The Conjoint Effects of Open Seats, Redistricting, and District Inter-Election Partisan Discontinuity on Voting for the U.S. House

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Abstract

The two ways by which an incumbent House district party can lose the personal vote component of its electoral strength—member retirement and movement of redistricted voters into the district—have been studied in isolation by congressional election scholars. What have been overlooked, however, are the joint consequences when member retirement is accompanied by a heavy influx of new voters. The assumption pervading the literature is that constituents absent their old incumbent on the ballot vote similarly, regardless of the circumstances responsible for such absence. In this study, we find that the simultaneous impact on voters of no incumbent candidate plus being redistricted produces about twice the damage to the incumbent party than does the damage caused by either factor alone. Furthermore, we show that constituents redistricted between districts with congruent incumbent party partisanship are more likely to support the new incumbent party than are those from districts of opposing partisanship, likely because they employ evaluations of the old incumbent's performance as a surrogate for the prospective performance of the new incumbent party's candidate.

Studies of voters shifted into new congressional districts by decennial redistricting have focused almost exclusively on the impact of these voters on the electoral fortunes of incumbents. Aside from the obvious reelection consequences resulting from new voters' partisan leanings, it is widely recognized that another source of reelection impact stems from the simple fact of these new voters' unfamiliarity with the incumbent (Rush 2000, 55-56; Crespin 2005, 257-59; McKee 2008a, 126-29; McKee 2008b, 963-64; Hood and McKee 2010, 346-48; Hood and McKee 2013, 206-16; McKee 2013, 634-39). Compared to retained constituents, newcomers are less likely to recognize the member, let alone be aware of past representational activities such as casework services or pork barreling that are popular with Democratic and Republican constituents alike. To some extent, of course, voters will be moved to a new district because of the Supreme Court mandate to create intra-state population equality; i.e., to increment the size of under-populated districts. But population inflow may also reflect strategic calculation by mapmakers to impair the reelection chances of opposition party incumbents (Yoshinaka and Murphy 2009, 452-57; Yoshinaka and Murphy 2011, 438-43). Regardless of why newcomers have been added, however, it is supposed in congressional election research that their voting behavior, even if a member tries to win their backing through personal visits or setting up campaign offices in the new areas, will closely resemble that of non-redistricted constituents elsewhere whose incumbent retires. (Desposato and Petrocik 2003, 24; Boatright 2004, 448-50; Desposato and Petrocik 2005, 52; McKee 2008b, 973).[1]

Left unexplored, however, is how transplanted voters behave when they are moved into districts where the incumbent is *not* running for reelection. The general assumption is that the likelihood of casting a pro-incumbent party ballot will be similar for all three categories of voters whose own incumbent is not a candidate: non-redistricted voters in open seats, redistricted voters

in seats where the new incumbent is running for reelection, and redistricted voters in open seats. For the first two categories, evidence documenting similar voting behavior has, in fact, emerged from aggregate data studies that contrast election results in geographical units (i.e., towns, counties, or census blocks) remaining within a district with results in units shifted into a new district (Ansolabehere, Snyder Jr., and Stewart 2000; Rush 2000, 96-125; Desposato and Petrocik 2003). But the possible combined effect of redistricting plus the absence of an incumbent vote cue for voters in open seats has not been considered. On one hand, perhaps all that matters is whether or not a constituent previously has been represented by the incumbent appearing on the current ballot, meaning that redistricted voters in open seats would closely resemble voters in the first two categories. But on the other hand, it may be that open seat transplants would inflict a double hit upon the incumbent party. Above and beyond not having an incumbent cue to secure their votes, these new constituents also can be expected to have lower odds of recognizing the incumbent party's replacement candidate, who, as shown by Jacobson and Carson (2016 56), is more likely than the opposition party challenger to possess the local officeholding experience that can build electoral support. So from the perspective of an incumbent party’s effort to hold on to its seat, the combination of incumbent retirement plus large numbers of new constituents might well intensify the electoral damage suffered.

An additional source of damage done to the incumbent party by redistricted constituents, however, may lie in the political environment of the district left behind and the lingering influence on the vote it might continue to exert, regardless of whether these new constituents are moved to an open seat district or to a district with an incumbent on the ballot. This too is a matter generally neglected by congressional election studies. Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart’s redistricting study of retained and transplanted counties does take brief note of its finding that

with all else controlled, counties moved to a different district from districts previously represented by members of the same party as that of the new member vote more heavily for the new member than do counties moved from districts previously represented by opposition party members. Very tentatively, they suggest that this might result from members transferring some of their political organization to the same party candidate inheriting the castaway parts of the old constituency. In any event, the authors conclude that "Further research on the issue might be warranted" (2000, 26).

A sign of the same phenomenon noted by Ansolabehere, et al., is contained in earlier work done by Brown (1981 435-43), even though his investigation is not directed at redistricting or even at congressional voting per se. Employing congressional voting simply as a measure of partisan behavior, he finds that moving to an area whose dominant partisanship differs from that of the previous residency—analogous to maintaining residency while one's congressional district instead changes partisanship through redistricting—causes corresponding changes in voting preferences. But the degree of drift toward the new dominant party is conditioned by the partisanship of the old area. The pull of the previous partisan environment, which arose from forces such as interactions with family, friends, and co-workers, exposure to local media, etc., continues to exert a contextual effect that restricts the degree to which migrants embrace the partisanship of their new locale in their consequent voting behavior.[2] It thus may be hypothesized from both studies that regardless of whether redistricting transfers constituents to an open seat district or to one where a different member is attempting reelection, the loss of votes experienced by the incumbent party will be tempered if many of these newcomers previously had a representative of the same party. But subsequent research has not picked up on this possibility despite the aforementioned suggestion of Ansolabehere, et al. Instead, it is simply assumed that

redrawn constituents in general, with party identification of course controlled, pose the same degree of peril to incumbent party election chances.

We shall in this study focus on both of these interrelated and under-investigated questions pertaining to redistricting that have just been outlined: how redistricting affects constituents transferred into open seat districts, and how the partisan tilt of the district from which constituents have been transferred influences their subsequent votes for Congress. This will involve a comprehensive comparative analysis of post-redistricting voting among all categories of voters that can be defined in terms of the intersection of whether their district has an incumbent running for reelection, whether they have been redistricted, and, if so, whether the partisanship of the incumbent in their old district matches that of the incumbent party in the new district.

Table 1 lists the applicable categories. The first two columns pertain to the initial model we shall estimate in which incumbent partisanship in the old district is ignored, while the second two columns pertain to the full model in which this information on past district partisanship is taken into account. For Model 1, incumbent party voting is expected to be highest for non-redistricted voters whose own member is on the ballot, and lowest for redistricted voters in an open seat district. Voters redistricted into districts with a different incumbent running as well as non-redistricted voters in open seats, in accordance with the findings cited above from previous research, are expected to be similar to one another, with intermediate levels of pro-incumbent party voting. For Model 2, which has six rather than four categories, we expect that when redistricted voters in either incumbent-running or open seat districts are differentiated according to whether their member in the old district had the same partisanship as that of the incumbent party in the new district, those from inconsistent districts will have a lower level of incumbent

Table 1 Expectations of Incumbent Party Voting Levels for Different Categories of Voters

Model 1		**Model 2**	
Category of Voter	**Expected Level of Incumbent Party Voting**	**Category of Voter**	**Expected Level of Incumbent Party Voting**
1) Member (own) on ballot, non-redistricted	Highest	1) Member (own) on ballot, non-redistricted	Highest
2) Member (different) on ballot, redistricted	Intermediate	2) Member (different) on ballot, redistricted	Intermediate (but higher than in category 3)
3) Open seat, non-redistricted	Intermediate	3) Open seat, non-redistricted	Intermediate (but lower than in category 2)
4) Open seat, redistricted	Lowest	4) Open seat, redistricted	Intermediate, but higher than in category 5)
		5) Open seat, redistricted, consistent incumbent party	Intermediate, but lower than in category 4)
		6) Open seat, redistricted, inconsistent incumbent party	Lowest

party voting than will those from consistent districts. Finally, redistricted voters in open seats with inconsistent partisanship are expected to be the least inclined of any category to vote for the incumbent party candidate, given that all three of their attributes should contribute toward that outcome.

Data and Methods

The data set to be analyzed is the ANES 2012 Time Series Study, which is based upon interviews with 5,916 respondents who were interviewed either face-to-face or on-line. With such a large number of cases, the largest in the history of ANES polling, the data set is suitable for answering the questions we have posed. ANES surveys for the previous two immediate post-

redistricting years—1992 and 2002—have considerably smaller numbers of respondents, meaning that some categories of voters we wish to analyze would be too undersized for useful generalization. Post-redistricting surveys in years prior to 1992, aside from relatively low numbers of respondents, lack the information necessary to identify constituents' districts in the election year just before redistricting, thus making it impossible to determine whether or not a voter was transferred into a new district.[3]

Among respondents casting U.S. House ballots in 2012, only those voting for a major party candidate in a race with two-party competition will be considered,[4] as well as only those from states where redistricting was a possibility (i.e., states with at least two districts). Furthermore, voters in the two districts where a Democratic and Republican incumbent faced off against one another as a result of redistricting are eliminated (Boswell (D) v. Latham (R), Ia. 3; and Sutton (D) v. Renacci (R), Oh. 16).

The dependent variable is coded 1 in the case of a vote for the incumbent party candidate, and 0 otherwise. Explanatory variables in the full model to be analyzed are as follows:

Same partisanship (1 if the respondent is an identifier with the incumbent party in the 2012 district, 0 otherwise. Independent leaners are included with weak and strong partisans)[5]

Independent partisanship (1 if the respondent identifies as a pure independent, 0 otherwise)

Incumbent running (1 if an incumbent is trying for reelection, 0 if the seat is open)

Incumbent party partisanship (1 if an incumbent running for reelection, or the incumbent party candidate in an open seat district, is Republican, 0 if Democrat)

Campaign spending [ln(incumbent party spending)-ln(non-incumbent party spending)][6]

Southern state (1 if the respondent is a voter in one of 13 southern states, 0 otherwise).[7]

Incumbent party partisanship*Southern state (interaction between incumbent party and southern residency)

Consistent incumbent party (1 for redistricted voters who are in new district with same incumbent party partisanship as that in their old district, 0 otherwise)

Inconsistent incumbent party (1 for redistricted voters who are in new district with different incumbent party partisanship than that in their old district, 0 otherwise).

In the case of voter partisanship, respondents who identify with the party opposite that of the incumbent party comprise the reference category. On both the Consistent incumbent party and Inconsistent incumbent party variables, respondents who are not redistricted are coded as zero, thus forming the reference category. The coefficients for Consistent incumbent party and Inconsistent incumbent party will then represent, respectively, the difference in pro-incumbent party support between non-redistricted voters and redistricted voters in districts with incumbent party partisanship identical to that in their old district, and the difference between non-redistricted voters and redistricted voters in districts with incumbent party partisanship opposite that in their old district.

Natural logarithms are used in operationalizing the spending variable under the assumption that return on investment declines as spending increases. The Southern state variable allows for the assumption that southern Republican districts will be safer than northern

Republican districts given the strongly conservative ideological correspondence between GOP candidates and constituents in this region, and the assumption that southern Democratic districts will be safer than northern Democratic districts given the large proportion of the former with majority minority populations. By adding a term for the interaction between incumbent party partisanship and region, we allow for the possibility that southern Republican candidates of the incumbent party will be especially safe.

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, and the independent variables exist at both the individual and contextual (i.e., congressional district) levels, we employ multilevel probit analysis in the estimation. At the individual level, fixed effects for both intercept and slope coefficients are calculated, while at the higher, contextual level, the random effects variance for the intercept is calculated. Conventional analysis simply entering at a single level both individual- and contextual-level variables would introduce downward bias in the size of the coefficients' standard errors, because cases contained within an aggregation such as a House district are not likely to be independent of one another (Steenbergen and Jones 2002, 220; Bickel 2007, 9-12). Furthermore, significance testing of contextual variables in single-level estimation will improperly assign degrees of freedom based on the total number of individual cases rather than the number of contextual units (Bickel 2007, 110). The estimation is performed employing the gllamm (Generalized Linear Latent and Mixed Models) program of Stata (Rabe-Hesketh, Skrondal, and Pickles 2004).

A First Look at Redistricting Effects

In analyzing Model 1, we examine the initial question posed of whether the combination of having been redistricted and not having an incumbent on the ballot in the new district leads to a magnified probability of opposing the incumbent party. Here, a single independent variable

titled Redistricted, simply indicating whether a voter has been shifted into a new district (1=Yes, 0=No), is used, rather than the two variables outlined above for the full model specifying whether the voter has been shifted between districts with the same incumbent party (Consistent incumbent party), or between districts with divergent incumbent parties (Inconsistent incumbent party). The latter two variables will then be substituted for Redistricted in the subsequent analysis of Model 2. Multilevel probit results for the initial model appear in Table 2.

The control variables in the initial equation behave for the most part as expected, with voters' partisanship relative to that of the incumbent party, spending, the presence of

Table 2 The Effects of Redistricting and Open Seats on Incumbent Party Voting in 2012

Independent Variable	**Fixed Effects**
Incumbent running	0.272**
	(0.144)
Redistricted	-0.299***
	(0.098)
Same partisanship	2.858***
	(0.121)
Independent partisanship	1.310***
	(0.134)
Incumbent party partisanship	0.117
	(0.112)
Campaign spending	0.107***
	(0.024)
Southern state	0.213*
	(0.141)
Incumbent party	-0.157
partisanship*Southern state	(0.147)
Constant	-1.559***
	(0.207)
	Variances of Random Effects Intercepts
House District Level	0.194***
	(0.066)
Log likelihood	-804.119
N of Respondents	2687
N of House Districts	342

Note: Entries are binomial probit coefficients and standard errors resulting from multilevel analysis. One-tail tests used to determine significance of all coefficients, except for Incumbent party partisanship and Constant where two-tail tests apply.
***Significant at .01 level; **significant at .05 level; *significant at .10 level

an incumbent on the ballot, and southern residency significantly affecting the likelihood of a pro-incumbent party vote. Whether the incumbent party is Republican or Democratic, however, does not matter, not surprising in light of the fact that the national popular House vote in 2012 was quite evenly split between the parties. (Democratic candidates in the aggregate received 1.5 percent more votes than did Republicans.)[8] Also not materializing is a significant positive sign for the interaction between incumbent party partisanship and southern residency, which would have meant an extra electoral boost for southern Republicans. Instead, regardless of partisanship, southern incumbent party candidates do better than their northern counterparts. Of course, the chief variable of substantive interest, Redistricted, has a significant negative coefficient, indicating that voters drawn into new districts are less likely to support the incumbent party. Finally, the random effects parameter appearing near the bottom of the table, estimating the variances of the intercept at the higher, contextual level, is significant. Thus, even with fixed effects taken into account, the probability of pro-incumbent party voting still differs among House districts.

Table 3 Probabilities of Pro-Incumbent Party Vote in 2012 for Constituents Classified According to Redistricting Status and Whether the Seat Was Open

Classification of Voter	**Mean Predicted Probability of Vote for Incumbent Party**
Member (own) on ballot, non-redistricted	0.667 (1685)
Member (different) on ballot, redistricted	0.619 (629)
Open seat, non-redistricted	0.623 (263)
Open seat, redistricted	0.574 (110)

Note: Probabilities are population average impacts computed according to prior distribution of random effects. N of cases is in parentheses. Calculations based on Table 2 parameters

Table 3 translates these results into mean predicted probabilities of a pro-incumbent party vote for each of the four respondent categories resulting from the intersection of redistricting status and the presence or absence of a member trying for reelection. To generate these probabilities, we retain voters' actual values on all independent variables except Redistricted and Incumbent running. Then, starting with the category of non-redistricted voters having an incumbent on the November ballot, we set all voters' values on Redistricted and Incumbent running to 0 and 1, respectively, to simulate voting behavior under the assumption that every respondent belonged to this category. The probabilities, which are population average impacts, are calculated according to the prior distribution of the random effects (Skrondal and Rabe-Hesketh 2009, 673-81). The overall mean probability of a pro-incumbent party vote then becomes the entry (0.667) appearing in Table 3. Probabilities for the remaining three categories (redistricted voters with an incumbent running, non-redistricted voters in open seats, and redistricted voters in open seats) are computed according to the same procedure, employing the applicable values of Redistricted and Incumbent running.

In Table 3, retained voters in districts where their existing member tries for reelection are, of course, the most likely to cast pro-incumbent party votes. Retained voters in open seats and voters shifted to districts with an incumbent other than their own on the ballot have lower probabilities, in both cases at about the 0.62 level. So the finding mentioned above from previous aggregate data research that constituents behave equivalently when they do not have the opportunity to vote for their existing incumbent, regardless of how this situation came about, is replicated in our own survey data analysis at least for these two groups. Expectations also hold for the remaining group of constituents who are transferred to a new district where there is no incumbent candidate. The odds of supporting the incumbent party drop even further to 0.574

here, an additional decline of more than four percentage points. All constituents unable to vote for the member currently representing them, therefore, are not alike, contrary to the prevailing belief. Relative to the voting impact of retaining the same member, the absence of an incumbent on the ballot in tandem with relocation to a new district contributes about twice the damage done to the incumbent party than that produced by either incumbent absence or relocation alone.[9]

A relevant concern at this point, however, involves the likelihood that at least some of the retirement decisions responsible for the opening up of a seat were prompted by redistricting itself. In their study of the 2002 round of congressional redistricting, Yoshinaka and Murphy (2011, 440-42) find that change in underlying district partisanship, but not the percentage of new constituents, affects decisions not to seek another term. For our own 2012 analysis, the evidence is that the number of redistricting-induced retirements was quite limited; i.e., the Brennan Center for Justice identifies 10 members whose departures "may have had something to do with redistricting" (Iyer 2012). Nevertheless, it is possible that redistricted voters in these reconfigured districts were affected differently by incumbent absence than were redistricted voters in districts where retirement decisions were not influenced by adverse line drawing. Perhaps as part of a two-prong strategy to switch a seat, for example, a redistricting party followed up its success in encouraging incumbent retirement in an opposition district by supplying extra campaign assistance to local party officials, such as putting them in touch with accomplished campaign professionals, piggybacking district-specific survey questions on to statewide polls, etc. So new voters in these open seat districts might have especially depressed odds of supporting the replacement incumbent party candidate.

To test this possibility, we redid the analyses in Tables 2 and 3 by removing redistricted voters in the open seat districts named by the Brennan Center.[10] The expectation was that pro-

incumbent party voting by the remaining 75.5 percent of redistricted open seat respondents would be greater than that of the entire group of redistricted open seat respondents as before, thus making the respondent category less distinctive in its voting behavior. The results, however, were little changed. Redistricted open seat voters in districts where retirement did not seem caused by hostile line drawing actually became slightly *less* likely to back the incumbent party (0.568 vs. the previous 0.574). It does not seem, therefore, that our results have been affected by the motivations behind retirement decisions.

Does Congruence in the Incumbent Party Partisanship of Old and New Districts Matter for Redistricted Voters?

The analysis that follows is now performed using the full specification of Model 2, which goes one step further to differentiate among redistricted constituents according to whether the incumbent party in their old district is the same as the incumbent party in their new 2012 district. The Consistent incumbent party and Inconsistent incumbent party variables are substituted for the single Redistricted variable. Table 4 reports the results. Both redistricting variables have significant negative coefficients (-0.201 and -0.436, respectively), indicating that both kinds of redistricted respondents have a smaller probability of backing the incumbent party than do those in the reference category of non-redistricted respondents. The larger magnitude of the latter coefficient, however, indicates that voters shifted from districts with incumbent party partisanship at odds with that of the new district support the incumbent party less than do transplanted voters whose districts are consistent in partisanship. A Wald test shows that the two coefficients are significantly different (χ^2=2.03, p=0.077, one-tail test).

The mean predicted probabilities of an incumbent party vote are listed in Table 5, calculated using the same procedure as before. This time, of course, we are dealing with a total of six rather than four categories; i.e., redistricted voters with a different incumbent on the ballot

Table 4 The Effects of Redistricting and Open Seats on Incumbent Party Voting in 2012: Redistricted Voters Differentiated by Inter-Election Consistency of Incumbent Party

Independent Variable	Fixed Effects
Incumbent running	0.248**
	(0.143)
Consistent incumbent party	-0.201*
	(0.134)
Inconsistent incumbent party	-0.436***
	(0.118)
Same partisanship	2.859***
	(0.122)
Independent partisanship	1.300***
	(0.135)
Incumbent party partisanship	0.108
	(0.113)
Campaign spending	0.102***
	(0.024)
Southern state	0.233**
	(0.140)
Incumbent party	-0.176
partisanship*Southern state	(0.147)
Constant	-1.520***
	(0.209)
	Variances of Random Effects Intercepts
House District Level	0.196***
	(0.067)
Log likelihood	-803.071
N of Respondents	2687
N of House Districts	342

Note: Entries are binomial probit coefficients and standard errors resulting from multilevel analysis. One-tail tests used to determine significance of all coefficients, except for Incumbent party partisanship and Constant where two-tail tests apply.
***Significant at .01 level; **significant at .05 level; *significant at .10 level

and redistricted voters in open seats are each subdivided depending on whether incumbent party partisanship in the old and new districts is consistent or inconsistent. The rank ordering of the probabilities is compatible with expectations. Consistent redistricted voters provide stronger support for the incumbent party regardless of whether there is an incumbent running for reelection. The difference in both comparisons is in the range of four percentage points. At the extreme, inconsistent redistricted voters in open seat districts only have a 0.554 probability of

casting a pro-incumbent party vote, more than eleven percentage points below the level for voters who

Table 5 Probabilities of Pro-Incumbent Party Vote in 2012 for Constituents Classified According to Redistricting Status and Whether the Seat Was Open, and Inter-Election Consistency of Incumbent Party

Classification of Voter	Mean Predicted Probability of Vote for Incumbent Party
Member (own) on ballot, non-redistricted	0.666 (1685)
Member (different) on ballot, redistricted, consistent incumbent party	0.634 (396)
Member (different) on ballot, redistricted, inconsistent incumbent party	0.596 (233)
Open seat, non-redistricted	0.627 (263)
Open seat, redistricted, consistent incumbent party	0.594 (110)
Open seat, redistricted, inconsistent incumbent party	0.554 (69)

Note: Probabilities are population average impacts computed according to prior distribution of random effects.
N of cases is in parentheses. Calculations based on Table 4 parameters

retain the same member. Of course, even for these voters who have all three characteristics slanting them away from the incumbent party, a vote for its nominee still is more likely than not. This is unsurprising in light of the aforementioned finding by Jacobson and Carson (2016, 56) that the retiring member's party is more likely to nominate a stronger replacement candidate than is the opposition party. So despite voters in this final category having the weakest odds of supporting the incumbent party, they nonetheless can be expected by a narrow margin to vote this way.

The obvious question at this juncture is just why moving between same party districts makes one more likely to vote for the incumbent party than does moving between districts held by opposite parties. As pointed out above, one possibility is along the lines of the speculation put forth by Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2000) that incumbents are willing to turn over parts of the political organization they built to a fellow party candidate in areas of their constituency

lost to redistricting. Requisite data to explore this hypothesis, however, are not available. Another possibility might relate to the contextual effect put forth by Brown (1981) that also was discussed above; i.e., social interactions and exposure to media sway constituents toward identification with the dominant political environment of the old district, and some of this identification carries over into the new district after redistricting. But what specific element of the prior political environment might be responsible for this? On one hand, the relevant element could be the congressperson per se. Members of Congress are generally popular in their district, and transplanted constituents might extrapolate from their favorable experience with the old member a positive sense of how the candidate of the same party would provide representation in the new district, even if these constituents do not identify with that party. On the other hand, the prior political environment responsible for the contextual effect might in fact have little to do with the member per se and instead be a function simply of the overall partisanship of the district. Members of Congress predominantly represent districts in which their own party prevails, and constituents whose partisanship has been fortified by that prevailing partisanship may bring it with them when they are moved into a new district by redistricting.

A test of this latter, district partisanship-centered possibility may be attempted by working with presidential returns in the old district, rather than with the party of the old congressional incumbent as before. Presidential returns have been the standard indicator used in past redistricting investigations, as well as in congressional election studies more generally, to gauge district partisanship, both because of their availability as well as the robust relationship between party identification and presidential voting (Crespin 2005, 258; Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006, 78; Yoshinaka and Murphy 2009, 454; Carson, Crespin, and Williamson 2014, 168). We use here major party presidential returns in the old districts from

2008, the most recent pre-2012 election. As the replacement for the previous independent variable of Consistent incumbent party, we now substitute a variable (Consistent incumbent party (Pres.)) coded 1 for redistricted respondents transferred from a district whose presidential winner came from the same party as that of their new incumbent House party, and 0 otherwise. Analogously, therefore, the replacement for the Inconsistent incumbent party variable (Inconsistent incumbent party (Pres.)) is 1 for redistricted respondents whose old district supported the presidential candidate of the party opposite that of the incumbent party candidate in the new district, and 0 otherwise. Non-redistricted respondents continue to be the reference group.

A possible deficiency of these two new redistricting measures, however, is that underlying Democratic partisanship is very likely overstated by Barack Obama's comfortable victory over John McCain. As a corrective measure, therefore, we also employ an alternative form of these variables based on the presidential candidates' showing in a district relative to their median showing across all 435 districts. So, for example, a respondent transferred into a Democratic House district from an old district in which Obama received .51 of the two-party vote—0.015 below his median district showing—would no longer be coded as consistent (i.e., the respondent would now receive 0 on Consistent incumbent party (Pres.) and 1 on Inconsistent incumbent party (Pres.)).

Table 6 reports the multilevel probit coefficients for the new analysis. In the first column, where consistency is determined in terms of the actual presidential winner in a district, it will be seen from the negative signs of both relevant parameters that redistricted voters in both consistent and inconsistent districts have lesser odds of supporting the incumbent party candidate than do non-redistricted voters. The Wald test for ascertaining a significant difference between

Table 6 The Effects of Redistricting and Open Seats on Incumbent Party Voting in 2012: Redistricted Voters Differentiated by Inter-Election Consistency of Incumbent Party (Consistency Based On 2008 Presidential Winner and 2012 House Incumbent Party)

Independent Variable	**Fixed Effects w/District Pres. Winner in 2008 Specified in Terms of Absolute Vote %**	**Fixed Effects w/District Pres. Winner in 2008 Specified in Terms of % Relative to Overall Mean**
Incumbent running	0.323**	0.294**
	(0.145)	(0.144)
Consistent incumbent party	-0.222**	-0.204*
	(0.134)	(0.134)
Inconsistent incumbent	-0.311**	-0.382***
party	(0.143)	(0.138)
Same partisanship	2.857***	2.856***
	(0.121)	(0.122)
Independent partisanship	1.310***	1.302***
	(0.134)	(0.135)
Incumbent party	0.128	0.101
partisanship	(0.123)	(0.113)
Campaign spending	0.108***	0.104***
	(0.024)	(0.025)
Southern state	0.217*	0.235**
	(0.147)	(0.141)
Incumbent party	-0.161	-0.179
partisanship*Southern state	(0.147)	(0.148)
Constant	-1.627***	-1.572***
	(0.219)	(0.210)
	Variances of Random Effects Intercepts w/District Pres. Winner in 2008 Specified in Terms of Absolute Vote %	**Variances of Random Effects Intercepts w/District Pres. Winner in 2008 Specified in Terms of % Relative to Overall Mean**
House District Level	0.196***	0.194***
	(0.066)	(0.066)
Log likelihood	-805.126	-804.709
N of Respondents	2687	2687
N of House Districts	342	342

Note: Entries are binomial probit coefficients and standard errors resulting from multilevel analysis. One-tail tests used to determine significance of all coefficients, except for Incumbent party partisanship and Constant where two-tail tests apply.
***Significant at .01 level; **significant at .05 level; *significant at .10 level

the parameter values of -0.222 and -0.311, however, shows that while the direction of this difference is as expected, the two types of redistricted voters cannot be statistically distinguished from one another (χ^2=0.22, p=0.639). The parameter values in column two (-0.204 and -0.382),

which are based upon the presidential vote relative to the overall district median, likewise show that inconsistent voters are weaker in their support for the incumbent party candidate than are consistent voters. But once more, the magnitude of the difference between these two types of voters falls short of significance (χ^2=0.96, p=0.326).

The results thus depart from what was found in Table 4. The political environment from which redistricted voters were displaced does not seem to have a lingering impact on their subsequent congressional voting behavior when this environment is operationalized in terms of partisan homogeneity, as tapped by presidential election returns. Instead, the contextual effect that matters, as indicated by the significant difference between the Consistent incumbent party and Inconsistent incumbent party parameters in Table 4, is whether redistricted voters' previous district was represented by an incumbent House member whose partisanship matches that of the new incumbent party.

The subsequent analysis, therefore, centers on the specific ways in which the old member matters. Here, we limit ourselves only to redistricted constituents and examine how their evaluations of the old member color their voting decision in the new district. The ANES 2012 Time Series Study we have been using includes two relevant evaluations of the old member: how well the member has kept in touch with people in his or her district, and overall job performance. In both cases. we set the value of 4 as the most favorable rating and 1 as the most unfavorable.[11] The expectation is that for constituents transferred into a new district where the incumbent party corresponds to the party of the old incumbent, more positive evaluations of the old member should lead to better odds of voting for the new incumbent party. Where there is a transition between parties, on the other hand, old member evaluations should bear an inverse relationship to the odds of backing the incumbent party. To accommodate this latter circumstance, the

incumbent evaluations of such voters are reversed so that 4 is recoded to 1, 3 to 2, 2 to 3, and 1 to 4. Thus, evaluations should have a regularly positive effect on pro-incumbent party voting regardless of whether voters in consistent or inconsistent districts are considered.

The control variables in this analysis of redistricted voters are mostly the same as those employed in Table 4. Because non-redistricted voters are no longer present to serve as the reference group as before, Consistent incumbent party but not Inconsistent incumbent party is retained; i.e., voters whose incumbent party switches between elections now form the omitted, reference category. Table 7 contains the results of the analysis. The new variable evaluating the old incumbent's ability to keep in touch (Touch) has a wrongly signed and insignificant negative coefficient. Assessments of the old incumbent's overall job performance (Job performance), on the other hand, have the significant positive effect that was hypothesized. The conclusion, therefore, is that the voting behavior of constituents in new districts is indeed affected by their overall impressions of the incumbent in their previous district. And because of the generally favorable tone of such evaluations, this rebounds to the advantage of the incumbent party. of the harm that can be expected to befall the incumbent party. Relative to retained voters in districts where the incumbent seeks reelection, redistricted voters shifted into a district with a new campaigning incumbent and non-redistricted voters whose incumbent retires do indeed experience equivalent reductions in the odds of backing the incumbent party. But voters who both have been redistricted as well as transferred into an open seat district fall off in pro-incumbent party voting to an especially pronounced degree. Furthermore, regardless of whether redistricted voters are moved into a different district with a campaigning incumbent or into an open seat district, pro-incumbent party support varies according to whether they have come from a district with a member of the same party as that of the new incumbent party, or from a district

Table 7 The Effects of Evaluations of Previous Member on Voting for the Incumbent Party in 2012: Redistricted Voters Only

Independent Variable	Fixed Effects
Incumbent running	0.144
	(0.206)
Consistent incumbent party	0.457***
	(0.199)
Touch	-0.167
	(0.176)
Job performance	0.189*
	(0.124)
Same partisanship	3.079***
	(0.218)
Independent partisanship	1.400***
	(0.323)
Incumbent party partisanship	0.000
	(0.238)
Campaign spending	0.115***
	(0.049)
Southern state	0.729***
	(0.259)
Incumbent party	-0.558
partisanship*Southern state	(0.398)
Constant	-2.257***
	(0.395)
	Variances of Random Effects Intercepts
House District Level	0.296*
	(0.200)
Log likelihood	-164.283
N of Respondents	616
N of House Districts	220

Note: Entries are binomial probit coefficients and standard errors resulting from multilevel analysis. One-tail tests used to determine significance of all coefficients, except for Incumbent party partisanship and Constant where two-tail tests apply.
***Significant at .01 level; **significant at .05 level; *significant at .10 level.

with a member of the opposite party. The reason for this does not seem to lie in the general partisan environment of the old district. Rather, it appears to be a function of constituents using their overall evaluation of the old member as a proxy for how the candidate of the same party in the new district would perform the job of representative. And since most House members are

positively evaluated, this means that using the old member as a proxy will normally reverberate to the advantage of the new district's candidate.

The lessons are clear, therefore, from the standpoint of an incumbent district party facing an immediate post-redistricting election. Most important is to try to dissuade the existing member from retiring. Granted, a new voter shifted into the district will have, ceteris paribus, depressed odds of supporting the incumbent that are equal to those of a retained voter whose member retires. Still, the critical difference here is that all retained voters are subject to the detrimental impact of an open seat, whereas only the fraction of voters who are transferred into the new district will be subject to the impact of a new, unfamiliar member. In the full sample of respondents, we have analyzed in Tables 2 and 4, 25.7% were shifted into a new 2012 district by redistricting. For the preceding two post-redistricting election years of 1992 and 2002, McKee reports—albeit just for districts with incumbents seeking reelection—similar figures of 24% and 23%, respectively (2013, 629). So, on average, the overall magnitude of the electoral problem posed for the incumbent party by redistricting is only about one quarter as great. But when an incumbent does retire, the damage done by the combination of an open seat along with an influx of new constituents is particularly acute. In this case, therefore, the incumbent party has strong incentive, assuming that fellow party state legislators are in charge of the redistricting process and that the retirement decision is known prior to the redrawing of lines, to lobby these legislators in order to limit the influx as much as possible.

To the extent that new constituents must be moved into a district, however, the incumbent party would benefit by considering more than just their partisanship alone. What also matters is whether prospective newcomers have been represented by a member of the same party as that of the incumbent party in the new district. As we have shown, even when voter partisanship is

controlled, migration from a district with an incumbent of the same party as that of the new incumbent party provides a boost to the new party as a result of constituents relying upon their perceptions of the old member as a surrogate for expectations of how the new member will behave. Despite the present era in which voters' partisanship is increasingly dominant in determining their voting behavior (Jacobson 2015, 862-68; Fiorina 2017, 135-36; Abramowitz 2018, 62-69), parties thus need to realize that there still is room for other factors to play an important role, such as these perceptions, as well as, of course, whether voters' existing incumbent appears on the ballot.

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[1] Boatright (2004, 441) also finds a modest tendency for members to adjust their roll call ideology (measured in terms of ADA scores) from 1991 to 1992 in correspondence with partisan change in district composition caused by redistricting.

[2] For other studies dealing with contextual effects on voting behavior, see Books and Prysby (1992, 48-50), Burbank (1997, 120-26), and Pattie and Johnson (2000, 48-50).

[3] Determining voters' placement in 2012 with regard to the categories we are interested in studying was a time-consuming process. The first step involved identification of respondents' 2010 and 2012 election district numbers in the ANES 2012 Time Series Study. Then, by consulting candidate lists in each year, assignment to a category was made by ascertaining whether the winning candidate in the 2010 district was on the voter's 2012 ballot as the incumbent and, if not, whether this was because of retirement or because the voter was transferred to a new district with either a different incumbent seeking reelection or no incumbent candidate. In the case of transferred voters, the partisanship of the incumbent party in both years was compared to establish whether there was consistency or inconsistency.

[4] The "jungle" November elections held in Louisiana's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd districts, however, each featured multiple Republican candidates and at least one Democratic candidate. Thus, even though voters had a choice from among major party candidates, voters in these three districts had to be excluded from the analysis.

[5] As is standard practice, independent leaners are included with those weakly or strongly identifying with a party since these leaners are very similar to weak identifiers in voting for the preferred party (Jacobson and Carson, 2016, 151-52).

[6] This operationalization of campaign spending replicates that used by Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002, 131) and Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young (2010, 607). Like them, we also assign $5,000 to candidates not reporting any spending (only expenditures of at least $5,00 had to be disclosed to the FEC).

[7] The South includes the 11 states of the old Confederacy, plus Kentucky and Oklahoma.

[8] The relative neutrality in the effect of national partisan forces in 2012 also mitigates against the possibility that one party's candidates will be disproportionately hurt by having new constituents moved into their districts. McKee (2013, 634-39) finds that the pro-Republican tides in the South in 1992 and at the national level in 2002 had this negative impact on Democratic fortunes those years.

[9] We also tested for the existence of an interactive effect between Incumbent running and Redistricting, but the term was negatively signed and insignificant. Thus, the combined impact of these two variables is additive rather than multiplicative.

[10] These members include David Dreier (R), Jerry Lewis (R), Ellon Gallegly (R), and Lynn Woolsey (D) of California, Tim Johnson (R) of Illinois, Joe Donnelly (D) of Indiana, Bob Turner (R) of New York, Brad Miller (D) and Heath Shuler (D) of North Carolina, and Steve Austria (R) of Ohio. Donnelly and Turner subsequently ran for the Senate in 2012, Donnelly successfully.

[11] Specifically, respondents could answer the keeping in touch question by saying very good, fairly good, fairly poor, or very poor. With regard to job performance, the possible responses were: approve strongly, approve not strongly, disapprove not strongly, and disapprove strongly.