Electoral Order and Political Participation: Election Scheduling, Calendar Position, and Antebellum Congressional Turnout

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ABSTRACT

Surge-and-decline theory accounts for an enduring regularity in American politics: the predictable increase in voter turnout that accompanies on-year congressional elections and its equally predictable decrease at midterm. Despite the theory’s wide historical applicability, antebellum American political history offers a strong challenge to its generalizability, with patterns of surge-and-decline nowhere evident in the period’s aggregate electoral data. Why? The answer to this puzzle lies with the institutional design of antebellum elections. Today, presidential and on-year congressional elections are everywhere same-day events. By comparison, antebellum states scheduled their on-year congressional elections in one of three ways: before, after, or on the same day as the presidential election. The structure of antebellum elections offers a unique opportunity—akin to a natural experiment—to illuminate surge-and-decline dynamics in ways not possible by the study of contemporary congressional elections alone. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative materials, our analysis clarifies and partly resolves this lack of fit between theory and historical record. It also adds to our understanding of the effects of political institutions and electoral design on citizen engagement.
The turnout in any specific election is largely a question of how many of the less interested, less responsive people are sufficiently stimulated by the political circumstances of the moment that they will make the effort to vote. An excited election situation in which a stirring issue or an attractive candidate makes the party-candidate choice seem unusually important may bring these peripheral voters to the polls in large numbers. In an election of lesser apparent importance and weaker total stimulation the participation of these peripheral voters declines, leaving the electoral decision largely to the high-interest core voters.

Angus Campbell (1960)\(^1\)

“[I]f the October [House] elections can be carried, the majority will be more than double in November. There is always a floating vote which [sic] goes with the strongest party. By success in the first election, we will secure this vote for the second, and if the elections are carried in the state by barely one thousand, we can count upon a majority of twenty thousand for McClellan in November. So let each friend of the country, every man who desires a change in the administration of our government remember that in every vote gained for the Democracy in October they increase McClellan’s strength by a score of votes in the election to follow”

The Gettysburg Compiler (1864)\(^2\)

Introduction

Broad-based citizen participation is a cornerstone of effective democratic performance. For that reason alone, generations of political scientists have been justified to plumb all manner of data and map the patterns of citizen engagement in American elections, along with the causal forces that underlie them. Take one prominent example: the theory of surge-and-decline. Surge-and-decline has been a fixture in the literature on American voter turnout since Angus Campbell first penned his seminal article nearly fifty years ago. That theory provides a succinct explanation for one of the enduring regularities in American electoral politics, the predictable increase in voter turnout that accompanies on-year (i.e., presidential-year) congressional elections, along with its equally predictable decrease at midterm—a pattern one noted authority has labeled “the presidential pulse of congressional elections.”\(^3\) This strong uptick in the on-year and its accompanying midterm loss would also provide the foundation for a theory of
governmental responsiveness and accountability. Here, voters who surge to the polls to cast a top-of-the-ticket vote for president stick around to vote down-ballot in sub-presidential contests, like the race for Congress. In so doing, they reward the advantaged presidential candidate’s congressional party with additional votes that, at the margins, swing competitive districts and provide a greater pool of legislative support for incoming executive leadership—at least until congressional midterm elections, at which time the presidential advantage from on-year congressional elections is substantially abated.

The simplicity of surge-and-decline theory is one of its greatest assets. The model divides voters into two classes: “core” and “peripheral.” Core voters are regular participants in the electoral process. All things being equal, core voters show up at the polls in similar numbers for both on-year and midterm congressional elections. As regular participants in the electoral process, core turnout is largely invariant between election periods. Observed variation in turnout therefore rests largely on the behavior of peripheral voters. Peripheral voters are marginal voters—irregular participants in the electoral process. Peripheral voters require additional inducements to turnout in low-stimulus congressional elections.

On-year congressional elections provide peripheral voters with two such inducements to vote. One flows from the greater marginal benefits of participation that the “spillover effects” or “positive externalities” of presidential campaigns provide. In comparison to the typical congressional campaign, presidential campaigns are high-stimulus events. Presidential candidates are typically well known and well financed, able to saturate the paid-media airwaves with both positive and negative political information. The free media also saturate the airwaves with a continuous stream of information on
presidential campaign dynamics and stories about the individual candidates. In addition, political parties mobilize to get out the presidential vote, as do various national and subnational interest groups, citizen groups, and individual voter-activists. In this climate, peripheral voter engagement with national politics is heightened, its partisan stakes are clarified, and activist organizations more likely make contact with peripheral voters and get them to the polls.

A second inducement to vote is institutional and works to lower the marginal costs of political participation for peripheral voters. Today, presidential elections and on-year congressional elections are everywhere same-day events; once the decision to vote in the former has been made, “turning out” for the latter is essentially costless. While informational constraints may still act to deter, many peripheral voters still choose to cast a down-ballot vote for Congress. As a result, congressional candidates become, at the margins, either the beneficiary or the victim of exogenous presidential campaign dynamics.

Surge-and-decline is not without critics. Some point to the erosion of presidential coattails and a concomitant decline in congressional swing ratios as evidence of the theory’s declining relevance to the study of contemporary American politics. According to this line of thought, the incumbency effect has insulated congressional elections from the influence of presidential campaigns, while the erosion of partisanship and associated rise of split-ticket voting have likewise contributed to the isolation of congressional campaign dynamics from presidential elections. Others critics have challenged surge-and-decline’s central theoretical account, proposing an alternative explanation for on-year/midterm voter dynamics, one rooted in the logic of political economy and centered
on the retrospective evaluation of incumbent presidents after their first two years in office.\textsuperscript{5} This referendum theory of congressional voting contends that would-be midterm voters decide whether or not to turn out based on changes in the economic conditions of the preceding two years, as well as patterns of presidential approval. Finally, more sympathetic critics, while partly conceding the insights of referendum theory and acknowledging the growing isolation of contemporary congressional elections, continue to defend an amended version of surge-and-decline, refining the original theory’s underlying behavioral dynamics to include a reconsideration of the partisan composition of both on-year and midterm election participants.\textsuperscript{6}

This paper takes a closer look at the defining regularity in turnout that undergirds surge-and-decline theory. While there is ample evidence to indicate that the impact of presidential turnout on congressional electoral margins and seat shares has diminished with time, and that the calculus to turn out remains complex and dynamic, there is no gainsaying the fact that patterns of uptick and downtick in congressional turnout continue to course through American electoral politics with almost mechanical regularity. To illustrate, the upper graph in Figure 1 reports national turnout rates in American congressional elections since 1952.

[Figure 1 about here]

Because this uniform regularity in turnout is foundational to surge-and-decline theory, a challenge to its generalizability is posed by any electoral era in which this defining characteristic appears to be absent. Consider the graph at the bottom of Figure 1, which presents aggregate rates of American congressional turnout for the years 1828-1874. In stark contrast to the uppermost graph, these data show little evidence of the
regular uptick and downtick from on-year to midterm so characteristic of contemporary congressional elections. In sum, the theoretical expectations of surge-and-decline do not seem to fit the patterns contained in the historical data.

Assorted political and socio-economic explanations might be cited to account for the contrasting patterns of turnout in antebellum and contemporary elections. Such arguments maintain that, absent the nationalizing effect of the Civil War, and given the lack of integration that characterized contemporaneous economic, communications, and transportation systems, antebellum elections were for the most part decidedly decentralized events. Even elections for federal office, by this argument, were largely isolated and disconnected events. Hence the connections between presidential and congressional elections were effectively severed, rendering the application of surge-and-decline theory to this period an anachronistic exercise at best.7

We take a different view. While not wishing to obscure the historically distinctive aspects of this era—indeed our analysis depends in part upon that distinctiveness—we will nonetheless argue that the applicability of surge-and-decline theory to earlier electoral periods can be substantially vindicated once that era’s unique electoral-institutional environment is properly accounted for. In addition, attention to the distinctive character of antebellum congressional elections allows us raise fresh theoretical questions regarding the dynamics of surge-and-decline and, more broadly, the influence of political institutions and electoral design on patterns of citizen engagement, questions that can not be properly leveraged through the use of contemporary electoral data alone.
Our institution of interest is the distinctive election-scheduling regime under which antebellum federal elections were organized. It was not until 1874 that Congress officially mandated individual states to synchronize their congressional election schedule on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, effectively exposing congressional elections *in toto* to the full force of presidential election stimuli. In antebellum America in particular, the congressional election calendar manifested a remarkable diversity. For instance, the election calendar to fill the Thirty-First Congress (Dec. 3, 1849-Mar. 3, 1851) was *fifteen* months long, beginning on August 7, 1848 and ending on November 13, 1849, roughly three weeks before the opening of the new session in December 1849. Within the parameters of this elongated season, an individual state might choose to schedule its on-year congressional elections in one of three basic calendar positions: 1) like today, on the same day as its presidential election; 2) before its presidential election, or 3) after its presidential election.

Does surge-and-decline theory perform any better on antebellum congressional elections once we take account of *electoral time*—that is, basic differences in scheduling and calendar position within this elongated electoral season? Figure 2 disaggregates congressional turnout data for the period 1828-1874 according to whether or not a state’s congressional elections were held before, after, or on the same day as its presidential election. Preliminary visual inspection of Figure 2 provides initial evidence to suspect that those elections that correspond most closely to contemporary congressional elections—those held on the same day as their presidential election—exhibit more identifiable patterns of surge-and-decline. This is especially true of the period 1840-60,
the period both prior to the disruptions of civil war and after the full-flowering of national
two-party competition. By comparison, patterns of congressional turnout in the “after”
states evince the starkest departures from patterns associated with “surge-and-decline.”
Patterns in the “before” states are perhaps the most interesting because they are least
expected. In some ways an intermediary case, these elections exhibit many of the same
patterns observed in “same day” states, but with somewhat less regularity (or intensity).

[Figure 2 about here]

Simple summary statistics lend more support to the visual patterns in Figure 2.
Table 1 presents data on average levels of on-year and midterm congressional turnout for
three different periods, 1828-74, 1828-60, and 1840-60. For each period, the table also
reports “drop-off” (the average difference in turnout rates between one on-year election
period and its subsequent midterm). As Table 1 clearly shows, in each time period,
“same-day” scheduling of congressional and presidential elections produces the steepest
levels drop-off, followed by “before” and then “after” calendar dates. Perhaps most
striking, the change in turnout from on-year to midterm in the “after” states is actually
positive, and is suggestive of the very steep turnout decline occurring in states that
scheduled their presidential-year congressional races sometime after the conclusion of the
presidential race.

[Table 1 about here]

Unpacking the Decision to Vote

As both Figure 2 and Table 1 suggest, the variegated antebellum election calendar
provides scholars with a unique opportunity— one akin to a natural experiment—to
clarify surge-and-decline dynamics in ways not possible through the study of
contemporary congressional elections alone. As we will show, the distinctive contours of the antebellum calendar shaped the decision to turnout in patterned ways by altering the calculus of voting in congressional elections. First, the marginal benefits of voting in both the “same day” states and the “before” states were greater than in the “after” states. This is because congressional elections held either on or before the day of the presidential vote exposed citizens to the high-intensity stimuli of a presidential campaign-in-progress, stimuli that readily infused the congressional campaign environment, heightening political interest and partisan animosities, and directly impacting the probability of going to the polls.9 By contrast, in the “after” states, citizens made their decision to vote for Congress insulated from the atmosphere of the presidential campaign, in a lower-intensity environment, one in which the marginal benefits of casting a vote for Congress were substantially reduced.

Second, the marginal costs of turning out to vote were higher in both the “before” states and the “after” states, where the decisions to vote in presidential and congressional elections were independent acts separated in time. By comparison, voters in “same-day” states had only to show up at the polls once to cast a vote in both congressional and presidential contests. Indeed, in the era of the party-strip ballot, the decision to “turn out” for one’s congressional race in “same-day” states was more an institutional residuum of the decision to cast a vote in the presidential election than it was a real choice in itself. Casting a vote for Congress in same-day states was in a real sense costless.

This variable mix of schedule-induced costs and benefits resulted in an electoral environment with three analytically distinct sets of political incentives. Each of these settings, we hypothesize, shaped the probability of voting in a state’s congressional
election in patterned and hence predictable ways. Table 2 summarizes this unique antebellum calculus of voting and its corresponding incentives in a simple 2 x 2 matrix.

[Table 2 about here]

In “same day” states, the marginal benefits of voting for Congress should be at their highest (with the presidential campaign at fever pitch), while the marginal costs of voting should be negligible (both turnout acts occurring simultaneously). As a result, surge behavior should be strongest in these states, while drop-off from on-year to midterm should be correspondingly steepest. By contrast, in the “after states,” the marginal benefits of congressional voting should be at their lowest (the presidential campaign having already concluded), with marginal costs higher (because a second and independent decision to vote is required). As a result, surge behavior should be weakest in these states and drop-off correspondingly the shallowest. Finally, the “before” states represent a more complex electoral environment, with more complicated predictions regarding a potential voter’s expected behavior. Like the “after” states, the marginal costs of voting in “before” states were high (again, because two separate turnout decisions were involved).

On the other hand, like the “same-day” states, the marginal benefits of voting for Congress were also high (spillover effects from a presidential campaign-in-progress). For these reasons, surge behavior and drop-off should fall somewhere in between the values for “same-day” and “after” states. Beyond that, however, the precise size of the presidential-stimulus effect in “before” states should also be a function of how many days, weeks, or months a congressional election was scheduled before the date of the presidential election. As a result, expectations regarding political participation in these
states should also vary according to its proximity to or distance from the end of the presidential contest.

**Looking Ahead**

The analysis of antebellum voting behavior, then, provides leverage on a set of questions otherwise difficult to reach. Is on-year surge behavior in contemporary congressional voting solely a function of spillover effects provided by high-stimulus presidential campaigns? Or is higher volume turnout in on-year elections also institutionally-induced, aided by the lower barriers to voting created by same-day scheduling? In contemporary congressional elections both variables are hopelessly conflated. Because these elections are everywhere scheduled on the same day as the presidential contest, it is difficult to disentangle the separate effects of scheduling and presidential stimuli on congressional turnout. However, the antebellum electoral setting allows us to isolate presidential “spillover effects” and institutional “same-day” effects and assess their independent impact. The unique calendar structure of antebellum elections allows us to ask, for example, what happens when we relax the institutional “same-day” effect but maintain the presidential stimulus effect in full force? Under these conditions, how much surge behavior do we continue to observe? If surge behavior is primarily due to the stimulus presidential elections, then same-day scheduling should have an inconsequential effect on turnout and a null finding should result. And what if we were further to set the congressional race two weeks or two months out from the presidential election, what would the additional impact on surge behavior likely be? Likewise, what would the impact on turnout be if both presidential stimulus and same-day scheduling are removed? In all, by exploiting the constitutive features of the
antebellum era’s unique electoral order, researchers can ask a range of more fine-grained and theoretically relevant questions regarding the underlying dynamics of congressional turnout.

A Model of Antebellum Congressional Turnout: Data and Method

To analyze the effect of election scheduling on congressional turnout we construct the following model:

$$PY_{CTO_{it}} = a_{i} + b_{CAL} \text{CALENDAR POSITION}_{it}$$

$$+ c_{MOVE_{it}}$$

$$+ d_{PY}_{CTO_{i(t-1)}}$$

$$+ e_{COMPETITIVE MARGIN_{it}}$$

$$+ f_{\text{Real ANNUAL PER CAPITA GDP}}$$

$$+ g_{\text{WARTALK}}$$

$$+ h_{\text{LOG % LITERATE}_{it(\text{LOG})}}$$

$$+ \epsilon$$

We perform our analysis using a cross sectional-time series data set. To take account of its distinctive properties we employ a fixed-effects OLS model with panel corrected standard errors. A lagged dependent variable is also included to account for the presence of serial correlation in our model.10

Our dependent variable is $PY_{CTO_{it}}$, which measures statewide presidential-year turnout percentage in House elections for state $i$ at time $t$.11 The key independent variable of interest is $\text{CALENDAR POSITION}_{it}$, a categorical variable that takes a value of “0” if a state’s congressional election is held on the same day as its presidential election, “1” if it
is held anytime before the presidential contest, and “2” if held anytime after. At each stage of our analysis, “same day” is the omitted comparison category. Thus our analysis will look for systematic differences between both the “before” states and the “after” states, on the one hand, and “same-day” states, on the other.\textsuperscript{12}

Several additional control variables believed to affect congressional turnout are also included in the equation. MOVE measures the impact of scheduling change on a state’s congressional turnout. MOVE is a dummy variable and takes a value of “1” if the calendar date of a state’s congressional election has changed since the previous midterm contest and “0” if otherwise. All things being equal, we expect changes in the scheduling of congressional elections to precipitate confusion among some portion of a state’s electorate and to increase the costs of casting a vote for Congress. Therefore we expect MOVE to have a negative impact on turnout.

COMPETITIVE MARGIN\textsubscript{it} is a measure of the level of statewide two-party competition in congressional elections. The expected relationship is negative, as the statewide competitive margin decreases, turnout is expected to increase.\textsuperscript{13} LOG % LITERATE\textsubscript{it} measures the log percentage of a state’s population recorded as being able to read and write by the U.S. Census. We employ this variable in an effort to control for the effect of education on turnout at a time when finer measures of educational attainment are not available.\textsuperscript{14} The relationship between education and turnout in contemporary American political is positive; as the former increases, so to does the latter. However, in an era in which mass political parties regularly mobilized 70 to 75% of the eligible electorate or more—reaching far deeper into the population of eligible voters that do contemporary party organizations—the expected relationship here is less clear. ∆
ANNUAL REAL PER CAPITA GDP is a measure of the annual change in gross domestic product. In a recent review of the literature on turnout, Blais reports evidence for both a positive and a negative relationship between economic hardship and turnout. As such, we include a measure of economic performance in our analysis, but we are largely agnostic as regards its expected relationship with the dependent variable. WARTALK measures the impact on turnout of a general climate of war. For the period in question (1828-1860) no on-year congressional election cycle overlaps with ongoing military operations. This variable therefore controls for the effects of both prewar and/or postwar war-related debate on turnout and takes a value of “1” for those congressional elections in which either the anticipation of war or the politics of its aftermath, conditions that book-ended actual military conflagration, injected themselves into the campaign (1848 and 1860). Finally, as noted above, a lagged dependent variable is also included to account for the presence of serial correlation in our model, as well as fixed-effects dummy variables for each state and each congressional election-period to account for unmodeled factors in the political climate of each state and each election season that might plausibly influence turnout levels.

Empirical Results

Table 3 presents our initial set of findings. Column 1 of Table 3 shows that states that scheduled their elections to Congress sometime after the date of their presidential election experienced rates of congressional turnout almost -7 percentage points lower than those that held their congressional and presidential elections on the same day. Equally striking, our findings also sustain preliminary observations that states that scheduled their congressional elections before the date of their presidential election did
not have statistically different turnout rates than SAME-DAY states. This null effect is surprising and can be taken as preliminary evidence that same-day scheduling was not a significant contributing factor behind surge behavior in the SAME-DAY states. Rather, when we examine the totality of our results, it seems evident that on-year spikes in congressional turnout were primarily the result of increased partisan contagion—a “spillover” effect due to the high-stimulus character of an ongoing presidential contest. Put differently, faced with the prospect of having to turnout twice during the federal election season, and even absent the specific inducement of a top-of-the-ticket presidential contest, congressional voters in BEFORE states still turned out to the polls at levels statistically indistinguishable from those observed in SAME-DAY states. This finding is even more striking given the prevalence of the party-strip ballot, an institutionally distinctive feature of nineteenth-century elections, and one that virtually guaranteed parity in turnout between congressional and presidential elections in the SAME-DAY states.

[Table 3 about here]

The Distinctiveness of November

As a further test, we next hypothesized that those congressional elections situated both immediately before and immediately after a presidential election might, along with “same-day” races, constitute a uniquely high stimulus environment. To isolate these states and compare them with others, we next recoded our scheduling data into three new groups: 1) “same-month” states (i.e., those states holding their on-year congressional elections anytime during the month of November), 2) “before” states (i.e., those holding their congressional elections anytime prior to November), and 3) “after” states (i.e., those
holding their congressional elections anytime following November). We then reran our analysis.

These findings are contained in Table 3, column 2 and support our initial intuition. Removing non-synchronized November dates from the BEFORE category has a more discernible effect on levels of political participation. Scheduling a state’s congressional elections sometime before November of a presidential year results in a -4.6 point drop in turnout on average compared to states that scheduled these races anytime in November. Even more dramatically, however, among states that scheduled their congressional races in December or later, turnout fell on average a staggering -14.7 points. Even under this specification, then, participation in BEFORE states still look more like SAME-MONTH states than it does AFTER states (though not as much as it did using our SAME-DAY specification). To conclude this discussion, November of a presidential election year was a distinctive environment, one that provided an extra stimulus to congressional turnout, regardless of whether such races were scheduled before, on, or after the date of the presidential election. States that chose to schedule their congressional elections outside of that November window suffered accordingly, although those that scheduled their legislative contests sometime during the presidential election season still experienced turnout rates about +10 points higher on average than those that scheduled them sometime after the November window had closed.

*Calendar Proximity and Congressional Turnout in “BEFORE” States*

Was congressional turnout in the BEFORE states affected specifically by calendar proximity to the November presidential election date? To get at this question we divided BEFORE states into subgroups holding their congressional elections in one of three
calendar periods: 1) October and (non- SAME-DAY) November, 2) September, and 3) August and before. Our equation was otherwise specified as before and identical tests were conducted. Those results are presented in Table 4, column 1. Once again, we find no discernable difference in turnout rates between BEFORE and SAME-DAY states. That is to say, we find no evidence that increasing the calendar distance from the November date of a presidential election depressed congressional turnout in a statistically significant fashion when compared to SAME-DAY turnout. Nor are the coefficients attached to these early dates even in a consistent direction.

[Table 4 about here]

What if we were to redo our analysis, this time using “SAME MONTH” as our point of comparison instead of “SAME DAY”? Table 4, column 2 presents these results. The findings are somewhat complicated and difficult to interpret plainly. While substantively, we observe a -5 point turnout drop in the October and the “August and before” states and a -10 point drop in the September states, only the October coefficient is statistically significant at conventional levels of \( p < .05 \). In all, the distinctiveness of the November political climate is once again underscored, though we recommend caution in interpreting these results, as the number of cases in each subgroup may not be sufficient to support as fine-grained an analysis as we are endeavoring here.

**Alternative Tests and Robustness Checks**

To this point, we have compared rates of turnout across states, controlling for differences in a state’s relative position on the congressional election calendar. One criticism of this approach is that our scheduling variable is only spuriously related to turnout—that is, that differences in calendar position may be correlated with more
significant (and as yet unspecified) differences between temporally clustered states. In an effort to address this concern we here provide supplemental checks on our initial findings, offer two additional tests that bear upon the plausibility of our central findings.

*Presidential Turnout and Congressional Calendar Position*

First we performed a test identical to that presented in Table 3, only this time substituting presidential turnout for congressional turnout as our dependent variable. In the antebellum years 1828-1860 almost all presidential elections were held within a narrow two-week time window in November and, after 1844, all took place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of that same month. Thus, all things being equal, we expect to find no systematic relationship between a state’s placement on the congressional calendar and its turnout in presidential elections. A finding of patterned differences between “same day,” “before,” and “after” states, especially ones that replicate our congressional results, should count as evidence against us. Such results would suggest that differences in state turnout across the congressional calendar were more a function of clustering by specific mix of states with similar turnout characteristics within a specific calendar location, rather than with the *per se* causal influence of calendar position itself. Conversely, a null finding should add strength to our central claim that calendar position exerted an independent influence on antebellum congressional turnout.

Our results are presented in Table 5. As with our previous analyses, we conducted two separate tests: one, a “same-day” analysis, looks for differences in presidential turnout between states that scheduled their congressional elections either before or after their presidential election versus states that held both contests on the same
day; the other, a “same-month” analysis, compares turnout in “before” and “after states
again turnout in states holding their congressional and presidential elections anytime in
November. As Table 5 makes clear, congressional calendar position has no independent
effect on presidential turnout, whether we examine for “same-day” effects or “same-
month” effects. This null finding provides additional confirmation that the sizeable and
statistically significant effect of calendar position on congressional turnout should be
taken seriously as an independent determinate of the decision to vote in on-year
congressional elections.

[Table 5 about here]

Comparing Within-State Turnout Differentials by Calendar Position

As a second test, we investigated whether within-state differences between
congressional and presidential turnout varied systematically according a state’s
congressional calendar placement. Because voters in SAME-DAY states only went to the
polls once, and because the party-stripe ballot virtually ensured that a voter who turned out
to vote for president also “turned out” for the congressional race, the turnout differential
between presidential and congressional races in these states (what is referred to in the
literature as “roll-off”) was minimal. However, in states where congressional and
presidential elections were separate calendar events, and where voters consequently were
required to make two separate turnout decisions, wider discrepancies between a state’s
congressional and presidential turnout should be observable. Thus, should we observe
both systematic differences in turnout differentials between SAME-DAY and AFTER states
and a null relationship between SAME-DAY and BEFORE states, we will take this as
confirmation of the robustness of our principal conclusions.
What is the effect of calendar position on statewide turnout differentials? Table 6 presents our results. When interpreting our findings, a negative coefficient denotes a lower level of congressional turnout relative to presidential turnout in non-SAME-DAY states compared to SAME-DAY states. Consistent with our previous findings, no statistically significant differential in congressional and presidential turnout appears to distinguish BEFORE and SAME-DAY states. While the coefficient is negative, its magnitude is substantively trivial. In all, the resilience of this null finding continues to impress us. Substantively, it suggests that despite the constraints imposed by separate calendar dates for congressional and presidential elections, voters in the BEFORE states nevertheless went to the polls in early congressional elections at rates statistically indistinguishable from their November levels, manifesting a turnout differential similar to SAME-DAY states, whose voters had only to show up at the polls once and cast a single consolidated party ticket. By contrast, a statistically significant difference in turnout differentials remains between AFTER and SAME-DAY states, with the gap between congressional and presidential turnout in the AFTER states almost -4.5 points wider than that evinced in SAME-DAY states.

As with our previous analyses, we reran our tests, this time comparing turnout differentials in both BEFORE and AFTER states to SAME-MONTH states (again, states that held their congressional elections in November, regardless of whether it was held on, before, or after the date of the presidential election). Once more our results underscore the general distinctiveness of the November electoral environment. Here, we observe clear differences between BEFORE and SAME-MONTH states. The differential in congressional/presidential turnout in BEFORE states was -6.8 points lower than the same
differential in \textsc{same-month} states. Even more dramatic, the turnout differential in the \textsc{after} states was a dramatic -15.3 points in comparison to \textsc{same-month} states.

[Table 6 about here]

\textbf{Explaining Turnout Similarities in “Before” and “Same-Day” States}

The small difference in turnout between \textsc{before} states and \textsc{same-day} states is the most unexpected result to arise from our statistical tests (especially when compared to turnout rates in the \textsc{after} states). The question that remains is whether a reasonable explanation can be brought to bear on this unintuitive electoral pattern. Two different modes of explanations seem plausible candidates—one focuses on attitudinal characteristics of the individual voter; the other is organizational and focuses on the strategic behavior of political parties. The individual-level explanation explains the unexpectedly high congressional turnout rates in \textsc{before} states in terms of the greater personal benefits that accrue to voting in an environment permeated by the excitement of an ongoing presidential campaign. By this explanation, the decision to participate in the legislative contest is a purely personal one, with peripheral voters, in particular, drawn to the polls in greater numbers because of the heightened partisan animosities and high-salience issue concerns that radiate from the presidential contest.

By contrast, the organizational explanation accounts for high congressional turnout in the \textsc{before} states in terms of the strategic actions of political parties and their intense preoccupation with the outcome of \textit{presidential} elections. By this explanation, peripheral voters are pulled into the system through the systematic mobilization efforts of patronage-minded party activists. In the period under examination, early congressional races were forecasting events, signaling to interested observers the probable outcome of
the November presidential contest both in these states and beyond. Political parties therefore had strong incentives to mobilize voters in the early-voting states and get them to the polls in order to claim the benefits of momentum for their side heading into November’s national contest.

While both explanations were doubtless operative—and more research is required to assess the relative weight of the two—a canvass of the historical record inclines us toward the organizational account as a primary explanation for the levels of high turnout in the before states. Substantial evidence can be adduced to show that nineteenth-century party strategists and other political commentators held to the view that victory in a state holding early congressional elections could influence the outcome of its November presidential race—and, if enough of these early victories could be strung together, the results might even be interpreted as signaling a strong national tide in favor of the victorious political party. The result was that each of the major parties had every incentive to pull out the stops to maximize their electoral advantage in states with early congressional contests.

The general government cannot prevent States holding their State elections at such times as make them tentative and significant of the Presidential election; and although the two elections, with their expense of money, time, and excitement, are injurious to the citizens of the States, and many States have abandoned them, still other States have held to them against the interest of their citizens, for the sake of the political power which is thus given to their public men and to the managers of their political machinery. *Everything must be done for Maine, Indiana, and Ohio, nothing must be refused them, because they vote by general ticket in November, and their September and October elections will settle and proclaim their presidential vote* [italics added].

A party’s success in the August, September, and October elections was expected to demoralize the opposition, hearten supporters, and swing “the floating vote” in sufficient numbers to create the appearance of inevitability and swing a state’s
presidential contest in November. Consider the following remarks by one Democratic operative drawn from a period just outside the one in question:

“[I]f the October elections can be carried, the majority will be more than double in November. There is always a floating vote which [sic] goes with the strongest party. By success in the first election, we will secure this vote for the second, and if the elections are carried in the state by barely one thousand, we can count upon a majority of twenty thousand for McClellan in November. So let each friend of the country, every man who desires a change in the administration of our government remember that in every vote gained for the Democracy in October they increase McClellan’s strength by a score of votes in the election to follow.”

In similar fashion, consider the following private communication between two high-level Republican operatives:

“[T]he political outlook is not very encouraging for us. The recent election in Maine shows that the tidal wave has not been completely broken. The drift seems to be strongly against us at almost every point. . . . Our friends in Ohio are hopeful of carrying the state by a small majority. . . . If we loose Ohio we shall also lose Pennsylvania and New York. If we carry Ohio we will carry Pennsylvania, but New York, I think, we must probably lose in any event.”

Likewise, in response to the following query by one newspaper reporter—“What . . . do you suppose will be the effect [of a September victory in Maine] on the October states?”—a New York Democratic official predicted,

“[The effect of the Maine victory] must be very great,” replied Judge Schoonmaker. “Our people will plunge into the campaign in Ohio and Indiana with that confidence which belongs to victory. Every man now will be sure that the tide is with them, while [opposition party] will be correspondingly depressed.”

Still other state Democratic Party elites exuded similar confidence that such a result would be “an incentive to harder and better work.”

Pennsylvania was one of the BEFORE state to which nineteenth-century pundits regularly turned in an effort to forecast the results of the November presidential contest. Recalling the days when Pennsylvania could be counted among states scheduling their congressional elections in October, the political commentator Richard H. Dana, Jr.
informed his readers that the Keystone state “was regarded as almost decisive upon the vote of the whole Union.” Such was the case in the presidential election of 1856, Dana averred:

There is very little doubt that the small majority which that State gave in here October election of 1856 for the Democratic candidates practically settled the Presidential election in the following November. The certainty almost established thereby that her twenty-eight electoral votes would be given to Mr. Buchanan had such an effect upon a highly excited and impressionable community, upon the fears of one side and the hopes of the other, as well as upon the timid and self-seeking everywhere, that the national election was substantially given up in the other thirty states.24

Turning his attention to Ohio and Indiana and their influence in more recent presidential contests, Dana continued, “. . . [D]oes anyone doubt that if the State elections in Ohio and Indiana had gone for one and the same party, whichever it was, the certainty how their thirty-seven electoral votes would go would have settled the question for the whole nation?”25

It was not until 1874 that Congress would finally step in and declare that henceforth the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November would be the day on which states would be required to hold their congressional elections. Though states had been trending in this direction for some time, and it would take several more years before all the states in the Union would come into compliance—Maine, the last holdout, would not switch over until 1960—the legislation was considered a milestone in national politics. Reflecting on the significance of the change, one newspaper recalled how “not many years ago the months of August, September and October were given over to politics in various parts of the country, and the effect upon the entire country was felt.” “[E]specially in a Presidential year,” the paper continued, “[t]hese elections . . . were supposed to have a significant bearing upon the grand result.”
“As Pennsylvania goes in October, so will the Union go in November” was accepted as a political axiom, not to be lightly disregarded. . . . Indiana and Ohio were the scenes of political contests, in the intensity and warmth of which, no equals are presented, and this because of the influence it was believed the results would exert upon the national election a month later.26

“Happily for the country at large,” the paper concluded, “the dates have been changed, so that in all the significant states, the State and national elections fall upon the same day in the same month—that of November.”27

Given the importance of these early contests as a possible forecast of the November presidential election, it should come as no surprise that party organizations made every effort to get supporters to the polls in larger numbers than their opponents and, in the process, boosted state turnout to levels closely comparable to those evinced in the SAME-DAY states. By contrast, with the presidential election resolved, party organizations should have had correspondingly less incentive to mobilize congressional voters in the AFTER states; indeed, perhaps by this time many of these patronage-oriented electoral machines were already starting to disband. In fact, it is worth noting that in no instance involving our investigation of 19th century newspaper election coverage did we find comparable discussion of “after” states, especially regarding their level of political agitation and their influence on national politics.

Surge-and-decline: Estimating the Effect of Calendar Position on Turnout “Drop-off” Rates

Earlier we presented graphical evidence, along with simple bivariate statistics, indicating that antebellum SAME-DAY states exhibited patterns of surge-and-decline—a patterned increase in congressional turnout due to the short-term influence of presidential elections and a subsequent “drop-off” at the midterm—similar to (though perhaps shallower than) those observed in contemporary congressional elections. That data also
seemed to reveal roughly similar patterns of surge-and-decline in BEFORE states, with the bulk of those effects running counter to expectations concentrated in the AFTER states.

Does calendar positioning continue to influence patterns of surge-and-decline when subjected to multivariate testing? The findings in Table 6 add additional credence to basic patterns we have reported throughout this paper. First an interpretive note: When evaluating the coefficients in Table 7, the larger the size of the coefficient, the shallower the magnitude of the on-year to midterm “drop-off” relative to the omitted category (either SAME-DAY or SAME MONTH, depending on the particular analysis); the smaller the coefficient, the steeper the drop-off relative to SAME-DAY/ SAME-MONTH states.

As we have by now come to expect, the findings in Table 7, column 1 show a null relationship in patterns of surge-and-decline between BEFORE and SAME-DAY states. That is to say, the magnitude of drop-off in congressional turnout from on-year to midterm in BEFORE states statistically indistinguishable from those found for the comparison category (SAME-DAY states). This suggests that the magnitude of the drop-off in both BEFORE and SAME-DAY states is roughly comparable. On the other hand, the pattern of drop-off from on-year to midterm in the AFTER states is -8.7 percentage points shallower than the comparison SAME-DAY category.

When the baseline for comparison is once again switched from SAME-DAY to SAME MONTH, as in Table 7, column 2, a more substantial difference is can observed in the BEFORE states. Here we find that drop-off was roughly -10 points shallower in pre-November BEFORE states relative to November states, while that figure jumps to -22.5 points in the post-November AFTER states!
Swapping Positions on the Congressional Election Calendar: Moving between “High-Intensity” and “Low-Intensity” Environments

Our final test is in many respects our most interesting. If scheduling effects are indeed a principal explanation for the patterns found in this paper, then changes in congressional turnout should be discernable when states made significant alterations to the calendar date of their House contests between two consecutive presidential-election periods. Because of our consistent null findings regarding turnout differences in SAME-DAY and BEFORE states, we combined these two calendar statuses to create a single “high stimulus” category (states with congressional election dates that exposed them to the external stimulus of an ongoing presidential campaign), with AFTER states designated as “low stimulus” states. On this basis, we constructed a new categorical variable of interest, one taking a value of “1” if a state moved its on-year congressional election date from a low-intensity to a high-intensity election environment in two consecutive presidential election years; “2” if a state moved its congressional election from a high-intensity to a low-intensity environment; and “0” if there was no significant change in calendar position. “No change” was the (omitted) comparison category.28

Table 8 reports our findings on the impact of calendar movement upon congressional turnout. These findings provide still further confirmation for the principal results in this paper. As Table 8, column 1 indicates, moving a state’s congressional election date from a low-stimulus to a high-stimulus electoral environment resulted in a turnout increase of +6.1 points relative to states that did not alter their calendar status (p<.10). Conversely, moving a state’s congressional election date from a high-stimulus to a low-stimulus environment was associated with a decrease in turnout of -9.8 point relative to states that did not alter their calendar status.
The effects of scheduling change on congressional turnout are greater still when we fold into the “high intensity” category those after states with November congressional election dates. As Table 8, column 2 shows, under this specification, moving a state’s congressional election from a low-stimulus to a high-stimulus electoral environment increased congressional turnout by +9.8 points relative to “no change” states. Likewise, moving a state’s congressional election date from a high-stimulus to a low-stimulus environment resulted in a -13.4 point drop in turnout relative to “no change” states. These patterns once again suggest the unique status of the month of November as a high stimulus environment for congressional elections, regardless of whether those elections occurred before, after, or on the same date as the presidential contest.

**Conclusion: Electoral Order and Political Participation**

The concept *electoral order* refers to a foundational set of conditions, rules, and structured relationships that persist over time and give rise to patterned forms of political participation and strategic elite interaction. These features define a given electoral era and distinguish it from both preceding and succeeding eras. In this paper, we have examined what we believe to constitute a defining element of a distinctive nineteenth-century electoral order. The period’s decentralized federal-election scheduling regime, and the wide range of variation it sanctioned for positioning states on the congressional election calendar, precipitated the rise and institutionalization of this distinctive electoral universe. James has presented evidence indicating that the sequential ordering of nineteenth-century congressional elections gave rise to bandwagoning dynamics similar
in character to the modern phenomenon of momentum in sequentially ordered presidential primaries. He has further shown that partisan elites were hyperaware of this dynamic, understood its operations, and adjusted their strategies of electoral contestation to take advantage of its salient properties (and minimize its equally evident disadvantages).

In this paper, by contrast, we have focused on a second defining feature of this early American electoral order. Whereas today every state in the Union schedules its congressional elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November—the same day as the presidential contest—in the nineteenth century, the on-year congressional election calendar distributed legislative contests widely around the presidential election, sometimes before, sometimes after, and sometimes, as today, at the same time as the presidential election. We have concentrated specifically on the antebellum era, when electoral variation was greatest.

What resulted were predictable patterns of voter participation. Whereas contemporary congressional elections everywhere manifest a highly regularized pattern of surge-and-decline in voter turnout from on-year to midterm, in the antebellum era such a pattern depended on a state’s position on the electoral calendar. Among states that scheduled their congressional elections after the conclusion of the presidential contest, very little on-year surge in voter participation can be detected. In addition, because the voter surge in these states was so muted, so too was the corresponding magnitude of the “midterm loss” or “drop-off” that followed two years later. By comparison, the modern phenomenon of surge-and-decline was alive and well in the so-called “same-day” states—those states that scheduled their on-year congressional elections on the same day
as their presidential contest. This does not surprise us greatly: similar institutional configurations should manifest similar empirical patterns of behavior. Both modern and antebellum “same-day” congressional elections are characterized by the higher marginal benefits to voting that derive from exposure to high stimulus presidential campaigns and the lower marginal costs to voting associated with same-day election scheduling. What does surprise us—and what perhaps constitutes our most unexpected set of results—is our null finding with regard to the so-called “before” states. Here we expected the scheduling of congressional and presidential elections as two separate calendar events to result in some attenuation in congressional turnout. Instead, we found no statistical evidence of difference in turnout between “before” and “same-day” states, leading us to conclude that the high stimuli of the presidential campaign-in-progress and the partisan mobilization that ensured, overrode the higher costs of individual participation in on-year congressional elections.

The importance of presidential-campaign stimuli to congressional turnout is further underscored when we isolate the month of November as a distinctive political environment, one that stimulated participation regardless of whether the legislative races took place before, after, or simultaneous with the date of the presidential election. Compared to these “same-month” states, states holding their congressional contests before November did experience a statistically significant decline in turnout of just over -4.5 percentage points on average, though this paled in comparison the greater than -14.5 point drop on average observed in states scheduling their elections to Congress after November. Finally, we found the effects of this antebellum scheduling regime to be robust in the face of alternate specifications of the dependent variable, a point
underscored by our analysis showing that scheduling changes that resulted in movement of a state’s congressional elections from high intensity electoral environments to low intensity environments (or vice versa) produced changes in the level of political participation consistent with our theoretical expectations.

Further research is required to map fully the contours of this distinctive American electoral order. For example, this paper has only been able to provide brief and anecdotal evidence to bear on the question of whether the influence of the presidential campaign on congressional elections in the “before” states were largely a party-based “mobilization effect” or an individual-level “engagement effect.” That is, was turnout in the “before” states at levels comparable to “same-day” states due mostly to the presence of large, labor-intensive political party organizations, anxious for a share of the spoils that successful presidential campaigns brought, and mindful of the role partisan victories in early voting states could have on the November presidential contest? Or, alternatively, did on-year turnout in “before” states surge because peripheral voters made thousands of individual decisions to vote in congressional elections as a result of sustained exposure to presidential-campaign “spillover?”

The variation characteristic of this nineteenth-century scheduling also affords the opportunity to test propositions that have long interested historically minded students of American electoral behavior. For instance, it has long been believed that the “consolidated” or “party-strip” ballot enforced partisan continuity down-ballot once a voter determined the partisan direction of their top-of-the-ticket vote (in on-years, the presidential contest). What then first appears to be a democratic act of strong voter partisanship transmutes into a decidedly less democratic form of institutional coercion. A
focus on antebellum elections gives us some additional leverage on this ongoing debate. If in fact the party-line vote was largely a product of the party-strip ballot, then we should observe higher rates of split-ticket voting in “before” and “after” states, where voting for Congress was not constrained by one’s vote for president, than we observe in “same-day” states, where the effects of the consolidated party-strip ballot were fully operative on these races.

Finally, if we are correct in our characterization of this antebellum environment as a fully distinctive electoral order, then we should be able to observe the effects of its most salient properties upon the activities and performance of the national government. Did the behavior of legislative delegations differ materially depending upon whether they hailed from “before,” “after,” and “same-day” states? More broadly, did the elongated congressional election season, as well as the influence of its peculiar electoral rhythms, have a patterned influence on the rules, procedures, and partisan dynamics of Congress as an institution? Can its influence be seen in patterns of presidential activity, as for example the veto? In all, there are a host of fresh research questions that come to mind once we call into view the unique properties of this nineteenth-century American scheduling regime.

2 The Gettysburg Compiler, Gettysburg, PA, October 3, 1864.


8 Congressional legislation included an escape clause for states whose own constitution specified the date of its congressional elections. While the vast majority of states were in compliance by 1876—one indeed, a large majority had synchronized their federal elections prior to 1874—it was not until 1888 that the last large state in the Union (Ohio) was effectively on board, while Oregon, Vermont, and Maine continued to hold out longer still—in the case of Maine, until 1960.

9 It was almost always the case that states scheduled their congressional elections to be held after the national parties’ presidential nominating convention. With both presidential candidates known and the issues defined, the campaign season was officially open, even if active campaigning did not typically begin until after Labor Day.

10 All statistical analysis was performed using STATA 8 SE.

11 Congress did not require states to hold their congressional elections in districts until 1842. Prior to this time several states held statewide at-large contests for the House. Indeed, even in 1844 four states (Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and New Hampshire) continued to hold their congressional races at large. As a result, in order to preserve uniformity in our units of analysis, we use the individual state as our principal unit. A short but useful history of single-member districts for Congress can be found at http://www.fairvote.org/reports/1995/chp2/mast.html.


13 In states where more than two parties contested congressional elections, COMPETITIVE MARGIN measures the competitive difference between the two parties with the highest vote shares.

14 This is admittedly an imprecise variable on two counts. First, literacy is in itself a very crude measure of educational attainment. However, the alternative measures available to the student of antebellum elections are so constricted that there are almost no good options. Second, complicating matters further is the fact that there exists no single continuous measure of statewide literacy rates for the period comprised by our analysis. We have therefore supplemented U.S. Census data on statewide literacy with IPUMS samples of the same. Because both sets of data are collected decennially, we have also interpolated values at two-year intervals to complete the data set.

In the end, we ran our analysis using both %LITERATE and %INSCHOOL, as well as logged versions of each. The performance of our variables of interest, CALENDAR POSITION, (both its direction and significance), was largely unaffected by the choice. Neither was it significantly affected by its exclusion. For these reasons we felt justified including the variable in our model not withstanding its limitations.

We originally hoped to include a dummy variable for section, to control possible systematic differences in congressional turnout between Northern and Southern states. Unfortunately this North-South dummy was unacceptably collinear with our fixed effects variables, forcing us to exclude it from the analysis. In other analyses, we excluded our fixed effects variables and substituted the section dummy. No significant impact on our variable of interest (CALENDAR POSITION) was found.

It was rare for a state to schedule its on-year congressional election before July; indeed most of these appear to have been scheduled to follow the conclusion of the two major-party presidential nomination conventions.

We also substituted a measure of state competitiveness in presidential elections and a lagged presidential turnout variable for similar variables used in our analysis of congressional turnout. We also excluded MOVE, our measure of the effects

Many more examples of a presumed “forecasting effect” can be found. Speaking of the October 1836 congressional elections in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, the Whig *Ithaca Herald* predicted that Van Buren Democrats would have “fine times” in November “if they carry the October elections.” Similarly, a writer for the New Hampshire periodical *Farmer’s Cabinet*, remarking on the October 1848 elections, wrote that “[t]he result of these elections will be looked for with much interest by political men, as indicating all we can know of the probable result of the coming Presidential campaign. They, however, are not strictly reliable indications, although they have much influence on the national vote.” Likewise, writing for Putnam’s Magazine in 1868, yet another commentator remarked, “It is seldom that the real foreshadowing of the September and October elections disappoint us in November.”

“The result of these elections will be looked for with much interest by political men, as indicating all we can know of the probable result of the coming Presidential campaign. They, however, are not strictly reliable indications, although they have much influence on the national vote.” Likewise, writing for Putnam’s Magazine in 1868, yet another commentator remarked, “It is seldom that the real foreshadowing of the September and October elections disappoint us in November.”

For our purposes, a state was coded “no change” even if, for example, it changed its congressional election date from the September before its November presidential election to the October before, since both elections are designated “high intensity” contests in this analysis. A state was also coded “no change” if it changed its calendar status from BEFORE to SAME DAY, since, again, each is considered a high-intensity electoral environment in this analysis.


FIGURE 2. THE INFLUENCE OF CALENDAR POSITION ON "SURGE AND DECLINE," 1828-1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1952-2006</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1828-72</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1828-60</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1840-60</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same Day</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>-13.5</td>
<td>Same Day</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
<td>Same Day</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>-4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>-8.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2. THE CALCULUS OF VOTING IN ANTEBELLUM CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS: THE EFFECTS OF CALENDAR POSITION ON VOTER TURNOUT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same-Day Scheduling</th>
<th>Presidential Stimulus</th>
<th>Presidential Stimulus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>SAME-DAY&quot; STATES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Marginal Benefits from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Marginal Costs from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AFFECT ON VOTING CALCULUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Surge Behavior/ Steep Drop-off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>&quot;BEFORE&quot; STATES</td>
<td>&quot;AFTER&quot; STATES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Marginal Benefits from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Marginal Costs from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AFFECT ON VOTING CALCULUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate Surge Behavior/ Moderate Drop-off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Marginal Benefits from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Marginal Costs from Voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AFFECT ON VOTING CALCULUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal Surge Behavior/ Minimal Drop-off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALENDAR POSITION</td>
<td>&quot;Same-Day&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Same-Month&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Before Pres</td>
<td>1.585</td>
<td>-4.608 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.578</td>
<td>2.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After Pres</td>
<td>-6.854 ***</td>
<td>-14.656 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.456</td>
<td>2.388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Move                      -4.986 ***  -5.495 ***  
1.733                     1.646

Turnout$_{LAG}$           0.035       0.030
                          0.061       0.057

Competitive Margin        -0.121 ***  -0.113 ***  
                          0.034       0.034

$\Delta$ Real Annual Per Capita GDP  -0.022     -0.034  
                          0.033      0.034

War Talk                  5.555 *     6.422 *  
                          3.364      3.277

Log % Literate            -22.800 **   -24.641 **  
                          9.619      9.385

Constant                  157.785 *** 174.560 ***  
                          43.686     42.955

n=183  n=183
R2=0.800  R2=0.811

Note: ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtcse]).

"Same Day" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Position."
TABLE 4. THE EFFECT OF RELATIVE DISTANCE FROM PRESIDENTIAL DATE ON CG TURNOUT IN “BEFORE” STATES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR POSITION</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Day&quot; Analysis</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Month&quot; Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before Pres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct &amp; non-sync Nov</td>
<td>2.527</td>
<td>-5.030 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.185</td>
<td>2.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>-2.975</td>
<td>-10.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.379</td>
<td>10.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>-2.975</td>
<td>-4.978 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td>3.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August and before</td>
<td>3.238</td>
<td>2.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After Pres</td>
<td>-6.975 ***</td>
<td>-16.247 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.435</td>
<td>2.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move</td>
<td>-4.994 ***</td>
<td>-5.452 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>1.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout_LAG</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Margin</td>
<td>-0.119 ***</td>
<td>-0.114 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta) Real Annual Per Capita GDP</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Talk</td>
<td>5.439</td>
<td>6.286 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.365</td>
<td>3.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log % Literate</td>
<td>-22.532 **</td>
<td>-24.723 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.580</td>
<td>9.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>156.643 ***</td>
<td>175.106 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.522</td>
<td>43.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=183 n=183
R\(^2\)=0.801 R\(^2\)=0.811

Note: ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtcse]).

"Same Day" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Position."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR POSITION</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Day&quot; Analysis</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Month&quot; Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before Pres</td>
<td>-2.545</td>
<td>0.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.985</td>
<td>2.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After Pres</td>
<td>-1.062</td>
<td>2.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>2.631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Move              | 0.655               | 0.471                 |
|                   | 1.046               | 1.016                 |
| Presidential Turnout_{LAG} | 0.121 *** | 0.125 *** |
|                   | 0.046               | 0.046                 |
| Competitive Margin | -0.354 ***          | -0.355 ***            |
|                   | 0.027               | 0.027                 |
| Δ Real Annual Per Capita GDP | -0.037 * | -0.035 * |
|                   | 0.020               | 0.021                 |
| War Talk          | -1.252              | -1.587                |
|                   | 2.848               | 2.865                 |
| Log % Literate    | 1.668               | 1.656                 |
|                   | 2.989               | 2.948                 |
| Constant          | 51.050 ***          | 47.437 ***            |
|                   | 13.595              | 13.688                |

n=219 n=219
R2=0.889 R2=0.888

Note: ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtcse]).

"Same Day" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Position."
### TABLE 6. THE EFFECT OF CALENDAR POSITION ON WITHIN-STATE CONG-PRES TURNOUT DIFFERENTIALS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR POSITION</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Day&quot; Analysis</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Month&quot; Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before Pres</td>
<td>1.998</td>
<td>-6.815 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.800</td>
<td>2.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After Pres</td>
<td>-4.403 *</td>
<td>-15.326 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.505</td>
<td>3.155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Move**
  - "Same-Day": -5.678 ***
  - "Same-Month": -5.884 ***
  - 1.872
  - 1.797

- **Turnout Differential\_LAG**
  - "Same-Day": -0.011
  - "Same-Month": -0.004
  - 0.083
  - 0.082

- **Competitive Margin**
  - "Same-Day": 0.222 ***
  - "Same-Month": 0.228 ***
  - 0.052
  - 0.051

- **\(\Delta\) Real Annual Per Capita GDP**
  - "Same-Day": 0.008
  - "Same-Month": -0.003
  - 0.035
  - 0.035

- **War Talk**
  - "Same-Day": 2.539
  - "Same-Month": 3.199
  - 3.328
  - 3.254

- **Log % Literate**
  - "Same-Day": -41.578 ***
  - "Same-Month": -43.803 ***
  - 12.574
  - 12.180

- **Constant**
  - "Same-Day": 183.412 ***
  - "Same-Month": 203.773 ***
  - 57.837
  - 56.494

- **n=177**
- **R\(^2\)=0.550**
- **R\(^2\)=0.576**

**Note:** ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtpcse]).

"Same Day" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Position."
TABLE 7. THE EFFECT OF CALENDAR POSITION ON
TURNOUT "DROP-OFF."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR POSITION</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Day&quot; Analysis</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Month&quot; Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before Pres</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>9.978 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.070</td>
<td>3.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After Pres</td>
<td>8.674 ***</td>
<td>22.564 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.773</td>
<td>4.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move</td>
<td>-3.647</td>
<td>-1.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.430</td>
<td>2.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-off\text{LAG}</td>
<td>-0.187 **</td>
<td>-0.201 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\Delta Competitive Margin</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\Delta Real Annual Per Capita GDP</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\Delta Log % Literate</td>
<td>21.045</td>
<td>28.399 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.189</td>
<td>13.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-96.112</td>
<td>-143.133 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.157</td>
<td>61.820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=143 n=143
R2=0.586 r2=0.621

Note: ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtcse]).

"Same Day" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Position."
TABLE 8. THE EFFECT OF CHANGE IN CALENDAR POSITION ON CONGRESSIONAL TURNOUT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR POSITION</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Day&quot; Analysis</th>
<th>&quot;Same-Month&quot; Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low to High Intensity</td>
<td>6.145 *</td>
<td>9.840 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.940</td>
<td>3.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High to Low Intensity</td>
<td>-9.838 **</td>
<td>-13.414 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.427</td>
<td>4.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TurnoutLAG</td>
<td>-0.305 ***</td>
<td>-0.308 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Margin</td>
<td>-0.156 ***</td>
<td>-0.151 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Annual Per Capita GDP</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log % Literate</td>
<td>37.894 ***</td>
<td>35.473 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.951</td>
<td>14.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-156.655 **</td>
<td>-145.235 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.605</td>
<td>68.372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=143  n=143  R2=0.464  r2=0.477

Note: ***=p<.01, **=p<.05, *=p<.10

Note: The dependent variable is Δ in congressional turnout from one presidential election period to the next.

OLS regression with fixed effects and panel-corrected standard errors (all analyses use STATA 8 SE [xtpcse]).

"No Calendar Change" is the omitted comparison category for variable "Calendar Change."