

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONGRESSIONAL
ENDORSEMENTS IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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August 2013

Major Subject: Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Little is known about why elected officials choose to get involved in presidential nomination struggles. Recent research argues that elected officials have a collective incentive to nominate an electorally viable and ideologically unifying candidate. Yet, elected officials must balance these collective incentives with their own personal considerations (e.g., reelection motives, policy interests, ambition, ideology) that may either foster or inhibit their ability to act on their collective desire to nominate viable, ideologically unifying candidates. Further, this research then determines the extent to which elected officials are rewarded—or punished—for getting involved during the presidential nomination process. In particular, interparty differences between the Republican and Democratic coalitions predict that Republicans, but not Democrats, will be rewarded for attempting to lead intraparty nomination struggles. Finally, this research links the aggregate-level findings that endorsements from elected officials are important determinants of nomination outcomes to the individual level by arguing that elected officials' endorsements mobilize their constituents to get involved in politics. In particular, as the mobilization process targets those who are already likely to participate in the first place, endorsements during presidential primaries leads to differential participation in politics. In sum, this research provides individual level foundations for the causes and consequences of congressional endorsements in presidential nomination contests.

DEDICATION

To my family and friends, whose support made this possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a humble task to watch a word processing cursor blink back at you when you begin to thank those who have helped get where you are today. How do you thank everyone? The task has no bounds and knows no limits. That being said, the task is to be done, and so it shall.

I first want to thank those individuals who provided me with a desire for learning early in my life. I was fortunate to have many teachers who, while faced with a multitude of other classroom challenges and constraints, were able to foster my passion for education. Regardless of whether it was at Waccamaw Academy, Conway Elementary School, Conway Middle School, or Conway High School, I was pushed to pursue my educational interests. In addition, I am thankful for all those coaches, instructors, counselors, and advisors who provided leadership and mentoring to me from early childhood.

From my time at Furman, I am deeply thankful to Dr. Lyman Kellstedt, who recognized my late arrival to political science as an academic pursuit, helped me develop a plan for entering graduate school, and provided valuable life lessons (and a few on the golf course, as well). I am fortunate to consider him a friend, colleague, and golfing partner.

I am fortunate to have had a community in graduate school that provided me with helpful feedback and support. My course instructors helped mold me from someone with a firm liberal arts perspective into a thoughtful researcher comfortable with a quantitative approach. My dissertation committee provided constructive criticism and feedback at key points in my development, for which I am very grateful.

My dissertation chair—Dr. Paul Kellstedt—provided me the room to grow as a

scholar, for which I will always be grateful. I know I am a better researcher and better person for having been given both the space to develop and also the guidance when needed. Through course instruction, mentoring, and chairing this dissertation, Paul provided me with all I could ask for from an advisor. I'm proud to call him my advisor and my friend.

I am deeply thankful for the love and support my family provided me in my journey through graduate school. My sisters Wyndi and Heidi were and continue to be sources of strength and individuals I rely on when I need support and advice that only big sisters can provide. As we learned during my time in graduate school, we don't always come together often, but we always come through for each other. For that and many other reasons, I am fortunate to have such wonderful sisters.

My parents (Nancy and Raymond) were supportive of my graduate school aspirations from the moment the notion crossed my mind. They provided me the all the support I needed to make my graduate school experience as comfortable as possible. I am thankful for the times they came to visit and support for me to come visit them. I appreciate the courage and strength that they both showed for each other and for me as I paused my graduate studies to return home upon my father's passing. The love of learning, never-ending curiosity, and ability to sort through massive data to find meaning that they taught me continues to serve me well. I am so grateful and thankful for having my loving family.

I was fortunate in graduate school to not only pursue my academic interests, but also pursue the love of my life—Erica. As Erica and I became closer and eventually married, I was pleased to define and expand my family to include Erica's, as well. Graduate school—and dissertation writing, in particular—are challenges that not many people understand. That is one of the primary reasons that I am thankful for the support and encouragement that Dennis and Suzanne provided to me. Their

confidence in my abilities—and in Erica’s judgment—were and continue to be sources of strength.

Finally, I am so thankful to have met my best friend and wife, Erica. While I did not seek out a partner in school, I soon found one after I arrived. Erica’s unwavering confidence in me, her appreciation for my quirks and silliness, and her radiance kept me motivated and keep me loving our life together. Erica knows when something is special; when I think something is important, she does too; she knows how to be silly and when it’s time to stop being silly; she is a goofus on the roofus with me; really, everything that happens is nicer with her. Even writing a dissertation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Even though political parties maintain control of presidential nominations, little is known about what leads individual party members to participate in the process. Previous research indicates that members of the extended political party engage in a conversation about whom to nominate, focusing on the fact that party elites have a collective incentive to nominate an electorally viable and ideologically unifying candidate. Yet, at the same time that party elites are concerned with these collective considerations, they also have personal, strategic incentives that may foster or prevent their participation in the nominating process. A series of interrelated causes and consequences for endorsements are likely to be considered by Members of the U.S. House of Representatives when they choose to make their endorsement decision.

This research first focuses on the strategic incentives that party elites face in their individual decisions to lead the nomination process. Using endorsement data on a subset of party elites—Members of the U.S. House of Representatives—this research indicates that individual members of the extended party are strategic with their decision to participate in or abstain from the nomination process. The literature on congressional behavior informs the theory and model specification used to determine the causes of endorsements by Members of Congress. In particular, Members of Congress have personal, strategic considerations that are likely to influence their decision about whether and when to endorse. These considerations include ambition, electoral security, legislative activity, and the timeline of the presidential primary calendar.

This research also indicates that party elites have personal, strategic incentives for their involvement in presidential nomination contests. These personal considera-

tions go hand in hand with their collective incentives to nominate a candidate who will unify the party who will be an asset on Election Day. In attempting to influence the outcome of the nomination process, elected officials within the extended party are also likely to ask “What’s in it for me?” Instead of focusing on the rewards that are provided to the endorsee when party elites make public endorsements of presidential candidates, this research focuses on the rewards that the extended party provides endorsers for showing political skill during the nomination process. This research draws on the political parties literature, which articulates differences in the nomination process for the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Using an original dataset on the endorsement behavior of a subset of party elected officials—Members of Congress—I show that the extended Republican Party but not the extended Democratic Party rewards their members for exhibiting political skill and leading the nomination process. This is sensible, given the division that exists within the Democratic Party and the relative unanimity within the Republican Party.

Finally, this research builds on findings that show congressional endorsements during presidential primaries are important predictors of nomination outcomes. The individual level mechanism that translates aggregate endorsements into nomination victories is unclear; however, I argue that Members of Congress, as leaders of their local political party, are likely to have an impact on their constituents when they choose to make a presidential primary endorsement. In particular, they are likely to mobilize their constituents to get involved in politics. The effect, however, is not constant across their constituents. Instead, those voters who are mobilized are those who are already likely to participate in the first place. This argument is an extension and innovative application of the rational prospector theory prominent in the political participation literature. Congressional endorsements during presidential

primaries mobilize higher education voters to express an intention to vote, persuade others to vote, attend political meetings, donate money to candidates, and engage in other political work. These endorsements also have unanticipated effects for less educated voters.

Presidential primary endorsements present a number of unique, theoretically rich approaches for study. This research focuses on the interrelated nature of the causes and consequences of presidential primary endorsements by Members of Congress. Given that the extended party maintains control over presidential nominations, it is necessary to determine the various roles, approaches, causes, and consequences of presidential nomination behavior by elements of the extended party. To be sure, Members of Congress are interested in maintaining control over the nomination process, but they must also take into account other considerations, when deciding whether to participate. These considerations are the subject of this research project.

2. WHICH PARTY ELITES CHOOSE TO LEAD THE NOMINATION PROCESS?*

2.1 Introduction

Recent developments in the presidential primary literature indicate a special role for party elites. No longer afforded the power to make “back room” deals at party conventions, or relegated to the sidelines to watch as party activists nominate extremist candidates, party elites nevertheless maintain an important role in nominating presidential candidates. Instead of merely responding to the campaign, party elites appear to be the important factor that determines nomination outcomes (Cohen et al. 2008). Given the macro-level findings that party elites have the power to influence the process by making early endorsements (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007), we should expect them all to do so.¹ Yet, the data are not consistent with this point; some members of the extended party attempt to lead the process while others do not.² This presents a puzzle: all party elites have the power to influence the presidential nomination process, but only some actually use it. This puzzling observation leads to the central questions of this paper: *Who are the party elites willing to lead presidential nomination battles? Why do some party elites choose to lead the nomination process while others do not?*

*The final, definitive version of this paper has been published as “Which Party Elites Choose to Lead the Nomination Process” in *Political Research Quarterly*, 66, March 2013 doi:10.1177/1065912911430669 (First Published on February 8, 2012) by Sage Publications, Inc., All rights reserved.

¹While it is an important question, it is beyond the scope of this research to assess whether the decision to participate or not among Members of Congress influences nomination outcomes. Instead, the purpose of this research is to reexamine the factors that determine participation in the nomination process. Whether these individual decisions influences nomination outcomes is the focus of future research.

²In fact, from 1996 to 2008, only half of all Members of the U.S. House of Representatives made endorsements in their party’s presidential primary.

This dissertation chapter argues that many of the theoretical advancements to explain legislator behavior – including reelection motives (Mayhew 1974), policy interests (Fenno 1973), ambition (Schlesinger 1966), and ideology – explain the individual decision by a specific subset of party elites to lead their party’s nomination contest. Using endorsement data from the 1996-2008 presidential primaries, this paper shows that these factors, along with those identified in the nominations literature, are important predictors of the behavior of party elected officials in presidential nomination elections. These findings show that party elites have individual – as well as collective – incentives to either refrain from or actively engage in their party’s nomination contests.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I review the literature on the presidential nominations process. Second, I posit a theory to explain the strategic use of presidential primary endorsements by Members of Congress. I also discuss the data employed in the statistical analyses. While the hypotheses specified in this paper are particular to Members of Congress, the theoretical contribution is that members of the extended party have their own strategic considerations—along with the collective incentive to protect party orthodoxy and nominate a viable general election candidate—when choosing to participate in the nomination process. Third, I describe the research design and data I use to test these hypotheses. Fourth, I provide evidence that Members of Congress rely on a number of considerations when choosing to whether to lead the nomination process—consistent with the notion that Members of Congress rely on a strategic decision calculus that incorporates both collective incentives and their own personal considerations. Finally, I conclude with a brief review of the contributions and implications of the findings.

2.2 Previous Research

While elites played a central role in party nomination fights before the 1960s, a series of party reforms were thought to have taken power away from elites and given control of the party nominations process to the mass public. In the 1970s, reforms to the presidential nomination process led many political scientists to argue for a minimal role for elites (Aldrich 1980, Polsby 1983). Yet, following the electoral debacle of the 1972 presidential election where many party leaders and loyal party voters found the nominee unacceptable, Democratic party leaders reengaged the nomination process through the Hunt Commission in 1982, which reserved “superdelegate” status for party leaders and elected officials. This status was meant to provide a moderating effect whereby party leaders and elders could influence the nomination outcome at the convention (Crotty and Jackson 1985). Regardless of their institutionalized role in the nomination process, party elected officials retain a number of means through which they are able to influence the nomination outcome.

Party elites continue to influence the nomination process during the invisible primary period. The invisible primary period is when presidential candidates attempt to establish viable campaigns before the primary season begins with the Iowa caucuses. Presidential campaigns must establish their viability during this time period because of the costs of running a presidential campaign, the increase in multi-state primary and caucus dates, and front-loading in the primary calendar (Adkins and Dowdle 2001, Mayer and Busch 2004, Aldrich 2009). Party elites determine the outcome of presidential nominations by influencing the media coverage, resources, and support from the mass public given to candidates during the invisible primary period (Steger 2008). Candidates who are able to attract money, media attention, and party elite support are thus better equipped to campaign once the primary season begins.

Party elites activate networks of volunteers and contributors on behalf of their candidate of choice. Presidential candidates publicize support from party elites in advertisements, in press conferences, and on web pages (Williams et al. 2009). Candidates emphasize party elite support in fundraising appeals (Bimber and Davis 2003), while party elites often raise money on behalf of presidential candidates. Thus, party elites are able to campaign on behalf of candidates as well as activate their personal network of supporters in order to support a particular candidate.

Recent developments in the literature on party nominations indicate that parties continue to control the nomination process. Using forecasting models, these works show that aggregate support from party elites influences public support for candidates during the invisible primary period (Cohen et al. 2008; Dowdle, Adkins, and Steger 2009). Steger (2007) finds that counts of endorsements influence candidate support in primaries. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2008) also find that aggregate endorsement counts are significant predictors of candidate support, fundraising, and media coverage in the invisible primary – in fact, endorsements are the most important predictor of candidate support in the mass public. Thus, endorsements by party elites clearly have the potential to influence the outcome of presidential nomination contests.

Scholars who use the forecasting approach also offer theoretical arguments about the incentives for making endorsements by party elites. Cohen et al. (2008) and others argue that party elites have an incentive to make a collective decision on a nominee. This collective decision takes place through a conversation-of sorts-among party elites. The collective decision is not an easy one; the extended party must communicate with one another about the electoral prospects and ideological acceptability of the various candidates in an environment of extensive uncertainty. Steger (2007) provides empirical evidence for this assertion; using a median voter frame-

work, Steger shows that candidates at the overall ideological median fail to receive party elite support but that candidates at their own party's ideological median attract the most support. This finding indicates that party elites support candidates who will both unify the party's constituencies and be viable for the general election. Similarly, Butler (2004) argues that party elites prefer a presidential candidate at the top of the ticket who will be beneficial to those candidates lower on the ballot, but no empirical evidence is offered. Steger (2008) finds that Republican elites are more likely to endorse, endorse earlier, and coalesce around a candidate than Democratic elites, attributing much of the cause to uncertainty within the Democratic Party about which candidate will emerge as the frontrunner. Party elites are also in a unique position with respect to their role in leading the collective decision making process. Instead of responding to mass candidate support, fundraising, or media coverage, Cohen et al. (2008) conclude that endorsements "represent the autonomous judgments of a relatively small world of party members" (311). Thus, it appears that the collective decision reflects the judgments of party elites as to the ideological acceptability and electoral prospects of the various candidates.

While we know about the collective incentives to settle on a nominee, and the collective consequences that this has for nomination outcomes, we have little knowledge about the micro-level incentives for party elites to abstain or participate in the party nomination process. Thus, the puzzles remain: which elites are willing and unwilling to lead their party's presidential nomination process by making pre-Iowa endorsements? Moreover, if party elites have the ability to determine who becomes their presidential nominee, why do they all not offer their support? In the next section, I suggest an explanation for these questions.

2.3 A Theory of Endorsements by Party Elected Officials

The literature previously reviewed indicates that party elites have the ability to influence the outcome of party nomination contests through the collective decision to settle on a nominee. The theoretical approach in previous research focuses on the incentives for party elites to make this decision by coordinating on an acceptable nominee. Regardless of whether party elites choose to coordinate in smoke-filled convention halls, as in the pre-reform period, or through an extended conversation during the invisible primary, this approach argues that party elites maintain control of the nomination process. By protecting the party's ideological brand, satisfying the party's constituent groups, and choosing a viable candidate for the general election, party elites have strong collective incentives to participate in the nominations process.

The shortcoming to this approach is that by focusing only on those party elites who care about the outcome of the nomination process and who are able to act on their preferences for the nomination outcome, little is known about those party elites who choose to abstain from endorsing. For the pre-reform period, this implies that fully understanding party control of nominations requires a comprehensive understanding of which party members were even allowed into the smoke-filled rooms to choose a nominee. For the post-reform period, this implies that party elites have strategic factors to consider when choosing to participate in their party's nomination process.

This paper focuses on a specific subset of party elites—Members of the U.S. House of Representatives—and argues that many factors that influence the behavior of Members of Congress are also likely to influence their willingness to lead the party's nomination process by making a pre-Iowa endorsement. This approach is advantageous because it provides theoretical examples of strategic considerations that a subset of

the political party—Members of Congress—entertain when choosing whether to participate in their party’s presidential nomination contest. Thus, instead of omitting those party elites who fail to participate, this approach provides leverage on the central questions of the paper—“who participates and why?”—by incorporating those party elites who choose to participate and those who choose to abstain.

The drawback to this theoretical approach is that it omits other members of the extended party who participate in choosing the nominee. Interest groups, former elected officials, and party activists play an integral role—along with elected officials—in selecting the party’s nominee. These other groups in the extended party are likely to be responsive to the collective incentives of ideological acceptability and electoral viability as they participate in the conversation about which nominee best serves the party’s needs. While this approach omits other members of the extended party from the analysis, the theoretical contribution of this paper is broadly applicable to other members of the extended party to the extent that other members incorporate their own strategic considerations when choosing to participate in the party nomination process. For example, elected officials in both public and party office are likely to consider the security of their hold on the position in their decision to participate or abstain; this theoretical approach is broad enough to include not only Members of Congress but also state party chairs and elected interest group leaders.³ In other words, while the argument advanced in this paper is focused on a particular subset of the extended party—Members of Congress—the broader argument is that the collective incentives to control the nomination outcome must be considered together with the strategic incentives that both foster and impair the extended party’s participation. These strategic incentives are discussed below.

³One can easily imagine a meeting of interest group leaders where the benefits and drawbacks of participation in the party’s nomination process is discussed.

2.3.1 Electoral Considerations

Congressional scholarship emphasizes the role that the reelection motive has for Members of Congress (Mayhew 1974). Members of Congress use advertising, credit claiming, and position taking as tools to ensure their own reelection. When making endorsements in their party's presidential nominating contests, Members of Congress are likely to rely on their own electoral considerations. Endorsements in presidential primaries afford Members of Congress the opportunity to both claim credit and take positions regarding the direction of their political party. Members who endorse early (either through endorsing the eventual nominee, or through endorsing the candidate who won in their district) can use this endorsement as evidence of their political acumen in fundraising appeals to party members. Similarly, early endorsements in presidential primaries allow Members of Congress to take positions on the direction of the party through choosing the most viable and electable candidate who maintains party orthodoxy.

Members of Congress who attempt to lead their party's nomination process through making an early endorsement are putting themselves in a situation that can have both risks and rewards. While the nominations literature emphasizes that party activists, elites, the media, and candidates are the audience for endorsements, a broader audience exists as well. The Members' own constituents—including her personal, primary, and reelection constituency (Fenno 1978) are likely to be interested in both the timing and nature of their representatives' endorsement. Members who endorse early in their party's nomination battles are sending a signal to constituents that they are a loyal member of the party. If this signal about party loyalty is out of step with constituent preferences, Members are likely to face electoral punishment, much as they do for out of step roll call votes (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan

2002). Thus, Members of Congress who are without electoral security are unlikely to seek opportunities that will allow them to send further signals that they are out of step with constituent preferences.

Members of Congress who are electorally vulnerable are also less likely to endorse early simply because they focus on their own reelection. Members who face electoral risk are likely to spend more time focusing on their own campaign, including raising money and attending campaign events in the district, leaving little other time for focusing on discretionary activities like presidential primary endorsements.⁴ These observations lead to my first hypothesis:

H1: As a Member's electoral safety increases, the Member will be more willing to make an early endorsement in her party's primary.

While this hypothesis was articulated in previous studies of presidential nominations (Butler 2004; Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2008), the research designs employed in these studies made their hypothesis untested. Thus, this paper presents a first empirical test of the reelection hypothesis for the decision to endorse among elite elected officials in presidential primaries.

To measure electoral considerations, I collected two measures of electoral security. First, I collected data on each House member's electoral margin for the previous election cycle. For instance, this means that for the 1996 Republican presidential primary, I collected data on those members' 1994 electoral margins. Second, because legislators are likely to look to their party's overall strength in their district as an indicator of electoral security, I also collected data on presidential margins by House district for the previous presidential election. For example, this means that for the 1996 Republican primary, I collected data on the Republican presidential vote margin

⁴Members who are more secure have more discretion and therefore are free to lead the nomination process.

in each district from the 1992 presidential election. The electoral margin measures are expected to have a positive influence on the likelihood of legislators making a pre-Iowa endorsement in their party's presidential primary.

2.3.2 Policy Interest and Institutional Position

In addition to reelection, Members of Congress are motivated with a desire to influence public policy (Fenno 1973). Presidential nominees are seen as the face of the political party by the mass public because they set the direction of the party's ideological positions (Herrera 1995; Petrocik 1995); thus, Members with higher levels of policy interest should be more likely to care about the direction of the political party. Members use their activity within Congress to indicate their policy interests and preferences. Whereas roll call voting indicates the preferences of Members of Congress, discretionary activities, such as bill sponsorship, cosponsorship, signing Amicus curiae briefs, working in committee, and speaking on the House floor allows Members to indicate their policy interests. Members of Congress cosponsor legislation in an attempt to influence policy outcomes (Kessler and Krehbiel 1996; Koger 2003). Cosponsored legislation can indicate both substantive interest in policy as well as symbolic motivations (Rocca 2007). The contribution strategies of PACs follows the intensity of Member preferences as indicated by bill sponsorship and cosponsorship (Rocca and Gordon 2009). Because discretionary activities by Members of Congress are indicative of policy interest, Members who are policy activists should be more likely to take an active role in selecting their party's nominee. These observations lead to my second hypothesis:

H2a: As a Member's policy interests increase, the Member will be more willing to make an early endorsement in her party's primary.

To measure the legislator's policy interest, I collected data on three measures of

legislator policy activity within Congress.⁵ First, I collected data on the number of bills the Member of Congress introduced during the session of the party primary. Second, I collected data on the number times the Member of Congress cosponsored bills introduced by other members during that session. Finally, I collected data on the total number of bills introduced by the Member of Congress that were signed into law by the president during that session.⁶ Each of these measures are expected to have a positive influence on the likelihood that Members of Congress will make a pre-Iowa endorsement in their party's presidential primary.

H2b: Members' willingness to make early endorsements in their party's presidential primaries depends on their institutional position within Congress.

In addition, Members' institutional position is likely to influence whether they attempt to lead their party's nomination process. First, freshmen Members are likely too consumed with their own reelection and learning about the internal workings of Congress to have the time and energy to devote to leading their party's nomination process. Thus, freshmen Members are expected to be less likely to make early endorsements in their party's presidential primaries. I use a dummy variable to indicate whether the Member of Congress was a freshman during the year of the presidential primary. Second, Members who have higher levels of seniority are likely to have experience with leading their party's nomination process. Senior Members

⁵An alternative interpretation to this hypothesis is that Members of Congress who are more networked with their colleagues are more likely to make an early endorsement in their party's primary. Indeed, measures of social networking in Congress are highly correlated with the measures of policy interest used in this paper. For example, the number of outward cosponsorships are correlated highly with various measures of social networking, including closeness at $r = .13$, betweenness at $r = .34$, eigenvector centrality at $r = .05$, and connectedness at $r = .24$. Similarly, the number of bills signed into law is correlated with closeness at $r = .31$, betweenness at $r = .24$, eigenvector centrality at $r = .32$, and connectedness at $r = .17$. Clearly some interplay between policy activity, social networking, and endorsing in the party's primary is taking place. While I would prefer to include these measures of social networking in the analysis, they have not been updated through 2008.

⁶These data come from Adler and Wilkerson's Congressional Bills Project (2008) and James Fowler's Cosponsorship Network Data (2006a and 2006b)

of Congress are also likely to possess more policy expertise and knowledge about the candidates and more experience with the nominations process than their junior colleagues. Thus, Members with higher levels of seniority are expected to be more likely to lead their party's nomination process. To measure seniority, I use the number of years served in the House for each Member of Congress.

Finally, party leaders play an important role within Congress to set the agenda and internalize electoral risk for other members of the party caucus (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2004). On the one hand, party leaders may be more willing to lead the nomination process because of their unique position of policy interest within the party. Because party leaders internalize the electoral risk of their more marginal members, party leaders are likely to be especially concerned with the outcome of nomination contests and use their endorsement powers to maximize the likelihood that the party will nominate a viable and ideologically orthodox candidate. On the other hand, party leaders may be less likely to lead the nomination process out of a desire to preserve party unity. Indeed, the 2008 Democratic nomination process included party leaders operating as referees between the campaigns. Thus, the expected effect of party leadership is uncertain. I use a dummy variable to indicate whether the Member of Congress participates in the party leadership structure.⁷ In sum, I argue that policy interest and institutional position within Congress are important predictors of Members' willingness to lead their party's nomination process.

2.3.3 Member Ambition

Ambition is also an important predictor of the behavior of Members of Congress. Ambition is important because it alters the representational interaction between leg-

⁷These positions include Speaker of the House, Majority and Minority leader, Majority and Minority whip, party caucus chairman, committee chairman, ranking minority committee member, and party campaign committee leader.

islators and constituents (Schlesinger 1966). Two types of ambition are likely to be particularly important when considering Members' willingness to lead their party's nomination process. First, Schlesinger (1966) identifies progressive ambition, or the desire to obtain a more important office, as an important explanation for legislator behavior. Members who have progressive ambition establish a legislative record that appeals to broader constituents (Schlesinger 1966; Hibbing 1986; Herrick and Moore 1993). For many Members of Congress, this means appealing beyond their personal, primary, and reelection constituents in the district (Fenno 1978) to a broader, more diverse coalition of statewide voters. If statewide voters are more moderate than the Members' district constituents, Members should be less likely to make early endorsements as they need to broaden their electoral appeal to a more moderate audience of voters. To determine whether progressive ambition influences Members' decision to make early endorsements, I collected data from House Members' biographies indicating whether or not they displayed progressive ambition by running for statewide office or the presidency. These observations lead to hypothesis 3a:

H3a: Members of Congress with progressive ambition are less likely to lead their party's nomination process.

Second, Members not only have ambition for higher office, but they also have intrainstitutional ambition for positions of power and prestige within Congress (Herrick and Moore 1993). Members of Congress with intrainstitutional ambition adjust their roll call voting to indicate stronger party support (Herrick and Moore 1993) and distribute campaign contributions to their colleagues in a systematic manner to protect marginal incumbents, support candidates in competitive open seat races, and support competitive challengers to the other party's incumbents (Cann 2008; Currinder 2003, 2009; Heberlig 2003; Heberlig and Larson 2005; Heberlig, Hetherington, and Larson 2006). These activities signal to colleagues a desire on the part

of the Member of Congress become a leader.

Members of Congress with intrainstitutional ambition are likely to seek out opportunities for position taking to indicate their party support; leading the nomination process through making an early endorsement is an example of such behavior. Members with intrainstitutional ambition can strategically use their endorsements to gain prestige within the extended party, mobilize activist and fundraising networks, and increase media attention, not only for the benefit of the endorsee, but also for their own benefit. Early endorsements allow ambitious members to show their colleagues in Congress that they are willing to think as a leader by internalizing the task of protecting the party's ideological brand and considering the electoral benefits to the party of the various primary candidates. Leading the process, rather than waiting for a clearer frontrunner to emerge, allows ambitious members to indicate their willingness to be a leader within the party. Thus, members with intrainstitutional ambition use their endorsements to signal to both caucus members and other party elites that they have the political skills necessary to become a party leader. These observations lead to hypothesis 3b:

H3b: Members of Congress with intrainstitutional ambition are more likely to lead their party's nomination process.

To determine whether Members of Congress have intrainstitutional ambition, I collected data on the amount of money they were willing to contribute from their own campaigns to other campaigns. These data come from C-SPAN's campaign finance database. In the statistical analysis, I adjusted these values into real 2008 dollar amounts. Following the literature on the effects of campaign finance on congressional elections (Jacobson 1980), I take the logged values of the real 2008 dollar amounts.⁸ Ambitious Members of Congress are likely to use endorsements in presi-

⁸Jacobson (1980) argues that the natural logarithm of campaign expenditures allows for avoiding

dential primaries as a tool to signal their leadership qualities to the extended party.

2.3.4 Member Ideology

Ideology is an important component of presidential nomination contests (Kenny and Lotfinia 2005; Morton and Williams 2001; but see Gopoian 1982 and Norrander 1986). These spatial models use Downs' (1957) median voter argument as a framework. Steger (2007) argues that the assumptions of the spatial model, including assumptions about voter information levels, are more applicable to party elected officials than to the mass public during the invisible primary period. Party elites are likely to have more experience with the ideological orientation of the party, are more informed about the ideological content of candidate positions, and are better able to place themselves and candidates within the party's ideological space, making elite elected officials more likely to satisfy the assumptions of the median voter model. Because my argument is about whether Members are willing to lead their party's primary—and not necessarily about whom Members choose to endorse—the role of ideology in this argument is slightly different than that argued by other nomination scholars. In my argument, Members of Congress satisfy the demands of the spatial model, but use these demands differently in their decision to make an early endorsement. I argue that when making an endorsement, Members of Congress incorporate their ideological proximity to their most proximate candidate. Members who are closer to a candidate are likely to find the decision to make an early endorsement easier because they have an ideological ally from whom to choose. In contrast, Members for whom the most proximate candidate is not close are unlikely to lead the nomination process because the choices are likely to hold unsatisfying ideological positions.

the assumption of a linear relationship between money and votes. Likewise, I argue that the relationship between campaign contributions and making a pre-Iowa endorsement is nonlinear.

No direct method exists for comparing the ideological proximity of Members of Congress to their party's presidential candidates. Steger (2007) calculates the ideological distance between each Member of Congress and their party's presidential candidates using Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) Common Space ideological scores. This approach requires using proxy measures for those presidential candidates who did not serve in Congress. In contrast, Cohen et al. (2008) use a panel of experts to rate the ideological positioning of each presidential candidate. These observations lead hypothesis 4a:

H4a: As the ideological proximity to their closest candidate option increases, Members of Congress will be more likely to lead their party's nomination process.

Steger (2007) finds that candidates at their party's ideological center receive the most support from party elites. This implies that Members of Congress at their party's ideological center are more likely to find acceptable candidates to endorse. Therefore, I also created a measure of each Member of Congress' ideological proximity to their party's mean ideological score using both the Steger (2007) and the Cohen et al. (2008) approaches. This leads to hypothesis 4b:

H4b: As the ideological proximity to their party's center increases, Members of Congress will be more likely to lead their party's nomination process.

For ease of presentation, I include results based on the Cohen et al. (2008) measure.⁹

2.3.5 Other Factors

As noted above, the literature on presidential nominations identifies a few factors that are likely to influence whether elite elected officials lead the nominations process. First, voters and elites prefer candidates from their home state; similarly, Members

⁹Please see Appendix A for details on the construction of the ideological distance measures.

of Congress should be more likely to make early endorsements when a “native son” candidate is running for their party’s nomination. To test this hypothesis, I use a dummy variable to indicate whether the Member of Congress has a “native son” candidate running for their party’s presidential nomination. Second, Cohen et al. (2008) and others find that Members of Congress are more likely to support a party leader from their congressional caucus for president. This is likely because Members are more familiar with their party leaders and also because they owe support to their party leader. I employ a dummy variable for those partisans who have a party leader from who to choose.¹⁰ Third, Republicans are more likely to unify around a frontrunner candidate than Democrats (Mayer 1996; Steger 2008). Thus, I use a dummy variable for Members of Congress who are Republicans. Fourth, even though Cohen et al. (2008) find that in the aggregate party elites do not respond to mass level campaign factors, individual decisions by party elected officials should use mass level campaign factors as an indicator of the extent to which the party has a frontrunner candidate. Thus, increased support for the frontrunner should lead Members of Congress to be more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. In order to measure support for the party’s frontrunner, I use Cohen et al.’s (2008) pre-Iowa nationwide polling data. I supplemented these data, which run through 2004, using nationwide Gallup polling for both the 2008 Republican and Democratic primaries.¹¹

Finally, because momentum is so important during the nomination process (Bartels 1988), Members of Congress are likely to be wary of the dynamics of the nomina-

¹⁰Substantively, this measure captures the effect among House Democrats in 2004 of having former Majority and Minority Leader Dick Gephardt running for president. All House Democrats were familiar with Gephardt, as even freshmen would have been recruited to run during his tenure as Minority Leader. The only other caucus leaders to run for president in this data were John Kasich (R-OH) in 2000, who served as Chairman of the House Budget Committee, and Duncan Hunter (R-CA) in 2008, who served as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Neither Kasich nor Hunter were in as powerful a position as Gephardt to obtain endorsements from their former colleagues.

¹¹Please see Appendix B for details on the construction of these public opinion measures.

tion process. In this argument, the timing of the Members' own presidential primary or caucus is central. Members for whom constituents will be able to vote in the party primary or caucus earlier in the calendar are likely to have more certainty about how the candidates will be received at home. This is because the results of polling and elite discourse are likely to be predictive of how the candidates will be received by the Members' home constituencies. In contrast, Members whose constituents will be unable to vote until months after the invisible primary ends have more uncertainty about how the candidates will be received at home. While Members have information about how the candidates are currently received, this information is likely to be discounted as the number of days until their own primary increases because momentum and unexpected campaign events can alter the course of the race. Members whose constituents are able to vote in earlier presidential primaries are more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements because Members can be more confident about how the candidates will be received with their home constituents; Members whose constituents must wait longer to vote in presidential primaries are confronted with more uncertainty about how the candidates will be received at home, making these Members less likely to lead the nomination process. To determine the amount of uncertainty facing a Member of Congress about the nomination process, I include a count of the number of days from the Iowa caucus until the Member's constituents have the opportunity to vote in their party's presidential primary.

In order to test my theory of early endorsements in presidential primaries, I focus on members of the U.S. House of Representatives who were running for reelection during the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections. I focus on parties where the nomination is contested; nomination contests where an incumbent president is on the ballot are omitted. This means that I include the Republicans in 1996, Republicans and Democrats in 2000, Democrats in 2004, and both Republicans and Democrats

in 2008. To collect the endorsement data for 1996, 2000, and 2004, I relied on data previously compiled by Cohen et al. (2008), who amassed early endorsement data for party elites relying on media accounts. I also supplemented the Cohen et al. (2008) data for 2000 and 2004 with data from Eric Appleman's Democracy in Action web site affiliated with George Washington University. I used Appleman's web site in conjunction with a political blog, Democratic Convention Watch, to obtain endorsement data for the 2008 primaries. I also conducted my own Lexis-Nexis search of newspaper accounts of endorsements in order to obtain endorsement dates for 2008. Where possible, I checked to determine whether the endorsement dates were consistent across sources. These data sources were employed to create the binary dependent variable used in the analyses.¹² As the dependent variable is binary, I employ a logistic regression approach.¹³

Finally, it is likely that many of these variables measure the same underlying propensity among Members of Congress to engage in political activity. For example, congressional policy activity, campaign contributions to other candidates, and engaging in presidential nomination politics are likely to be activities that are highly inter-related. This is especially likely to be true, given the propensity for some Members of Congress to be particularly interested in politics while others are (comparatively) not. Thus, the findings reported below are consistent with the argument posited here, even though the dependent variable and independent variables are likely to

¹²Following the literature on presidential primaries (Cohen et al. 2008, Steger 2007), I focus on the decision to endorse before the Iowa caucus to test my hypotheses.

¹³Ideally, the research design would be able to incorporate explanatory variables at both the individual level of the Member of Congress and the group level of the primary campaign in a multilevel model framework. Unfortunately, data limitations at the primary campaign level prohibit the use of a multilevel model. An ideal approach would have many more primary campaign groups than the six used in the analysis (1996 GOP, 2000 Democrats, 2000 GOP, 2004 Democrats, 2008 GOP, 2008 Democrats). Instead, I incorporate variables specific to the primary campaign, including average Gallup support for the frontrunner in the party primary and whether the Member of Congress could endorse in a Republican primary, by using robust standard errors, keeping in mind that inferences about primary campaign variables may be suspect.

capture some of the same concept.

2.4 Results

This section presents evidence that explains why Members of Congress choose to lead their party’s presidential nomination process. The following results present descriptive statistics of the data and the results from the logistic regression pooled across all presidential primaries from 1996 to 2008. Table 2.1 includes the ideological proximity measures derived from the Cohen et al. (2008) method. The first column in each table displays the coefficient estimate and the standard error, while the second column shows the estimated substantive effect ranging from the minimum to the maximum of the independent variable.

As noted below, Table 2.1 indicates that roughly half of all Members of Congress endorse before the Iowa caucuses. In the aggregate, then, it would appear that Members of Congress essentially “flip a coin” when deciding whether to lead their party’s nomination process. Yet, the multivariate results also indicate that Members of Congress take into account a number of factors when deciding whether to lead their party’s presidential nomination process. Instead of flipping a coin, Members of Congress strategically act when making pre-Iowa endorsements based on their levels of electoral security, legislative policy activity, ambition, whether a “native son” candidate is running for their party’s nomination, whether a congressional party leader is running, whether the Member is a Republican, the amount of public support for their party’s frontrunner, and the number of days until their own constituents have the opportunity to vote in the presidential primary.

Table 2.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variable</i>				
Endorse Before Iowa	0.51	0.5	0	1
<i>Legislator Electoral Security</i>				
Legislator Margin of Victory	39.2	28.1	0.01	100
Party Presidential Vote Margin	17.2	22.5	-44	92.1
<i>Legislator Congressional Activity</i>				
Bills Introduced	18.3	14.3	1	144
Bills Cosponsored	304.8	161.9	21	1180
Bills Passed Into Law	0.75	1.53	0	29
Freshman	0.15	0.36	0	1
Seniority	10.6	8	2	54
Party Leader	0.13	0.34	0	1
<i>Legislator Ambition</i>				
Logged Contributions to Other Candidates	10.02	5	0	15.1
Progressive Ambition	0.18	0.38	0	1
<i>Legislator Ideology</i>				
Ideological Proximity to Closest Candidate (Cohen)	0.13	0.17	0.0004	1.09
Ideological Proximity to Party Mean (Cohen)	0.26	0.2	0.0005	1.29
Ideological Proximity to Closest Candidate (Steger)	0.04	0.05	0	0.36
Ideological Proximity to Party Mean (Steger)	0.1	0.08	0	0.47
<i>Other Factors</i>				
Native-Son Candidate on Ballot	0.18	0.39	0	1
Chamber Leader on Ballot	0.16	0.36	0	1
Republican Primary	0.49	0.5	1	1
Average Support for Frontrunner Pre-Iowa	0.44	0.14	0.22	0.6
Days to Primary	51.3	30.7	-16	155
N	1209			

These findings also present evidence for the electoral security hypothesis. While Members of Congress do not rely on their party's presidential candidate vote margin

from the previous election cycle, it appears that increased personal electoral margins are positively associated with pre-Iowa endorsements. Increased electoral margins allow Members of Congress to pursue other interests, including making endorsements in their party's presidential primaries. Table 2.2 indicates that increasing across the values of electoral security is associated with a roughly 18 percent increase in the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement. According to Mayhew (1974), the actions of Members of Congress are colored with their pursuit of reelection; the results presented here indicate that safer electoral margins are associated with acting to influence the outcome of the nomination process.

Table 2.2 also indicates that Members of Congress who are concerned with public policy are those more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Members who engage in higher levels of cosponsorship activity through supporting their colleagues' legislation are more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Table 2.2 shows that increasing from the minimum number of cosponsorships to the maximum number of cosponsorships more than triples the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from roughly 29 percent to 94 percent. These findings make sense, given that patterns of cosponsorship are indicative of policy interest (Kessler and Krehbiel 1996; Koger 2003). Members who engage in discretionary activities within Congress indicate—both to their constituents and to their colleagues—that they are interested in the policy making process. This interest in policy is not only particular to their actions in the halls of Congress but also extends to their actions in shaping the direction of their party by influencing the outcome of the nomination process.

Table 2.2: The Determinants of Pre-Iowa Endorsements in Presidential Primaries by Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1996-2008

	Column I	Column II
Legislator Margin of Victory	.007* (.003)	.44→.62
Party Presidential Vote Margin	-.002 (.003)	
Bills Introduced	-.002 (.005)	
Bills Cosponsored	.003* (.0006)	.28→.95
Bills Passed Into Law	.09* (.05)	.5→.88
Freshman	-.34 (.21)	
Seniority	-.006 (.01)	
Party Leader	-.15 (.2)	
Logged Contributions to Other Candidates	.06* (.03)	.37→.58
Progressive Ambition	.13 (.17)	
Ideological Proximity to Closest Candidate	-.46 (.44)	
Ideological Proximity to Party Mean	-.39 (.35)	
Native-Son Candidate on Ballot	.92* (.17)	.47→.69
Chamber Leader on Ballot	2.1* (.27)	.43→.86
Republican Primary	.96* (.18)	.4→.63
Average Support for Frontrunner Pre-Iowa	4.5* (.69)	.29→.69
Days to Primary	-.009* (.002)	.65→.31
Constant	-4.04* (.57)	
N	1209	
Pseudo R ²	0.12	
Percent Correctly Classified:	65.2	
Proportional Reduction in Error:	28.7	
Improvement over Null:	183	
<i>Note:</i> Dependent variable whether MC endorsed before Iowa caucuses.		
Robust standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are from Logistic Regression.		
* indicates p< .05, one-tailed test.		

Similarly, Table 2.2 indicates that Members of Congress who are better able to navigate the winnowing process and have their bills signed into law by the president

are more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Increasing from the minimum bill success to the maximum bill success increases the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from roughly 50 percent to roughly 88 percent. Careful examination of the results indicates that extreme values are driving the findings. Three Members of Congress are particularly likely to have their legislation signed into law by the president. These members are Rep. Bill Young (R-FL), Rep. Bob Livingston (R-LA), and Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY). Rep. Young had 29 bills signed into law in 2000, Rep. Livingston had 17 bills signed into law in 1996, and Rep. Rangel had 13 bills signed into law in 2008. When these extremely successful Members are excluded from the analysis, the statistical and substantive significance of the findings no longer holds. While positively signed, the measure of bill passage fails to reach statistical significance.¹⁴ Thus, these findings indicate that Members who are successful at guiding their legislation through Congress to be signed by the president are no more likely to lead their party's nomination process. Indeed, these findings suggest that congressional policy activity and partisan endorsements are indicators of a broader propensity to take political action.

Members' institutional position within Congress is expected to influence whether they choose to lead their party's presidential nomination process. Table 2.2 indicates that freshmen Members of Congress are no less likely to lead their party's nomination process. While negatively signed, the coefficient for freshmen Members of Congress fails to reach statistical significance ($p = .11$, one-tailed test). Party leaders and members with increased seniority are no more or less likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Even though party leaders set the agenda and internalize electoral risk for the caucus (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2004), the data here indicate that those

¹⁴The statistical and substantive significance of the other findings hold despite the failure of the bill passage measure.

findings are particular to their roles within Congress and do not extend to selecting a presidential nominee.¹⁵ Perhaps the effect of party leadership in the statistical model is absorbed by the logged contributions and legislative activity measures.¹⁶ Thus, little support exists for the second hypothesis regarding the impact of institutional positioning on the decision to lead the nomination process.

Recall that the third hypothesis pertains to the influence of Member ambition on their willingness to lead their party's nominations process. Table 2.2 indicates that Members' progressive ambition does not influence their willingness to make pre-Iowa endorsements. In contrast, Members of Congress who have intrainstitutional ambition—those who donate more money to other candidates, PACs, and political party committees—are more likely to make a pre-Iowa endorsement. Increasing across the values of logged contributions to others increases the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from roughly 37 percent to 58 percent. This is similar to increasing from the contribution behavior of Rep. Gene Taylor (D-MS) in 2004, who failed to contribute any money to his fellow Democrats, to the contribution activity of Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI) in 2008, who donated \$899,500 to his Republican colleagues. The literature on ambition indicates that Members who are ambitious seek out opportunities to take positions (Herrick and Moore 1993); these findings are consistent with that argument. Members of Congress' donation patterns are indicative of ambition for power, and those who donate more are more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. These results provide systematic evidence that Members of Congress who are ambitious are more likely to lead their party's presidential nomination process. These findings—when taken in combination of those regarding

¹⁵This finding holds true even when using separate measures for partisan caucus leaders and committee leaders.

¹⁶Logged outward contributions are correlated with party leadership at $r = .15$. The number of bills signed into law is correlated with party leadership at $r = .23$. The number of outward cosponsorships is correlated with party leadership at $r = -.01$.

congressional policy activity—suggest that presidential endorsements, contributions to other candidates, and congressional policy activity are likely to be indicators of a broader propensity to engage in political activity. In other words, these measures are likely to be indicators of the extent to which a Member of Congress is interested and engaged in politics.

The fourth hypothesis pertains to the influence of ideology on pre-Iowa endorsements. Members of Congress who are not closely positioned to their party’s presidential candidates are hypothesized to be less likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements; while the coefficients are correctly signed, Table 2.2 provides no support for the ideological proximity hypothesis. Members of Congress who are closer to a candidate, or who are at their party’s ideological center, are no more or less likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Similarly, Members’ proximity to their party’s ideological center are no more likely to lead the nomination process. Thus, no evidence is provided for the fourth hypothesis.

The multivariate analysis in Table 2.2 also includes a number of variables found to be important in the presidential nominations literature. First, the literature on presidential primaries finds that both voters and elites support candidates from the same state; Table 2.2 provides further empirical support for this finding. Members of Congress who share the same home state with presidential primary candidates are more likely to make pre-Iowa endorsements. Indeed, Members of Congress with a “native son” to choose from in their party’s primary are 22 percent more likely to lead the nomination process with a pre-Iowa endorsement. Second, the literature on presidential nominations consistently finds that Republicans settle on a nominee faster than Democrats (Mayer 1996; Steger 2008); Table 2.2 provides increased support for this literature. After controlling for other factors, the effect of being Republican increases the probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from 40 percent to

63 percent. Third, Members of Congress who are able to endorse a former party caucus leader for president are twice as likely to make a pre-Iowa endorsement; the effect increases the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from 43 percent to 86 percent. Fourth, potential endorsers respond to the amount of candidate support among party identifiers; increases in the support for the frontrunner in pre-Iowa polling are associated with an increase in the probability that Members of Congress will make pre-Iowa endorsements. Increasing from the minimum to the maximum support for the primary frontrunner more than doubles the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement by Members of Congress from roughly 29 percent to 69 percent.¹⁷ This finding is counter to the findings of Cohen et al. (2008) and others, who find that the endorsement decisions by party elites are not driven by campaign factors. Instead, this finding indicates that Members of Congress do respond to the level of party agreement on a nominee.

Finally, Table 2.2 indicates that Members of Congress whose constituents vote later during the primary calendar are less likely to lead their party's nomination process. Indeed, increasing from the minimum number of days until the Members' constituents have the opportunity to vote in the primaries to the maximum number of days until their constituents get to vote decreases in half the predicted probability of a pre-Iowa endorsement from roughly 65 percent to roughly 31 percent. This is substantively equivalent to the differences in the decision to make a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement by those Members of Congress from Iowa, for whom campaign factors are likely to be clear and the consequences are known, to the decision to make a

¹⁷I also included an interaction term between support for the frontrunner and whether the Member of Congress was a Republican. The substantive findings of the other variables remained the same. The interaction term indicated that Democrats were non-responsive to public support for their party's frontrunner, while Republicans were increasingly responsive as public support for their party's frontrunner increased. These results, while substantively interesting, are not germane to the main argument of the paper.

pre-Iowa endorsement by Members of Congress from Oregon and Kentucky, where campaign factors at the time of the early endorsement decision are likely to change by the time their own constituents have the opportunity to vote at the end of the nomination season.¹⁸ Thus, Members' endorsement decisions respond to the timeline of the nomination process.

The substantive findings can be broadly grouped into factors that the member can influence and factors that are beyond the member's control. For example, Members' cosponsorship activity is determined by the extent to which the member has an interest in policy and networks within the institution. This is why cosponsorship activity has such a large substantive effect on the decision to lead the nomination process. Members who have policy interests and who network in Congress are more likely to be interested in the outcome of presidential nomination contests. Similarly, the extent to which Members act on their ambition for power—through contributing money to other candidates—is a function of their own willingness to be an active fundraiser. Members who have policy interest and ambition are more likely to lead their party's nomination process.

On the other hand, a number of factors that influence the decision to lead the nomination are beyond the Members' control. While Members of Congress may have some ability to lobby their party regarding the schedule of primaries, the primary calendar is largely beyond their control. Similarly, Members' partisanship, the presence of a “native son” candidate on the ballot, or the presence of a party caucus leader on the ballot are factors that are a given. Thus, even if Members of Congress have ambition and policy interest, other factors specific to their status within the party and the calendar of the nomination process influences their ability to be a leader.

¹⁸In 2008, Kentucky and Oregon held their Democratic and Republican primaries on May 20, two weeks before the last primaries in the nomination calendar.

Finally, Members of Congress have some control over the extent to which they are concerned for their electoral security. While the basic demographic and political factors in the district are largely given, Members have more control over how much money they raise, the extent to which they prevent the rise of a quality challenger, their personal behavior, and their voting behavior in Congress. Members who are not motivated to take interest in policy or have ambition are unlikely to lead their party's nomination. Other Members may find the endorsement process too challenging, especially if their constituents weigh in later during the primary calendar or if the Member does not have a relationship with one of the candidates. In sum, Members of Congress who wish to be a leader in their party's primary can do so—as long as they are willing to overcome some basic fundamentals of the nomination process.

2.5 Conclusion

Party elites participate in an extended conversation to pick a presidential nominee. In this conversation, party elites make a collective decision regarding which presidential primary candidate is most likely to preserve party orthodoxy and win in the general election. Yet, the aggregate decision is colored both by individual decisions to participate and individual decisions not to participate. The contribution of this chapter is that party elites draw on their personal, strategic considerations—as well as the powerful collective incentive to influence the outcome—when deciding whether to participate in the nomination process. This chapter focuses on a subset of party elites—Members of the U.S. House of Representatives—but the contribution of this paper is generalizable to other members of the extended party. Like incumbent House members, labor unions, civil rights organizations, business groups, party activists, and other elected officials must make their own personal calculation regarding whether they should participate or abstain from choosing the party's nominee.

The findings indicate that differential rates of endorsement participation exist among an important subset of party elites. While it is beyond the scope of the current chapter, an implication of these findings is that these different endorsement rates among various members of the extended party can influence the outcome of the nomination process. On the one hand, Members of Congress who have electoral security, ambition, have higher levels of policy activity, and earlier primaries may have distinct interests and preferences within the party which would lead them to have disproportionate influence on the nomination outcome. In other words, it is possible that these findings indicate that certain segments of the extended party—not the extended party as a whole—maintain control of the nomination outcome.

On the other hand, however, these factors do not in themselves indicate that members who lead the nomination process have distinct preferences from those who do not. Indeed, Members of Congress with electoral security have interests to nominate an ideologically orthodox and viable general election candidate because they are also likely to prefer a candidate at the top of the ticket who will be beneficial to all party candidates on the ballot. Similarly, the incentives for Members of Congress with ambition are to incorporate the preferences of their colleagues with their own preferences as they make an endorsement. These incentives are likely to induce ambitious members to respond to the preferences of members who do not choose to participate. In addition, Members who have higher levels of policy activity are likely to be more familiar with their colleagues' preferences and thus incorporate them into their endorsement decision. Thus, the extent to which different decisions to participate influences nomination outcomes depends on the extent to which those who choose to participate reflect the preferences of those who choose not to participate. These implications are the subject of future research.

Recent scholarship likens the nomination process to a conversation among party

activists, mass party identifiers, the media, candidates, and party elected officials (Cohen et al. 2008). Yet, the contours of the conversation are defined by the members of the extended party who choose to participate—and the absence of those who do not. Not all members of the extended party are in a position to participate. This paper shows that segments of a subset of the extended party—Members of the U.S. House of Representatives—choose to participate or abstain from the conversation for strategic reasons.

3. THE LUCRATIVE REWARDS FOR INTRAPARTY ACTIVISM DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

In the modern era, members of the extended political party are tasked to serve as gatekeepers to ensure the electability and ideological acceptability of the party's presidential nominees. Indeed, empirical studies of nomination outcomes find that elite party support determines which primary candidate becomes the eventual nominee (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007). The dominant approach in the literature assumes that the extended party mobilizes on behalf of their candidate of choice in order to preserve the party's ideological brand and select a nominee who will be an asset at the ballot box during the general election (Butler 2004). In this work, I present an alternative argument for why members of the extended party get involved in their party's nomination battles. Instead of rewards that are based on the party's success, my argument focuses on rewards that are centered on the individual member of the party.

In particular, I focus on the rewards that may be reaped when elected officials in the extended party elect to endorse candidates in their party's presidential primary. In this approach, I do not disagree with the argument that members of the extended party get involved in the nomination process to protect party orthodoxy and nominate a viable general election candidate; indeed, my argument is consistent with this notion. In addition to these collective incentives, however, I argue that elected officials in the political party have personal incentives that influence their involvement in the nomination process. Namely, I argue that elected officials get involved in their party's nomination process to take advantage of rewards that are

provided from the extended party. After all, elected officials must first look to shore up their own political concerns before getting involved in other political activities. For those elected officials who do choose to get involved in selecting a nominee, their own personal political context is likely to be at least as important as protecting party orthodoxy and nominating a presidential candidate who will be an asset on Election Day.

While the decisions to get involved in the nomination process clearly have consequences for outcomes (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007), these individual decisions by elected officials are also likely to have personal consequences. Just as endorsements are likely to mobilize members of the extended party on behalf of the endorsee, endorsements are also likely to mobilize members of the extended party on behalf of the endorser. After all, members of the extended party are likely to look to those who get involved in nomination contests as being leaders within the party and as such worthy of support. Similarly, presidential campaigns themselves are likely to consider their endorsers as worthy of support.

Additionally, partisan differences in party elite behavior predict differing levels of mobilization on behalf of the endorser. Scholars have long noted that fundamental differences exist in elite and mass behavior within the parties during the nomination period, with Democratic nomination contests being more divisive (Mayer 1996; Steger 2008). Given these observations, it is sensible to predict that the extent to which the extended party rallies to reward its elected officials who take part in the nomination contest will depend on whether the elected official is a member of the Democratic or Republican party. In particular, Republican elected officials should be more likely to be rewarded than their Democratic counterparts for choosing to participate in their party's nomination contest. This leads to the following research questions to be addressed in this paper: *Are elected officials rewarded for getting*

involved in their party's presidential nomination struggle? Does the extent to which elected officials are rewarded depend on whether they are members of the Democratic or Republican party? Do these rewards ultimately translate into increased support on Election Day?

3.2 Previous Research

The extended political party has powerful motivations to be active in their presidential nomination contest. According to Butler (2004), the extended party gets involved in presidential nomination contests in order to protect party orthodoxy and nominate a strong candidate for the general election. In this theoretical approach, members of the extended party select from among their party's primary candidates the sole candidate that can unify the party's ideological wings and provide a strong showing on Election Day. Using a median voter theory framework, Steger (2008) provides empirical evidence that candidates at the overall ideological median fail to receive party elite support but that candidates at their own party's ideological median attract the most support.

Previous research on the role of party elites in nomination contests conceives of the decision to participate as a collective one, both from a theoretical and empirical perspective. Indeed, Cohen et al. (2008) argue that the extended party participates in an ongoing conversation during the pre-primary period regarding the electoral prospects and ideological acceptability of the various candidates. During this ongoing conversation, party elites activate their personal network of supporters in order to support their preferred candidate. In the aggregate, party elites coordinate their support on a preferred candidate, who reaps the benefits of additional fundraising and organizational support. Indeed, this aggregate support translates into increased media coverage, financial resources, and support from the mass public during the

pre-primary period (Cohen et al. 2008; Dowdle, Adkins, and Steger 2009; Steger 2008). Similarly, Steger (2007) finds that party elite support influences candidate support during the primaries. This line of research provides compelling evidence that the extended party collectively decides on a presidential nominee.

While the dominant theoretical and empirical approach in the literature is to conceive of actors within the extended party as responding to collective incentives, other research on presidential nominations focuses the attention on individual members of the extended party. Findings from the previous chapter provide a theoretical approach that takes into account individual level incentives that foster or inhibit a subset of the extended party—Members of Congress—from participating in their party’s nomination contest. This approach argues that the collective incentives to participate in the nomination contest must be supplemented by the individual incentives that influence the behavior of Members of Congress. The previous chapter indicates that Members of Congress are more likely to lead their party’s nomination contest based on their personal electoral security, ambition, legislative activity within Congress, the presence of a native son candidate or a chamber leader running for the party’s nomination, the level of mass support for the frontrunner, and the closer their state’s primary election is to the Iowa caucuses. Thus, while the collective incentive to coordinate on a nominee who both protects party orthodoxy and will be an asset on Election Day is strong, this approach refocuses the analysis on individual members within the extended party who have their own concerns to consider.

3.3 Theoretical Argument

The literature on presidential nominations focuses on two actors: the extended political party and the presidential candidates themselves. This conception of the political party extends the definition beyond simply the formal party organization

to include elected officials, allied interest groups, consultants, partisan media, and 527 organizations (Cohen et al. 2008; Dominguez 2005; Dominguez and Bernstein 2003; Grossman and Dominguez 2009; Masket 2009; Schwartz 1990; Skinner 2005). In this work, I argue that Members of Congress—specifically, Members of the U.S. House of Representatives—are separate from the extended party organization. Members of Congress interact with the rest of the extended party organization in a system of rewards that accrue to preferred presidential candidates and individual Members of Congress. Thus, instead of including Members of Congress with the extended party—as is done throughout the literature—I argue that Members of Congress must be separated from the rest of the extended party organization. Similarly, in this work the extended party includes formal party organizations, allied interest groups, consultants, the partisan media, and 527 organizations, but not Members of Congress.

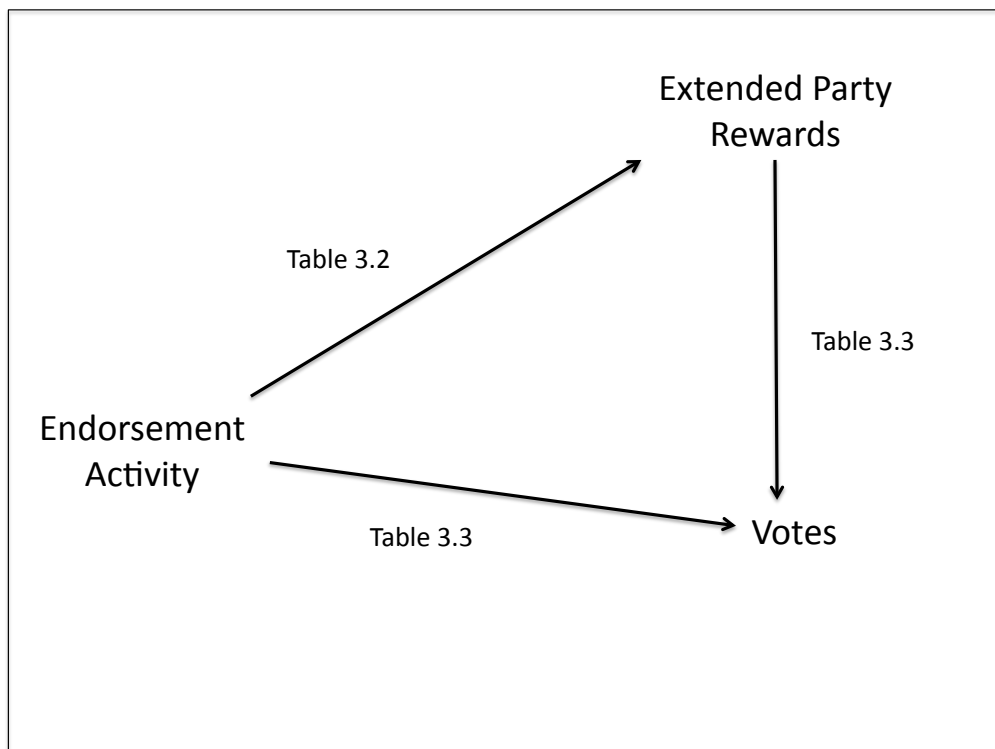
Members of Congress have an active role to play during their party’s presidential nominating contests. Within the Democratic party, Members of Congress are afforded an official role as a superdelegate at the national convention, while Republican Members of Congress also attempt to get involved to influence the nomination outcome. The dominant approach in the presidential nomination literature argues that through activating their political networks on behalf of their preferred nominee, Members of Congress can help influence the dynamics of the race and ultimately determine the identity of the nominee (Dowdle, Adkins, and Steger 2009; Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007). In this approach, Members of Congress use their influence within the extended party to provide benefits and rewards to their preferred presidential candidate who they feel is most likely to unify the party and win on Election Day. Given these collective incentives, it is sensible to assume that Members of Congress rush to influence the outcome of the nomination process. On the contrary, only roughly sixty percent of Members of the U.S. House get involved in their party’s

nomination contest prior to the Iowa caucuses. Indeed, this activity does carry with it the potential for risks, including making an incorrect endorsement, offending party leaders, or exacerbating party divisions. Thus, despite the powerful *collective* incentive to influence the outcome that applies to all members of the extended party, it remains unclear why *individual* Members of Congress would choose to get involved in their party's nomination process.

In addition to using their public support to influence the nomination outcome, my argument is that Members of Congress use their public support of presidential candidates to reap personal benefits to themselves. In this perspective, not only does publicly supporting a presidential candidate benefit the endorsee, it also leads to personal benefits to the endorser. In other words, just as the extended party coordinates resources to assist their preferred presidential candidate, so does the extended party coordinate resources to assist Members of Congress who are active in determining the nomination outcome. This increase in resources may then be used by Members of Congress to increase their own voter support on Election Day. The theoretical argument in this section is summarized in Figure 3.1.

To understand why the extended party would reward or punish Members of Congress for getting involved in their party's nomination contest, it is necessary to examine the nature of the extended political party. Members of the extended party are not only gatekeepers to the ballot for presidential nominating campaigns, but they are also gatekeepers in congressional primary campaigns (Masket 2009). Elements of the extended party share fundraising lists (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009, 2010) and coordinate on their preferred presidential nominee (Cohen et al. 2008). Interestingly enough, the same incentives that are offered to explain why the extended party coordinates on a presidential candidate—to preserve party orthodoxy and nominate a strong candidate for the general election—explain why elements

Figure 3.1: The Influence of Intraparty Activism on Member Reelection



of the extended party should reward Members of Congress for participating in the nomination process.

Just as the extended party needs to preserve party orthodoxy, so does the extended party need to reward Members of Congress who are active in their party's nomination contest. Members of Congress who are active in their party's nomination contest are likely to be activists or ambitious for partisan leadership roles. Indeed, if we are to interpret public support for a presidential candidate as a signal about the electability and viability of the endorsee, it also makes sense to interpret this public support as a statement about the political skills and qualities of the endorser. Thus, the extended party has strong incentives to incorporate and reinforce ties between their organizations and Members of Congress.

In particular, the extended party has a desire to reward Members of Congress who display political skill during the nomination process. Evidence of political skill displayed during the nomination process includes both supporting the eventual nominee and doing so prior to the beginning of the public's input during the primaries. Members of Congress who endorse the eventual nominee display political skill in an ability to forecast which candidate running for their party's nomination is most likely to unify the party and win the most delegates during the primaries. Moreover, elected officials who are able to "pick the winner" are likely to be those who are subsequently viewed favorably by the nominee and his or her campaign, thus making the endorser much more valuable to the rest of the extended party. In addition, making an accurate forecast *prior* to the beginning of the public's input during the Iowa caucuses is indicative of political skill as it is done before any real election results are available. In other words, the extended party should be particularly likely to reward Members of Congress who publicly support the presidential candidate who eventually becomes their party's nominee and who does so before the Iowa caucuses.

In addition, the literature on presidential nominations is especially focused on differences in the nomination process for Democrats and Republicans. In particular, wide gaps exist in the level of harmony within the Democratic and Republican parties at both the mass and elite level. At the mass level, Democratic identifiers are more divided on various political issues than Republican identifiers on roughly 84 percent of NES survey items. In fact, for roughly 61 percent of NES survey items, Democratic identifiers are more divided than the mass public as a whole (Mayer 1996, 77).¹ At the elite level, surveys of party elites from 1972, 1980, and 1984 indicate that Democratic party leaders were less in agreement than their Republican counterparts on 83 percent of public opinion items (Mayer 1996, 87). This division at the mass and elite level within the Democratic party leads to a nomination process that is more divisive. As a result, Democrats nearly always have a lower percentage of first ballot convention votes won by the nominee, a lower percentage of the vote won by the nominee in presidential primaries, and a higher number of divisive primaries (Mayer 1996).² In a similar analysis that focuses on the behavior of party elites in nomination contests, Steger (2008) finds that fewer Democratic elected officials endorse presidential nomination candidates, those that do endorse do so at a later point in time, and the Democratic endorsers divide their support among more candidates than do the Republicans. These observations about the divided nature of Democratic presidential nominations lead to a clear prediction about the behavior of the extended party in rewarding Democratic Members of Congress for getting involved in the nomination process.

Given that the Democratic party is more divided at the elite and mass level than the Republican party, the extended Democratic party is unlikely to rally to

¹These survey item statistics are calculated using Mayer's figures for both seven point scale questions and thermometer rating questions from every ANES between 1968 and 1994.

²These figures come from Mayer (1996), Table 1.1.

support Democratic Members of Congress who get involved in nomination contests. This is because members of the extended Democratic party—liberal interest groups, donors, and Political Action Committees—are themselves likely to be divided as to the preferred presidential nominee. The extended Democratic party is likely to look unfavorably upon those Members of Congress within the party who attempt to lead the nomination process by endorsing a presidential candidate. In such a divisive environment, endorsing one candidate over the others is likely to make more enemies than friends. Indeed, making a public endorsement within the Democratic party nomination process is likely to foster ongoing division within the party.

The lack of division within the Republican party makes their situation very different. Republican Members of Congress who choose to get involved in the nomination process are likely to be viewed favorably among the extended Republican party as the extended Republican party is likely to be in the process of uniting around a preferred candidate. As such, the extended Republican party, unlike the extended Democratic party, is likely to reward its Members of Congress who take part in the nomination process.

In turn, the rewards that are conferred by the extended party to Members of Congress allow them to translate into Election Day benefits. Indeed, presidential candidates who are rewarded by the extended party receive increased support from voters, so it is sensible to predict that incumbent Members of Congress who receive support from the extended party will also be rewarded by voters. Two potential mechanisms exist whereby endorsement activity by incumbent Members of Congress translates into increased support on Election Day. First, the mechanism may be indirect: If Members of Congress who are rewarded by the extended party use these rewards in their campaigns, it is likely that these rewards will translate into increased voter support on Election Day. From this perspective, the rewards that the extended

party confers on Members of Congress allows them to finance their reelection campaigns, which subsequently influences their ability to get reelected.

Second, it is also possible, though unlikely, that Members of Congress will be directly rewarded by voters on Election Day for their endorsement behavior during their party's presidential nomination contest. Members of Congress are unlikely to be directly rewarded by their constituents for their endorsement behavior because the audience for this behavior is not the broad elements of a Member's constituency but rather targeted toward party elites. Moreover, despite the fact that Member endorsement behavior does attract some media attention, this coverage is not widespread. Finally, as this endorsement activity among Members of Congress occurs many months prior to their own Election Day, this activity is unlikely to be an important factor for many voters. Indeed, especially when compared with voter partisanship, campaign spending, the incumbency advantage, and all the other factors that influence voter behavior in congressional elections, the endorsement activity during presidential nomination contests of incumbent Members of Congress is unlikely to leave a prominent impression in the minds of voters.

In sum, the extended Republican party mobilizes to support those Members of Congress who are accurate in endorsing the eventual nominee and do so prior to the Iowa caucuses. The extended Republican party does so because it has an interest in supporting ambitious partisans who display political skill through leading the presidential nomination process. In contrast, the extended Democratic party may also prefer to support ambitious partisans who display political skill, but chooses not to because of the division that exists at both the elite and mass level during Democratic presidential nomination contests. These rewards are likely to translate to increased support among constituents on Election Day, not because voters are likely to recall the political skill displayed by their Member of Congress, but rather

because their Member of Congress has increased resources from which to build a base of political support.

3.4 Research Design and Data

While much of the previous literature on the role of the extended party in presidential nomination campaigns focuses on forecasting models (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007), the research design employed here uses a different approach. Given that I argue that rewards are accrued by individual Members of Congress from the extended party, I focus my research design and measurement strategy on analyzing the responsiveness of the extended party to the behavior of individual Members of Congress.

Recall that the argument is that the extended political party rewards Members of Congress who display political skill during the nomination process. The measurement task becomes determining an appropriate operationalization of the methods through which the extended party confers rewards to Members of Congress. The rewards that the extended party confers on their preferred presidential nomination candidates is the appropriate theoretical starting place. The extended party rewards their preferred presidential nomination candidates with activated networks of volunteers, increased fundraising, and organizational support (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007). Given that my expectations are similar about the ways in which the extended party rewards Members of Congress for displaying political skill during the nomination contest, it follows that the extended party is likely to reward Members of Congress with activated networks of volunteers, increased fundraising, and organizational support.³ Clearly, the most directly feasible measurement approach is to focus

³This list of rewards is by no means exhaustive. In fact, these all pertain to electoral support. Other potential rewards include those that increase the elected official's clout in legislative battles and increased media attention.

the analysis on the extent to which the extended party rewards Members of Congress during the nomination process with increased fundraising and contributions.

The extended party includes interest groups, consultants, partisan media, and 527s. These groups have a number of direct and indirect ways to target financial support to Members of Congress who display political skill during the nomination process. One such method is through Political Action Committees. Political Action Committees represent interest groups and are allowed to make contributions directly to candidates' campaign organizations. Given that the concept of the extended party incorporates interest groups, it follows that interest groups mobilize through their PACs to reward Members of Congress who display political skill.

Given that my focus is on the behavior of individual Members of Congress and the fundraising responses by the extended party, my measurement strategy is particularly targeted on fundraising data that are associated with each individual Member of Congress. Fortunately, the Federal Election Commission provides campaign finance data that are disaggregated based on the source of the funds. Thus, it is possible to know for each Member of Congress in each election cycle not only their total funds raised, but also the funds raised from all political action committees (PACs) and funds raised by the type of PAC. While I expect that PACs—as the fundraising and contributing wings of the extended party in general will be responsive to the political skill displayed by Members of Congress during their party's nomination contest, I also expect that business PACs and ideological PACs will also be responsive. I expect that business PACs will display similar behavior because this includes PACs that are affiliated with organizations that are traditionally identified with one of the two parties. For example, business groups that are affiliated with the Republican party include the American Bankers' Association, while business groups that are affiliated with the Democratic party include the trial attorneys and their affiliated PACs.

Similarly, ideological PACs include groups such as the National Rifle Association, EMILY's List, and politicians' own leadership PACs that are clearly identified with one of the extended parties. Thus, I focus not only on the responsiveness of PACs as a whole but also on the responsiveness of business and ideological PACs to Members of Congress leading their party's nomination process.

In particular, my measurement strategy for PAC responsiveness is to model the share of the fundraising total received from PACs instead of the size of the fundraising total overall. Rather than modeling the amount of funds received overall (which can fluctuate based on idiosyncratic features of Member personality), this approach models the share of funds received from the extended party. By focusing on the share of funds raised from each source—rather than the raw dollar amount—this approach focuses explicitly on the resources accrued from each group of the extended party. Thus, as extended party PACs reward Members, Members' share of funds from the extended party should increase. This approach is a more stringent test of the hypotheses because it requires PACs not simply to be responsive overall, but responsive enough to boost the Members' receipts relative to their receipts as a whole. These measures of campaign finance sources represent the dependent variables in the analyses presented below.

In order to test my expectation regarding the extended party's responses to behavior by Members of Congress in their party's presidential nomination contest, I collected public endorsement data for each member for the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential primaries.⁴ To collect the endorsement data for 1996, 2000, and 2004, I relied on data previously compiled by Cohen et al. (2008), who amassed

⁴This endorsement data is confined to those Members of Congress who have a contested presidential primary in their party. I did not collect endorsement data for those Members of Congress who shared party affiliation with a sitting president running for reelection. As such, my analyses include the Republicans in 1996, Republicans and Democrats in 2000, Democrats in 2004, and Republicans and Democrats in 2008.

endorsement data for party elites relying on media accounts. I supplemented this data with my own Lexis-Nexis search of newspaper accounts of endorsements to obtain information for the 1996 through 2008 presidential primaries. These data were used to collect pertinent information related to this analysis, including the identity of the presidential endorsee and the date of the public endorsement by the Member of Congress. This information was then used to create two dummy variables. The first dummy variable is an indicator for whether the Member of Congress endorsed prior to the Iowa caucuses. The second dummy variable is an indicator for whether the Member of Congress endorsed the party's eventual nominee. In the statistical analyses, these two dummy variables are interacted to create a measure indicating whether the Member of Congress endorsed the party's eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses.

In the analyses presented below, I use a number of control variables to account for variations in campaign receipts from PACs. I collected data on whether the member was in the chamber's majority party, opponent's campaign spending, the previous vote for the incumbent, the previous vote for the incumbent's presidential candidate, and dummy variables for whether the member faced a quality challenger, was a freshman, or was in the congressional party leadership.

Recall that I also expect that the level of reward from the extended party to the Member of Congress for getting involved in the nomination process depends on whether the member is part of the extended Republican or Democratic party. As such, I conduct separate analyses on both Republican and Democratic Members of Congress. The results of the statistical analyses are presented below. The tables below present results to test my expectations regarding the extended party's PAC responsiveness to the presidential nomination contest endorsement activity of incumbent Members of Congress.

In addition, the tables below presents results to test my expectations regarding the direct and indirect mechanisms through which the endorsement activity of incumbent Members of Congress ultimately influences their ability to get reelected. As such, the standard congressional election incumbent vote share model is employed, variations of which are used in Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) and Carson et al. (2010), where the dependent variable is the two-party percentage of the incumbent's vote share in the current election. Other important independent variables in the model include the district's presidential vote, measured as an average of the incumbent's presidential party performance in the district in the two most recent elections, the lagged incumbent vote share from the previous election, the incumbent's voting record in Congress, measured as the absolute value of the first dimension of Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) DW-Nominate scores, a dummy variable for whether the incumbent faced a quality challenger, a dummy variable for whether the incumbent was a freshman Member of Congress, a measure of the change in personal income per capita, and a measure of presidential approval.⁵

3.5 Results

Before turning to the multivariate analysis, a brief introduction to the variables of interest is necessary. Recall that the key independent variables in this analysis are two dummy variables—whether the Member of Congress endorsed prior to the Iowa caucuses and whether the Member of Congress endorsed the eventual nominee—which are then combined in an interaction term to create a dummy variable for whether the Member of Congress endorsed the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses. Again, I have clear predictions about differences between Republicans and Democrats, so those results are presented. Table 3.1 presents the mean and standard

⁵The measures for change in personal income per capita and presidential approval are coded based on whether the Member of Congress shares the same party as the sitting president.

deviation for these nomination activities by party.

Table 3.1: Nomination Activity Participation Rates, 1996-2008

	All Observations	GOP	Dem
Endorsed Eventual Nominee	.46 (.5)	.46 (.5)	.45 (.5)
Endorsed Pre-Iowa	.61 (.49)	.65 (.48)	.57 (.5)
Pre-Iowa X Eventual Nominee	.32 (.47)	.39 (.49)	.26 (.44)
N	1218	591	627
<i>Note:</i> Cell entries represent nomination activity participation rates. Standard deviations are in parentheses.			

Table 3.1 indicates that while no clear partisan differences exist in their abilities to endorse the eventual nominee, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to endorse prior to the Iowa caucuses. These results are similar to the differences in partisan endorsement rates found by Steger (2008). Similarly, Republican Members of Congress are more likely to endorse the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses. Clearly, Republican Members of Congress are more likely to lead the nomination process and more likely to support the eventual nominee when leading the nomination process. These figures provide some broad support for elite level partisan differences in nomination activism noted elsewhere in the literature.

Table 3.2: The Influence of Endorsement Timing and Accuracy on PAC Fundraising, 1996-2008

	Total PAC %		Business PAC %		Ideological PAC %	
	GOP	Dem	GOP	Dem	GOP	Dem
Majority Status	-0.063*	0.032*	-0.032*	0.052*	-0.012*	0.009*
	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(-.012)	(0.004)	(0.003)
ln(Opponent Spending)	-0.014*	-0.015*	-0.015*	-0.015*	0.004*	0.006*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Previous Election Vote	0.001*	0.000	0.001*	0.001*	0.0	0.0
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
Previous Presidential Vote	0.000	-0.001*	0.001	-0.002*	0.0	0.0
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
Challenger Quality	-0.001	-0.036*	0.001	-0.029*	0.001	0.001
	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Freshman	0.000	-0.050*	-0.007	-0.085*	0.012*	0.026*
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Party Leader	0.048*	0.043*	0.041*	0.063*	0.001	-0.001
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Endorsed Eventual Nominee	-0.013	-0.026	-0.008	-0.014	0.001	-0.002
	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Endorsed Pre-Iowa	-0.035*	-0.022	-0.025	-0.14	-0.008*	-0.003
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Pre-Iowa X Eventual Nominee	0.068*	0.047*	0.045	0.018	0.011*	0.006
	(0.030)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.02)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Intercept	0.578*	0.658*	0.508*	0.452*	0.001	-0.026*
	(0.063)	(0.053)	(0.057)	(0.043)	(0.009)	(0.011)
N	591	627	591	627	591	627
R ²	.10	.10	.13	.28	.20	.28

* indicates p < .05, one-tailed test.

Table 3.2 presents the three tests of my hypotheses articulated in the previous sections. The dependent variable in the first two columns of Table 3.2 is the per-

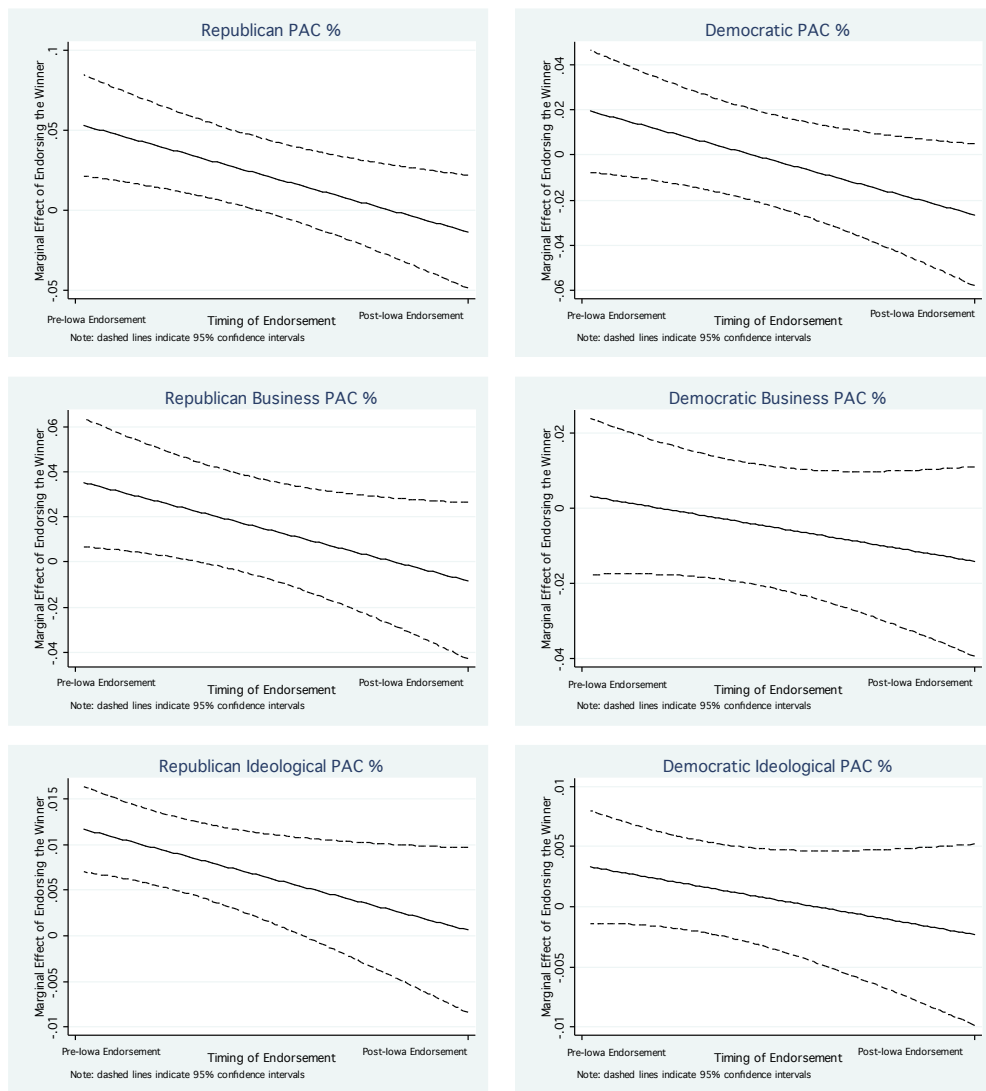
centage of campaign funds received from PACs. PAC contributions are an important source of funds for congressional campaigns. PACs make up roughly 45 percent of campaign funds received by incumbent Members of Congress, and as such are a sizable financial source.⁶ The first two columns of Table 3.2 contain the results of two regression models; one for Republicans and one for Democrats. While some differences exist across the models, the tests of my argument are with the measures of endorsing the eventual nominee, endorsing pre-Iowa, and the interaction of the two. The interaction term is positive and statistically significant in both models.

To gain a better understanding of the substantive effects, it is necessary to plot the marginal effect of endorsing the nominee across the timing of the endorsement. Figure 3.2 provides the marginal effects graphs for the regressions presented in Table 3.2. The marginal effects figures for the regressions where the dependent variable is the percentage of PAC funds raised are on the top row. The top row of Figure 3.2 indicates that, among Republicans, the marginal effect of endorsing the eventual nominee on the percentage of PAC funds received positive and statistically significant for a pre-Iowa endorsement but zero for a post-Iowa endorsement. In other words, endorsing the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses leads to a roughly five percent increase in the funds received from PACs among Republicans. Holding other figures constant, this is substantively equal to an increase of roughly \$23,500. On the other hand, the top row of Figure 3.2 also indicates that among Democrats, the marginal effect of endorsing the eventual nominee is zero both for a pre-Iowa and a post-Iowa endorsement. These results provide evidence to support my two hypotheses. The extended Republican party rewards Republican Members of Congress who endorse the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses with an increase in the share of funds from PACs, while the extended Democratic party does not reward

⁶This is roughly equal to \$544,600.

Democratic Members of Congress for this behavior.

Figure 3.2: The Influence of Intraparty Activism on Incumbent Fundraising, 1996-2008



The third and fourth columns in Table 3.2 present additional tests of my expectations. The dependent variable in these columns is the percentage of campaign funds received from business PACs. Business PACs include those that are affiliated with corporations or trade associations. Examples of business PACs include those affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or Microsoft. Business PACs are an important source of funding for congressional campaigns, constituting roughly 32 percent of all campaign funds received for incumbent Members of Congress. Unlike the results for the total percentage of funds received from PACs, the interaction term in neither model is statistically significant. The second row in Figure 3.2 presents the interaction graphs to understand the marginal effect of endorsing the eventual nominee across the timing of the endorsement. Like the results for all PACs, Figure 3.2 indicates that among Republicans, the marginal effect of endorsing the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses is associated with a 3.2 percent increase in the percentage of funds raised from business PACs. Holding other figures constant, this is substantively equal to an increase of roughly \$14,000. The second row in Figure 3.2 also indicates that Democratic Members of Congress, however, are not rewarded for endorsing the party's eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses. These results provide further support of my expectations; the extended Republican party rallies to reward Republican Members of Congress with an increase in the share of funds received from business PACs, while the extended Democratic party does not reward Democratic Members of Congress.

The fifth and sixth columns of Table 3.2 presents tests of my expectations in which the dependent variable is the percentage of campaign funds received from ideological PACs. Ideological PACs include those affiliated with the National Rifle Association or EMILY's List. Ideological PACs also include contributions from politicians' leadership PACs, such as Senator Jim DeMint's (R-SC) Senate Conser-

vatives Fund or Representative Steny Hoyer's (D-MD) AmeriPAC. At roughly four percent of overall funds received, ideological PACs makeup a smaller percentage than do business PACs. Table 3.2 indicates that the interaction term for endorsing the eventual nominee before the Iowa caucuses is positive and statistically significant for Republicans but not so for Democrats. The bottom row of Figure 3.2 indicates that Republican Members of Congress are rewarded by ideological PACs for endorsing the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucus. This activity leads to a 1.2 percent increase in the share of funds from ideological PACs. Holding other figures constant, this is substantively equal to an increase of roughly \$605. In contrast, the bottom row of Figure 3.2 indicates that Democratic Members of Congress are not rewarded by the extended party for endorsing the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses.

In total, the results from Table 3.2 present a compelling case regarding the mobilization of the extended Republican party to support Republicans in Congress who lead their party's nomination process. In contrast, these results indicate that the extended Democratic party fails to support Democrats in Congress who attempt to lead the Democratic presidential primaries. These results are consistent with the hypotheses presented in this manuscript.

3.5.1 Campaign Finance and Member Reelection

Given that the extended party rewards Republican Members of Congress who display political skill during their party's nomination process, it is sensible to determine the extent to which this activity subsequently influences members' vote shares on Election Day. Recall that two potential mechanisms exist for Members of Congress to use their intraparty activity to influence their reelection. First, the influence of members using their presidential nomination contest activity on their own reelection may be indirect, as increases in PAC donations from the extended party

allows incumbent Members of Congress to finance more campaign activity. From this perspective, Members of Congress use their activity during presidential nomination campaigns to attract more money from PACs associated with the extended party, which subsequently allows them to spend more money on their campaign.

Second, Members of Congress may be rewarded directly by voters on Election Day for their activity during their party's nomination contest. Of course, there is ample reason to be skeptical of this approach. Despite extensive research that indicates Members of Congress are held accountable by their constituents, there is little reason to expect that voters would be aware of the endorsement behavior of the average Member of Congress or that this information, when coupled with partisanship, campaign spending, and all the other factors that influence incumbent vote share, would be an important criteria for holding members accountable. Thus, there is little reason to expect that Members of Congress are held accountable—either rewarded or punished—for their endorsement behavior during intraparty nomination contests. The direct empirical tests of this argument is in Table 3.3.

The key independent variable in column 1 is the gap in campaign spending between the incumbent and the challenger, measured as the natural log of the challenger's spending minus the natural log of the incumbent's spending.⁷ The influence of an increase in PAC receipts due to Member involvement during their party's nomination process is indirect through this campaign spending variable. Column 1 of Table 3.3 indicates that the spending gap between the challenger's campaign and the incumbent's campaign is negatively signed and statistically significant. In other words, as the challenger's campaign spending advantage increases, the incumbent's vote share declines, while as the challenger's campaign spending advantage decreases, the incumbent's vote share increases.

⁷All campaign expenditure amounts are adjusted to 2008 dollars.

Table 3.3: The Influence of Extended Party Rewards on Incumbent Vote Share, 1996-2008

	Column I	Column II
Presidential Vote	0.36*	0.36*
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Lagged Incumbent Vote	0.11*	0.11*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Roll-Call Ideological Extremity	-8.12*	-7.88*
	(2.57)	(2.59)
Challenger Quality	-2.56*	-2.56*
	(0.45)	(0.45)
Freshman	0.99	0.97
	(0.71)	(0.71)
Change in Personal	0.027*	0.027*
Income	(0.01)	(0.01)
Presidential Approval	-0.04*	-0.04*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
ln(Challenger Spending)-	-3.36*	-3.36*
ln(Incumbent Spending)	(.2)	(0.2)
Endorsed Winner Prior to Iowa		0.45
		(0.58)
Intercept	36.1*	36.2*
	(1.6)	(1.6)
N	1174	1174
R ²	.64	.64

Note: Dependent variable is the incumbent's two-party percentage of the vote.
* indicates $p < .05$, one-tailed test.

This provides further empirical evidence for the relationship between campaign spending and votes noted in congressional elections research. Moreover, it provides *indirect* evidence that incumbent Members of Congress who are rewarded by their

extended party with an increase in campaign funds can subsequently use these funds to their advantage on Election Day.

Recall from Table 3.2 that Republicans who display political skill during their party's nomination process through endorsing the eventual nominee prior to the Iowa caucuses are rewarded with an increase in the share of funds from PACs. If this increase in funds is translated to an increase in incumbent Republican campaign expenditures by the same amount, the expected incumbent vote share increases from 64.1 percent to 64.2 percent.⁸ While this increase is not statistically significant, it does provide some empirical evidence for the indirect benefits of the rewards the extended party can provide incumbent Members of Congress who display political skill during their party's presidential nomination contest.

In contrast, column 2 of Table 3.3 indicates that Members of Congress who display political skill through endorsing the winner of their party's nomination contest prior to the Iowa caucuses are not directly rewarded on Election Day. While the coefficient for the dummy variable is positive, it is not statistically distinguishable from zero. These findings confirm the expectations regarding the potential for direct influence of endorsement activity on incumbent vote shares. Instead of being rewarded directly by voters for their involvement in the presidential nomination process, incumbent Members of Congress are rewarded by the extended party with increased funds, which allows them to spend more on their campaign relative to their opponent's campaign. Thus, the influence of Member endorsement activity on their reelection is indirect through their ability to boost their own fundraising.

⁸This figure is calculated by holding all other variables used to predict the incumbent vote share from column 1 of Table 3.3 at their means and increasing the spending advantage for the incumbent in the spending gap measure by the amount of \$23,500.

3.6 Conclusion

The contributions of this paper are threefold: First, this paper contributes to the literature on presidential nominations by refocusing the unit of analysis to individuals and groups within the extended party. While the aggregate forecasting approach can tell us much about the nomination process, refocusing on individuals and groups within the extended party allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the incentives within the nomination process. Members of Congress certainly are motivated to determine the outcome of the nomination process, but to understand their individual incentives for participating, it is necessary to focus on individuals as the unit of analysis.

Second, this paper makes a theoretical contribution to the nominations literature by arguing that public endorsements by Members of Congress are used not only to benefit the endorsee, but also to reap rewards to the endorser. The endorser can capitalize on their intraparty activism to attract resources and support from the extended party. The extended party, after all, has an interest in promoting their elected officials who display such political acumen and ambition. These financial rewards can then be used by incumbent Members of Congress to finance their own reelection efforts.

Third, this paper contributes to the literature on political parties. The widespread division within the Democratic party and the comparatively low division within the Republican party makes their presidential nomination processes different (Mayer 1996). The extended Republican party has an incentive to reward Members of Congress who exhibit political skill during the nomination process because doing so helps to contribute to the shorter time span and higher degree of unanimity within their coalition. As displayed in this article, the extended Republican party mobilizes

to provide financial benefits to those Members of Congress who display political skill during the nomination process. Unfortunately for Democratic Members of Congress, the extended Democratic party does not mobilize to reward their political skill during the nomination process because doing so would likely offend the many disparate elements of the coalition. Thus, Democratic Members of Congress are not rewarded for their political skill and the nomination process continues to be divisive.

Recent developments in the nomination literature indicates that the political party maintains control of the presidential nomination outcome. Yet, given that the extended political party has control of the outcome, the focus then must turn to which elements of the party participate and for what reasons. This paper indicates that Members of Congress choose to participate or not participate in their party's presidential nomination process because of personal rewards that they will accrue for displaying political skill. Instead of only caring about influencing the identity of the nominee, Members of Congress are also likely to ask "What's in it for me?" when getting involved in intraparty nomination contests.

4. THE MOBILIZING EFFECTS OF CONGRESSIONAL ENDORSEMENTS IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

“Generally, an endorsement is worth the vote of the endorser and, about half the time, the endorser’s spouse...My advice for them would be to relax. No one cares.”

-Political scientist Larry Sabato, June 25, 2003, *The Oakland Tribune*

4.1 Introduction

Considerable disagreement exists surrounding the role of endorsements in presidential primaries. On the one hand, many political pundits view endorsements as a waste of energy on the part of the endorser and on the part of the campaigns who seek them. To support their argument, analysts often point to nationally representative surveys in which respondents claim they are not influenced by the endorsements of prominent political leaders.¹ At most, these pundits argue that endorsements are “insider baseball” that only influences partisan elites, donors, and the mass media.

On the other hand, a growing group of political researchers argue that, instead of simply being symbolic, aggregate endorsements are the *most important* determinant of presidential nomination outcomes. Indeed, this research provides empirical evidence to support campaigns’ considerable effort to court endorsements from local elected officials. This paper focuses on the extent to which public support from Members of Congress mobilizes their constituents to participate in presidential nomination campaigns. The theory articulated by Cohen et al. (2008) and others specifies that the extended political party—including Members of Congress—participate in an

¹For example, Gallup’s October 2007 survey item found 37 percent of the public thought endorsements of candidates were “somewhat” or “very” important, 23 percent thought that endorsements were “not too important” and 38 percent thought that endorsements were “not important at all.”

ongoing discussion akin to a signaling game regarding which presidential primary candidate is most likely to unify the party's disparate factions and be an asset during the general election. Once the extended party settles on their preferred candidate, their public support for that candidate subsequently influences polling, fundraising, and election results, thereby determining the outcome of the nomination. Yet, the connection between aggregate endorsements and nomination outcomes is unclear. Little is known about the mechanism through which public endorsements influence individual voter behavior and participation. If Members of Congress play an important role in the party's decision to settle on a nominee, it is *most likely* to be in their own communities, where presumably they have the most influence. Moreover, their endorsement is most likely to influence the participatory decisions of those constituents who are most likely to know about the endorsement—those with higher education levels.

This research explores the connection between the strategic decisions by Members of Congress to make endorsements and the participatory response by their constituents. Not only do these endorsement decisions have national consequences for nomination outcomes, but they also have consequences at the district level for voter participation and civic engagement. These consequences, however, are not uniform; some voters are more likely to be mobilized than others when their Member of Congress makes a public endorsement in the party primary. These findings provide additional support to the rational prospector theory of Brady, Schlozman, and Verba (1999). In particular, this research addresses the following: When Members of Congress make endorsements during their party's presidential nomination contest, how do their constituents respond?

In the political participation literature, scholars have developed extensive models to explain the variance in citizens' political activism. Early models of political

participation focused on the skills and resources that foster citizens' participation in politics (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In this model, citizens are involved in politics because they have the resources – education, income, age, and other demographic characteristics – to do so. These skills and resources allow citizens to engage with politics. While they focus on whether voters and nonvoters take similar positions on questions of public policy, they do demonstrate that highly educated citizens turn out to vote in increased numbers than lower educated citizens.

Similarly, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) and Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1994) reframe the debate on participation by focusing on reasons why citizens fail to participate in politics. In addition to resources, these scholars find that citizens do not participate in political activity either because they cannot or because they are not engaged with politics. Citizens cannot participate in politics because they lack the time, the civic skills, or the money. In particular, voting participation is predicted by individual interest and civic skills, donating money is predicted by individual income, and devoting free time to political activities is predicted by political interest and civic skills (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1994).

Other scholars note that an important predictor for political participation is mobilization (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). In addition to resources, interest, and engagement, these scholars argue that citizens participate in politics depending on whether they have been asked to do so. In asking citizens to participate, campaigns adjust individuals' decision calculus regarding whether to get involved in politics. These scholars show that mobilization is higher during more competitive election campaigns. This perspective places a key role for campaigns in that they have the ability to increase political participation through mobilization efforts. These models explain substantial variation in the study of political participation.

Given the importance of the role of mobilization in political participation, the lack

of conceptual and measurement innovation in the literature is surprising. Survey-based approaches to studying mobilization and political participation focus nearly exclusively on two components of mobilization. First, mobilization is operationalized as the survey respondent's recall of whether they were contacted by one of the campaigns during the election. Second, because mobilization appears targeted to competitive elections, researchers also employ measures of the survey respondent's perception of the competitiveness of the election. In this work, I combine the approaches used in the political participation research to determine whether citizens are mobilized to participate in politics when their Member of Congress makes a presidential primary endorsement. Rather than focusing in direct outreach efforts, however, I focus on strategic behavior in the political environment—endorsements by elected officials—that sends signals to voters regarding their political participation. This focus on the political environment capitalizes on the research that documents that political participation is higher during more competitive elections.

Little is understood about the role of resources, interest, or mobilization in the specific case of presidential primaries. The general models described above are likely to be applicable; however, substantial variation exists in the types of mobilization that occur during presidential primary campaigns. This research focuses on one type of mobilization effort that leads citizens to participate in politics. Rather than assuming that mobilization efforts are broad-based, this research builds upon that of Brady, Schlozman, and Verba (1999) to argue that, in the case of presidential primary campaigns, citizens are mobilized to participate when their Member of Congress makes an early endorsement of a presidential candidate. Indeed, these narrow efforts are likely to be targeted at those likely to participate in the first place, such as those with high education levels. In other words, citizens are asked to participate through a number of different methods (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993); one particular

example of a mobilization campaign is when a Member of Congress makes an early endorsement in a presidential primary campaign.

4.2 Theoretical Argument

In this section, I argue that endorsements by Members of Congress during presidential primary campaigns leads to a process of rational prospecting (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999) which leads to unequal constituent mobilization. Members of Congress are likely to view their constituents as a series of concentric circles, radiating outward from the member to intimate supporters, primary supporters, election supporters, and everyone in the district (Fenno 1978). When Members of Congress make public endorsements, they send a signal to their constituents regarding who should win their party's nomination. This signal, however, is not targeted at all constituents; rather, it is narrowly-targeted at primary supporters and the member's intimate associates. Included in these groups is the local network of the member's supporters and political party activists. Members of Congress target their endorsements to these groups of constituents because they are likely to mobilize others during the presidential primary campaign. This rational prospecting relies on political recruiters who are mobilized by their Member of Congress' endorsement to work on behalf of the endorsed candidate.

In this model, political recruiters are campaign activists, organizers, and local party leaders who assess voters' participation potential when building a mobilization strategy for the campaign. This participation potential is the product of a two-stage process in which political recruiters first use available information to determine likely targets for mobilization and then offer information on participatory opportunities. In the language of Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995), one of the methods through which individuals are asked to participate in

politics is through an endorsement by an elected official during presidential primaries. Thus, instead of considering all voters as equally worthy of political mobilization, rational political recruiters determine which citizens have the most participatory value. In other words, mobilization efforts are likely to be targeted at those likely to participate anyway. Thus, the effect of mobilization is likely to be *contingent* on their assessed participatory value.

Two considerations are likely to make the role of the political recruiter substantially more difficult in the case of primary election campaigns than in the case of general election campaigns. First, mass interest in the primaries is likely to be substantially lower than in general election campaigns. Participation, interest, and activity is likely to be clustered among those especially high in resources and engagement. Those citizens who are lower in resources and engagement are likely to be more difficult for political recruiters to mobilize, and hence, not worth the effort. Second, primary elections remove partisanship as a useful heuristic for determining who to mobilize. For example, in presidential primaries, political recruiters can use voter history lists to determine who to mobilize, but they are likely to have more errors in their efforts than in general election campaigns, when they can simply mobilize those who are co-partisans. Each of these considerations makes primary campaign mobilization along the lines discussed by Brady, Schlozman, and Verba (1999) more difficult. Because their job is more difficult during primaries, political recruiters are more likely to rely on networks and other trusted heuristics, including targeting those most likely to participate.

In addition, consider the case of a campaign that is recruiting volunteers to come to a fundraising event. The campaign organizers and activists are likely to develop a list of voters who have a high likelihood of participating in the first place, and then the organizers are likely to focus their efforts on this particular group of individuals.

Moreover, the literature argues that these efforts are likely to be most effective in mobilizing citizens to participate in other activities beyond simply voting in a general election. Brady, Schlozman, and Verba (1999) show that because the process has two stages and involves rational prospecting, it exacerbates resource inequalities and contributes to disparities in political participation.

Regardless of whether the role is formal, as in the case with the Democratic Party, or informal, as in the case with the Republican Party, Members of Congress maintain a leadership role as elected officials within their party organization. Indeed, research suggests that endorsements by the extended party organization—the network of elected officials, interest groups, consultants, etc. that makeup the modern political party—are the *most important* determinant for nomination outcomes (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007). In this framework, Members of Congress—as part of an extended party organization—participate in a dialogue with other party elements regarding the viability and ideological acceptability of nomination candidates. According to the theoretical argument advanced by Cohen et al. (2008), this dialogue occurs over months across a widely dispersed geographic area with a particular outcome in mind—selecting the party’s nominee.

While Members of Congress are certainly eager to participate in this national conversation, they must also be strategic about the impact their endorsement can have on their own constituents. Within their congressional district, Members of Congress are likely to serve as de-facto party chieftains.² In the past, Members maintained political control through the dispensation of patronage; today, Members activate and accumulate political control of the party in their district through maintaining close relationships with members of the local extended political party. Indeed, Members of

²For example, Joe Crowley is not only the congressman from New York’s 7th Congressional District, but he is also the chairman of the Queens County Democratic Party organization.

Congress are likely to have personal knowledge of local party chairs and key precinct captains.

Members of Congress use their public endorsements to signal support to stakeholders in the local extended party organization and mobilize the party on behalf of their preferred candidate. The support that Members of Congress provide to presidential nomination candidates transfers instant local credibility and organizational support that the campaign is unlikely to accumulate on its own. Presidential primary campaigns devote substantial energy and resources to their political departments, which are tasked with amassing support from local party leaders with the hopes that support from party chiefs will translate into mass mobilization. Moreover, this support is likely to have substantial impact in low-turnout party caucuses and primaries, where seemingly small mobilization efforts can have large effects on the composition of the electorate.

Once Members of Congress signal their support for a preferred presidential primary candidate, their status as local party leader responsible for mobilizing activists and voters exacerbates existing resource inequalities for political participation. With their public endorsements, Members of Congress send a signal to their local network of party activists and personal supporters that they should mobilize on behalf of the preferred candidate. This network of supporters and activists is likely to be small, cohesive, and experienced at the process of local campaigning. As such, they have a wealth of knowledge as rational prospectors in that they are likely to know how to mobilize local voters and other activists. In other words, they are likely to be high in political resources and engagement—and know where to look to find others who are just like them. Once these people are activated to support the preferred candidate, they are likely to mobilize their own personal networks of family, friends, and associates. Because personal networks tend to be homogenous, political activation

and mobilization that occurs at this level will exacerbate resource inequalities for participation. When Members of Congress make endorsements during presidential primaries, their signal mobilizes those citizens with higher resources at the expense of those without political resources, which serves to widen participatory inequalities.

In particular, education is a political resource likely to lead to differential responsiveness to efforts at mobilization. The key role of education in the political behavior literature informs this determination. First, education serves to provide individuals the information regarding the mechanism of how to participate in primaries and the process for registering to vote (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Second, citizens' education levels will determine whether they receive the message of the endorsement and use the endorsement as an information tool to update their behavior (Zaller 1992). In particular, higher education individuals are more likely to be aware of their Member of Congress' presidential primary endorsement and use that information to update their considerations regarding whether to participate in the primaries, while lower education individuals are unlikely to be aware of the endorsement at all. These observations therefore do not predict that everyone will be mobilized when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement. Rather than everyone responding equally to mobilization efforts, the process of rational prospecting for higher education voters implies that the statistical model should employ an interaction between the voters' education levels and the status of whether they were mobilized by their Member of Congress. This interactive hypothesis specifies that the effect of mobilization should depend on the voter's level of education: Individuals are mobilized when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement but the effect of the endorsement depends on the individual's education level.

In other words, the mobilization efforts by Members of Congress should interact with the voter's resources to lead to unequal participation. Moreover, this unequal

participation builds upon pre-existing inequalities in participation, which widens the participatory gaps across education levels. In sum, Members of Congress use their public endorsements of presidential nomination candidates to mobilize their network of supporters on behalf of their preferred candidate. This network of activists is subsequently likely to contact their close associates and friends on behalf of their preferred candidate. Because citizens' networks of friends and family are likely to be homogenous, when Members of Congress and their political supporters attempt to mobilize the public on behalf of presidential nomination candidates, they are likely to mobilize people similar to themselves—those who are high in political resources and engagement. Thus, when Members of Congress attempt to mobilize their constituents on behalf of their preferred presidential nomination candidate, they will exacerbate existing inequalities in political participation.

4.3 Research Design and Data

To determine whether endorsements from Members of Congress influence citizens' decision to participate in presidential primaries, I combine data on congressional endorsements with public opinion surveys that oversample from each congressional district. I collected presidential primary endorsement data for Members of Congress running for reelection in 2000 and 2004.³ These data come from Lexis-Nexis newspaper searches for congressional endorsements during the presidential primaries. For each Member of Congress running for reelection, I collected data on the date and endorsee. These were then transformed into a dummy variable which indicates whether the Member of Congress endorsed prior to the Iowa caucuses. The variable measures a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement because of the prominence that pre-Iowa caucus endorsements have in the literature. In the forecasting literature on presidential

³This data includes both Republicans and Democrats in 2000, as both parties had open primaries, while in 2004 the data only includes Democrats.

nominations (Cohen et al. 2008; Steger 2007), endorsements made prior to the Iowa caucuses are determinants of nomination outcomes. The measure used in this analysis is the obvious individual level variant of that same measure employed in the forecasting studies.

This endorsement data was combined with survey data from the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) of 2000 and 2004. These surveys oversampled respondents from each congressional district. The NAES asks a number of questions regarding respondent participation in the presidential primaries. These are combined to create a number of separate dependent variables which define the analyses presented. First, given that I hypothesize that endorsements mobilize citizens to indicate an intention to vote in the presidential primary, I use the NAES survey item that asks respondents about their intention to vote in their state's primaries or caucuses.⁴ Second, I use a similar approach to determine whether individuals followed through and reported that they did in fact vote in their state's primary or caucus.⁵ Third, as I also hypothesize that endorsements mobilize citizens to get involved in the presidential primaries beyond simply voting, I create additional dependent variables based on NAES survey items that ask respondents about the extent of their political participation during the presidential primaries. These other participatory acts include persuading others to vote, attending political meetings, donating money, wearing a button or displaying a sticker or sign, and other candidate work.⁶ These

⁴The actual NAES item wording is, "As of now, are you planning to vote in your state's upcoming presidential primary election or caucus?"

⁵The actual NAES item wording is, "In talking with people about politics and elections, we often find that they don't get a chance to vote. Did you happen to vote in your state's recent presidential primary election or caucus?"

⁶The specific items are as follows: "During this presidential campaign, have you talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?" "During this presidential campaign, have you gone to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular presidential candidate?" "During this presidential campaign, have you given money to any of the presidential candidates?" "During this presidential campaign, have you worn a presidential campaign button, put a campaign sticker

items are used to test my hypothesis regarding other forms of political participation.

Fortunately, the 2000 and 2004 NAES includes items that tap into the necessary concepts to create a standard political participation model, including resources, political interest, social involvement, and demographics. To measure resources, I include measures of the survey respondent's education, income, age, and whether the respondent is unemployed. To measure political interest, I include measures of political knowledge, the strength of the respondent's party identification, and whether the respondent is a habitual follower of politics. To measure social involvement, I include measures of the respondent's church attendance, whether the respondent is a union member, and the number of years the respondent has lived at the current address. Finally, I include demographic indicators for whether the respondent is white, an indicator for whether the respondent is African American, and an indicator for whether the respondent is male. These measures combine to create the standard model for explaining political participation.

To test my main hypothesis—congressional endorsements lead to unequal mobilization during presidential primaries—I link the endorsement measure with the measure of the respondent's level of education. In particular, this interaction term provides a direct test of whether individual responsiveness to an endorsement by their Member of Congress depends on the respondent's education level. Given that the models include data that are nested and that I am interested in both individual and aggregate level predictors of political participation, I use a multilevel modeling framework in which individual survey respondents are nested within congressional districts where their Member of Congress either endorses or does not endorse. Individual respondents are nested within congressional districts because important variation—whether

on your car, or placed a sign in your window or in the front of your house?” “During this presidential campaign, have you done any other work for one of the presidential candidates?”

the Member of Congress endorses—occurs at the congressional district level, not the individual level. Including the endorsement measure as an individual level variable without the nested data structure would likely lead to increased probability of a Type I error. In particular, including grouped measures at the individual level would likely create standard errors that are too small, thus increasing the probability of a false positive error.

In sum, my research design combines the standard political participation model with a predicted interactive effect between the respondent’s education level and whether the respondent’s Member of Congress made a presidential primary endorsement. This design is used to test my hypothesis that citizens are mobilized to participate in presidential primaries when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement, but that the effect widens inequalities in political participation by mobilizing those with higher education levels and having little or no effect on those with lower levels. Moreover, I apply these tests to both the question of whether individuals are more likely to vote and whether individuals are likely to get involved in other participatory activities. In the next section I present the results of the statistical analyses that test my hypothesis.

4.4 Results

Recall that my argument is that Members of Congress serve as leaders of their local political party. When they decide to make an endorsement during presidential primaries, certain citizens are likely to be mobilized while others are not. This is because Members of Congress—and their extended political associates—are “rational prospectors” (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999) who attempt to mobilize those citizens who are *already likely* to participate in politics in the first place. In the following tables I present analyses that provide evidence that support these claims.

In particular, my analyses indicate that citizens are mobilized to participate in presidential primaries when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement, but that the effect of the mobilization depends on the level of the individual's education.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Models One and Two

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Number of Observations
<i>Model I</i>					
Intend to Vote in Primary	0.79	0.41	0	1	22,829
Pre-Iowa Endorsement	0.69	0.46	0	1	22,829
Education	4.16	2.27	0	8	22,829
Income	-0.06	2.03	-3.98	4.02	22,829
Age	-0.25	16.06	-27.28	51.7	22,829
Unemployment	0.28	0.45	0	1	22,829
Political Knowledge	2.52	1.06	0	4	22,829
Follows Politics	2.84	1.21	0	4	22,829
Strength of Partisanship	1.99	0.95	0	3	22,829
Church Attendance	1.93	1.31	0	4	22,829
Union Member	0.16	0.36	0	1	22,829
Years at Address	10.16	11.79	0	97	22,829
White	0.83	0.38	0	1	22,829
Black	0.09	0.29	0	1	22,829
Male	0.46	0.50	0	1	22,829
<i>Model II</i>					
Voted in Primary	0.41	0.49	0	1	81,964
Pre-Iowa Endorsement	0.71	0.42	0	1	81,964
Education	4.19	2.28	0	8	81,964
Income	-0.02	2.04	-3.98	4.02	81,964
Age	0.11	16.09	-27.28	51.7	81,964
Unemployment	0.28	0.45	0	1	81,964
Political Knowledge	2.57	1.01	0	4	81,964
Follows Politics	2.86	1.20	0	4	81,964
Strength of Partisanship	1.98	0.96	0	3	81,964
Church Attendance	1.94	1.31	0	4	81,964
Union Member	0.16	0.37	0	1	81,964
Years at Address	10.42	11.97	0	97	81,964
White	0.83	0.37	0	1	81,964
Black	0.09	0.29	0	1	81,964
Male	0.45	0.50	0	1	81,964

Table 4.1 presents basic descriptive statistics and introduces the variables used in the first analyses. In the 2000 and 2004 presidential primaries, roughly 70 percent of Members of Congress running for reelection chose to make a pre-Iowa endorsement. The first dependent variable is binary and indicates whether the NAES survey respondent intends to vote in their state’s primaries or caucuses. Given the high level of social desirability, it is not surprising that roughly 79 percent of respondents indicate an intention to vote in their state’s presidential primary. Table 4.1 also indicates summary statistics for the second dependent variable in the analysis. While nearly 80 percent of respondents indicated an intention to vote in their party’s primaries or caucuses, only 40 percent of respondents indicated that they actually did vote to determine their party’s presidential nominee in their state’s primary or caucus.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Models Three Through Seven

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Number of Observations
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Persuade Others to Vote	0.23	0.42	0	1	35,972
Attend Meetings	0.03	0.18	0	1	35,972
Donate Money	0.06	0.24	0	1	35,972
Button or Sign	0.06	0.23	0	1	35,972
Other Work	0.01	0.12	0	1	35,972
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Pre-Iowa Endorsement	0.70	0.46	0	1	35,972
Education	4.19	2.27	0	8	35,972
Income	-0.06	2.04	-3.98	4.02	35,972
Age	0.19	16.14	-27.28	51.7	35,972
Unemployment	0.28	0.45	0	1	35,972
Political Knowledge	2.55	1.02	0	4	35,972
Follows Politics	2.82	1.23	0	4	35,972
Strength of Partisanship	1.98	0.96	0	3	35,972
Church Attendance	1.96	1.31	0	4	35,972
Union Member	0.16	0.36	0	1	35,972
Years at Address	10.39	12.04	0	97	35,972
White	0.83	0.37	0	1	35,972
Black	0.09	0.29	0	1	35,972
Male	0.45	0.50	0	1	35,972

Table 4.2 also provides details on the summary statistics for the other independent variables employed in the analysis. Due to different time periods for asking items, the number of respondents across the two models is different. Roughly 23 percent of respondents indicated that they had persuaded others to vote, only three percent of respondents attended political meetings, six percent donated money to candidates, six percent wore a button or displayed a yard sign, and one percent did other work for candidates during the presidential primaries. Each of these measures is used as a dependent variable in the analyses that are presented below. Table 4.2 also presents the summary statistics for the independent variables used in the analyses.

Table 4.3 presents the results of the first two multilevel logistic regression models where the survey respondent's voting participation serves as the dependent variables. The key independent variables that test my hypotheses across the two separate models are the interactions between whether the Member of Congress endorses before the Iowa Caucuses and the measure of the respondent's education. The effects of the control variables are consistent and follow the expected relationship across the two separate models: older, higher income earners, strong partisans, and higher interest voters are more likely to express an intention to vote in the primary or caucus and more likely to report having voted in their party's primary or caucus. In other words, those voters with higher levels of resources and engagement are more likely to express an interest in voting in presidential primaries. These findings reinforce the literature that demonstrates the importance of resources, interest, and involvement on political participation.

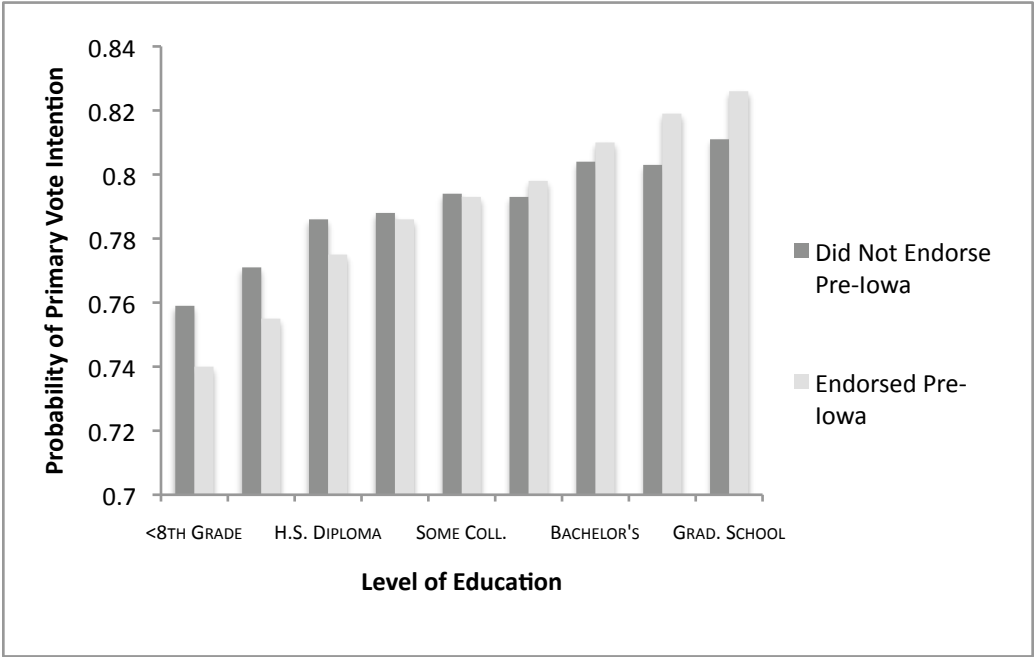
The first column of Table 4.3 indicates that the effect of the pre-Iowa endorsement increases across the range of education levels in predicting intention to vote. Figure 4.1 presents these results graphically, indicating the differential effects of the endorsement mobilization across education levels. The effect of the pre-Iowa endorsement

Table 4.3: The Influence of Pre-Iowa Endorsement on Voting Participation, 2000 and 2004

	Intention to Vote	Voted in Primary
Pre-Iowa Endorsement	-0.10 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.04)
Education X Pre-Iowa Endorsement	0.03* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
<i>Resources</i>		
Education	-0.03* (0.01)	0.06* (0.01)
Income	0.03* (0.01)	0.07* (0.01)
Age	0.003* (0.001)	0.02* (0.01)
Unemployment	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.13* (0.02)
<i>Political Interest</i>		
Political Knowledge	0.11* (0.02)	0.18* (0.01)
Follows Politics	0.2* (0.01)	0.28* (0.01)
Strength of Partisanship	0.2* (0.02)	0.27* (0.01)
<i>Social Involvement</i>		
Church Attendance	0.05* (0.01)	0.14* (0.001)
Union Member	0.11* (0.05)	0.19* (0.02)
Years at Address	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
<i>Other Demographic Controls</i>		
White	0.17* (0.06)	0.08* (0.03)
Black	0.3* (0.08)	0.26* (0.04)
Male	-0.11* (0.03)	-0.11* (0.02)
Intercept	0.01 (0.10)	-2.99* (0.06)
N	22829	81964
Number of Groups	832	832
Estimates are from multilevel logistic regression.		
* indicates p < .10, one-tailed test.		

increases across education levels, with higher education respondents more likely to express an intention to vote when their Member of Congress makes a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement. Voters with some graduate school or graduate school education levels are roughly one percent more likely to indicate an intention to vote in their party's primaries.

Figure 4.1: The Interactive Effect of Endorsements and Education on Intentions to Vote in Presidential Primaries



Recall that the theory articulated here predicts a mobilization effect for higher

education voters, but generally predicts that lower education voters should have roughly the same participation rates regardless of mobilization. Only half of this story is indicated in Figure 4.1. Rather, while higher education voters are mobilized to express an intention to vote at a higher rate than those who are not mobilized, the opposite appears to be true for lower education voters. Voters with some college or less are actually more likely to express an intention to vote when their Member of Congress does not make a pre-Iowa endorsement. In fact, respondents with less than an eighth grade education are actually two percent less likely to report an intention to vote when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement. Instead of only mobilizing the higher educated, endorsements also appear to de-mobilize lower educated citizens.

In contrast, the second column of Table 4.3 indicates that there is no interactive effect between the pre-Iowa endorsement measure and that of the respondent's education in predicting whether respondents voted; rather, the effect of education does not depend on whether the respondent was mobilized by a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement. Thus, while the endorsement appears to boost the intentions to vote of those with higher education levels, the endorsement fails to translate into mobilization on the primary election day.

Table 4.4 presents the results of five multilevel logistic regressions where the dependent variables are the other measures of political participation discussed above—persuading others to vote, attending political meetings, donating money to candidates, wearing a button or displaying a yard sign, and doing other work for candidates.

Again, the key test of my hypothesis is the interaction term between the pre-Iowa caucus endorsement measure and the measure for the respondent's education. As with the results for voter turnout presented in Table 4.3, in general, the control

Table 4.4: The Influence of Pre-Iowa Endorsement on Other Political Participation, 2000 and 2004

	Persuade Others	Attend Meetings	Donate Money	Button or Sign	Other Work
Pre-Iowa Endorsement	-0.09 (0.07)	-0.42* (0.16)	-0.33* (0.12)	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.44* (0.22)
Education X Pre-Iowa Endorsement	0.02* (0.01)	0.06* (0.03)	0.06* (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.07* (0.04)
<i>Resources</i>					
Education	0.007 (0.01)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.003 (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)	0.006 (0.04)
Income	0.02* (0.001)	0.01 (0.02)	0.14* (0.01)	-0.006 (0.01)	-0.05* (0.03)
Age	-0.009* (0.001)	-0.01* (0.003)	0.02* (0.001)	-0.02* (0.002)	-0.007* (0.004)
Unemployment	0.03 (0.04)	0.16* (0.08)	0.11* (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	0.13 (0.12)
<i>Political Interest</i>					
Political Knowledge	0.26* (0.02)	0.24* (0.04)	0.25* (0.03)	0.17* (0.03)	0.22* (0.05)
Follows Politics	0.44* (0.02)	0.39* (0.04)	0.41* (0.03)	0.37* (0.03)	0.56* (0.06)
Strength of Partisanship	0.23* (0.01)	0.27* (0.03)	0.28* (0.03)	0.37* (0.03)	0.31* (0.05)
<i>Social Involvement</i>					
Church Attendance	0.02* (0.01)	0.06* (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)
Union Member	0.06* (0.03)	0.29* (0.08)	0.02 (0.06)	0.16* (0.06)	0.32* (0.11)
Years at Address	-0.002* (0.001)	0.01* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.004)
<i>Other Demographic Controls</i>					
White	0.08 (0.05)	-0.14 (0.12)	-0.24* (0.09)	-0.16* (0.09)	-0.35* (0.16)
Black	-0.19* (0.07)	0.12 (0.15)	-0.10 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.11)	-0.02 (0.20)
Male	0.25* (0.03)	0.12* (0.06)	0.18* (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.13 (0.09)
Intercept	-4.00* (0.10)	-6.22* (0.23)	-5.39* (0.18)	-5.04* (0.17)	-7.16* (0.34)
N	35,972	35,972	35,972	35,972	35,972
Number of Groups	834	834	834	834	834

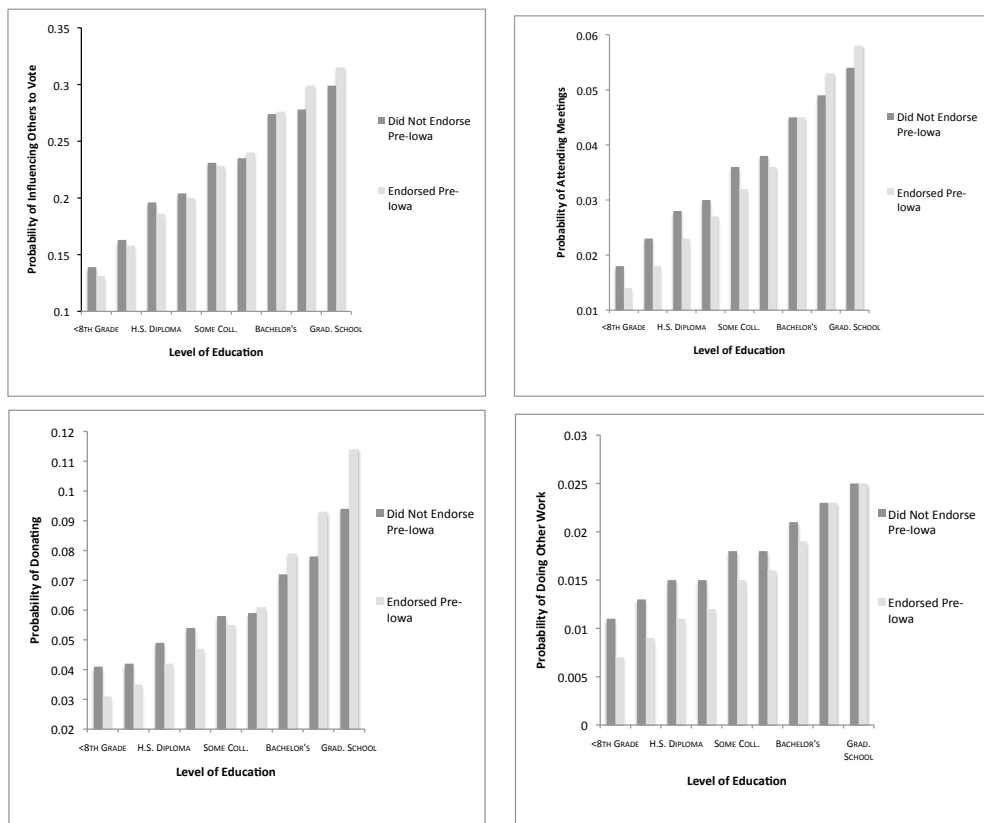
* indicates $p < .10$, one-tailed test.

variables follow the expected relationship across the five models—older, higher income earners, strong partisans, and higher interest voters are more likely to report engaging in other political activity. Again, these findings support the findings demonstrated in the literature.

The results in Table 4.4 indicate that for four of the five analyses, the effect of the pre-Iowa caucus endorsement depends on the respondent's education levels. In particular, the interaction terms are positive and statistically significant in the models where the dependent variable is persuading others to vote, attending political meetings, donating money to candidates, or other work for candidates. In contrast, the interaction term is positive but not statistically significant in the model where the dependent variable is wearing a button or displaying a yard sign. Figure 4.2 presents these results graphically.

While the levels are generally low and the effect sizes not large, Figure 4.2 indicates that the effect of the endorsement depends on the individual's education levels. In the cases of influencing others to vote, attending political meetings, or donating money to candidates, individuals with higher education levels are mobilized while individuals with lower education levels appear to be de-mobilized when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement. In contrast, the case of other political work indicates that higher education individuals are not mobilized when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement, but rather that individuals with lower education levels are actually less likely to do political work when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement. The most notable effect in Figure 4.2 reflects the sizable boost in campaign giving among higher educated respondents when their Member of Congress endorses. In particular, Figure 4.2 indicates that respondents with some graduate school or graduate school degrees are roughly two percent more likely to report donating to campaigns when their Member of Congress endorses. Thus, the

Figure 4.2: The Interactive Effect of Endorsements and Education on Political Participation in Presidential Primaries



findings from Table 4.4 indicates that, in general, individuals are mobilized to get involved during their party's primaries when their Member of Congress makes a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement, but that the effect depends on the respondents' levels of education.

These analyses present three key takeaways. First, the analyses indicate that Members of Congress use their endorsements to mobilize their constituents to act during presidential primaries. Consistent with findings elsewhere (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999), the effects of campaign mobilization depends on the extent to which citizens are already likely to participate. In other words, Members of Congress make public endorsements in presidential primaries that mobilize their constituents, but the citizens who are mobilized to participate are already likely to participate anyway. Thus, the mobilization effects that occur due to these endorsements widen the already large gaps in participation across education levels. These findings are especially relevant in the case of presidential primaries, where turnout is already lower and concentrated among higher education voters.

Second, the analyses indicate that not all participatory activities are influenced by Members' endorsement behavior. Rather, citizens are particularly likely to respond to endorsements in the context of political participation other than simply voting. In fact, while it appears that citizens are mobilized to vote in their primary or caucus, this enthusiasm collapses and does not translate into actual votes in the primary or caucus. Rather, individuals are mobilized to participate in the context of working on behalf of candidates. Regardless of whether it is persuading others to vote, attending political meetings, or donating money to candidates, individuals are mobilized to participate in politics when their Member of Congress endorses a presidential nomination candidate. Similarly, individuals are not mobilized to wear a button or display a yard sign. In particular, these findings indicate that the activities

where individuals are responsive are those that are likely to provide the most electoral return for campaigns.

Third, Figures 4.1 and 4.2 reveal a more complex situation than originally predicted by my hypothesis. Rather than only boosting political participation among the higher educated, presidential primary endorsements by Members of Congress also seem to de-mobilize those citizens with lower education levels. In other words, presidential primary endorsements by Members of Congress alters the composition of the electorate by increasing participation among the most educated and reducing participation among the least educated. One potential explanation for this puzzling finding lies in the perception that party decisions are dominated by insiders. Given that the endorsement process is considered to be a conversation among party elites, it is sensible that insiders within the congressional district (such as those with high education levels) would be mobilized to participate. The flip side of the equation, however, is that as the process comes to be viewed as being more the domain of insiders, those who are disaffected (such as those with lower education levels) would be less likely to participate. Because the rational prospecting process emphasizes the central role of those with higher education levels, voters with less education may be more likely to view party primaries as being not for them.

Campaigns are willing to tradeoff lower participation among lower educated constituents with higher participation among higher educated constituents because it alters the composition of the electorate in their favor. In the absence of mobilization, participation occurs due to other factors that are beyond the campaign's control. Instead, when campaigns mobilize the electorate through presidential primary endorsements, they can exert some control over who is likely to participate. Rather than settling for the uncertainty of not influencing who will participate, the rational prospecting process of endorsements during presidential primaries ensures

some level of certainty about the composition of the electorate during the primaries. Moreover, this certainty boosts participation among those who are likely to have the resources to contribute, communicate with others about the election, and vote during the primaries. Thus, adjusting the composition of the electorate on favorable terms is a highly desirable outcome for presidential primary campaigns.

In sum, these findings are consistent with my hypothesis. Individuals are mobilized when their Member of Congress makes a pre-Iowa caucus endorsement, but that mobilization depends on the individual's education level. Moreover, individuals are particularly likely to be mobilized in the context where local campaigns and political networks are likely to be active—persuading others to vote, attending political meetings, donating money to candidates, and other candidate work. Endorsements from Members of Congress mobilize those already likely to participate and demobilize those not likely to participate.

4.5 Conclusion

Little clarity exists on the influence of a presidential primary endorsement. Some scholars argue that presidential primary endorsements are the determinant of nomination outcomes, while others observe that few people will admit to endorsements being important for their choice. This research contributes to the discussion by refocusing the discussion on two considerations. First, endorsements are important for presidential nomination campaigns because they mobilize a desirable pool of constituents to participate in politics. Presidential nomination campaigns devote substantial resources to obtaining endorsements from elected officials. Nomination campaigns seek endorsements from Members of Congress and other elected officials to coordinate support within the party hierarchy, but also because elected officials are important within their community. Members of Congress are likely to be party

leaders within their communities, which makes their endorsement particularly valuable because they can use their endorsement to activate networks of party activists and organizers. These highly skilled and experienced activists are likely to know the best approaches for recruiting volunteers and supporters to the campaign.

Second, endorsements by Members of Congress are likely to mobilize those who are already likely to participate in politics in the first place. Instead of mobilizing the resource-poor, endorsements by Members of Congress mobilize those citizens with higher education levels. This means that the endorsement has increased return for campaigns, because the endorsement boosts the participation of those likely to participate anyway. Campaigns are likely to tolerate the tradeoff of lower participation among the lower educated as part of the rational prospecting process. Thus, the endorsement process exacerbates a pre-existing inequality in political participation.

While endorsements are likely to determine the outcome of presidential nomination campaigns, little is known about the mechanism through which endorsements translate into increased political support and activism at the individual level. This research shows that endorsements not only directly influence the nomination outcome, but also influence the individual level decision regarding whether and how to participate in politics. Highly educated individuals—who are likely to participate already—are mobilized when their Member of Congress makes an endorsement. When Members of Congress make a presidential nomination endorsement, they mobilize networks of highly educated individuals who are then more likely to persuade others to vote, attend political meetings, contribute money to candidates, or do other work for candidates. Each of these individual level activities is important for presidential nomination campaigns and can assist in determining the nomination outcome. Thus, this research provides individual level evidence that documents how endorsements contribute to presidential primary election outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

The collective decision to lead the nomination process is actually a series of individual decisions made by elected officials of both political parties. These individual decisions aggregate into a collective voice about which presidential primary candidate is most likely to unify the party and win at the general election. Yet, the party's collective voice has less unity than previously realized. Instead, the unity that is depicted in aggregate forecasting studies instead breaks down after consideration of the fact that many elected officials do not attempt to lead the nomination process. Rather than leading the process, many rely on considerations other than a desire to influence the outcome, which leads them to determine that making an endorsement is not worth their effort. Likewise, those elected officials who do decide to lead the nomination process also have considerations that lead them to determine that leading the process is worthwhile. As is shown in Chapter 2, Members of Congress have their own personal considerations, including ambition, electoral security, and other factors, that influence their willingness to lead the party's presidential nomination contest. In other words, one implication of this research is that desire to influence the nomination process is likely to be relatively constant across all elected officials, but strategic considerations, rather than collective incentives, are what actually determines who participates in determining the outcome.

One possibility is that some underlying concept motivates Members of Congress not only to get involved in their party's nomination process but also to act on their ambition for higher office and legislative agenda. Many of the variables that are used in Table 2.2 to predict whether Members of Congress lead their party's nomination process are likely interrelated from both a conceptual and measurement perspective.

Indeed, the nature of the concepts in Chapter 2, including ambition and legislative activity, along with Members' willingness to lead their party's presidential primaries, hearkens to the congressional literature debate about the distinction between show horses and workhorses (Matthews 1960; Payne 1980). If simply being an active Member of Congress—regardless of whether that activity is for work or for show—underlies observed ambition, legislative activity, and presidential primary endorsements, this implies that these concepts and variables are indicative that Members use whatever means available to influence the political process (Langbein and Sigelman 1989). In other words, Members of Congress have a number of routine (e.g., bill cosponsorship) and non-routine (e.g., presidential primary endorsements) activities they undertake to influence the political process. It is likely that Members of Congress who have a propensity to take action, in general, are more likely to make endorsements, display ambition, act on their legislative agenda, and even appear on political talk shows. More research is needed to determine why Members of Congress take action, the interrelated nature of the actions they can take, and what underlying concepts are likely to motivate them.

In addition, the findings from Chapter 3 indicate that elected officials are motivated to participate in choosing their party's nominee because doing so can provide them with electoral rewards. Intraparty activism by elected officials clearly benefits the eventual nominee, but it also provides a bundle of resources to the endorser in the form of increased contributions by the extended political party. These effects are not uniform, however; the extended Republican Party mobilizes to support elected officials who lead the Republican nomination, but the extended Democratic Party does not. These differences are not surprising; variation in electoral coalitions, diversity, and complexity lead the Republican Party to coalesce around a nominee faster than the Democratic Party. Thus, intraparty activism during presidential primaries

leads to interparty differences in electoral benefits with Republican elected officials reaping the rewards.

Yet, the findings from Chapter 2 raise questions about the nature of the results from Chapter 3. In particular, if Republican (but not Democratic) Members of Congress who lead their party's presidential nomination process receive increased contributions, why do more of them not endorse? Perhaps those Members of Congress who fail to endorse are not swayed by the future payoff they would receive by doing so. Another possibility is that Members of Congress are unaware that their endorsement decisions have financial rewards, though this seems unlikely. One strategy for answering this question would be to conduct structured interviews with those Members of Congress who, according to the regression results in Table 2.2, should be those who endorse, but in reality fail to do so. Perhaps a systematic approach for analyzing these cases would provide greater understanding about why the financial rewards of endorsements do not motivate more Members of Congress to do so.

The theoretical motivations in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 offer different views about the role of the Member of Congress in relation to their party organization. In particular, the argument from Chapter 3 is that Republican (but not Democratic) Members of Congress should be rewarded for leading their party's presidential nomination process, because the extended Republican Party has stronger incentives to coordinate on a preferred presidential nominee. This conception of the party is largely focused on elites at the national level; however, the theoretical argument from Chapter 4 assumes that Members of Congress serve as party chieftains in their own congressional district. Thus, one way to more strongly connect the theoretical expectations from Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 would be to determine the extent to which both national and local party coalitions and diversity influence the responsiveness of the party to Members' endorsement decisions. In particular, this approach would specify that

Members of Congress could receive rewards from their extended national party, their extended local party, both, or neither. This type of analysis would provide additional leverage for determining whether the mechanism by which elected officials influence the presidential nomination process occurs through national or local conversations within the extended political party. To the extent that Members of Congress could be rewarded for variation in the national party, this would support the findings from Chapter 3; by contrast, if Members of Congress are rewarded based on variations in their local party, that would provide support for the theoretical framework offered in Chapter 4.

This research provides empirical support to one mechanism through which elected officials determine the eventual nomination outcome. Chapter 4 demonstrates that not only do elected officials collectively determine who eventually wins, but also their individual decisions about whether or not to make an endorsement has an impact on the political participation of their own constituents. In general, endorsements by elected officials during presidential nominations contests have an effect of exacerbating pre-existing inequalities in political participation through mobilizing those already predisposed to participate and demobilizing those less inclined to participate.

The findings from Chapter 2 also raise questions about the results in Chapter 4. If Members of Congress are strategic with their endorsements, it may be possible that an underlying variable is influencing both the decision of Members to endorse and the decision of constituents to participate. For example, consider the case in which a Member represents a district where citizens are more likely to participate in politics. The Member's endorsement, and the decision to participate by an individual, are both likely to be influenced by the overall propensity of the district to participate in politics. Members who represent a district that is more engaged in politics should take that into account when deciding whether to lead their party's nomina-

tion process. It is likely an expectation of those constituents that their Member be involved in political matters. Moreover, if the district has this increased degree of political participation, the Member's endorsement is likely to have higher value for presidential campaigns, and thus the Member is likely to be a target of recruitment. By contrast, Members who represent districts with low political engagement are less likely to have the expectation that they influence the nomination process as their constituents are unlikely to be engaged in the process.

In general, the considerations raised here emphasize the interrelated nature of the chapters of this dissertation. In particular, the strategic nature of the endorsement decision in Chapter 2 has theoretical implications for Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The decision to endorse or not endorse is likely not an exogenous shock to the extended party or to the Members' constituents, but rather is likely an endogenous feature of the nomination system whereby Members take into account both the anticipated financial rewards from the extended party and their ability to mobilize their constituents. In other words, Members need to take into account the considerations offered in Chapter 2, but also need to forecast the potential effects offered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 when deciding to get involved in the first place.

As such, an endorsement is the byproduct of a nuanced process of strategic considerations. To be sure, in the aggregate, endorsements reflect the desire of elected officials to maintain control of the nomination process through supporting a nominee who can unify the party and is electorally viable. But, the theoretical motivation offered here takes this approach as a given. Instead, the argument offered here is that endorsements by elected officials are both the cause of theoretically-interesting effects, and also an effect of theoretically-interesting causes. Indeed, while the modeling approach here conceives of the cause-effect relationship as being exogenous, in reality, the considerations that go into the decision to endorse, and the effects that

those endorsements produce, are likely a system of both causes and effects. In other words, substantial interplay is likely to exist between the decision to endorse and the potential consequences the endorsement produces.

The conventional wisdom in the political press about endorsements during presidential primaries is that they are worthless. Recent scholarship on political parties indicates that, on the contrary, endorsements are the key determinant of the eventual nominee. This research builds upon the findings in the political parties literature by arguing that individual elected officials—in this case, members of the U.S. House of Representatives—have strategic considerations, in addition to the collective incentive to nominate a viable and ideologically unifying candidate, about whether or not to attempt to lead their party’s nomination process. Namely, these considerations include reelection motives, policy interests, ambition, ideology, the electoral rewards that they receive for making an endorsement, and the ability to mobilize their own constituents. In fact, rather than being worthless, endorsements by elected officials do seem to have value, not only to the eventual nominee, but also to their campaign coffers and to their constituents.

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APPENDIX A

DATA CODING FOR IDEOLOGICAL PROXIMITY MEASURES FROM

CHAPTER 2

In Appendix A, I discuss the method whereby I constructed the ideological proximity measures used in the analysis from Chapter 2. I attempted to follow the ideological proximity measures created by Steger (2007) and those created by Cohen et al. (2008). Steger's measures use the DW Nominate Common Space scores developed by Poole and Rosenthal (1997) for each Member of Congress. For presidential candidates, Steger uses proxy measures either from when they served as Members of Congress, or from taking averages of the Common Space scores from the candidate's home state. The values to calculate the ideological scores for presidential candidates are listed below:

1996: Lamar Alexander (R-TN): actual, from future Senate career

Patrick Buchanan (R-DC): average of VA and MD Republicans (Bartlett, Ehrlich, Gilchrest, Morella, Bateman, Bliley, Davis, Goodlatte, Wolf, and Warner)

Robert Dole (R-KS): actual, from current Senate career

Robert Dornan (R-CA): actual, from current House career

Steve Forbes (R-NJ): average of NJ Republicans (Franks, Frelinghuysen, Loblondo, Martini, Roukema, Saxton, Chris Smith, and Zimmer)

Phil Gramm (R-TX): actual, from current Senate career

Alan Keyes (R-MD): average of MD Republicans (Bartlett, Ehrlich, Gilchrest, Morella)

Richard Lugar (R-IN): actual, from current Senate career

Arlen Specter (R-PA): actual, from current Senate career

Pete Wilson (R-CA): actual, from previous Senate career

2000: Bill Bradley (D-NJ): actual, from previous Senate career

Al Gore (D-TN): actual, from previous Senate career

Lamar Alexander (R-TN): actual, from future Senate career

Gary Bauer (R-VA): average of VA Republicans (Bateman, Bliley, Davis, Goodlatte, Wolf, and Warner)

George W. Bush (R-TX): actual, from future Presidential career Elizabeth Dole (R-NC): actual, from future Senate career

Steve Forbes (R-NJ): average of NJ Republicans (Franks, Frelinghuysen, Loblondo, Roukema, Saxton, and Chris Smith)

Orrin Hatch (R-UT): actual, from current Senate career

John Kasich (R-OH): actual, from current House career

Alan Keyes (R-MD): average of MD Republicans (Bartlett, Ehrlich, Gilchrest, Morella)

John McCain (R-AZ): actual, from current Senate career

Dan Quayle (R-IN): actual, from previous Senate career

Robert Smith (R-NH): actual, from current Senate career

2004: Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL): actual, from previous Senate career

Wesley Clark (D-AR): average of AR Democrats (Pryor, Lincoln, Ross, Berry, and Snyder)

Howard Dean (D-VT): average of VT Democrats (Jeffords and Leahy)

John Edwards (D-NC): actual, from current Senate career

Richard Gephardt (D-MO): actual, from current House career

Bob Graham (D-FL): actual, from current Senate career

John Kerry (D-MA): actual, from current Senate career

Dennis Kucinich (D-OH): actual, from current House career

Joseph Lieberman (D-CT): actual, from current Senate career

Al Sharpton (D-NY): average of New York City African American Democrats
(Meeks, Owens, Rangel, Towns)

2008: Barack Obama (D-IL): actual, from current Senate career

Hillary Clinton (D-NY): actual, from current Senate career

John Edwards (D-NC): actual, from previous Senate career

Joe Biden (D-DE): actual, from current Senate career

Mike Gravel (D-AK): actual, from previous Senate career

Dennis Kucinich (D-OH): actual, from current House career

Bill Richardson (D-NM): actual, from previous House career

Chris Dodd (D-CT): actual, from current Senate career

John McCain (R-AZ): actual, from current Senate career

Mike Huckabee (R-AR): average of recent AR Republicans (A. Hutchinson, T.
Hutchinson, Boozman, Dickey)

Mitt Romney (R-MA): average of recent MA Republicans (Blute and Torkildsen)

Ron Paul (R-TX): actual, from current House career

Fred Thompson (R-TN): actual, from previous Senate career

Duncan Hunter (R-CA): actual, from current House career

Rudolph Giuliani (R-NY): average of NY Republicans (King, Fossella, Kuhl,
McHugh, Reynolds, and Walsh)

Tom Tancredo (R-CO): actual, from current House career

Alan Keyes (R-MD): average of MD Republicans (Bartlett and Gilchrest)

Thus, for the measures I used based on the Steger method, the ideological proximity from each Member of Congress to their closest presidential candidate equals the absolute value of the difference between their own ideological ideal point (from Nominate Common Space) and the ideological ideal point of their closest presidential

candidate (from Nominate Common Space and proxies) for that primary.

I also created ideological proximity measures following the method employed by Cohen et al. (2008). Appendix C for the Codebook for Endorsement Data associated with their work describes in detail their method for creating ideological scores for each Member of Congress and the presidential candidates. For each Member of Congress, $\text{ideology} = -1.02 + 2.915 \times \text{abs}(\text{Nominate})$.

Cohen et al. (2008) also used expert coders to rate each presidential candidate on a continuous ideological scale from 1 to -1 for the primaries through 2004. In this rating system, Democratic presidential candidates who are closer to -1 are in the conservative wing of their party, those who are closer to 0 are in the middle of their party, and those with a value of 1 are in the liberal wing of the party. Republican presidential candidates with values closer to -1 are in the liberal wing of their party, those who are closer to 0 are in the middle of their party, and those closer to 1 are in the conservative wing of their party.

Thus, for the measures based on the Cohen et al. (2008) method, I calculated the ideological proximity from each Member of Congress to each presidential candidate, and determined which value was the smallest. The process for creating the ideological proximity to the closest candidate measures are similar, regardless of using the method from Cohen et al. (2008) or Steger (2007).

Finally, it should be noted that the empirical findings are robust to either the Cohen et al. (2008) or the Steger (2007) method of finding ideological distances. Regardless of which measure is employed, increased ideological distance between Members of Congress and presidential candidates is associated with a decreased likelihood of a pre-Iowa endorsement.

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC OPINION DATA FOR GENERATING PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE PARTY'S FRONTRUNNER MEASURE FROM CHAPTER 2

In this section, I describe the process of creating the measure of public support for the party's frontrunner before the Iowa caucuses that is used in Chapter 2. As noted above, I used the public opinion data made available by Marty Cohen that is used in the Cohen et al. (2008) work. I also supplemented this data with nationwide Gallup public opinion data on the 2008 Republican and Democratic primaries. The main text of the question is as follows:

Next, I'm going to read a list of people who may be running in the (Republican/Democratic) primary for president in the next election. After I read all the names, please tell me which of those candidates you would be most likely to support for the (Republican/Democratic) nomination for president in (1996/2000/2004/2008), or if you would support someone else.

The dates for the surveys compiled by the author are listed below. All surveys are from Gallup.

2008 Democratic Primary: 1/12/2007, 2/9/2007, 3/2/2007, 3/23/2007, 4/2/2007, 4/13/2007, 5/4/2007, 5/10/2007, 6/1/2007, 6/11/2007, 7/6/2007, 7/12/2007, 8/14/2007, 9/8/2007, 9/15/2007, 10/4/2007, 10/12/2007, 11/2/2007, 11/11/2007, 11/30/2007, 12/15/2007

2008 Republican Primary: 1/12/2007, 2/9/2007, 3/2/2007, 3/23/2007, 4/2/2007, 4/14/2007, 5/5/2007, 5/10/2007, 6/1/2007, 6/11/2007, 7/7/2007, 7/12/2007, 8/4/2007, 8/14/2007, 9/8/2007, 9/15/2007, 10/4/2007, 10/12/2007, 11/2/2007, 11/11/2007, 11/30/2007, 12/15/2007