expected to pay: expected party dues, DCCC funds raised, and money given to vulnerable incumbents (Frontline & R2B Raised/Given). Beyond such direct expenditures, sometimes MCs were attributed "Points," as a function of financially supporting the party or hosting campaign events for the party and their colleagues. Members with higher points are believed to be rewarded with valuable positions (Grim & Chávez, 2019).

Table A17 in the Appendix summarizes data from these reports. As discussed, different dues and DCCC fundraising goals apply to different positions. We divide all positions into four tiers in descending order of financial expectations: (1) Leadership and Exclusive

Committee Chairs, (2) DCCC Chairs and Chief Deputy Whips, (3) Non-Exclusive Chairs and members of Exclusive Committees, and (4) all other members. Notably, only 15 percent of members paid their dues in full, and 17 percent met their DCCC fundraising goals. Members in higher-tier positions are more likely to meet these expectations: 32 percent of first-tier members paid their dues compared with only 10 percent of those in the fourth tier, and 37 percent of first-tier members achieved their DCCC goal compared with only 17 percent in the fourth tier.

Because the dependent variable reflects ordered tiers of positions, with one representing the highest and four the lowest tier, we estimate an ordered logit model to analyze members' advancement prospects. The regression results (Table 7) show that whether members paid their dues or met their DCCC goals is not significantly related to advancement. However, members who raised larger amounts through the "Red to Blue" (R2B) program are significantly more likely to move into higher-tier positions in the following term. In addition, members' point totals are significantly and positively associated with advancement, suggesting that active party service continues to play an important role in shaping members' future positions.

This implies among Democrats, neither paying off party dues nor meeting the DCCC's fundraising goal has a significant effect on securing positions, suggesting that the party does not penalize members who fall short of these goals. Instead, those who raised more money, particularly through the Red to Blue (R2B) program, were significantly more likely to move into higher-tier positions. This pattern indicates that the Democratic caucus rewards proactive fundraising efforts rather than enforcing strict compliance with contribution quotas.

Table 7: Effects of Fundraising and Party Service on Advancement within the Democrats

	Dependent Variable: Tier of the Position in the Next Term			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fundraising Variables				
Paid off Dues	0.65			
	(0.39, 1.07)			
Achieved DCCC Goal	1.02			
	(0.63, 1.66)			
Log(R2B Raised Money)	0.92*			
	(0.85, 0.99)			
Log(Total Raised Money)		0.83**		
		(0.74, 0.93)		
Standardized Fundraising Gap			1.42	
			(0.98, 2.40)	
Performance and Service Variables				
Points				0.99**
				(0.99, 1.00)
Position Controls				
Current Position	15.02***	14.39***	15.91***	14.47***
	(11.48, 19.87)	(10.99, 19.07)	(12.20, 21.00)	(11.03, 19.19)
Num. Obs.	729	729	729	729

Notes: Coefficients are presented with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Models (1)–(4) include different sets of fundraising and performance predictors. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

Our analysis advances understandings of congressional committees and legislative parties by clarifying how coveted positions are allocated—and with what consequences—in today's highly competitive House. Using new data and updated methods, we qualify conventional accounts of intra-party advancement.

First, while parties can extract additional resources from members holding high-ranking committee and leadership positions, this party tax does not bite equally. Even after formal dues systems were institutionalized, many rank-and-file members meet their electoral and career goals without approaching their assigned contribution targets, contrary to alarmist

claims from critics such as Representative Buck or Issue One.

Second, enforcement capacity is asymmetric across parties. Despite internal conflicts over leadership (e.g., frequent turnover among top House Republicans), the GOP appears more effective than the Democrats at securing member contributions. Intriguingly, party leaders themselves contribute substantial sums—likely a credibility strategy to justify demanding funds from others and to signal commitment to collective goals. Thus, "strong" parties impose real costs on their leadership.

Third, we reaffirm that committee influence is highly concentrated among leaders, but with some nuance. Although these positions confer substantial benefits, a significant portion of these gains is recycled back into party coffers and to colleagues. In this respect, our findings both support and refine the "cardinals versus clerics" framework: Committee cardinals wield outsized power but must also share more of the spoils than rank-and-file members.

Finally, as underscored by using coarsened exact matching to address causality, we uncover a reinforcing feedback loop: Financial supporters are rewarded with desirable positions that further boost their fundraising capacity which, in turn, facilitates greater party support. This cyclical process deepens the entrenchment of partisan resource flows and magnifies the strategic value of monetary contributions.

These findings invite several extensions. Future work should compare the predictive validity of financial contributions versus roll-call unity as measures of party loyalty in different partisan and temporal contexts. Scholars might also examine the micro-mechanisms of enforcement (e.g., informal sanctions, resource access, agenda control), the heterogeneity of expectations across factions, and how institutional shocks (e.g., redistricting, campaign finance rules) recalibrate the contribution–advancement nexus. Taken together, our results

suggest that in the contemporary House, money is not merely a by-product of influence—it is a central currency through which influence is acquired, maintained, and disciplined.

References

Adler, E. S., & Cayton, A. (2021). Shelter in a storm: Campaign fundraising, party competition, and the changing nature of congressional committee assignments. *Congress & the Presidency*, *48*(3), 287-318.

Asmussen, N., & Ramey, A. (2018). When loyalty is tested: Do party leaders use committee assignments as rewards? *Congress & the Presidency*, *45*(1), 41–65.

Bade, R., & Caygle, H. (2016). The price of power. *Politico*. Retrieved from `https://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/house-\newlinefreedom-caucus-republican-donors-228380`

Baker, R. K. (1989). *The new fat cats: Members of Congress as political benefactors*. Priority Press Publications.

Beckel, M. (2017). The price of power. *Open Secrets*. Retrieved from `https://issueone.org/articles/price-power-report/`

Bertrand, M., Bombardini, M., & Trebbi, F. (2014). Is it whom you know or what you know? An empirical assessment of the lobbying process. *American Economic Review*, *104*(12), 3885–3920.

Bonica, A., & Cox, G. W. (2018). Ideological extremists in the U.S. Congress: Out of step but still in office. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *13*(2), 207-236.

Buck, K. (2017). *Drain the swamp: How Washington corruption is worse than you think*. Simon and Schuster.

Burgat, C. (2017). Problems with the committee tax in Congress. *Brookings Institution*. Retrieved from `https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/07/21/problems-with-the-committee-tax-in-congress/`

Cann, D. M. (2008). *Sharing the wealth: Member contributions and the exchange theory of party influence in the US House of Representatives*. State University of New York Press.

Cann, D. M., & Sidman, A. H. (2011). Exchange theory, political parties, and the allocation of federal distributive benefits in the House of Representatives. *Journal of Politics*, *73*(4), 1128–1141.

Canon, D. T. (1989). The institutionalization of leadership in the U.S. Congress. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *14*(3), 415–443.

Caucus, H. F. (2022, October). *Hfc road map* (Tech. Rep.). Fox News.

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (2007). *Legislative leviathan: Party government in the House*. Cambridge University Press.

Currinder, M. (2008). *Money in the House: Campaign funds and congressional party politics*. Hachette.

Deering, C. J., & Smith, S. S. (1997). *Committees in Congress*. SAGE.

Deering, C. J., & Wahlbeck, P. J. (2006). U.S. House committee chair selection: Republicans play musical chairs in the 107th Congress. *American Politics Research*, *34*(2), 223-242.

Dehejia, R. H., & Wahba, S. (1999). Causal effects in nonexperimental studies: Reevaluating the evaluation of training programs. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*,

94(448), 1053–1062.

Drutman, L., Grossmann, M., & LaPira, T. M. (2014). The interest group top tier: More groups, concentrated clout. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=2453733

Eilperin, J. (2006). *Fight club politics: How partisanship is poisoning the House of Representatives*. Rowman and Littleeld.

Federal Election Commission. (2023). Campaign finance data. Retrieved from https://www.fec.gov/data/browse-data/?tab=bulk-data

Fenno, R. F. (1973). *Congressmen in committees* (Vol. 6). Little, Brown.

Fouirnaies, A., & Hall, A. B. (2018). How do interest groups seek access to committees? *American Journal of Political Science*, *62*(1), 132–147.

Fowler, L. L., Douglass, S. R., & Clark Jr, W. D. (1980). The electoral effects of House committee assignments. *Journal of Politics*, *42*(1), 307–319.

Francis, K., & Bramlett, B. (2017). Precongressional careers and committees: The impact of congruence. *American Politics Research*, *45*(5), 755–789.

Frisch, S. A., & Kelly, S. Q. (2006). *Committee assignment politics in the U.S. House of Representatives* (Vol. 5). University of Oklahoma Press.

Green, M. N., & Harris, D. B. (2007). Goal salience and the 2006 race for house majority leader. *Political Research Quarterly*, *60*(4), 618–630.

Grier, K. B., & Munger, M. C. (1991). Committee assignments, constituent preferences, and campaign contributions. *Economic Inquiry*, *29*(1), 24–43.

Grim, R., & Chávez, A. (2019). Here's how much the democratic party charges to be on each House committee. *The Intercept*. Retrieved from https://theintercept.com/2019/09/03/dccc-house-committees-dues/

Grossmann, M., & Hopkins, D. A. (2016). *Asymmetric politics: Ideological Republicans and group interest Democrats*. Oxford University Press.

Hasecke, E. B., & Mycoff, J. D. (2007). Party loyalty and legislative success: Are loyal majority party members more successful in the U.S. House of Representatives? *Political Research Quarterly*, *60*(4), 607–617.

Hawkings, D. (2017). For 20, a New Year's boost in House legislative sway. `https://rollcall.com/2017/01/10/for-20-a-new-years-boost-in-house-legislative-sway/`.

Heberlig, E. S. (2003). Congressional parties, fundraising, and committee ambition. *Political Research Quarterly*, *56*(2), 151–161.

Heberlig, E. S., Hetherington, M., & Larson, B. (2006). The price of leadership: Campaign money and the polarization of congressional parties. *Journal of Politics*, *68*(4), 992–1005.

Heberlig, E. S., & Larson, B. A. (2007). Party fundraising, descriptive representation, and the battle for majority control: Shifting leadership appointment strategies in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1990-2002. *Social Science Quarterly*, *88*(2), 404–421.

Heberlig, E. S., & Larson, B. A. (2012). *Congressional parties, institutional ambition, and the financing of majority control*. University of Michigan Press.

Herrnson, P. S. (1997). *Money and motives: Spending in House elections* (Vol. 6). CQ Press.

Ho, D. E., Imai, K., King, G., & Stuart, E. A. (2007). Matching as nonparametric preprocessing for reducing model dependence in parametric causal inference. *Political Analysis*, *15*(3), 199–236. doi: 10.1093/pan/mpl013

Hopkins, D. J. (2018). *The increasingly United States: How and why American political behavior nationalized*. University of Chicago Press.

Iacus, S. M., King, G., & Porro, G. (2012). Causal inference without balance checking: Coarsened exact matching. *Political Analysis*, *20*(1), 1–24.

Imai, K., & van Dyk, D. A. (2004). Causal inference with general treatment regimes. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *99*(467), 854-866.

Jacobson, G. C. (1985). Party organization and distribution of campaign resources: Republicans and Democrats in 1982. *Political Science Quarterly*, *100*(4), 603-–625.

Jenkins, N. R. (2022). *Getting what you want, or going where you're told? clarifying the role of caucus fundraising in the committee assignment process.*

Kanthak, K. (2007). Crystal elephants and committee chairs: Campaign contributions and leadership races in the U.S. House of Representatives. *American Politics Research*, *35*(3), 389-406.

Kelly, R., & Lesniewski, N. (2025). Vote studies 2024: House GOP unity inched up as Senate Democrats saw record success on votes that split the parties. *Roll Call*. Retrieved from `https://rollcall.com/2025/02/18/congress-party-unity-vote-studies/`

Kim, I. S. (2018). Lobbyview: Firm-level lobbying congressional bills database. Retrieved from `https://www.lobbyview.org/data-download`

Kolodny, R., & Dwyre, D. (1998). Party-orchestrated activities for legislative party goals: Campaigns for majorities in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1990s. *Party Politics*, *4*(3), 275–295.

Krehbiel, K. (1993). Where's the party? *British Journal of Political Science*, *23*(2), 235–266.

Larson, B. A. (2004). Incumbent contributions to the congressional campaign committees, 1990-2000. *Political Research Quarterly*, *57*(1), 155–161.

Lee, F. E. (2016). *Insecure majorities: Congress and the perpetual campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leighton, W. A., & Lopez, E. J. (2002). Committee assignments and the cost of party loyalty. *Political Research Quarterly*, *55*(1), 59–90.

Lewis, J. B., Poole, K., Rosenthal, H., Boche, A., Rudkin, A., & Sonnet, L. (2025). *Voteview: Congressional roll-call votes database.* Retrieved from `https://voteview.com/`

Maltzman, F. (1997). *Competing principals*. University of Michigan Press.

Masters, N. A. (1961). Committee assignments in the House of Representatives. *American Political Science Review*, *55*(2), 345–357.

Meinke, S. R. (2016). *Leadership organizations in the House of Representatives: Party participation and partisan politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

O'Connor, P. (2008, Sept 23). GOP threatens stingy lawmakers. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from `https://www.politico.com/story/2008/09/gop-threatens-stingy-lawmakers-013770` (Online article)

Pearson, K. (2015). *Party discipline in the U.S. House of Representatives*. University of Michigan Press.

Peters, R. M. J., & Rosenthal, C. S. (2010). *Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the new American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Powell, E. N. (2015). Legislative consequences of fundraising influence. In *American Political Science Association annual meeting, San Francisco, CA, September.*

Powell, E. N., & Grimmer, J. (2016). Money in exile: Campaign contributions and committee

access. *Journal of Politics*, *78*(4), 974–988.

Schlesinger, J. A. (1966). *Ambition and politics: Political careers in the United States*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Schweizer, P. (2013). *Extortion: How politicians extract your money, buy votes, and line their own pockets*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Shepsle, K. A. (1978). *The giant jigsaw puzzle: Democratic committee assignments in the modern House*. University of Chicago Press.

Sorauf, F. J. (1994). *Inside campaign finance: Myths and realities*. Yale University Press.

Stewart, C. (2021). *House Standing Committee Assignments, 103rd - 117th Congress*. Harvard Dataverse. Retrieved from `https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/XLIHUC`

Thakur, A. (2025). A matching theory perspective on legislative organization: assignment of committees. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1–25.

Volden, C., & Wiseman, A. E. (2014). *Legislative effectiveness in the United States Congress: The lawmakers*. Cambridge University Press.

Westefield, L. P. (1974). Majority party leadership and the committee system in the House of Representatives. *American Political Science Review*, *68*(4), 1593–1604.

Wilkins, A. S. (2018). To lag or not to lag?: Re-evaluating the use of lagged dependent variables in regression analysis. *Political Science Research and Methods*, *6*(2), 393–411.

Zeleny, J. (2006). G.O.P gains big fund-raising advantage. *New York Times*. Retrieved from `https://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/21/us/politics/21donate.html`

Appendix

Table A1: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (All Parties)

	Dependent Variable: Positions				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Log(Contributions)	1.15***	1.12***	1.36**	3.51**	1.18***
	[1.08, 1.22]	[1.05, 1.19]	[1.09, 1.70]	[1.51, 8.15]	[1.13, 1.24]
Party Unity	1.01	1.02	1.00	1.04	1.01
	[1.00, 1.03]	[1.00, 1.03]	[0.97, 1.03]	[0.96, 1.13]	[1.00, 1.03]
Seniority	0.97	0.91***	1.11***	0.91**	1.00
	[0.94, 1.01]	[0.86, 0.96]	[1.07, 1.15]	[0.85, 0.97]	[0.95, 1.05]
Freshmen	1.10	1.84**	0.16	0.00***	1.85**
	[0.63, 1.95]	[1.23, 2.76]	[0.02, 1.22]	[0.00, 0.00]	[1.23, 2.77]
Marginal Dist	0.89	0.79	0.77	0.85	0.86
	[0.72, 1.11]	[0.56, 1.11]	[0.53, 1.11]	[0.35, 2.08]	[0.65, 1.13]
Majority	1.25**	1.63**	0.81	0.88	1.32*
	[1.06, 1.47]	[1.13, 2.35]	[0.56, 1.18]	[0.61, 1.28]	[1.05, 1.67]
LES	1.00	1.05	1.02	0.95	0.95
	[0.92, 1.09]	[0.95, 1.17]	[0.93, 1.11]	[0.84, 1.08]	[0.88, 1.01]
Previous Positions	18.21***	230.98***	64.16***	73.23***	43.33***
	[6.17, 53.72]	[111.44, 478.73]	[35.23, 116.84]	[33.17, 161.66]	[19.66, 95.47]
NonTop Comm Leaders	0.66	0.23***			
	[0.37, 1.16]	[0.10, 0.52]			
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,139	4,139	4,139	4,139	4,139
Log-Likelihood	-1,913.1	-1,246.1	-671.8	-455.8	-1,576.2

Notes: Odds ratios reported, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates from logistic regressions with term fixed effects; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$. A value of 0.00 indicates an estimated odds ratio very close to zero due to rounding.

Table A2: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (Democrats)

	Dependent Variable: Positions				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Log(Contributions)	1.07	1.05	1.11	2.69	1.12*
	[0.96, 1.19]	[0.95, 1.16]	[0.89, 1.38]	[0.88, 8.23]	[1.02, 1.24]
Party Unity	1.01	1.01	0.98	0.99	1.01
	[0.99, 1.03]	[0.99, 1.03]	[0.94, 1.02]	[0.95, 1.04]	[0.99, 1.03]
Seniority	1.00	0.92	1.17***	0.93	1.04
	[0.96, 1.04]	[0.83, 1.00]	[1.13, 1.22]	[0.86, 1.01]	[0.95, 1.13]
Freshmen	0.96	1.44	0.50	0.00***	1.73
	[0.39, 2.36]	[0.70, 2.94]	[0.06, 4.19]	[0.00, 0.00]	[0.93, 3.20]
Marginal Dist	0.85	0.76	0.46	0.52	0.98
	[0.62, 1.18]	[0.43, 1.34]	[0.15, 1.40]	[0.09, 3.16]	[0.62, 1.56]
LES	1.03	1.19	1.00	1.04	1.12
	[0.84, 1.27]	[0.99, 1.43]	[0.72, 1.38]	[0.91, 1.19]	[0.99, 1.27]
Previous Positions	18.26***	242.61***	86.72***	116.60***	41.02***
	[6.07, 54.94]	[111.83, 526.50]	[42.51, 176.97]	[41.38, 328.59]	[18.54, 90.83]
NonTop Comm Leaders	0.54	0.38*			
	[0.25, 1.18]	[0.15, 0.94]			
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,056	2,056	2,056	2,056	2,056
Log-Likelihood	-937.1	-619.7	-290.5	-248.0	-765.7

Notes: Odds ratios reported, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates from logistic regressions with term fixed effects; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$. A value of 0.00 indicates an estimated odds ratio very close to zero due to rounding.

Table A3: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (Republicans)

	Dependent Variable: Positions				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Log(Contributions)	1.20***	1.17**	1.73	5.67***	1.22***
	[1.08, 1.34]	[1.06, 1.28]	[0.97, 3.09]	[2.18, 14.78]	[1.09, 1.37]
Party Unity	1.01	1.02	1.03	1.26**	1.02
	[0.97, 1.05]	[0.99, 1.04]	[0.96, 1.10]	[1.09, 1.46]	[1.00, 1.05]
Seniority	0.92*	0.86***	1.08***	0.80*	0.97
	[0.86, 0.99]	[0.82, 0.91]	[1.03, 1.12]	[0.68, 0.95]	[0.91, 1.02]
Freshmen	1.06	1.99**	0.00***	0.00***	1.86*
	[0.61, 1.86]	[1.30, 3.04]	[0.00, 0.00]	[0.00, 0.00]	[1.16, 2.97]
Marginal Dist	0.95	0.77	0.88	1.62	0.75**
	[0.69, 1.31]	[0.56, 1.06]	[0.62, 1.24]	[0.44, 5.96]	[0.62, 0.91]
LES	1.06	1.17*	1.03	1.03	0.96
	[0.90, 1.25]	[1.03, 1.33]	[0.96, 1.10]	[0.95, 1.13]	[0.86, 1.07]
Previous Positions	18.77***	356.60***	47.20***	47.05***	48.66***
	[6.45, 54.63]	[178.49, 712.37]	[22.13, 100.69]	[14.29, 154.92]	[21.31, 111.04]
NonTop Comm Leaders	0.68	1.21***			
	[0.35, 1.34]	[1.10, 1.33]			
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082
Log-Likelihood	-962.9	-599.6	-364.2	-188.6	-793.9

Notes: Odds ratios reported, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates from logistic regressions with term fixed effects; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$. A value of 0.00 indicates an estimated odds ratio very close to zero due to rounding.

Table A4: Effect of MC's Contributions to Different Recipients on Advancement (All Parties)

Recipient Type	**Top 3**	**Top 5**	**Comm. Leaders**	**Party Leaders**	**All Positions**
Party	1.05* [1.00, 1.09]	1.07* [1.01, 1.14]	1.14*** [1.08, 1.20]	1.24** [1.03, 1.49]	1.10*** [1.04, 1.16]
Challenger	1.02 [0.98, 1.05]	1.06** [1.02, 1.10]	1.06 [0.99, 1.14]	1.34*** [1.16, 1.54]	1.08*** [1.04, 1.13]
Incumbent	1.02 [0.98, 1.07]	1.03 [0.98, 1.09]	1.10 [0.99, 1.22]	1.40*** [1.15, 1.72]	1.08*** [1.03, 1.13]

Notes: Odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of obtaining committee or leadership positions. Control variables are identical to those in Tables A1–A3. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A5: Effect of MCs' Contributions on Advancement by Recipient Types

		Top 3	**Top 5**	**Comm. Leaders**	**Party Leaders**	**All Positions**
Party CCC	Democrats	0.99 [0.90, 1.08]	1.02 [0.95, 1.09]	1.15 [1.00, 1.32]	1.20 [0.97, 1.49]	1.04 [0.98, 1.11]
	Republicans	1.10* [1.01, 1.20]	1.10* [1.01, 1.20]	1.21*** [1.14, 1.28]	1.39* [1.00, 1.92]	1.15*** [1.07, 1.23]
Challengers	Democrats	0.96 [0.89, 1.02]	1.02 [0.96, 1.09]	0.98 [0.90, 1.08]	1.46*** [1.19, 1.79]	1.05 [1.00, 1.11]
	Republicans	1.05 [0.97, 1.13]	1.05 [0.98, 1.14]	1.13* [1.00, 1.29]	1.23 [0.95, 1.59]	1.08* [1.00, 1.17]
Incumbents	Democrats	1.04 [0.96, 1.12]	1.00 [0.91, 1.11]	1.10 [0.95, 1.26]	1.44*** [1.19, 1.75]	1.05 [0.98, 1.13]
	Republicans	1.02 [0.95, 1.10]	1.08 [0.98, 1.20]	1.10 [0.97, 1.26]	1.39* [1.00, 1.92]	1.11* [1.02, 1.22]

Notes: Odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of obtaining committee or leadership positions, estimated separately for Democrats and Republicans. Each section corresponds to a different recipient type of Members' contributions: Party congressional campaign committees (CCC), challengers, and incumbents. Control variables are identical to those in Tables A1–A3. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A6: Interaction of MC's Contributions to Party CCC with Majority Switch and Gap

Variable	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Model A: Majority Switch					
Log(Contributions)	1.06* [1.01, 1.12]	1.09* [1.01, 1.18]	1.12*** [1.05, 1.20]	1.33*** [1.18, 1.51]	1.10** [1.03, 1.17]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Switch	0.94 [0.82, 1.09]	0.94 [0.86, 1.04]	1.05 [0.93, 1.18]	0.76 [0.57, 1.02]	0.99 [0.93, 1.06]
Model B: Majority Gap					
Log(Contributions)	1.05* [1.00, 1.11]	1.07* [1.01, 1.13]	1.14*** [1.08, 1.21]	1.25* [1.03, 1.51]	1.10*** [1.06, 1.15]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Gap	1.04 [0.98, 1.12]	1.00 [0.95, 1.06]	1.03* [1.00, 1.06]	1.02 [0.90, 1.16]	1.04 [0.99, 1.09]

Notes: Odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of obtaining committee or leadership positions. Model A includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and Majority Switch, indicating whether the majority party changes in the next term; Model B includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and the standardized Majority Gap, defined as the seat margin between the majority and minority parties. All models include the same control variables as in Tables A1–A3. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A7: Interaction of MC's Contributions to Challengers with Majority Switch and Gap

Variable	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Model A: Majority Switch					
Log(Contributions)	1.01 [0.96, 1.07]	1.04* [1.00, 1.08]	1.07 [0.98, 1.16]	1.23** [1.08, 1.39]	1.06* [1.01, 1.10]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Switch	1.00 [0.91, 1.10]	1.05 [0.94, 1.17]	0.98 [0.86, 1.11]	1.50** [1.15, 1.96]	1.07 [0.99, 1.16]
Model B: Majority Gap					
Log(Contributions)	1.02 [0.98, 1.06]	1.06** [1.02, 1.10]	1.06 [0.99, 1.14]	1.33*** [1.16, 1.53]	1.08*** [1.03, 1.13]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Gap	1.04 [1.00, 1.08]	0.98** [0.96, 0.99]	1.01 [0.95, 1.07]	0.97 [0.90, 1.04]	1.01 [0.98, 1.04]

Notes: Odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of obtaining committee or leadership positions. Model A includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and Majority Switch, indicating whether the majority party changes in the next term; Model B includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and the standardized Majority Gap, defined as the seat margin between the majority and minority parties. All models include the same control variables as in Tables A1–A3. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A8: Interaction of MC's Contributions to Incumbents with Majority Switch and Gap

Variable	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Model A: Majority Switch					
Log(Contributions)	1.04 [0.99, 1.10]	1.04 [0.99, 1.10]	1.12 [0.99, 1.26]	1.33* [1.06, 1.68]	1.07*** [1.03, 1.11]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Switch	0.94 [0.85, 1.03]	0.96 [0.83, 1.11]	0.94 [0.81, 1.09]	1.20 [0.89, 1.62]	1.03 [0.95, 1.11]
Model B: Majority Gap					
Log(Contributions)	1.03 [0.98, 1.07]	1.03 [0.98, 1.08]	1.10 [0.99, 1.22]	1.39** [1.14, 1.70]	1.08*** [1.03, 1.12]
Log(Contributions) × Majority Gap	1.06 [1.00, 1.12]	0.95*** [0.93, 0.97]	1.02 [0.94, 1.11]	1.02 [0.93, 1.12]	0.99 [0.96, 1.02]

Notes: Odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of obtaining committee or leadership positions. Model A includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and Majority Switch, indicating whether the majority party changes in the next term; Model B includes an interaction between Log(Contributions) and the standardized Majority Gap, defined as the seat margin between the majority and minority parties. All models include the same control variables as in Tables A1–A3. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A9: Subset Analysis (112 to 115 Congress)

	Type of Contribution	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Total Contributions	Log(Contribution)	1.20***	1.11	1.62*	4.04*	1.18***
		[1.10, 1.31]	[1.00, 1.23]	[1.04, 2.52]	[1.33, 12.29]	[1.10, 1.27]
	Party Unity	1.02*	1.02*	1.03	0.98	1.02*
		[1.00, 1.04]	[1.00, 1.04]	[0.98, 1.08]	[0.94, 1.02]	[1.00, 1.04]
	Seniority	0.97	0.94	1.09*	0.94***	1.01
		[0.93, 1.02]	[0.85, 1.05]	[1.02, 1.17]	[0.91, 0.97]	[0.94, 1.09]
Contributions to Party CCC	Log(Contribution, 2020$)	1.03	1.06*	1.21*	1.37**	1.11***
		[0.95, 1.11]	[1.01, 1.12]	[1.05, 1.41]	[1.12, 1.68]	[1.08, 1.14]
	Party Unity	1.02*	1.02*	1.03	0.97	1.02
		[1.00, 1.04]	[1.00, 1.03]	[0.98, 1.08]	[0.94, 1.01]	[1.00, 1.04]
	Seniority	0.98	0.95	1.10**	0.98	1.01
		[0.93, 1.03]	[0.85, 1.06]	[1.02, 1.17]	[0.95, 1.02]	[0.94, 1.10]

Notes: Table reports odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates are from logistic regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A10: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Positions across Different Committees

	Ways	Financial	Energy	Appropriations	Judiciary	Nontop Chairs
Log(Contributions)	1.69**	1.11*	1.34***	1.29***	1.01	1.69**
	[1.19, 2.40]	[1.02, 1.21]	[1.17, 1.55]	[1.12, 1.48]	[0.92, 1.11]	[1.19, 2.40]
Party Unity	1.04	0.99	1.01	0.98	1.13***	1.00
	[0.99, 1.09]	[0.97, 1.01]	[0.96, 1.06]	[0.95, 1.01]	[1.08, 1.19]	[0.96, 1.04]
Seniority	1.04	0.97	1.00	1.06	1.04	1.22***
	[0.96, 1.13]	[0.93, 1.02]	[0.94, 1.06]	[1.00, 1.13]	[0.98, 1.11]	[1.12, 1.34]
Freshmen	0.19	6.24***	0.35	0.89	3.95*	0.40
	[0.02, 1.46]	[3.71, 10.51]	[0.08, 1.48]	[0.36, 2.19]	[1.30, 12.03]	[0.08, 1.91]
Marginal Dist	1.03	0.99	0.99	0.82	0.33**	0.51**
	[0.83, 1.28]	[0.83, 1.17]	[0.81, 1.22]	[0.68, 0.99]	[0.18, 0.63]	[0.32, 0.82]
Majority	2.02*	1.38**	1.71**	2.24***	1.24	0.75
	[1.17, 3.49]	[1.06, 1.80]	[1.16, 2.53]	[1.55, 3.24]	[0.94, 1.63]	[0.52, 1.09]
LES	0.86**	0.86**	0.84***	0.75***	1.04	1.10
	[0.78, 0.95]	[0.77, 0.96]	[0.76, 0.93]	[0.67, 0.84]	[0.93, 1.16]	[0.94, 1.28]
Previous Positions	58.05***	102.39***	63.98***	78.34***	38.50***	16.70***
	[20.86, 161.60]	[48.43, 216.47]	[30.30, 134.93]	[36.55, 167.82]	[7.60, 194.85]	[6.97, 39.96]
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,860	2,086	2,001	2,031	1,827	1,671
Log-Likelihood	-419.7	-723.5	-548.7	-533.3	-540.0	-312.1

Notes: Odds ratios reported, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Estimates from logistic regressions with term fixed effects; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table A11: Holding Positions on Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (All Parties)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Recipient Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.082***	0.065***	0.131***	0.286***	0.111***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.029)	(0.049)	(0.014)
unity	−0.003***	−0.003***	−0.003**	−0.004***	−0.004***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
terms	−0.009**	−0.010**	−0.013***	−0.010***	−0.011***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
fresh	0.063**	0.062**	0.038	0.058**	0.069***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.019)
weak	0.224***	0.227***	0.223***	0.225***	0.230***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
major	0.069***	0.068***	0.076***	0.076***	0.067***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.015)
laggedles	0.014*	0.014*	0.009	0.015**	0.013*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
cm_count	−0.039***	−0.038***	−0.052***	−0.038***	−0.030**
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Constant	6.432***	6.424***	6.481***	6.481***	6.400***
	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.095)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,141	4,141	4,141	4,141	4,141
R^2	0.138	0.134	0.137	0.159	0.145

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A12: Holding Positions on Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (Democrats)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Recipient Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.034	0.030	0.087**	0.222***	0.068**
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.062)	(0.022)
Party Unity	−0.004**	−0.004**	−0.004**	−0.004**	−0.004**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Seniority	−0.008	−0.008	−0.011*	−0.008	−0.009*
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Freshman	0.083	0.084*	0.068	0.087*	0.090*
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Marginal Dist	0.245***	0.247***	0.245***	0.249***	0.249***
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.045)
Majority	0.195***	0.194***	0.201***	0.194***	0.198***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.009)
LES	0.024*	0.025*	0.020*	0.025**	0.024*
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Number of CMTE	−0.036*	−0.035*	−0.042**	−0.027*	−0.029*
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.014)
Constant	6.526***	6.521***	6.536***	6.516***	6.495***
	(0.134)	(0.131)	(0.136)	(0.137)	(0.131)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,058	2,058	2,058	2,058	2,058
R^2	0.197	0.196	0.199	0.221	0.202

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A13: Holding Positions on Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (Republicans)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Recipient Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.130***	0.102***	0.164***	0.389***	0.151***
	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.045)	(0.059)	(0.025)
Party Unity	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Seniority	−0.011***	−0.012***	−0.016***	−0.011***	−0.013***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Freshman	0.040	0.036	0.009	0.030	0.045
	(0.026)	(0.032)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Marginal Dist	0.204***	0.208***	0.204***	0.205***	0.214***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.028)
Majority	−0.141***	−0.144***	−0.120***	−0.133***	−0.148***
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)
LES	0.015**	0.015*	0.009	0.015*	0.012*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Number of CMTE	−0.036**	−0.034**	−0.058***	−0.044***	−0.026*
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Constant	6.474***	6.481***	6.592***	6.621***	6.478***
	(0.189)	(0.188)	(0.192)	(0.198)	(0.182)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082
R^2	0.110	0.099	0.098	0.125	0.114

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A14: Holding Positions on Money Donated in the Next Electoral Cycle (All Parties)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Next Term's Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.240***	0.264***	0.337***	0.709***	0.364***
	(0.071)	(0.069)	(0.097)	(0.088)	(0.070)
Seniority	0.026**	0.024*	0.019	0.026**	0.020*
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Freshman	−0.524***	−0.505***	−0.587***	−0.533***	−0.490***
	(0.127)	(0.130)	(0.136)	(0.133)	(0.125)
Marginal Dist	−0.327***	−0.312***	−0.334***	−0.333***	−0.302**
	(0.087)	(0.091)	(0.088)	(0.086)	(0.093)
Majority	−0.114	−0.119	−0.102	−0.099	−0.118
	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.080)	(0.085)	(0.080)
Party Unity	0.026***	0.026***	0.027***	0.025***	0.026***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
LES	−0.013	−0.012	−0.021	−0.006	−0.012
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.028)
NonTop Comm Leaders	0.124	0.218			
	(0.073)	(0.163)			
Constant	2.237***	2.210***	2.272***	2.404***	2.187***
	(0.374)	(0.361)	(0.359)	(0.374)	(0.357)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,167	3,167	3,167	3,167	3,167
R^2	0.137	0.138	0.134	0.145	0.146

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A15: Holding Positions on Money Donated in the Next Electoral Cycle (Democrats)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Next Term's Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.168*	0.297***	0.013	0.719***	0.346***
	(0.070)	(0.085)	(0.151)	(0.110)	(0.081)
Seniority	0.030***	0.026**	0.030**	0.026***	0.019*
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.008)
Freshman	−0.539***	−0.506***	−0.570***	−0.541***	−0.512***
	(0.135)	(0.139)	(0.148)	(0.141)	(0.133)
Marginal Dist	−0.543***	−0.521***	−0.548***	−0.543***	−0.522***
	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.102)	(0.101)	(0.102)
Majority	0.146***	0.140***	0.151***	0.168***	0.161***
	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.019)
Party Unity	0.026***	0.025***	0.027***	0.026***	0.026***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
LES	0.025	0.023	0.022	0.028	0.021
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.020)
NonTop Comm Leaders	−0.085	−0.027			
	(0.148)	(0.204)			
Constant	2.272***	2.270***	2.249***	2.364***	2.199***
	(0.555)	(0.550)	(0.551)	(0.543)	(0.517)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604
R^2	0.199	0.209	0.194	0.217	0.210

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A16: Holding Positions on Money Donated in the Next Electoral Cycle (Republicans)

	Dependent Variable: Log (Next Term's Contributions)				
	Top 3	Top 5	Comm. Leaders	Party Leaders	All Positions
Different Positions	0.305**	0.223*	0.622***	0.719***	0.371***
	(0.106)	(0.091)	(0.125)	(0.140)	(0.071)
Seniority	0.017	0.015	0.006	0.019	0.014
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Freshman	−0.508**	−0.510**	−0.574***	−0.523**	−0.470**
	(0.159)	(0.167)	(0.171)	(0.176)	(0.167)
Marginal Dist	−0.169	−0.166	−0.179	−0.180	−0.141
	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.122)	(0.124)	(0.126)
Majority	−0.594***	−0.599***	−0.567***	−0.599***	−0.619
	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.019)	(0.008)	
Party Unity	0.023*	0.023*	0.022*	0.022*	0.022*
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
LES	−0.012	−0.009	−0.019	0.005	−0.001
	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.021)
NonTop Comm Leaders	0.379	0.582**			
	(0.078)	(0.203)			
Constant	3.043**	3.032**	3.225***	3.211**	2.988**
	(1.053)	(1.015)	(0.958)	(1.005)	(0.992)
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,563	1,563	1,563	1,563	1,563
R^2	0.101	0.096	0.105	0.099	0.105

Notes: Coefficients from OLS regressions; standard errors are clustered by member and Congress. Log(Recipient Contributions) is measured in 2020 dollars. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A17: Relationship between Dues and MC Behavior for Democrats (Selected Years)

Statistic	**N**	**Mean**	**St. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Dues Goal	729	252,195	123,996	28,409	1,000,000
Dues Received	729	158,174	1,180,633	0	30,000,000
Dues Gap	729	94,021	1,171,711	−29,700,000	700,000
Whether Paid off Dues	729	0.15	0.36	0	1
DCCC Goal	729	550,128	2,172,508	17,045	30,000,000
DCCC Raised	729	651,356	6,015,732	0	139,687,538
DCCC Gap	729	−101,228	4,305,151	−109,687,538	3,222,764
Whether Achieved DCCC Goal	729	0.17	0.37	0	1
Frontline & R2B Raised/Given	729	112,104	418,825	0	5,197,792
Member Points	729	22.38	76.35	0	781

Notes: Data are drawn from DCCC lists for 2012, 2014, 2020, and 2022. Contributions are reported in nominal U.S. dollars.