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

William Bernhard
bernhard@illinois.edu
Tracy Sulkin
tsulkin@illinois.edu
Department of Political Science
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
240 Computing Applications Building
605 E. Springfield Avenue
Champaign, IL 61820

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Legislators seeking to make policy through their introduced legislation face an uphill climb. Of the five to six thousand bills introduced in the House every Congress, only a small number progress far in the legislative process. Success requires the assistance of colleagues, so bill sponsors devote considerable time and effort to soliciting the support of other MCs, building coalitions to promote their legislation. Assembling these coalitions involves making deals, compromising on key policy provisions, or trading support across bills. These deals, spanning both time and issue area, are potentially fragile because MCs face a variety of competing electoral and policy goals. How can a bill sponsor, intent on shepherding her bill through the legislative process, be sure that a fellow legislator will follow through on his commitment to support the measure? The transaction costs of legislative coalition-building can result in potentially suboptimal outcomes where desirable legislation does not get passed or even introduced. Legislators, therefore, must make their legislative horse-trading commitments credible so that bill sponsors can be confident that their colleagues will actually follow through.

We contend that cosponsorship of legislation provides a solution to the dilemmas of coalition-building by acting as a commitment device. A decision to cosponsor a bill represents a public pledge to support the sponsor's bill should it come up for a vote on the floor. Given the public nature of cosponsorship, a failure to follow through on this commitment will be noticed not only by the bill's sponsor, but also by other legislators, as well as by interested observers in the district, including potential challengers, affected interest groups, and journalists eager to
point out inconsistent behavior on the part of elected officials. An MC’s decision to withdraw a

1 The theoretical literature on logrolling focuses primarily on trading of support on roll call votes (see, for example, Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Carrubba and Volden 2000; Ferejohn 1986; Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 1987).

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cosponsorship pledge or to vote no on final passage on a bill he or she had cosponsored could, therefore, result in a loss of credibility with colleagues and with constituents. In turn, a reputation for not honoring commitments could jeopardize both the ability to pass his or her own legislation in the future and the possibility of reelection. This threat of punishment for backing out on a cosponsorship thus makes cosponsorship pledges more credible, allowing MCs to trade votes more easily. Cosponsorship, therefore, is a vital institutional component of the broader system of logrolling in Congress, facilitating vote trading across issues and over time.

We investigate the observable implications of cosponsorship as a commitment mechanism. Our analyses focus on the behavior of legislators on the 843,557 cosponsorships made on the 44,799 bills introduced by members of the House of Representatives in the 101-108th Congresses (1989-2004). Legislators have two ways to back out of their cosponsorship pledges: withdrawing and reneging. Withdrawing occurs when an MC formally removes him- or herself as the cosponsor for a bill. We define reneging as when an MC remains a cosponsor, but votes against the bill at final passage. We expect, first, that if cosponsorship helps foster legislative deals, legislators will only rarely back out on their cosponsorship pledges. And when they do, these choices should be systematic—a function of characteristics of the cosponsor, the sponsor, and the relationship between them, as well as the context surrounding the bill. Second, when MCs violate their cosponsorship agreements, we should see evidence of
punishment, both

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

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

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

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

and electoral performance. These dynamics have potentially far-reaching consequences for our
understanding of legislators’ coalition-building strategies, the development and maintenance of legislative reputations, and the nature of the electoral connection.

**Cosponsorship and Commitment**

Cosponsorship has been a regular component of legislative activity in the House since the late 1960s, when rules prohibiting it were relaxed and then formally lifted. Legislators today average about 200 cosponsorships per Congress across a variety of issues. However, the importance of these activities remains a source of debate among congressional scholars. Early arguments built on the (entirely correct) observations that cosponsorship is a relatively undemanding task for MCs and that most cosponsors are attached to legislation that never makes it to a vote, and claimed, therefore, that cosponsorship represents a largely symbolic activity (see, for example, Mayhew 1974).

In recent years, scholars have revised this view. Indeed, clear evidence indicates that cosponsorship matters to sponsors and to cosponsors in ways that affect the policymaking process. Sponsors of bills often tout the number of cosponsorships their measures attract, offering this as an indication that the bill has broad appeal and should be supported by other members. Empirical support for such bandwagon effects exists, although it is conditional--all other things equal, large numbers of cosponsors for a measure appear to increase the probability of committee consideration, but not ultimate success on the floor (Browne 1985; Krutz 2005; Wilson and Young 1997). More subtly, the ideological distribution of a bill’s cosponsors and the
timing of their cosponsorship decisions can serve as a signal about its policy placement,

2 The prohibition on cosponsorship ended in 1967, and, in 1978, limits on the number of cosponsors per bill were removed.
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providing other legislators with information about the content of the measure (Kessler and Krehbiel 1996).

Even if a particular bill fails to progress very far in the legislative process, cosponsorship can still have important policy consequences. Kingdon (1984) argues that new policies often go through a prolonged “softening up” period, so what may appear to be wasted effort on an issue at one point in time may actually lead to successful policy adoption down the road. And, even in the short term, unsuccessful bills can be influential. As Koger notes, they can be "incorporated into subsequent legislative proposals…stop another bill or class of bills…[or] send a signal of congressional interest to the executive branch on some regulatory issue" (230). This is particularly true for those with broad cosponsorship coalitions and/or support from prominent legislators.

Cosponsorship therefore has a potential policy payoff, even if the policy impact of a measure is not always, or even often, direct. And, for the cosponsors themselves, engaging in this activity offers the additional opportunity of an electoral payoff. Cosponsoring bills enables them to pursue their policy interests and those of their constituents in a visible and concrete manner (Campbell 1982; Koger 2003), and a record of cosponsorship on the “right” issues can help them at the polls (Sulkin 2005, 2009). In fact, the proactive nature of cosponsorship provides more opportunity for credit-claiming than many other legislative activities. As one of the MCs interviewed by Koger explained:
“Cosponsorship means you recognized early on that the bill is good public policy and that
it has merit and should be acted on. If a member cosponsors, that implies he or she
contributed to its success. If you just vote yes, you had no role in bringing the bill to
the
floor. There’s more credit in cosponsoring a bill and then voting for it” (2003, 32).
Legislators thus have electoral incentives to cosponsor, as it offers a relatively easy way to promote their reelection. However, that the actual act of signing on to a bill as a cosponsor is a simple task does not mean that legislators fail to devote thought and care to the decision. MCs are clearly selective in their choices, with the typical legislator cosponsoring less than five percent of all introduced measures. Part of the explanation, of course, is time and information constraints. It is also the case that the flip side of the “right” cosponsorships paying off is that the “wrong” cosponsorships can hurt a legislator, both with his or her constituents and with fellow legislators and coalition partners. As Krehbiel (1995) argues, the claim that cosponsorship is costless makes sense “[only] if costless refers…to the effort required to take action” (909).

The trajectory of the literature on cosponsorship, therefore, recognizes that, far from being a merely symbolic activity, it is an important part of the legislative process. We go further still, arguing that cosponsorship represents an institutional arrangement to facilitate deal-making and coalition-building between legislators. What makes cosponsorship a credible commitment device? Commitment requires both information on whether an MC has followed through on his pledge and some sort of punishment mechanism for a failure to do so. The public nature of cosponsorship facilitates both of these, enabling MCs to monitor the behavior of their colleagues and creating the possibility of meaningful consequences for failing to follow through on a promise to support legislation.

Without the institution of cosponsorship, a bill sponsor could still attempt to build a
coalition in favor of her bill, making deals with other MCs on an individual and private basis.

However, if an MC backs out on such a deal, he risks incurring the wrath of only the bill sponsor, since she is the only one who knows about the original pledge of support. Losing the future support of a single MC might not represent a significant enough punishment to deter
reneging. The sponsor could attempt to make backing out on the pledge public knowledge, but other legislators are likely to view this as an uninformative conflict between the sponsor and the cheating MC about “who promised what to whom.” Cosponsorship makes pledges of support formal and visible, such that other MCs can easily observe the behavior of the cosponsoring MC.

Consequently, a cosponsor who fails to follow through may come to be viewed as an untrustworthy coalition partner and hence should face potential punishment from other legislators and from party leaders. Evidence of “waffling” is also likely to hurt an MC with his constituents. Legislators thus have incentives to follow through on their commitments to protect their reputations.

Accordingly, once legislators have made the decision to cosponsor a measure, they should not back out lightly. This is not to say that there are not situations in which an MC might want to withdraw or renege on a particular bill. One possibility is that during the course of the legislative process (committee markups, amendments, and the like), the bill has changed enough that the cosponsor is no longer in support, or that a competing bill now aligns more closely with his or her preferences on that policy. Another is that the MC’s own preferences about the bill remain constant, but that other considerations intervene. For instance, a legislator could learn that his constituents are strongly against the measure, or there could be a credible threat of an experienced, high-quality challenger on the horizon who could use the MC’s support for the bill.
against him. Finally, a decision not to follow through on a cosponsorship pledge could be personal. Cosponsorships are inherently dyadic—the choice to cosponsor means support not just for a bill, but for the sponsor of that bill. If that sponsor does something to displease a cosponsor (e.g., by refusing to reciprocate and cosponsor one of his or her bills, by withdrawing or reneging 7
on a previous pledge, by supporting a bill he or she opposes, etc.), the MC might want to withdraw his or her cosponsorship support to send a message.

Given the potential punishments for withdrawing or reneging, though, the set of instances in which an MC wants to back out should be larger than the number of cases in which he or she actually does. We expect withdrawing or reneging to occur only when the legislator believes that the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. As discussed in more detail below, such a decision is most likely when the MC cares more about the outcome of the vote (and when his/her behavior is more likely to be pivotal to that outcome), when the sponsor is less powerful, when the relationship between the sponsor and cosponsor is weaker, and when the cosponsor is more secure electorally and in the chamber. And, even then, we expect to observe legislative and electoral consequences for the choice to back out on a pledge.

**Patterns of Cosponsorship**

Our analyses focus on cosponsorship activity on the 44,799 public bills and joint resolutions introduced in the 101st through 108th Congresses (1989-2004). This time period extends across three presidencies and includes a change in partisan control of the House (the switch to the Republicans in the 104 Congress) and so offers a sample of introduced measures and cosponsorship decisions across a variety of contexts. We compiled data on cosponsorship decisions and characteristics of bills from Fowler’s cosponsorship network project (see 2006a, 2006b), Adler and Wilkerson’s Congressional Bills Project, and the Library of Congress’s THOMAS site.
We limit our focus to these types of measures (i.e., excluding simple and concurrent resolutions) as they are the only categories of legislation that, if passed, have the force of law.

We use “bills” to refer to both bills and joint resolutions.
Table 1 provides some descriptive data on cosponsorship patterns. Across the sample, MCs introduced an average of 5600 measures per Congress (from a low of 4398 in the 104th Congress to a high of 6606 in the 102nd Congress). Each MC, therefore, has about 5600 opportunities to cosponsor in a term. Of all the potential cosponsorship decisions they face, legislators choose to sign on only between three and five per cent of the time. Each bill, in turn, averages around nineteen cosponsors, although this masks a wide range of variation across measures, with some receiving hundreds of cosponsors and about one-third receiving no cosponsors at all.

The timing of the decisions made by these bills’ cosponsors also varies. Members of the House may choose to sign on to a bill up until the time it is reported from committee, but a basic distinction can be drawn between original cosponsors, who make the decision to cosponsor prior to or coincident with the introduction of a bill, and post-introduction cosponsors, who sign on after introduction. An original cosponsor is more likely to have learned about the measure from the sponsor him- or herself (most likely through a Dear Colleague letter). Since the MC has agreed to cosponsor before observing colleagues’ reaction to the bill, we contend that original cosponsorship indicates a stronger signal of support on the part of the cosponsor and so should be less common. The results confirm this; as shown in the table, original cosponsorships are more infrequent than post-introduction, comprising only between about one-fourth and
one-third of cosponsorship decisions. 

Insert Table 1 about here

In previous work, we explored the factors explaining cosponsorship and the choice to be an original vs. post-introduction cosponsor (Bernhard and Sulkin nd). Here, we focus on the decision to back out on a cosponsorship pledge. As discussed above, this can happen in one of 9
two ways: an MC can formally withdraw from a bill he or she had cosponsored, or he or she can
choose to remain a cosponsor but renege by voting no when that bill reaches a final passage vote.
Because any cosponsorship decision can be withdrawn, our analyses of that phenomenon focus
on the full set of 843,557 cosponsorships made in the 101st Congresses.

Reneging, however, is only possible if a bill gets to a vote on the floor. Accordingly, our analyses
there target the 56,945 cosponsorship pledges made on bills that reached that stage.

**The Prevalence of Withdrawing and Reneging**

The first task is to identify when withdrawing and reneging occur. To do so, we obtained
data on withdrawal from the Library of Congress’s THOMAS site (which includes the date of
MCs’ cosponsorship decisions and the date of any withdrawal of those decisions). We
constructed our measures of reneging using Poole and Rosenthal’s roll call voting data and the
Congressional Bills Project’s matches between roll call number and bill/resolution number. To
identify the final passage vote for each bill that progressed to that point (about 4% of all
introduced bills), we coded the description of each vote and then matched the yea-nay totals
with those reported on THOMAS. Reneging is defined as a “no” vote on a bill for which an MC
was a cosponsor, and where the sponsor voted yes.

Figure 1 presents some descriptive statistics on withdrawing and reneging. Across the
congresses that we examine, there are a total of 1354 instances of withdrawing and 840
instances of reneging. Because the denominator is smaller for the latter, reneging is actually more common
than withdrawing. Nonetheless, when viewed as a percentage of the total number of

4 There are several instances in which a sponsor of a bill actually votes no on final
passage. This is most likely due to large changes in the bill occurring during the committee
mark-up and amendment stages. We do not include these in our analyses of reneging.
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cosponsorships made, both occur infrequently. The first set of columns in each panel of the
figure shows that only a very small number of cosponsorship pledges are withdrawn
(about .1-.3%) or reneged upon when MCs cast their votes on final passage (about 1.5% of the
time).

Insert Figure 1 about here

When we shift perspective a bit and calculate rates of withdrawing and reneging at the
level of bills or MCs, the levels are higher. The second set of columns shows that between about
2-5% of all measures that receive cosponsors have at least one later withdraw his or her support,
and about one-fifth of bills that reach a final passage vote have at least one cosponsor
renege to vote no. The third set of columns shows that in every Congress, between about one-fifth
and one-third of MCs withdraw at least one of their cosponsorships and about one-tenth to
one-third renge. And, if we aggregate across the entire time period (i.e., asking whether an MC
withdraws or reneges at least once across all of the Congresses in which he or she appeared in the
sample), we find that 48% of MCs reneged at least once and nearly 60% withdrew from at least one
of their cosponsorships.

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

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

or reneging does not occur very often. Figure 2 demonstrates that of the group of
measures for
which there was a withdrawal of a cosponsor, 77% had only one cosponsor withdraw, and fewer
than 5% had more than four cosponsors withdraw. Similar results hold for reneging—about half
of bills that were the subject of reneging had only one reneger, and only one-fifth had more than

5 These calculations are limited to bills that had at least one cosponsor, since withdrawing
and reneging are not possible for bills that are not cosponsored.
four renegers. And, as with all of the measures of withdrawing and reneging calculated here,

these rates are fairly steady across congresses.

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

or renegers, responsible for the bulk of the decisions to back out on pledges. Of the 451 legislators in the sample who renege (out of a total of 937 unique members in the 101st Congress), 54% do so only once, and just 3% renege more than four times. Similarly, of the 557 who withdraw, 43% do so only once and only 6% do so more than four times. Therefore, the patterns we explore in the analyses that follow are general and are not driven by just a few MCs or a few bills.

Who Reneges?

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

One interesting exception is Ronald Machtley (R-RI), who, in the 102nd Congress, withdrew as a cosponsor on 68 bills, all introduced by Harris Fawell, his Republican copartisan from Illinois. These bills nearly all dealt with rescissions to the budget on particular projects and were introduced by Fawell “by request” (i.e., at the request of another person or entity). Thus,
Machtley’s behavior appears to be more of a response to the broader political context than to an action of Fawell’s.

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

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backing out on a cosponsorship pledge only when the benefits to them of doing so offset the potential costs. This should be most likely when an MC cares enough about policy that he or she is willing to prioritize the outcome of the vote over the risk of appearing to be untrustworthy or indecisive, when a legislator is secure enough electorally and in the chamber to withstand any negative consequences that may arise from the decision to back out on his or her support of a measure, and/or when the relationship between the sponsor and cosponsor is weaker, so that the MC feels less obligation to follow through on the pledge made to the sponsor.

*Security of Cosponsor*

Predictions about the effects of security are straightforward. We expect that the more secure the legislator, the more willing he or she will be to risk the intra-chamber and external consequences that can come with reneging. Thus, seniority (number of years in office) and electoral safety (the MC’s proportion of the two party vote share in the previous election) should both be positively associated with reneging. Along the same lines, if a lack of concern about colleagues’ and constituents’ reactions frees legislators to renege, then those MCs who have made the decision to retire after their current terms (measured in our specifications as a dummy variable coded 1 if the legislator retires and 0 otherwise) will also have a higher probability of backing out on a pledge.
Of course, legislators make the final decision to retire at different points in the term, or even before it, and this is nearly impossible to pinpoint. However, since our “retire” indicator likely includes some MCs who made the choice to retire late in the term, it should make it more difficult for us to uncover a relationship between retirement and reneging.

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**Relationship between Sponsor and Cosponsor**

Our theory of the dynamics underlying reneging also suggests that features of the sponsor and the relationship between the sponsor and a cosponsor affect the reneging decision. In general, cosponsors will be less willing to back out on pledges they have made to powerful colleagues, so, all else equal, we expect to observe a lower probability of reneging if the sponsor is very senior (as measured in years in office) or a leader (Speaker, majority/minority leader, or whip). MCs should also be less likely to renge on a pledge if they have close connections to the sponsor, so at the dyadic level, we expect to see lower rates of reneging when the sponsor and cosponsor share a party affiliation or come from the same state.

For similar reasons, we anticipate that members of the majority party will be less likely than those in the minority to renge, since bills that reach a final passage vote are most often those that are supported by powerful members of the majority (or, at least, have been tacitly approved of by the appropriate committee chairs). Voting no on these measures, especially after having previously signed on in support of them, is therefore likely to be noticed and to elicit disapproval from party leaders. In contrast, in most cases a reneging minority MC will be backing out on a pledge on a bill sponsored by a majority member, and so has less to lose from reneging.

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

We have argued that the choice to be an original cosponsor indicates a stronger link to the
sponsor. Our previous work on cosponsorship provides empirical support for this claim. Our

In the analyses that follow, we also directly test the effects of same-party/out-party reneging.
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analyses showed that MCs’ policy considerations drive both the decision to be an original and a
post-introduction cosponsor, but that a history of interaction between a sponsor and potential
cosponsor (i.e., if the sponsor been a cosponsor of a bill of the MC’s in the past) is a much
stronger predictor of the former than the latter (Bernhard and Sulkin nd). It follows, then, that
original cosponsors should be less likely to renege on a cosponsorship pledge than post-
introduction cosponsors.

Policy Considerations

Finally, we predict that policy considerations should be central to the reneging decision.
In short, if a legislator does not care very much if a bill passes or fails, it should not be worth
risking the consequences that can come with reneging. Accordingly, reneging is likely to be
more common on more policy-relevant measures. One very rough proxy for this is whether a
measure is a bill or joint resolution. Both categories of legislation have the force of law if passed,
but taken as group, resolutions often deal with matters of less pressing importance. Therefore, we
include a dummy variable for “bill” in or models and anticipate that there will be more reneging
on bills than on joint resolutions. We also control for the issue content of measures (i.e., whether
they are about agriculture, defense, health, taxes, etc.). We do not have theoretical expectations
about which issues should be the subject of the most reneging, but expect that differences could
emerge, so in the analyses discussed below, we control for this with a series of nineteen dummy
variables for the issue content of a bill or joint resolution.

The scheme is exhaustive and mutually exclusive, such that each bill receives one and only one issue code (see Sulkin 2009). The categories include agriculture, budget, campaign finance, children’s issues, civil rights, consumer issues, corporate regulation, crime, defense &
When making decisions about whether to renege, policy-motivated MCs will also consider the likelihood that their choice will make the difference between the measure passing or failing. If the outcome of a vote on a bill is a foregone conclusion, there is little incentive to back out, as it opens one up to the punishments that can come from reneging without offering any policy benefit. We therefore expect to see a positive relationship between the closeness of a vote (measured as the absolute value of the yeas minus the nays) and the likelihood of reneging.

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

Our independent variables include the features of bills and MCs described above, plus a number of controls. Because rates of reneging could vary across congresses and within a term, we take time into account in two ways: by controlling for Congress (with a series of dummy variables) and by including a measure that taps the number of days that elapsed between the start of a term and the date of the vote on a bill. This “elapsed” variable runs from 0 (the vote took place on the first day) to 693 (the vote took place near the end of the second year of the Congress). We also control for the number of each MC’s cosponsored bills that made it to the
final passage stage in a particular Congress since this affects the number of opportunities to renege. And, we include controls for the MC’s party, for whether the legislator served a partial or foreign policy, education, environment, government operations, health, jobs & infrastructure, Medicare, moral issues, Social Security, taxes, and welfare.

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full term during a given Congress, and for the size of an MC’s state delegation (because those
from larger states will have more opportunities to cosponsor with “same state” legislators).

Results

The results presented in Table 2 are from a model designed to test these hypotheses about the effects of cosponsor security, sponsor-cosponsor relations, and policy considerations on the probability of reneging. Our unit of analysis is an MC’s vote at final passage on each of his or her cosponsored bills and joint resolutions that reached this stage. The dependent variable is coded 1 if the legislator reneged (i.e., voted no) and 0 otherwise. We estimate the model using probit and, because legislators can appear in the sample in multiple Congresses, cluster the standard errors on the cosponsor.

As shown, the results support our hypotheses about the factors driving reneging. We find that electoral safety is positively related to reneging—more secure legislators are more likely to back out on their pledges, as are those who do not plan to run for reelection and will instead retire. This suggests that MCs are cognizant of the potential ramifications of reneging and avoid engaging in it if they are concerned about their electoral prospects.

Along the same lines, the choice to renge on a measure is linked to characteristics of the sponsor of that measure and a cosponsor’s relationship with him or her. Reneging is less common when the sponsor-cosponsor dyad shares a party affiliation, and when the MC was an
original cosponsor. And, as expected, majority party cosponsors are less likely to renege than minority members, even after controlling for party affiliation.

Finally, policy considerations appear to operate in the manner predicted. Reneging is more frequent for bills than for joint resolutions, occurs more often for some issues than for
others, and increases in probability the closer the vote. Relatively ideologically extreme legislators are also more likely than their moderate colleagues to back out on a pledge.

Importantly, these effects are more than just statistical regularities; they are also substantively meaningful. To estimate the likelihood of reneging in different scenarios, we used CLARIFY (see Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) to calculate the probability of a "no" vote on a bill cosponsored by an MC when characteristics of that MC, his or her relationship with the bill's sponsor, and nature of the measure are varied. Recall that at the level of the cosponsorship decision, reneging is a rare event (comprising only about 1-2% of all decisions).

For instance, if we take a relatively safe and relatively ideologically extreme legislator from the minority party and calculate the likelihood that she would renege on a joint resolution for which she was a post-introduction cosponsor and for which she shares no same-party or same-state affiliation with the sponsor, the probability of reneging is about 5.5%. In contrast, the probability of a relatively vulnerable and moderate majority MC voting no on a bill for which he was an original cosponsor and the sponsor comes from the same state and same party is virtually

All else equal, MCs are significantly more likely to renege on education and health
measures and significantly less likely to renege on bills and resolutions dealing with children’s issues, moral issues, and civil rights.

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

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Thus, common differences in the context of the voting decision can have a big impact on the likelihood that a legislator will choose to renege.

**The Consequences of Reneging**

Our theory is predicated on the idea that cosponsorship represents a pledge of commitment and that backing out on this commitment has negative consequences. The results in Table 2 indicate that MCs appear to be aware of the potential for such consequences and act only when they feel confident they can withstand them, or when they value the policy effects of a “no” vote on a bill enough that they are willing to risk the ramifications of reneging.

However, as is the case with other legislative activities that may yield a payoff or cost, it is entirely possible that legislators are overly cautious, behaving as if there were a consequence for failing to follow through on a pledge, even if in reality such punishments were rare. This anticipatory response could produce the patterns of behavior we see in Table 2 in the absence of an actual effect of reneging. As a next step, then, it is important to assess more directly the consequences of reneging. We do so by examining the relationship between reneging and a variety of indicators of legislative and electoral success, including MCs’ ability to assemble cosponsorship coalitions for their own introduced legislation, the effects of their reputations for trustworthiness on the likelihood that their measures pass, and the impact of reneging on their vote shares in the next election.

For these calculations, we hold sponsor and cosponsor seniority, party, closeness of
the vote, time elapsed, number of cosponsored bills, and delegation size at their means. We further assume that the sponsor is not a leader and that the MC does not plan to retire and is not a partial termer. The differences in the probability of reneging are even larger if we also allow these to vary across their ranges.
**Reneging and Cosponsorship Coalition Size**

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

To test these hypotheses, we first conduct regression analyses, presented in Table 3,
where the units of analysis are MCs' bill introductions and the dependent variable is the number
of cosponsorships sponsors receive for these bills. (Standard errors are clustered on the MC.)

Because we are interested in assessing the effects of reneging, we limit the sample to those
members who engaged in this behavior. This also provides a stricter test, since we are asking
20
whether the size of their coalitions changes after reneging (i.e., rather than just comparing the average number of cosponsors for the bills of renegers and non-renegers).

Accordingly, our primary interest is in the act of reneging. We identified the date of an MC’s reneging incident and built a “spell” around this of the five introductions preceding and following it. The coefficient on reneging thus reflects the difference in the number of cosponsors for the measures introduced in the spell before and after the date of reneging. More specifically, if it is negative, it means that the size of MCs’ cosponsorship coalitions decrease post-reneging.

These analyses are designed to compare within individuals, which reduces the need for controls. Nevertheless, the effects of reneging may be subtle and swamped by differences in cosponsorship coalition size linked to characteristics of bills and MCs, so we do take into account the type of measure (bill or joint resolution), whether the bill was referred to multiple committees (since multiply-referred measures tend to receive more cosponsors), and its date of introduction. At the level of sponsors, we include party, majority-minority and leadership status, and seniority and ideological extremity. Finally, we include dummies for Congress and bill issue category.

Results

Table 3 presents these results (minus the coefficients for the Congress, introduction date, and the issue category dummies, which we omit in the interest of space). The critical finding here
These spells often cross Congresses (for those for whom the volume of introductions in a Congress does not reach five preceding and/or following the reneging incident), but if we limit them to a single Congress, the substantive conclusions are the same. Similarly, using slightly larger or smaller spells does not substantially change the results.
is that backing out on a cosponsorship pledge does indeed have a negative effect on the
size of
the coalitions for the reneging MC’s subsequent bill introductions. A failure to follow through
on
a cosponsorship commitment is associated with a decrease of three to four cosponsors on
the
bills an MC introduces after the reneging incident. Because the average number of
cosponsors
per bill is only about nineteen, this reflects a substantial difference. These results provide
evidence of the role of cosponsorships in facilitating logrolling deals. Legislators appear to
take
cosponsorship pledges seriously, and those who fail to follow through on their commitments
face
more difficulty in garnering support for their own initiatives.

Insert Table 3 about here

It is impressive that evidence of this effect shows up in aggregate analyses, especially
since we expect harsher consequences for some reneging MCs than others. Figure 3
summarizes
the results of a series of analyses designed to test our hypotheses about this variation. To
assess
these differences, we replicated the analysis in Table 3, but with different models for each
reneging situation. For the effects of majority status, we ran separate analyses for majority
and
minority members. To determine whether there are differences in the extent of punishment
for
reneging on a copartisan vs. a member of the other party, we again replicated Table 3, but
included two indicators of reneging—“same party” reneging and “cross party” reneging.
We
then used the same approach for comparing original vs. post-introduction cosponsorship—
separate indicators of reneging for each. To illustrate these effects, we present just the
coefficients on the measures of reneging (represented by the dots), along with the 95% confidence interval for each (represented by the lines). Low coefficients here represent more of an effect, since they reflect the difference between the number of cosponsors for an MC’s bills pre- and post-reneging.

22
As shown, all of the coefficients are negative, indicating that reneging generally decreases MCs’ success at assembling cosponsorship coalitions. However, as expected, the consequences are more pronounced for members of the majority party and when an MC reneges against a copartisan. There appear to be no real differences for original vs. post-introduction cosponsorships, though it seems reasonable to assume that any effects for this would be more likely at the dyadic than aggregate level (i.e., a sponsor may be more displeased when an original cosponsor backs out than when a post-introduction cosponsor does, but his or her colleagues as a whole may not know about the nature of the particular cosponsorship choice or make a distinction between them).

The Reputational Effects of Reneging

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

A poor reputation, in turn, may hurt the ability of an MC to build a legislative coalition or to win reelection.

We measure reputation as the probability that an MC votes for a bill which he
cosponsored when it comes up for a roll call on the floor. We assume that other legislators have

15 The differences in punishment for same-party vs. cross-party and original vs. post-introduction reneging are larger for majority MCs than minority MCs. Combining them, as we do in Figure 3, thus mutes the effects somewhat.

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except the prior beliefs (e.g., when a trustworthily MCI followed through and...
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C's requirement, we employed a motorized platform.
on bills signed by the MC at the final passage vote. For each of these votes, we estimate...
Probability that an MC will be faithful to his or her sponsor ship pledge.

Prior beliefs condition the effect of each vote on the updated probability of not reneging.
We assume that the parameters that constitute the problem follow a distribution.
We use Bayes' theorem to calculate the posterior probability:

\[ \text{Theta}^* = \arg \max_{\Theta} \frac{L(\Theta \mid \text{Vote}) \cdot P(\Theta)}{a}, \]

where

\[ a = P(\text{Vote} \mid \text{ Theta}^*). \]

basic formula for
the posterior
distribution is
\( \frac{a + \#(y \text{ea vot es})}{(a + b + n)}. \)

We begin with
unknown
parameters:
\( a = 1, \)
...
to determine a new value of $a$ for the next vote (i.e., $a(t) = (a/(1 - \theta(t-1)) + n) / [(\theta(t-1)/(1-\theta(t-1)) + 1 + n)]$. Therefore, the modified formula is $\theta(t) = \theta(t-1)/(1-\theta(t-1))$. Therefore, the modified formula is
The measure of reputation, therefore, is a probability that an MC will vote yea on a bill he cosponsored that comes up for a floor vote. Its value ranges from 0.3 to 0.99, with a mean of 0.92 and a standard deviation of .06.

Figure 4 illustrates the evolution of posterior beliefs concerning the probability of following through on a cosponsorship commitment should the bill get to a floor vote. The first panel compares two MCs, Representative Karen Thurman and Representative Zoe Lofgren. These legislators had a similar number of opportunities to renege (Thurman had 82 of her cosponsored bills reach a final passage vote and Lofgren had 83 of hers do so) and each reneged three times. However, the timing of their reneging decisions varied. Thurman had one reneging incident fairly early during the time period we study and two more very late. In contrast, Lofgren’s three incidents are in closer proximity to one another. Note how cheating late, after one has built up a reputation, results in a smaller loss of reputation than if one cheats early.

The second panel compares four representatives, each of whom had 68 potential opportunities to renege. Representative Virgil Goode never reneged, Representative Wes Watkins reneged once, Representative Jerry Moran reneged twice, and Representative Robert Wexler reneged three times. The graph reveals how these choices affect their reputation scores.

As shown, repeated reneging lowers reputation (though the size of the effect is greatest for the first reneging incident), but as we saw above, the timing of reneging choices matters as well.

Insert Figure 4 about here
We argue that perceptions of the relative trustworthiness of a bill sponsor shape the willingness of MCs to support that sponsor’s bill. That is, before making a deal with a bill sponsor, other MCs evaluate his or her reputation. All else equal, we expect MCs to be more willing to support the legislation of those sponsors that they view as trustworthy (i.e., who have
followed through on their own cosponsorship commitments). Thus, for example, all else equal,

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

measures than legislators like Goode who do not renege.

Results

To test this hypothesis, we first examine the relationship between the reputation of the sponsor and the size of the cosponsorship coalition for his or her bills. In these analyses, the number of cosponsors per bill is the dependent variable and the primary independent variable of interest is the sponsor's reputation score at the time that the bill was introduced. The controls include the same features of MCs and bills included in the analyses of cosponsorship coalition size in Table 3.17 Standard errors are clustered on the sponsor.

The results, presented in Table 4, reveal that the reputation score, while positive, is not a significant predictor of overall cosponsorship coalition size. However, if we focus just on bills introduced by majority members (which are more likely to become law and hence more likely to be taken seriously in the chamber), the relationship is positive and statistically significant. Bills sponsored by members with “good” reputations (i.e., who have not themselves reneged often in the past) receive more cosponsors than those introduced by MCs with bad reputations. Substantively, the difference between a sponsor with a reputation score of zero and one of one is

17 We exclude the 101st Congress from this analysis.
Because we use an uninformed prior to calculate the reputation measure, an MC’s initial votes are likely to produce significant updating. Nevertheless, MCs who served prior to the 101st, when our data collection starts, certainly had an established legislative reputation. Therefore, to prevent the results from being distorted by the arbitrary cut-point of our sample, we used the data from the 101st to calculate a reputational measure for all MCs in the 102nd Congress who also served prior to the 101st.
about 18-19 cosponsors. Although the reputation scores can theoretically run from almost zero to almost one, the vast majority of observations fall in the .80-.99 range. Within this range, then, we expect a difference of about 4-5 cosponsors, which is still impressive given that the average number of cosponsors per bill is less than twenty. Once again, we see that reneging can hurt sponsors’ abilities to promote their legislation.

An even more difficult test of the importance of an MC’s reputation is its effect on the probability that his or her measures pass in the chamber. Recall that, relative to the total number of bills introduced in the chamber, only a handful of measures pass. To determine whether a relationship exists between reputation and bill success, we conduct probit analyses where the dependent variable is whether a bill passed in the House and the independent variables include sponsor reputation and the controls described above. (Standard errors are again clustered on the sponsor). Because bills can pass without receiving a formal final passage roll call vote, we also include a dummy for whether or not that occurred for a particular bill. The results show that there is indeed an effect of reputation; bills introduced by MCs with good reputations are significantly more likely to succeed in the chamber. For example, if we set all of the controls at their means and sponsor reputation at .8, we find that a measure has about a 6% chance of passing. When the
sponsor reputation is set at .99, that probability jumps to almost 10%.

The Electoral Effects of Reneging

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

If we include a control for the number of cosponsors a bill receives, the coefficient on reputation drops very slightly.
a particular cosponsorship pledge seems fairly remote from constituents’ decisions about
whether or not to support him or her in the next election. After all, most constituents are
barely
able to recall the name of their representatives, much less track the specifics of what they
do in
office.

However, when we take into account the behavior of strategic challengers and the manner
in which legislators are covered by the news media, an effect seems more likely.
Challengers are
always on the lookout for weaknesses they can exploit, and a record of flip-flopping or
waffling
should provide them with ready ammunition. Reneging is therefore likely to attract their
attention. Similarly, local news coverage of MCs, while often sparse, tends to focus on
performance-related matters like missed votes (Arnold 2004). The criticism is particularly
harsh
when a member misses a vote on a measure in which he or she was involved. It seems
likely that
reneging would elicit similar criticism, while also inviting critiques about inconsistency. In
short,
reneging has the potential to affect the image that representatives have among elites in the
district, and a bad image should translate into electoral consequences.

If this is the case, we expect that reneging in one term will affect vote shares in the next
election. Given the centrality of the electoral connection in legislative studies, hypotheses
about
the effects of in-office behavior on electoral prospects are common. However, actually
finding
strong evidence of such effects has been rare, particularly after controlling for all of the
other
factors that can influence vote shares. Accordingly, our expectation is that any relationship
we do
uncover should be relatively small in magnitude.

Our approach to testing for electoral effects is to conduct regression analyses where an MC’s performance in an election (measured as his or her percentage of the two party vote share) is the dependent variable. Our independent variables include reneging in the previous term and 28
the appropriate controls. We incorporate two separate indicators of reneging. The first is whether, by January of the election year (i.e., one year into an MC’s term) he or she had reneged at least once. The second is his or her reputation score in that month. We choose January since that typically marks the point in time where potential challengers are making the choice about whether or not to run and when the next election is beginning to be discussed in the news and considered more seriously by interested observers in the district.

Our controls include each MC’s vote share in the previous election, whether he or she was unopposed in that election, whether he or she is unopposed in the current election, his or her seniority and ideological extremity, and majority party status. To contextualize reneging behavior, we also include other indicators of legislative activity, such as the number of bills the MC sponsored and his or her hit rate (the proportion of these bills that passed). Finally, we incorporate measures of the political climate, including the president’s approval in January of the election year, the swing toward or away from the MC’s party (measured as the average percentage of the Democratic vote in the previous congressional election subtracted from the average percentage of the vote in the current election), whether it is a midterm election, and whether the MC’s challenger is a “quality” one (measured by a dummy indicating whether he or she has prior elected office experience). For ease of interpretation, the approval and swing variables are all anchored on the Democrats (so if the President is a Republican, approval is calculated as 100 - presidential approval) and we run separate models for Democrats and
Republicans.

Insert Table 5 about here

29
The results are presented in Table 5. As shown, there are no effects for Democrats, but for Republicans, reputation does matter. Those with higher reputational scores (i.e., who have reneged less) do better in the next election. The coefficient on reputation for Republicans is about 6.4, but we must once again consider that most reputation scores fall between about .80 and .99. Across this range, then, those who score the highest have vote shares about 1-2% higher in the next race. This is on par with the magnitude of the effects found in other work on the electoral impact of legislative behavior (see, for example, Bovitz and Carson 2006; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Sulkin 2005) and so is impressive evidence of the potential electoral consequences of reneging. This is especially true given all of the other factors that we control for, particularly the quality of the challenger, which should also be a function of the legislator’s performance in office. In addition, although there is no significant effect of reneging once reputation is taken into account, if the reneging dummy alone is the only indicator of this behavior included, it is significant for Republicans (and negative, such that those who renge receive vote shares about 1.2% lower than those who do not).

Conclusions

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

It is not clear why the effects would exist for Republicans but not Democrats, but it could be related to differing views about the importance of consistency among MCs’ base
constituencies or to differences in patterns of party competition across this time period. The coefficient on reputation is indeed higher if challenger quality is omitted from the specification. We also conducted analyses examining the impact of reneging on challenger quality, but find little evidence of a direct effect.

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organization note that the transaction costs of legislating lead to the potential for suboptimal outcomes, where desired bills are left unpassed. In turn, much of the literature focuses on the institutions that MCs create to solve this problem, whether they be related to committee structure (e.g., Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 1987) or party organization (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). We argue that cosponsorship performs a similar role, serving as an institutional arrangement to aid in making commitments credible. In particular, the institution of cosponsorship provides a mechanism for individual MCs to build reputations for being trustworthy and to monitor the actions of their colleagues. Cosponsorship facilitates deal-making and thus enables legislators to achieve their policy goals.

Our results have shown that patterns of reneging are consistent with the idea that cosponsorship functions as a commitment device. Legislators rarely back out on the pledges they make, but when they do so, these choices are systematic. MCs are sensitive to their own status in the chamber, to their standing with constituents, and to the context surrounding a particular bill and so renege only when they can afford to and/or when they are willing to pay the potential costs. And, even though this should dampen the observable effects of reneging (i.e., because we do not see the full range of behaviors—what the implications of reneging would be if MCs backed out on a pledge whenever they felt so inclined), we still see clear effects on their legislative and electoral success. Legislators who renege harm their reputations and, as a result, face difficulty in assembling coalitions in favor of their own legislation and in getting that
legislation passed. And, at least for Republicans, there is also a price to pay on Election Day.

In future research, we plan to further explore the patterns and consequences of cosponsorship behavior. We will begin by expanding the analysis to include both withdrawing and reneging. Our expectation is that the same factors should drive both choices, but that the
repercussions of reneging are likely harsher than those for withdrawing, since the latter occurs at
a later, more consequential stage. We will also examine additional ramifications of a failure to
follow through on a cosponsorship commitment. For instance, we expect that an MC who
reneges may be less likely to attain a preferred committee or subcommittee assignment or may
be blocked from moving up the party hierarchy. We also expect that the process of reward and
punishment for cosponsorship behavior will play out at the dyadic level. When an MC reneges
on a sponsor’s bill, we anticipate that the sponsor will be displeased and will retaliate by failing
to cosponsor the MC’s future bills, by withdrawing existing cosponsorships from the MC’s bills,
or by reducing campaign contributions. Examining the interactions between MCs across time
will provide more insight into how relationships are built and how they evolve.

Cosponsorship has had underappreciated consequences for the development of the
legislative process over the past thirty years. If cosponsorship helps legislators to trade support,
then it provides individual MCs with the power to create coalitions in favor of their preferred
policies. Thus, changes in the rules regarding cosponsorship in the 1960s and 1970s empowered
individual legislative entrepreneurs at the expense of House leaders and committee chairs,
contributing to the decentralization of the House in the post-Watergate era. To the extent that our
investigations of reneging and withdrawing and of cosponsorship and bill success patterns over
time uncover systematic relationships, they will offer further confirmation that
cosponsorship plays a central role in the lawmaking process. As a result, understanding the dynamics of cosponsorship has the potential to offer new insight into the most fundamental question underlying the study of Congress--how the strategic decisions of individual MCs interact with institutional structures to produce policy outcomes.

32
Works Cited


Cox, Gary and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the*


Figure 1. The Prevalence of Withdrawing and Reneging by Congress

- Withdrawing
- Reneging

% of cosponsors
% of bills with
% of MCs who

Congress

% of cosponsors hip decisions
% of bills with renegers
% of MCs who renege

Congress
Figure 2. Distribution of Withdrawing and Reneging
Figure 3. Differential Punishment across Types of Reneging

Note: The figure presents the difference in the average number of cosponsors for MCs' bills before and after they renegade. These estimates are derived from models based on the results presented in Table 2, but where the type of MC (majority/minority) or type of reneging decision (on a post-introduction vs. original cosponsorship, or against a same-party/different-party sponsor) vary. The dots represent the coefficient and the lines the 90% confidence intervals.
Figure 4. Reneging and Reputation

0 20 40 60 80 Reneging Opportunities

Thurman Lofgren

Goode Watkins Moran Wexler

39
Table 1. Cosponsorship in the 101st-108th Congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Bills Introduced</th>
<th># of Introduced Bills with Cosponsorships</th>
<th>Total % of obs</th>
<th>Cosponsor Type %</th>
<th>% Original</th>
<th>% Post-Intro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6438 6606 5550 4398 4891 5657 5787 5452</td>
<td>146,269</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4243 4163 3598 2827 3319 3898 4022 3983</td>
<td>135,490</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4243 4163 3598 2827 3319 3898 4022 3983</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4243 4163 3598 2827 3319 3898 4022 3983</td>
<td>101,000</td>
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<td>34.8%</td>
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<td>4.1%</td>
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<td>4243 4163 3598 2827 3319 3898 4022 3983</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table presents data on the number of bill introductions and cosponsorship decisions (# of bills * number of MCs) for each Congress between 1989 and 2004.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Who Reneges?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Renege? Cosponsor Vote Share</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosponsor</td>
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<td>Seniority Retire?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Majority Party?</td>
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<td>Democrat?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremity Sponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader? Sponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniority Same</td>
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<tr>
<td>State? Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party? Bill?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosponsor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness of Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Elapsed # of Bills to Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partial Termer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation Size</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 56,943  Pseudo R-squared .18

Note: The table presents the results of a probit analysis where the dependent variable is whether or not a legislator or renege d on a cosponsor decision and the indepen
dent variables include the features of MCs and bills presented, along with a series of dummy variables for Congress and bill category. Standard errors are clustered on the MC. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01.
Table 3. The Effects of Reneging on Subsequent Cosponsorship Coalition Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosponsorship Coalition</th>
<th>Renege?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill? Multiple</td>
<td>-3.45(.96)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral?</td>
<td>-36.47(5.93)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party?</td>
<td>6.93(1.51)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat?</td>
<td>.45(1.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>1.92(1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader?</td>
<td>.08(.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Extremity</td>
<td>32.61(13.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremity</td>
<td>5.87(5.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>202.84(260.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 N 6377 R
Table 4. The Effects of Reputation on Sponsor Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosponsorship Coalition Size</th>
<th>Cosponsorship Coalition Size for Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill?</td>
<td>8.65(6.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>-34.39(3.45)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral?</td>
<td>4.98(.73)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>1.34(.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party?</td>
<td>-.36(.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat?</td>
<td>.10(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>13.37(4.19)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader?</td>
<td>-2.29(3.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>-3.30(1.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremity</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Termer</td>
<td>245.86(140.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 / \text{Pseudo/R} \] = .05 .06 .27 

---

**B**

ill Success Reputation
Note: The table reports OLS and probit results, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the number of cosponsors for an introduced bill (columns 1 and 2) and whether or not a bill passed the House (columns 3). The number of observations = # of bills introduced in the 102 congresses. The models also include controls for time (Congress and introduction date) and bill issue category. Standard errors are clustered on the MC. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reneged?</th>
<th>.46(.53)</th>
<th>-.99(.66)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation Next</td>
<td>-5.17(3.74)</td>
<td>6.38(2.92)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger</td>
<td>-5.28(.58)**</td>
<td>-6.28(.62)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced?</td>
<td>.02(.02)</td>
<td>.01(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Sponsored Bills</td>
<td>.75(1.19)</td>
<td>.79(1.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit Rate</td>
<td>-.10(.02)**</td>
<td>.04(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>10.34(1.49)**</td>
<td>-.71(1.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Extremity</td>
<td>.59(.02)**</td>
<td>.04(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party?</td>
<td>-1.47(.59)*</td>
<td>1.83(.90)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Vote Share</td>
<td>-15.71(1.03)**</td>
<td>1.26(1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Unopposed</td>
<td>29.21(.71)**</td>
<td>32.69(.37)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Unopposed</td>
<td>.82(.52)</td>
<td>.36(.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Election?</td>
<td>.05(.01)**</td>
<td>-.001(.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Approval</td>
<td>.68(.11)**</td>
<td>-.81(.12)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Swing Constant</td>
<td>-166.11(46.84)</td>
<td>124.94(75.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 1622 1476 R-squared .80 .82

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