

The Press and Political Accountability


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The mass media perform a vital function in democratic systems by reporting what elected officials are doing in office.  The media convey not only factual accounts of officials' activities and decisions, they also transmit evaluations of officials' performance, including assessments by other politicians, interest groups leaders, pundits, and ordinary citizens. Although the media are not the only source of information about officials' performance, they are by far the most important. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how large-scale democracy would be possible without a free and independent press to report the actions of governmental officials. Robert Dahl argues that the existence of alternative and relatively independent sources of information is one of seven necessary conditions for the existence of democratic government (Dahl 1989, 221; 1998, 86).

Information about elected officials' performance serves two purposes. First, it allows citizens to evaluate the desirability of retaining or replacing officials when they run for reelection. Candidates promise all sorts of things when they first run for office. When they run for reelection, however, there is no better guide to their future performance than what they have already done. Second, a regular flow of information about governmental decision making helps keep officials on their toes when they first make decisions. Officials who expect their actions to be featured on the evening news and on the front pages of newspapers may make different decisions than officials who expect their decisions to remain forever hidden from public scrutiny. 

How extensively and how effectively do media outlets in the United States cover elected officials? Do they report the kinds of information that citizens need to hold officials accountable for their actions in

office? Or is coverage so spotty and incomplete that even the most diligent citizens cannot learn much about who is responsible for governmental decisions? These questions are central to the performance of democratic government. Unfortunately, they are not questions to which we know the answers.

Most citizens are exposed to a regular diet of information about what the president is doing in office. The mass media cover presidential activities on an almost daily basis, reporting where the president travels, what he says, what he proposes, how his proposals fare in Congress, what he is doing about various crises, and what innumerable pundits, legislators, politicians, and foreign officials think of his performance in office. Although one can surely raise questions about the adequacy and fairness of the media's coverage of presidential activities, and about the depth of citizens' knowledge of presidential performance, two things seem clear. First, presidents know that their deeds and misdeeds will be covered by the press and noticed by the public, so they work hard to produce pleasing records. Second, when pollsters come knocking at their doors, it is reasonable to believe that most citizens have some evidentiary basis for determining whether they "approve or disapprove of the way the president is handling his job as president."

Can one make similar arguments about the way journalists cover members of Congress? Do legislators expect that their individual activities and decisions in Washington will be covered by the press and reported to their constituents? Are citizens exposed to regular information about what their senators or representatives are doing in office? Do citizens have any evidentiary basis for determining whether they approve or disapprove of the way their representatives are performing in office? Here the issues become more complicated, in part because there are 535 legislators to cover. Journalists do not cover all senators

and representatives equally well. Citizens in different states and different districts are not exposed to identical flows of information.

Legislators as Controlled Agents

Determining whether the mass media report the kinds of information that citizens need to hold legislators accountable requires that we have a model of how citizens make electoral decisions and how legislators make policy decisions. In order to evaluate the informativeness of the media, one needs to know how the provision or absence of information affects these two types of decisions. In this paper, I consider that legislators are controlled agents who are subject to periodic retrospective evaluations by citizens when they run for reelection. This model stands in contrast with the standard control model, where citizens evaluate candidates prospectively according to their positions on a wide range of policy issues. The retrospective model requires less information of citizens than the standard control model.¹

The retrospective model rests on five assumptions. The first is that legislators are strongly interested in reelection. This simple motivational assumption is basic to any model of representation in which legislators respond to citizens' preferences. In settings where legislators are not strongly interested in reelection, they lack the basic incentive to discover and follow citizens' wishes (Prewitt 1970). Most members of Congress are career-minded politicians, so this is a common assumption for theories about Congress.

The second assumption is that citizens have outcome preferences. Outcome preferences are attitudes about the desirability of specific ends, such as safe communities, clean air, protection from foreign

¹For a full comparison of the standard control model with a model of legislators as controlled agents, see Arnold 1993. This section borrows from that essay.

attack, and the maintenance of a sound economy. This is also a common assumption. The third assumption is that citizens either have policy preferences or can easily acquire policy preferences after the legislature acts. Policy preferences are attitudes about the proper means toward policy ends. Examples are preferences about instituting a seven-day waiting period before purchasing handguns, requiring mechanical scrubbers on coal-powered plants, increasing the number of aircraft carriers, or cutting federal expenditures across-the-board to balance the budget. This assumption is more realistic than the assumption in the standard control model that citizens have lots of policy preferences in advance of legislative action. In the retrospective model, citizens may acquire policy preferences as a direct consequence of legislative debate, or when they first notice a change in policy, or in the middle of a subsequent electoral campaign when a challenger questions the wisdom of an incumbent's actions in office.

The fourth assumption is that the system contains activists who have incentives to monitor what legislators are doing in office and to inform citizens about legislators' performance. Challengers to incumbent legislators have perhaps the strongest incentives for monitoring legislators' behavior and mobilizing voters. Few challengers fail to sift through incumbents' voting records in search of issues that can be used against incumbent legislators. In addition, groups that bear major costs under a particular governmental policy may help publicize what incumbent legislators have done to contribute to their plight. Journalists play two roles. They are independent monitors of legislative decision making who actively seek and report information about what legislators are doing in office. They are also conveyors of information from all sorts of interested parties, including legislators, challengers, and interest groups.

The fifth assumption is that citizens are capable of evaluating incumbent legislators by focusing on their positions and actions in office. This is a modification of the assumption in the standard control model


in which citizens actually evaluate legislative candidates according to their policy positions. The revised assumption simply states that citizens are capable of such evaluations once they become aware of what their representatives have done in office.

These five assumptions recognize a division of labor between ordinary citizens and those who work in the world of politics and public affairs. Legislators, challengers, activists, and journalists do most of the heavy lifting, while citizens act more like spectators who register their approval or disapproval at the end of a performance. This division of labor reflects the incentives that drive each type of actor. Although politics is a spectator sport for most citizens, it is a very serious business for politicians, activists, and journalists.

In the political world described by these five assumptions, legislators have strong incentives to anticipate citizens' future preferences. Even when citizens seem unaware of an issue or indifferent toward it, legislators do not presume that they are free to act as they please. Instead legislators consider the possibility that someone might work to inform their constituents about their actions prior to the next election, and some of their constituents might not be pleased by their actions and might oppose their reelection. In order to forestall such a reaction, legislators carefully choose their own positions and actions.

Challengers have equally strong incentives to uncover potentially unpopular positions and actions that incumbents have taken. Most challengers begin their campaigns with serious disadvantages. Incumbents are ordinarily better known than challengers, and most incumbents have spent their years in office showering their districts with newsletters, baby books, press releases, projects, services, and an unending stream of favorable publicity. Challengers need to find ways to generate negative publicity about incumbents and favorable publicity about themselves. Scandal aside, challengers have discovered that

unpopular positions and actions provide the best way to jump-start their campaigns, attract media attention, generate campaign funds, and get voters to notice them.

The leaders of interest groups also have incentives to inform their members — and perhaps citizens more generally — about legislators' actions in office.  Interest group leaders are themselves politicians who need to maintain the support of their current members and attract the support of new members. By focusing citizens' attention on the errors of government and the actions of specific legislators, interest group leaders attempt to mobilize their members to support continued group action. Single-issue groups may publicize legislators' votes on specific issues whereas broader-based groups often compile and publish ratings of all legislators to show how friendly or unfriendly individual legislators have been to their group interests.

Individual citizens have fewer incentives to become actively involved in monitoring legislators' performance in office. A single citizen can do so little to reward or punish an individual legislator that it hardly makes sense for that citizen to invest a lot of time and energy in acquiring information about legislators' actions in office (Downs 1957, 207-237). Even passive citizens, however, can acquire a great deal of politically relevant information when interest group leaders and challengers slip messages about legislators' performance in office into citizens' daily diet of news stories, advertisements, and direct mail. Citizens are capable of learning a great deal when it is presented to them indirectly; they simply have little incentive to seek it directly.

This model conceives of legislators as controlled agents rather than instructed delegates. Legislators do not simply follow the preferences of those few citizens who already have policy preferences. Instead legislators anticipate what policy preferences might exist at the time of the next election — including

preferences that citizens already hold and preferences that might be generated by challengers and interest groups working to tarnish legislators' reputations. According to this model, legislators need to pay attention to both the preferences of attentive publics and the potential preferences of inattentive citizens (Arnold 1990). Uncertainty abounds in a system like this. Legislators cannot possibly know for sure what policy effects will follow from specific governmental actions, how challengers or interest group leaders might use governmental actions or inactions to stir up citizens, or whether citizens might blame or absolve legislators for their connections with specific actions. What is certain is that legislators will do their best to anticipate citizens' preferences, to avoid the most dangerous mine fields, and to chart as safe a course as possible through the treacherous territory before them.


Informational Environment

The logic of the model is simple. Legislators adjust their behavior in office in order to avoid electoral problems, and they do this by paying careful attention to both the known preferences of attentive publics and the potential preferences of inattentive citizens. Challengers, interest group leaders, and journalists monitor what legislators do in office and publicize their successes and failures. Citizens are exposed to a flow of information about legislators' behavior, some positive, some negative. This flow of information helps citizens determine whether they would like to keep or replace legislators at the next election. Although the logic is simple, testing the empirical validity of the model is extraordinarily difficult. How can one know that legislators are anticipating and responding to the potential preferences of inattentive citizens when by doing so they remove the stimulus (a careless vote, a misguided proposal, a reckless action) that would have transformed those potential preferences into real and measurable preferences?

There are several ways to examine the validity of the model. One approach is to examine the behavior of legislators themselves. John Kingdon offers the most persuasive evidence that legislators anticipate the preferences of citizens who are not attentive to legislative action. He interviewed House members just after they had made decisions on fifteen important roll-call votes in 1969. His extensive questioning was designed to uncover the kinds of factors legislators considered and how they balanced various conflicting forces. One of his findings was that legislators attempt to consider how roll-call votes could be used against them and they anticipate the reaction of inattentive citizens (Kingdon 1989, 60-67). Similarly, one can examine the behavior of legislators when the visibility of their legislative actions changes. Elsewhere I have shown that legislators often vote one way when their actions are hidden and another way when the same actions are recorded for posterity (Arnold 1990, 99-108, 219-223).

A second approach is to examine the behavior of citizens. Do citizens reward legislators for their good deeds and punish them for their misdeeds? The most compelling recent example of lots of citizens reacting to legislators' misdeeds was the House bank scandal. According to one estimate, as many as thirty representatives with bank overdrafts were defeated or chose to avoid voters' wrath by retiring in 1992 (Jacobson 2001, 175). Two years later voters focused on legislators' connections with crime control, NAFTA, and the budget. Democratic representatives who supported President Clinton's positions on these three bills did significantly worse at the polls than those who opposed the president's position (Jacobson 1996).

Showing that some citizens reward and punish some legislators is relatively easy when there are one or two major issues. Doing so is much tougher if different citizens are focusing on different issues, or if they are reacting to a mixed series of good and bad actions. One problem is that it is very difficult to know to

what information citizens have been exposed. Asking citizens to recall specific bits of information about representatives may not be the best way to determine what information citizens actually received or how the information received affected how they evaluated their representatives. Recall of information is most relevant if citizens' decision making is memory based. On the other hand, if citizens process information on-line as they receive it and store only summary evaluations in memory, then knowing what kinds of information citizens remember would not be as helpful. 

The jury is still out as to whether citizens' decision making about politics is better captured by memory-based or on-line models. My sense is that both models explain aspects of citizens' decision making. Memory-based models are better at explaining how citizens make decisions about things that they were not expecting to evaluate. Zaller's account of how citizens answer survey questions about policy alternatives is persuasive (Zaller 1992). In his model, citizens canvass considerations at the "top of their heads" and answer according to the net value of the considerations that come to mind. Since things at the top of the head are often matters that were recently activated, perhaps by recent media stories or perhaps by the survey itself, Zaller can account for how citizens express opinions about a wide range of policy alternatives.

Memory-based models seem less satisfactory for explaining how citizens evaluate things that they expect to evaluate.² Knowing that I need to assign grades to students, I constantly update my evaluations of each student, rather than storing in memory everything they say in class or write in their papers.

²The models are not mutually exclusive. Hastie and Pennington (1988) suggest that some citizens may use an "inference-memory-based" process that combines elements from the two models. Initially citizens make inferences about candidates when they encounter information about them; later they combine information from various inferences to reach a decision. For example, jurors make inferences about the credibility of witnesses when they first testify, but they postpone judgment until they hear all evidence and receive instructions from the judge. For an excellent discussion of memory-based and on-line models see Just et al 1996, 19-24.

Knowing that they need to evaluate regularly their senators and representatives, some citizens may operate in similar fashion (Just et al 1996, 21-22). Milton Lodge and his colleagues offer as an alternative to memory-based models an impression-driven or on-line model of decision making in which citizens react to information as they are exposed to it, storing in memory only summary evaluations. In experimental settings, they show that their on-line model outperforms memory-based models. They conclude that campaign information strongly affects citizens' evaluations of candidates, even though most people cannot later recall the original information (Lodge, McGraw, Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, Brau 1995).

If citizens use on-line information processing for evaluating representatives and quickly forget most information they receive, then measures of information recall are poor indicators of citizens' exposure to and reception of politically relevant information. We need more direct measures of the informational environment in which citizens operate. Knowledge about the informational environment is also helpful for understanding what it is that citizens do happen to remember. Observers are often surprised that most citizens cannot recall how representatives voted on specific roll-call votes. It is never clear, however, whether the press featured these roll-call votes prominently and citizens failed to notice or remember them, or whether the press never spotlighted the votes in the first place. Put differently, are citizens largely to blame for how uninformed they seem about politics and public affairs, or is the press more at fault for failing to report frequently and prominently basic facts about representatives' behavior in office?

Some citizens acquire information about politics and public affairs directly from the mass media. They read newspapers, watch television, or listen to radio newscasts. Others citizens acquire information indirectly (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). They learn from a spouse, a friend, a fellow worker, or a union leader that their representative voted wrong on the North American Free Trade Agreement. Even when

citizens do not acquire information directly from the mass media, the media are generally involved in disseminating political information at earlier stages — for example, to one's spouse, friend, fellow worker, or union leader (Mondak 1995, 101-124). Knowledge about the informational environment is helpful for understanding citizens' decision making no matter whether citizens acquire information directly or indirectly from the mass media.

This discussion of citizens' decision making suggests that a third approach to determining the plausibility of the model of legislators as controlled agents is to study the informational environment. Is the informational environment relatively rich, full of details about what legislators are doing in office, where they stand on varying issues, and what their supporters and opponents are saying about their accomplishments and shortcomings? Or is the informational environment more of a wasteland, where citizens learn little about their representatives' performance in office? Although the third approach cannot settle any of the debates about whether citizens notice or use this information, it can help to determine whether citizens are regularly exposed to the types of information they would need in order to monitor their representatives' actions in office. If one found very little information about legislators' roll-call votes in local newspapers, it would not prove that citizens have no access to this information. It would, however, raise serious doubts about the likelihood that average citizens were regularly encountering information about roll calls. Similarly, if one found extensive information about legislators' roll-call votes in local newspapers, it would not prove that citizens were actually reading and processing this information, nor that the information was affecting their evaluations of their legislators. It would, however, raise serious doubts about any arguments that legislators were free to vote as they pleased because citizens would never notice.

Local Newspapers

Local newspapers provide an excellent arena for measuring the volume and type of information about representatives' performance. Although newspapers are not citizens' only source of information about their representatives, newspapers occupy a central position in the flow of information. All of the mass media — radio, television, newspapers, and magazines — cover Congress as a regular news story. Only newspapers, however, have the space to devote to the details of legislation and to the actions of local representatives (Hess 1981, 97-101; 1991, 102-09). Newspapers are also a conduit for stories that originate elsewhere. Interest groups communicate with citizens directly, through letters, newsletters, and fund-raising appeals, but they also communicate indirectly by helping to generate news stories, editorials, and letters to the editor about what particular representatives have done to help or hurt their causes. Incumbents and challengers have their own direct means for communicating with citizens, but they too rely on newspapers to amplify and spread their messages. Finally, in many localities, newspapers set the local news agenda and broadcast journalists follow their lead (Mondak 1995, 65-66; McManus 1990).

This paper reports findings from a book project nearing completion entitled, *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability*. The project seeks to answer four sets of questions about the volume, content, causes, and consequences of newspaper coverage. First, it seeks to establish how frequently local newspapers cover members of Congress. Do they regularly report information about representatives' actions in office and do they display their coverage in prominent ways? Or is coverage of representatives infrequent, spotty, or buried in the back pages of newspapers? It is important to determine something about the volume and prominence of political information because both factors affect whether citizens are likely to notice and digest the information.

Second, it examines the content of press coverage of individual legislators. Do newspapers report the kinds of information that citizens would need to hold representatives accountable for their actions in office, or do they focus on more peripheral matters that entertain, amuse, or enrage citizens without conveying much information about legislators' actual performance? Do they feature bill introductions, roll-call votes, leadership activities, and constituency service? Are newspapers evenhanded in their stories, or do they offer more extensive or more positive coverage to incumbents than to challengers, or to Democrats than to Republicans?

Third, it seeks to explain why newspapers differ in their coverage of Congress and its members. Why do some newspapers provide exemplary coverage of local representatives while others largely ignore representatives' activities? Do large, well-financed urban newspapers provide better coverage of representatives, or do these papers avoid extensive coverage of local representatives because their primary circulation areas include so many congressional districts? Does press coverage depend on what representatives do in Congress? Do local newspapers cover more extensively legislators who are important participants in congressional policy making — the workhorses — or do representatives attract local press attention by constituency-oriented activities? Does it matter whether newspapers have Washington correspondents?

Finally, it attempts to discover whether differential coverage of local representatives affects citizens' political knowledge. Are citizens who live in areas where newspapers carefully cover representatives more likely to recall or recognize their representatives than citizens who live in areas where media attention is sparse? Does media attention affect the chances that citizens will know something about representatives'?

records? When newspapers report extensive information about roll-call votes, are citizens more likely to know where their representative stand on the issues?

Unlike previous studies, which largely focused on the campaign period, this project explores how local newspapers covered representatives during an entire congressional session, from the first day of 1993 to election day 1994. The longer period is essential for studying political accountability. In order to determine what kinds of information newspapers make available to citizens, one needs to collect newspaper articles from a reasonable number of papers, for a reasonable number of representatives, and over a sufficiently long time period. Focusing on how a few newspapers cover a few representatives over a few weeks does not allow one to discover how coverage patterns vary over the cycle of governing, campaigning, and elections, or to generalize with any degree of certainty to the universe of all newspapers and all representatives. Attempting to balance these competing needs, I have selected three samples of newspaper coverage, each sample designed to reveal a different aspect of press coverage.

The first data set is a sample of 25 local newspapers and a corresponding sample of 25 representatives. It contains every news story, editorial, opinion column, letter, and list that mentioned the local representative between January 1, 1993, and November 8, 1994. My sampling strategy involved first selecting as representative a set of newspapers as possible, and then selecting randomly one House member from each newspaper's primary circulation area.

Selecting the newspaper sample was the greater challenge. At the time the sample was drawn, there were 1,567 daily newspapers in the country with combined circulations of 57 million copies. Eighty-eight of these newspapers had publicly available electronic archives for all of 1993 and 1994. The problem was to draw a sample of these 88 newspapers that was a reasonable approximation of the universe of all

daily papers. The good news was that the 88 papers included 38 percent of the total daily circulation in the country (despite the fact that they represented only 6 percent of all daily papers). This follows from the fact that a majority of citizens read a newspaper with a daily circulation of more than 100,000 copies, and large newspapers were overrepresented among the 88 papers. The bad news was that smaller newspapers were underrepresented in the electronic archives, and smaller newspapers tend to serve small cities and rural areas.

In order to draw a sample of newspapers that is representative of what the average citizen reads, I rank-ordered the 1,567 papers according to circulation, and then grouped the papers into approximate sextiles so that each group represented about one-sixth of the total daily circulation in the country. I then highlighted the 88 archived papers within the various sextiles. Given that the two lowest sextiles contained only seven of the 88 papers, I combined these two sextiles into a single group. I then randomly selected five papers from each of the five groups. The sample of 25 newspapers includes large national papers like the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Boston Globe*, mid-sized papers like the *Hartford Courant* and the *Tulsa World*, and small-city papers like the *Rock Hill Herald* (South Carolina) and the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (Idaho). From each newspaper's primary circulation area I randomly selected one representative for study. Table 1.1 lists the 25 newspapers and representatives in the first data set.

After choosing a sample of newspapers and representatives, I used computerized routines for searching the text of the 16,950 daily newspapers (25 newspapers times 678 days). This search identified and retrieved 8,003 news stories, editorials, opinion columns, letters, and lists that mentioned the 25 local representatives. Three full-time research assistants then read the material, coded the articles for their objective content, and summarized the tone and valence of each article. They used 68 variables to code

a variety of information, ranging from the size, location, and prominence of each article, to whether an article mentioned a representative's policy positions, roll-call votes, or leadership activities. They also tracked the appearance of 215 separate policy issues, in order to see how journalists portrayed representatives' connections to highly visible issues, such as NAFTA, the budget, crime, and gun control, as well as to less visible issues that Congress handles every year.

One limitation of the first data set is that one cannot determine what accounts for large differences in coverage. Why, for example, did some newspapers cover their representatives more heavily than other papers covered theirs? Did these differences in coverage reflect differences in the newsworthiness of representatives or in the editorial practices of newspapers? The question is unanswerable with a data set in which there is a one-to-one correspondence between each newspaper and each representative. The second and third data sets are designed to overcome this limitation.

The second data set parallels the first. I simply paired six newspapers from the first data set with six newspapers that are published in the same cities. The paired newspapers are from Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, and Washington. The aim was to determine how pairs of competing newspapers covered the same legislators. My research assistants coded the news stories, editorials, opinion columns, letters, and lists in these additional papers according to the same procedures used for the first data set. The second data set contains 2,175 items — 1,053 from the original six papers and 1,122 from the six comparison papers.

The third data set includes information about the volume and timing of coverage for a much larger sample of newspapers and representatives. This data set shows how 67 local newspapers covered 187 representatives during 1993 and 1994, with a total of 242 representative/paper dyads. The 61,084

citations — headline, date, section, page, and byline, but not full-text — allow one to analyze how the amount and timing of coverage depend on the newsworthiness of individual representatives, the competitiveness of elections, and the resources and constraints of individual newspapers. The third data set is not a random sample of all newspapers; it is closer to the universe of all newspapers that were available for electronic searches in 1993 and 1994. But imbedded in this data set are the 25 randomly-selected newspapers from the first data set. By analyzing separately how these 25 newspapers covered the 91 legislators within their primary circulation areas (22,175 citations in all), I can determine if the larger but less representative sample differs significantly from the smaller but more representative sample.

The fourth data set is designed to determine whether the volume of newspaper coverage affected how much citizens knew about their local representatives. This data set was constructed by linking information about how extensively the 67 newspapers in the third data set covered particular representatives with information about citizens' knowledge of their local representatives, as recorded in the autumn 1994 survey conducted by the National Election Studies. The unit of analysis is the individual citizen. Added to the usual attitudinal data about each citizen is information about how a local newspaper covered that citizen's representative during 1993 and 1994. The original 1994 NES data set had 1,795 respondents. I have information about local newspaper coverage for 675 of these respondents. Although the fourth data set is not ideal, it is the best that can be assembled, given the original NES survey. The survey contained information about how many times a week a citizen claimed to read a newspaper but not the name of the newspaper that a citizen read. So, I have been forced to assume that the local newspaper for which I have data is the same newspaper that a citizen actually read. The result, of course, is noisy data.

The next seven sections summarize the findings from the book's seven empirical chapters. These sections are then followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for political accountability.

Findings about the Volume of Coverage

1. Newspaper coverage of individual representatives is a regular event. Although coverage increases during political campaigns, the increment is relatively small compared to total coverage during non-campaign periods.

2. The median newspaper publishes about fifteen articles per month that mention a local representative — one article every two days. The range is from six articles per month to twenty-eight articles per month.

3. Large metropolitan newspapers do not ignore members of Congress, as previous studies suggest. These newspapers often use regional sections or regional editions to target coverage of individual representatives.

4. In cities with more than one newspaper, competing papers do not differ much in their coverage of local representatives. The editors at competing newspapers tend to agree on the newsworthiness of individual representatives, and they devote similar amounts of space to covering all local representatives.

5. Representatives who do newsworthy things attract more coverage than those who do not. Running for senator or governor, being investigated by the House ethics committee, or doing things that legislative specialists find newsworthy generates extra coverage. Institutional position is not associated with extra coverage.

6. Newspapers that have two or more representatives in their circulation areas provide less coverage of individual representatives than those that have a single representative to cover. Newspapers with reporters stationed in Washington do not provide more coverage than those without Washington correspondents.

7. Newspapers show no evidence of bias in the frequency with which they cover particular representatives. They give neither more nor less coverage to liberals, conservatives, ideological extremists, women, or minority members.

8. During campaign season, newspapers cover contested races more heavily than non-contested races. They also vary their coverage with the intensity of each race, with spending by challengers generating more incremental coverage than spending by incumbents. Newspapers that have more than one representative in their circulation areas provide even less coverage of individual representatives during campaign season than during other seasons.

9. Newspapers cover contested primaries more heavily than non-contested primaries, although the incremental effects are less than they are for contested elections. Spending by primary challengers also increases coverage, although the effects are smaller than they are for challengers in general elections.

10. Most newspapers do not publish more articles about senators than representatives. The exception to this rule is that large metropolitan newspapers with four or more representatives in their circulation areas tend to cover senators more extensively than representatives.

Findings about the Nature of Coverage

1. News stories are the predominant vehicle for conveying messages about representatives. Editorials, opinion columns, and letters to the editor constitute one sixth of all coverage. Representatives' own writings are a minuscule part of overall coverage.

2. Most newspapers publish articles about representatives in reasonably prominent places. Nearly half of all articles appear in the three most prominent locations that newspapers have to offer — the front page, the first page of another section, or the editorial or op-ed pages.

3. Representatives are the main subject of 40 percent of the articles. But many of the articles in which representatives are secondary subjects convey substantial amounts of politically relevant information about their positions and actions.

4. Most newspapers do not rely on just one or two reporters to cover representatives, although some degree of specialization is common. On the typical newspaper, three reporters write about a third of the news stories that mention a local representative, while several dozen others write the rest.

5. Nearly a third of all news stories that mention local representatives originate in Washington. The number of Washington-based reporters that a newspaper employs is unrelated to the volume of coverage from Washington.

6. More than half of all articles focus on representatives' participation in national policy making. In these articles, representatives are four times more likely to be portrayed as passive position takers than as active bill introducers, committee members, or leaders. Twenty percent of articles focus on representatives running for reelection.

7. Ten percent of articles contain criticisms of representatives' performance as policy makers. Although most news stories are relatively neutral in tone, 25 percent portray representatives positively and 5 percent negatively.

8. Strong opinions abound on the editorial and op-ed pages. Letter writers, editorialists, and columnists are just as likely to criticize representatives as to praise them. A few newspapers publish more criticisms than praise on their editorial and op-ed pages.

9. Only rarely do newspapers publish articles that show local representatives denigrating Congress as an institution.

10. Newspapers differ enormously in both the quantity and the quality of their coverage. The range is from newspapers that carefully cover representatives' positions and actions to those that offer superficial coverage.

Findings about Coverage of Position Taking

1. Most newspapers cover position taking regularly, with nearly a third of all articles reporting at least one form of position taking. The range in coverage is enormous, with the most diligent newspaper publishing ten times as much as the least diligent paper.

2. Most newspapers cover roll-call voting extensively, with half of all articles on position taking featuring roll-call votes.

3. News stories are the most common vehicle for reporting roll-call votes, although lists, editorials, columns, and letters account for half the coverage.

4. Newspapers do not offer frequent coverage of representatives cosponsoring bills. The number of bills that a representative cosponsors is completely unrelated to how local newspapers cover cosponsorships.

5. Newspapers rarely publish information about how representatives intend to vote on a bill pending on the House floor. The exceptions are for the biggest and most controversial bills.

6. Some newspapers are exemplary in the way they explain the essence of a policy conflict when they report representatives' votes. Many newspapers offer only cryptic accounts that do nothing to advance citizens' understanding of the nature of the conflict.

7. When newspapers do explain the basic policy conflict they usually cover both sides of an issue. Editorials, opinion columns, and letters are much more likely than news stories to explain something about the policy conflict. Although individually the opinion items are one-sided, collectively they cover both sides of most issues.

8. Newspapers feature a handful of issues when they cover representatives' position taking. The issues on which they focus include only some of the issues that experts consider the most important, innovative, and consequential.

9. Local newspapers are most likely to cover position taking when the national media feature those same issues in their coverage. These issues tend to be the ones which involve intense conflict between president and Congress, where presidential prestige is on the line, and where the outcome is in doubt.

10. Citizens are exposed to vastly different flows of information about representatives' policy positions depending on where they live and what newspapers happen to serve their localities.

Findings about Coverage of Policy Making

1. Newspapers provide modest coverage of bills that local representatives introduce. The amount of coverage is unrelated both to the number of bills a representative introduces and to how far the bills advance through the legislative process.

2. Newspapers provide even less coverage of representatives participating in committee and subcommittee activities. Although references to committee membership are reasonably common, connections to committee activities are usually lacking.

3. Newspapers provide only occasional coverage of representatives acting as leaders, including leading committees or subcommittees or acting as party leaders, caucus leaders, or coalition builders.

4. Editorial taste, rather than the actions of representatives, is the better explanation for why some newspapers cover law making more extensively than others. When reporters do cover law making, they are most attracted to intense, political conflict.

5. Although newspapers sometimes cover representatives working to enact bills of special concern to their districts, they also cover legislators' efforts to enact broader bills designed to ameliorate national problems.

6. Newspapers cover extensively representatives acting as local agents — i.e., working to acquire or protect constituency benefits. They rarely cover representatives announcing actual decisions or claiming credit for outcomes.

7. Representatives are more likely to attract continuing coverage when they are working to protect an existing flow of federal benefits than when they are working to acquire new constituency benefits.

8. Although representatives and their staff members devote substantial resources to casework, newspapers rarely report anything about those activities.

9. Newspapers are far more likely to report representatives working to acquire or protect constituency benefits than to report their active participation in law making.

Findings about Coverage of Campaigns

1. The intensity of a campaign drives the overall volume of campaign coverage. Newspapers cover competitive races heavily, less competitive races lightly, and primary campaigns hardly at all.

2. Newspapers publish almost as many campaign articles about challengers as they do about incumbents. Challengers and incumbents are equally central in the articles that mention both candidates.

3. Campaign articles tend to portray challengers somewhat more favorably than they do incumbents. This is especially true in the most competitive races.

4. National issues are an important part of campaign coverage. Indeed, newspapers feature national issues more prominently in campaign coverage than in noncampaign coverage. When newspapers discuss national issues, they feature issues of recent vintage more frequently than they feature issues resolved in the previous year.

5. Newspapers frequently portray representatives as supporters or opponents of the president or as adherents to some ideology. They rarely portray representatives as supporters or opponents of their

party in Congress. Most references about a representative's connection to party, ideology, or the president are made by challengers and are negative in their connotations.

6. Although horse race stories are common when newspapers cover presidential campaigns, they are not common when newspapers cover congressional campaigns.

7. When representatives run in competitive races against well-financed challengers, newspapers tend to publish regular criticism of them. Representatives are much more likely to be criticized for their positions than for their actions.

8. Most newspapers endorse incumbents for reelection. Editorial writers often emphasize things that are not part of their regular news coverage, including leadership, independence, experience, committee service, and seniority.

9. Representatives enjoy enormous advantages in news coverage compared with challengers. Their principal advantage, however, is not in campaign coverage, but in all the noncampaign coverage that they receive over the entire two-year election cycle.

10. The quantity and quality of campaign coverage depend both on journalistic habits that are developed outside campaign season and on how much challengers spend. Some newspapers provide exemplary coverage of campaigns, some abysmal, and some in between.

Findings about Coverage in Competing Newspapers³

1. Competition among local newspapers impedes the production of news about local representatives. Zaller's hypothesis that competitive market pressures actually diminish the production of news about politics and public affairs is confirmed (Zaller 1999).

2. A newspaper with at least one competing daily paper published 70 fewer articles about its local representative than did a monopoly newspaper. The negative effect of competition on the volume of news is apparent despite controls for circulation, which appears not to matter, and for the number of representatives in a newspaper's core circulation area, which matters a great deal.

3. Competing local newspapers provided similar amounts of information about local representatives. Competition induces a convergence in coverage levels — and convergence at a low level.

4. The two tabloid newspapers provided similar amounts of information about local representatives as their two broadsheet competitors. Indeed, given the fact that the tabloids published shorter newspapers than the broadsheets, the relative amount of information about representatives was greater in the tabloids than in their competitors.

³The first two findings about the volume of coverage are based on the third data set (242 representatives/newspaper dyads). The findings about the content of coverage are based on the second data set (12 newspapers, 6 representatives).

5. Despite their convergence in overall levels of coverage, competing newspapers reported position-taking activities in diverse ways. In four of six cities, one newspaper published nearly three times as many articles about position taking as the competing paper. The divergence was especially great for the reporting of roll-call votes, where one paper published six times as many articles as its competitor.

6. Competing newspapers gave representatives' lawmaking activities similar amounts of coverage. Lawmaking refers to a representative introducing bills, participating in committee or subcommittee meetings, or acting as a party leader, caucus leader, or coalition builder.

7. The volume of campaign coverage was similar in four pairs of competing papers, but divergent in the other two.

8. The differences between competing newspapers appear to be the result of differing editorial practices.

Findings about the Effects of Newspaper Coverage

1. The volume of newspaper coverage during the campaign period affected the likelihood that a citizen would report reading about the challenger in a local newspaper. Actually, the volume of newspaper coverage, by itself, explained nothing. When a citizen doesn't read the newspaper, heavy coverage goes unnoticed. And the regularity of newspaper readership, by itself, explained nothing. Not even the most dedicated newspaper reader profits from nonexistent campaign articles. It is the combination of the two variables — newspaper coverage times newspaper readership — that affected the likelihood that a citizen would read about the challenger. Finally, although both incumbent expenditures and challenger expenditures affected the likelihood that a citizen would read about the challenger, the impact of campaign expenditures did not diminish the impact of the volume of news coverage.

2. The volume of newspaper coverage during the campaign period also affected the likelihood that a citizen would report reading about the incumbent. The effects were not as strong as for challengers, no doubt because citizens had been reading about incumbents during the months and years before a campaign, whereas coverage of the challenger was heavily concentrated during the campaign period.

3. Citizens who were regular newspaper readers and who lived in areas where newspaper coverage was heavy during the campaign period were more than twice as likely to recognize the challenger as those where coverage was light. They were also better able to place a challenger on a seven-point ideological scale and better able to report something they liked or disliked about a challenger. All of these relationships are after controlling for spending by incumbents and challengers.

4. Citizens who were regular newspaper readers and who lived in areas where newspaper coverage was heavy during the entire two-year period were more likely to recognize the incumbent than those where coverage was light. Coverage during the campaign period did not affect recognition level.

5. Citizens who were regular newspaper readers and who lived in areas where newspaper coverage was heavy during the campaign period were more likely both to dislike something about the

incumbent and to know how many years the incumbent had served in office. Heavy coverage during the campaign period is usually the result of a strong challenger, and strong challengers often emphasize negative things like these.

Variations in Informativeness

Newspapers varied in both the quantity and the quality of their reporting. A careful reader of an excellent newspaper could learn a great deal about the local representative; an equally careful reader of a weak newspaper would learn very little. In order to give a sense of how much newspapers differed, I offer profiles of two newspapers at opposite ends of the distribution. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* was one of the best newspapers in the sample; the *Washington Times* was the weakest. Both newspapers were approximately the same size; the *Review-Journal* had a circulation of 132,000, the *Times* 92,000. Both newspapers covered junior Democrats: James Bilbray of Las Vegas in his fourth term and Albert Wynn of Maryland in his first.

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* covered James Bilbray intensively. It published 598 articles that mentioned him — 27 articles per month — second only to the *Tulsa World*, where James Inhofe was running for the Senate. More than a quarter of the articles appeared on the front page or the first page of another section. Coverage on the opinion pages was also extensive, with editorials, opinion columns, and letters accounting for nearly a quarter of all articles. More than half the news stories originated in Washington, second only to the *Houston Chronicle*. The quality of the news coverage in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* was also unusually high. This was one of the three most informative papers in the sample. The *Review-Journal* covered Bilbray as both a position taker and an active law maker. Like many newspapers it reported how its representative had voted on recent roll-call votes (177 articles). Unlike most papers it explained what was at stake in each vote, summarizing the viewpoints of supporters and

opponents. The paper's Washington reporters covered what Bilbray was doing on issues of interest to Nevada, including nuclear waste, Indian gaming, and an empowerment zone for Las Vegas. Seventy-six articles referred to bills he had introduced or to his committee activities, second only to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune's* coverage of Larry LaRocco. Although coverage of Bilbray at home was relatively sparse, like the Washington coverage, it was heavily oriented toward policy.

The *Washington Times* covered Albert Wynn lightly. It published only 130 articles that mentioned Albert Wynn — six articles per month — the least coverage of any newspaper in the first or second data sets. Any sense that the *Times* might have covered Wynn lightly because he represented a suburban Maryland district about which the editors cared little is easily dismissed. They did, after all, publish 46 photos of Wynn, the most photos of any newspaper in the sample. The *Times* covered Wynn largely as a position taker. Fifty-nine percent of the articles focused on position taking. Only four articles covered anything related to bills he had introduced or to his committee activities, the least of any newspaper in the sample. Opinion coverage was also the lightest for any newspaper: two editorials and one letter. Although coverage of position taking is important, the approach the *Times* employed was not very informative. Rather than incorporating coverage of roll-call votes into news stories, editorials, or opinion columns, the *Times* published lists of roll-call votes. The lists seldom had an accompanying explanation of the basic policy conflict. Many of the lists were accompanied by file photos of Albert Wynn and seven other representatives from Maryland and Virginia. It was a nice attempt to draw attention to otherwise drab lists with dull headlines (How Our Representatives Voted), but in addition to attracting attention, the editors might have illuminated the policy conflicts that gave rise to the votes so that readers could evaluate representatives' positions.

The differences between the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and the *Washington Times* were immense. The former painted a rich portrait of James Bilbray, with nearly an article per day of high quality journalism. Careful readers of the *Review-Journal* could learn a great deal about what Bilbray was doing to earn his keep. The *Times* offered just a rough sketch of Albert Wynn. Readers would have learned very little about what Wynn was doing besides voting.⁴

Although the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* was an unusually good newspaper, there were other newspapers in its class, including the *Los Angeles Times* and *Tulsa World*, and other papers that fell just short of this standard, including the *Hartford Courant* and *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Small town newspapers worthy of note include the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* and *Rock Hill Herald*. The *Washington Times* was in a class by itself; no other newspaper was so uninformative. A step up from the *Times* would be the *Phoenix Gazette*, *Newsday*, and *Tucson Citizen*. Here the problems were not so much the volume of coverage — the *Gazette* was slightly above average in volume — but the amount of information that the articles conveyed.

The informativeness of the six pairs of competing newspapers in Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, and Washington was relatively low compared with the informativeness of the other nineteen newspapers in the first and second data sets. None of the twelve newspapers were as informative as the three best newspapers in the sample, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, or *Tulsa World*. None were as good as the next tier of papers, the *Hartford Courant* or *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Although a case could be made that one of them, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, was above the

⁴The *Washington Post* was only marginally better than the *Times*. Only two of the thirty-one papers in the first or second data sets published fewer articles than the *Post* — the *Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

median, more or less comparable to the *Buffalo News*, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, *Rock Hill Herald*, and *York Daily Record*, none of the other eleven papers with same-city competitors were above the median in informativeness.

Political Campaigns

Newspapers differed in the kinds of activities they emphasized. The differences were most pronounced in how newspapers covered campaigns. The two newspapers that offered the best coverage of House campaigns were the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, the largest and the smallest papers in the sample. Each newspaper published more than 120 articles about the campaign, covered the challenger extensively, appeared scrupulously fair, and provided analysis and guidance on its opinion pages.

The Idaho campaign was a nasty one. Larry LaRocco and Helen Chenoweth insulted each other frequently; the *Morning Tribune* gave each candidate nearly equal space for their charges, counter charges, and rebuttals. Taken together, however, the news stories gave a good sense of what LaRocco had been doing in office and how the incumbent and challenger differed. Editorially neutral, the paper employed three opinion columnists: the first a LaRocco admirer, the second relatively neutral, the third hostile to LaRocco, repeatedly calling him “Beltway Larry.” The California campaign was hard-fought but civil. Although the *Times* endorsed Anthony Beilenson near the end of the campaign, the news and opinion pages were equally open and equally generous to both candidates. The *Times* commissioned five columns from both the incumbent and challenger, one each on crime, welfare, health care, defense, and the budget, and then published the paired columns together. The intent was to force Beilenson and Sybert to discuss important issues in a manner that allowed readers to compare their positions directly. The *Times* and the

Morning Tribune had different strategies for covering House campaigns, but both newspapers were informative and fair.

It was not surprising that the quality of campaign coverage in the *Times* and the *Morning Tribune* was impressive, since both newspapers were impressive in their coverage of Beilenson and LaRocco prior to the start of the 1994 campaign. The quality of coverage in other newspapers, however, changed dramatically once campaigns were launched. For one newspaper it was a change for the good. If 1993 was the standard for judgement, the *Phoenix Gazette* was one of the least impressive newspapers in the sample. Every few weeks the *Gazette* published an item entitled “Write to Your Elected Officials” that listed the names and addresses of state legislators and House members who represented the greater Phoenix area. Unfortunately, the *Gazette* published so little information about Jon Kyl’s positions and actions in 1993 that it was not clear what matters citizens might raise with Kyl. Perhaps the editors thought readers should write Mr. Kyl and inquire what he had been doing. By comparison, the *Gazette* covered the Kyl-Coppersmith battle for the Senate rather well. The news articles were extensive and evenhanded. Editorially, the newspaper strongly preferred Kyl, but most pro-Kyl editorials were followed a day or so later by anti-Kyl letters. Still, there was an odd disjunction between campaign and non-campaign coverage. The *Gazette*’s endorsement applauded Kyl for his knowledge of foreign and defense policy. As one of my assistants quipped, “the editors must read another paper, because Kyl’s expertise was not otherwise conveyed.”

For some newspapers, campaign coverage was much weaker than non-campaign coverage. The change was most dramatic in the *Hartford Courant*. This paper provided extensive coverage of Barbara Kennelly’s Washington activities. More than half of all news stories had a Washington dateline, and many

of these stories showed Kennelly heavily involved in national issues such as NAFTA, health care, and the budget. By comparison, campaign coverage was much lighter. The *Courant* was scrupulously fair to the principal challenger Douglas Putnam, reporting his views clearly and without bias. But campaign coverage was only 7 percent of total coverage, giving Kennelly an extraordinary edge over the poorly financed challenger. The shift was similar in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Coverage of Louis Stokes's Washington activities was extensive. Coverage of the 1994 campaign was paltry, with only nine articles mentioning James Sykora, the challenger.

The quantity and quality of campaign coverage depended both on journalistic habits that were developed outside campaign season and on how much challengers spent. Newspapers that covered representatives superficially outside campaign season did not suddenly become strong newspapers just because well-financed challengers happened to appear. Long Island's *Newsday* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* did not change their spots when Peter King's opponent spent \$416,000 and when William Lipinski's opponent spent \$278,000. The transformation of coverage in the *Phoenix Gazette* was the only exception to this rule, an exception fueled by the \$6,000,000 battle for Arizona's open Senate seat. On the other hand, newspapers that covered representatives comprehensively outside campaign season did not continue these habits in campaign season if there was no real battle to cover. Not even strong newspapers, such as the *Hartford Courant* or the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, wrote extensively about quiet campaigns in which challengers spent less than \$25,000.

The best campaign coverage appeared in quality newspapers with competitive races. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Tulsa World* set the standard here, with the *Bloomington Pantagraph*, *Buffalo News*, and *Rock Hill Herald* as runners-up.

The worst campaign coverage appeared in weak newspapers with uncompetitive races. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Seattle Times*, and *Washington Times* occupied the cellar; the *Tucson Citizen* was only slightly better than the cellar dwellers.

Candidates run for office as individuals (Mayhew 1974). Representatives defend their individual records in office and attempt to show why they deserve reelection; challengers attempt to show that they would make better legislators than current incumbents. But candidates are also linked to larger political forces. Most candidates run as members of party teams. Individual candidates may choose to emphasize or de-emphasize their party links. Candidates may also be linked to the incumbent president.

How frequently did newspapers portray representatives as supporters or opponents of their own party in Congress? Who portrayed them in this way? Was support or opposition a badge of honor that representatives wore proudly, or was party support a nasty label that challengers attached to incumbents? Party was not a central feature of campaign coverage; only 3 percent of all campaign articles portrayed representatives as party supporters or opponents (32 of 1,178). Nor was party support a badge of honor. Challengers and their friends were seven times more likely to portray representatives as party supporters than were representatives and their friends. Portrayals of representatives as party opponents were extremely rare (3 articles). In short, party was not a central element of campaign coverage, but when it was used in campaign articles it was used more to disparage representatives than to praise them.

Newspapers were much more likely to portray representatives as supporters or opponents of President Clinton than as supporters or opponents of their parties. Nearly 10 percent of campaign articles portrayed representatives in this fashion (111 articles). Most candidates did not consider President Clinton to be an electoral asset. Representatives and their friends were three times more likely to portray a

representative as an opponent of the president than as a supporter. Challengers and their friends were ten times more likely to portray a representative as a supporter of the president than as an opponent. References to connections with the president were heavily concentrated in a few districts.

The most striking finding about party support and presidential support is how negative were the connotations in campaign articles. Representatives and their friends seldom emphasized how much a representative supported a party or the president. In contrast, challengers and their friends frequently argued that a representative excessively supported the party or the president. In short, representatives really did campaign as individual candidates, and newspapers really did cover them that way. It was challengers who attempted to tar and feather representatives as blind supporters of party leaders or the president. Whatever association representatives had with team sports was portrayed more as vice than virtue.

Position Taking

Political accountability is enhanced if newspapers cover representatives' positions on issues that Congress has resolved. Positions on roll-call votes are a superb way to apportion responsibility for specific congressional actions because each representative must stand up and be counted. Each roll call has only two sides — yea or nay — so a representative cannot be all things to all people. Each absence from a roll-call vote creates an electoral liability, so the prudent legislator seldom prefers abstention to choosing sides. Each representative has exactly one vote, so the powerful, the ambitious, and the eloquent play no greater role than the weak, the lazy, and the inarticulate. Each vote requires all representatives to make decisions on the same proposal, thus creating a standardized way for comparing representatives' decisions.

Representatives are compelled to take sides on more than 500 issues each year. Their decisions are recorded for posterity.

Newspapers provide little public service if they print nothing more than roll-call lists that contain bill titles and representatives' positions. Bill titles are designed to be appealing, not informative. Most citizens need to be informed whether a bill labeled "tax reform" would eliminate or create loopholes, widen or narrow disparities between rich and poor, decrease or increase tax rates. They also need to know whether they would be worse off under something called reform. Newspapers can convey information about the content of bills in various ways, ranging from careful coverage of bills as they move through the legislative labyrinth to focused coverage of bills as representatives approve or reject them.

Newspapers differed greatly in the kinds of contextual information they offered readers to help them interpret representatives' roll-call votes. The *Los Angeles Times* developed one of the most effective ways for covering roll-call votes. Every few weeks it ran an article that featured how area representatives voted on several recent issues. The coverage was distinctive in several respects. First, the *Times* displayed roll-call information in a format that helped readers interpret the arcane happenings of Capitol Hill. For each vote, the editors first offered a brief synopsis of the bill and the legislative situation and then summarized the arguments on each side by quoting from at least one proponent and at least one opponent. Second, the *Times* often selected votes that challenged readers to consider the difficult tradeoffs among competing values — tradeoffs that representatives face daily. Consider its account of a procedural dispute that actually involved a direct conflict between citizens' expressed preferences for a balanced budget and their natural inclination to help the victims of disasters.

The House refused to allow a Midwest disaster relief bill to be debated under a rule (H Res 220) adding its \$3-billion cost to the national debt. This sent the measure back to the Rules Committee, which sets the terms of floor debate. Democrats, who control the House by a wide margin, rarely suffer defeat of one of their rules. Foes of the rule wanted the opportunity to offer an amendment putting the spending on a pay-as-you-go basis. But Democratic leaders noted that the 1990 Budget Enforcement Act permits deficit spending to cope with natural disasters.

Supporter David R. Obey (D-WI) said: “I think it is almost the height of political arrogance to expect even acts of God to comply with mere congressional rules of procedure.”

Opponent Timothy J. Penny (D-MN) said: “This is not simply a question of disaster aid. It is a question of leadership. . . . I am convinced that Americans would applaud our leadership in honestly paying for this disaster relief package.”

The vote was 205 for and 216 against. A yes vote supported the Democratic rule for debating disaster aid for the flooded Midwest (*LAT Valley* 8/8/93 B5).

A short synopsis like this allowed readers to make up their own minds on a policy dispute and then evaluate how their representative voted. During the period of this study, the *Times* published about 40 articles containing this type of synopsis, with an average of three roll-call votes per article.

At the other extreme were newspapers that offered very brief accounts of votes on particular issues. The *Washington Times*, for example, used the following cryptic account to accompany a list of how seven representatives from Maryland and Virginia voted on a bill to provide funds to close nearly 100 bankrupt federally-insured savings and loan institutions:

Failed thrifts bill passes. The House voted 214-208 Tuesday to authorize \$8 billion for the Resolution Trust Corporation to take over failed thrifts. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of the authorization (*WT* 9/19/93 A13).

Although Congress had been deadlocked on the question for seventeen months, while losses continued to mount, it was not immediately obvious what was the source of the conflict. Indeed, it is hard to believe that many citizens would have the contextual information to know whether a yea or a nay vote on this bill advanced or threatened their interests. Seven other newspapers in the first data set covered this roll-call vote. Four of them — the *Houston Chronicle*, *Orlando Sentinel Tribune*, *Phoenix Gazette*, and *Tulsa*

World — offered summaries that were no longer and no more informative than what the *Washington Times* published. Three newspapers — the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Louisville Courier-Journal* — gave readers a sense of the basic conflict. The dispute, by the way, was not whether the government should honor its commitment to bailout federally-insured institutions; it was whether other programs should be pared or spared as a consequence. Citizens needed to know this in order to evaluate their representatives' votes.

All newspapers covered position taking. Some newspapers did so in a way that enhanced citizens ability to monitor their representatives' actions in office. Unfortunately, many newspapers were more cryptic than informative when they reported roll-call votes. Only on a few major issues of the day — e.g., NAFTA and crime control — was the overall level of informativeness reasonably high in most newspapers.

Leadership Activities

The recorded vote is a superb way to apportion responsibility for specific congressional actions because each representative must stand up and be counted. A legislator either supports or opposes a particular bill; no intermediate position is available. The roll-call vote is not an effective way to apportion responsibility for legislative inaction. When Congress does nothing, it is rarely because a majority of representatives rejected a bill on the House floor. Inaction usually stems from other causes. Perhaps no one introduced a bill; a committee never acted; the Senate objected; a conference committee failed to resolve differences between House and Senate; the president vetoed it; time ran out. Those who wished that Congress had approved comprehensive health reform cannot study roll-call votes to discover if their representative contributed to that failure. Death came earlier in the game and without 435 smoking guns.

The roll-call vote also reveals nothing about who is responsible for earlier phases of law making. Walking to the House floor to vote is easy work compared to drafting a bill, orchestrating hearings, guiding it through committee, and building a political coalition. Although it is important for newspapers to report representatives' positions on roll-call votes and upcoming votes, an exclusive focus on position taking gives readers a distorted view of who is responsible for the nation's laws. Responsibility needs to be apportioned between entrepreneurial legislators, who propose, energize, and mobilize, and rank-and-file representatives who reject or ratify bills. Newspapers should cover all phases of the legislative process, not merely votes of ratification.

Committees are the very heart of the legislative process. Most of the suspense about what Congress will do each year centers on committees, which approve 10 percent of the bills that are introduced, rather than on the whole House, which approves 98 percent of the bills that reach the floor. Unfortunately, committees do not play an equally prominent role when local newspapers write about local representatives. The median newspaper published only six articles over the two-year period about representatives' participation in committee activities.

Although most of the action on Capitol Hill takes place in advance of counting the yeas and the nays, and most newspaper coverage of Congress as an institution reflects the importance of pre-floor activity (Hess 1981; Tidmarch and Pitney 1985), newspapers reversed their emphasis when they covered how local representatives participated in law making. Most newspapers covered representatives' participation in the final flourish of voting more heavily than they covered the months of pre-floor activities. To put these findings in perspective, the typical newspaper published nine articles about all of a

representative's leadership and committee activities over a two-year period and nine articles about a representative's position on a single bill — crime control.

The implications of these findings for political accountability are two. First, citizens are far more likely to see their representative as a position taker than as a legislative leader or craftsman. Citizens are far more likely to know their representative's position on crime control than they are to know whether their representative is a leader or a follower, a heavyweight or a lightweight, a credit or an embarrassment to the district. Second, representatives are far more likely to be concerned with their records as position takers — things that are done in the relative sunshine — than with their records in the darkened committee rooms or corridors of Congress. Senator John Culver (D-IA), who had a superb reputation in Congress for legislative leadership, once complained about the media: “They only focus on the things that make news. Leadership doesn't make news” (Fenno 1996, 130). The evidence in this study strongly supports his claim.

These generalizations do not apply universally. Some newspapers painted rich portraits of what representatives were doing in Congress. The *Hartford Courant*, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Tulsa World* published frequent and informative articles about representatives' law-making activities. Citizens in those communities had ample opportunities to learn what their representative was doing across the entire range of legislative activities. Representatives from those communities knew that their law-making activities were becoming part of the public record.

Opinion Coverage

The differences were also pronounced in the ways various newspapers treated representatives on their editorial and op-ed pages. Some newspapers featured local representatives in their editorials and opinion columns, most notably the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (104 items), *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

(76), *Phoenix Gazette* (69), and *San Diego Union-Tribune* (63). Other newspapers rarely mentioned local representatives in editorials or opinion columns, including the *Washington Times* (2), *Louisville Courier-Journal* (4), *San Francisco Chronicle* (10), and *Houston Chronicle* (10). The differences among newspapers were equally stark for letters to the editor. Several newspapers published lively exchanges among citizens about their local representatives, including the *Rock Hill Herald* (124 letters), *Tulsa World* (105), *Bloomington Pantagraph* (64), and *Las Vegas Review Journal* (60), while twelve newspapers — half the sample — published fewer than a dozen letters each that mentioned the local representative.

Opinion coverage can be enormously informative for citizens. Factual accounts of how representatives voted on various issues are helpful for citizens who already have well-developed preferences about those issues. Most citizens, however, do not have firm preferences on a range of issues. Editorialists, columnists, and letter writers can help citizens interpret issues on which representatives have been voting. They also help to interpret other kinds of activities — for example, policy leadership and coalition building — which lack any common metric for evaluating and comparing representatives. Assuming that it is reasonably balanced, interpretative coverage may be especially helpful, compared with news coverage, since citizens are eventually asked to evaluate their representatives' continued fitness for office and not simply describe what representatives have been doing.

We do not know whether heavy coverage on the opinion pages helps citizens learn more about their representatives than they would with just heavy coverage on the news pages. Although it is a researchable question, it is not one that can be answered in this project because the fourth data set, which

connects newspaper coverage with citizens' knowledge and attitudes about their representatives, is based on the volume of newspaper coverage, not on the content, quality, location, or format of that coverage.

Heavy coverage on the opinion pages may also strengthen the other accountability mechanism — representatives anticipating citizens' preferences or potential preferences and adjusting their behavior in advance of coverage to make it more acceptable to their constituents. We know that most representatives have staff members who clip items about them from local newspapers so that they can monitor how they are being covered (Cook 1989, 75, 201). We know that most representatives are especially sensitive to criticisms about them. The sensitivity comes with the territory for politicians who, according to Fenno, "perceive electoral troubles where the most imaginative outside observer could not possibly perceive, conjure up, or hallucinate them" (Fenno 1978). We know that most criticisms of representatives appear in editorials, opinion columns, and letters to the editor. It follows, then, that some representatives might behave differently in office depending on whether the opinion pages are relatively open or relatively closed to their critics.

Implications for Accountability

The quantity and quality of information that citizens are exposed to about their representatives depends on where they happen to live. The disparities are greatest between citizens living in large cities and those living in medium-sized cities. In general, large-city newspapers that happen to have many representatives in their circulation areas cover each representative less well than do papers in medium-sized cities that have only one or two representatives in their circulation areas. Citizens who live in large cities that have competing daily newspapers are doubly disadvantaged, since both city size and newspaper competition are associated with less informative coverage. Unfortunately, these disparities are reinforced

in other sectors of the informational marketplace. Television outlets in large cities cover local representatives much less frequently than do print outlets in the same cities. And candidates in large cities face significantly higher advertising rates for both print and electronic media than do candidates in small and medium-sized cities.

The informativeness of local newspapers also depends on the actions of representatives and on editors' tastes for covering politics and public affairs. Editors at the *Hartford Courant*, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Tulsa World* chose to devote more space and more journalistic talent to covering local representatives than did editors at the *Houston Chronicle*, *Idaho Falls Post Register*, *Newsday*, or *Norfolk Ledger-Star*.

The effects of such differences are potentially large and important. Scholars have long known that citizens differ widely in their attention to the media. Some citizens read newspapers regularly; some do not. But it now seems that even regular, seven-day-a-week readers are exposed to vastly different amounts of information about local representatives depending on where they live. Newspaper readers in Hartford, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Tulsa are exposed to much more information about local representatives than readers in San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, and Washington.

Scholars have yet to investigate how the richness of the informational environment affects what citizens know about their representatives. The two best studies of what citizens know about their representatives explored how various attributes of citizens — their interest, knowledge, attentiveness, partisanship, and ideology — affected whether they knew how their representative voted on the Persian Gulf War Resolution or the Omnibus Crime Act (Alvarez and Gronke 1996; Wilson and Gronke 2000). Both studies took for granted that the media reported how local representatives voted; the puzzle was to

explain why some citizens absorbed the available information and some citizens did not. We now know that the puzzle is more complicated. Some citizens are exposed to a rich array of information about representatives' policy positions; others are exposed to little. The next generation of studies about what citizens know about their representatives needs to sort out how much the informational environment matters.

The best newspapers do appear to provide citizens with the kinds of information that would allow them to monitor their representatives' actions in office. Regular readers of these newspapers would encounter a wealth of information about where their representatives stood on the issues and some information about their law-making activities. Not even the best newspapers, however, provide much coverage of election campaigns unless the challenger is competitive and well-funded. Lacking a competitive challenger, regular readers could learn very little about either the challenger's or the incumbent's campaign; once there is a competitive challenger, newspapers provide similar amounts of information about each about each candidate's campaign. In either case, however, the incumbent enjoys the enormous advantage of extensive coverage in the preceding months and years.

The least informative papers do not appear to provide citizens with the kinds of information that would allow them to monitor their representatives' actions in office. Although regular readers would encounter some information about representatives' positions and actions, it is hard to believe that they would be very well-informed if all they did was read their local newspapers. Sometimes my research assistants and I found the three-page write-ups in *Politics in America* or the *Almanac of American Politics*—the two leading reference books about individual senators and representatives—to be more informative than a year's worth of coverage in the least informative papers.

Of course, most citizens are not careful readers of local newspapers. Although 80 percent of the respondents in a 1994 survey reported that they read a newspaper at least once a week, only 48 percent of these readers claimed a daily habit. Seven percent read a paper five or six days per week, 17 percent three or four days per week, and 28 percent one or two days per week (National Election Studies 1995, V125). Moreover, the average newspaper reader does not scan every page or every section, does not pause to read every item that happens to mention the local representative, and does not notice every reference to a representative in a story about something else. In short, the average newspaper reader is likely to read only a fraction of the articles about local representatives. This is not necessarily a problem for the most informative newspapers. Even a one-third sample of the coverage in the very best papers would give citizens a reasonable idea of what their representatives have been doing. A one-third sample of the coverage in the weakest newspapers would offer little of value.

Table 1.1 Newspapers and Representatives Selected for Study

Newspaper	Circulation	Districts in Area	Selected District	Representative	Party	Year Elected
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	1,146,631	15	CA 24	Anthony Beilenson	D	76
<i>Newsday</i> (Long Island)	758,358	5	NY 3	Peter King	R	92
<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	556,765	8	CA 9	Ronald Dellums	D	70
<i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>	528,324	11	IL 3	William Lipinski	D	82
<i>Boston Globe</i>	508,867	4	MA 9	Joe Moakley	D	72
<i>Houston Chronicle</i>	419,759	6	TX 7	Bill Archer	R	70
<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i>	410,237	4	OH 11	Louis Stokes	D	68
<i>San Diego Union-Tribune</i>	373,453	5	CA 50	Bob Filner	D	92
<i>Buffalo News</i>	305,482	2	NY 30	Jack Quinn	R	92
<i>Orlando Sentinel Tribune</i>	285,172	3	FL 8	Bill McCollum	R	80
<i>Seattle Times</i>	239,476	3	WA 7	Jim McDermott	D	88
<i>Louisville Courier-Journal</i>	236,103	2	KY 3	Romano Mazzoli	D	70
<i>Hartford Courant</i>	229,284	1	CT 1	Barbara Kennelly	D	82
<i>Las Vegas Review-Journal</i>	131,769	1	NV 1	James Bilbray	D	86
<i>Tulsa World</i>	127,476	2	OK 1	James Inhofe	R	86
<i>Baton Rouge Advocate</i>	99,444	2	LA 6	Richard Baker	R	86
<i>Washington Times</i>	92,000	5	MD 4	Albert Wynn	D	92
<i>Phoenix Gazette</i>	83,431	4	AZ 4	Jon Kyl	R	86
<i>Norfolk Ledger-Star</i>	57,603	2	VA 2	Owen Pickett	D	86
<i>Bloomington Pantagraph</i>	51,868	1	IL 15	Thomas Ewing	R	91
<i>Tucson Citizen</i>	48,566	2	AZ 5	Jim Kolbe	R	84
<i>York Daily Record</i>	40,525	1	PA 19	Bill Goodling	R	74
<i>Rock Hill Herald</i>	30,495	1	SC 5	John Spratt	D	82
<i>Idaho Falls Post Register</i>	29,799	1	ID 2	Michael Crapo	R	92
<i>Lewiston Morning Tribune</i>	23,105	1	ID 1	Larry LaRocco	D	90
! Total	6,813,992	92				

Note: The newspapers are grouped into the six circulation sextiles discussed in the text.

Sources: Circulation data are from Editor & Publisher 1993. Party and year elected are from Congressional Quarterly 1993b.

Newspaper	Representative	Name in Headline	Total Mentions in Text	Mentions Per Article	Total Articles	Articles Per Month
<i>Tulsa World</i>	Inhofe	86	2,158	3.6	617	27.7
<i>Las Vegas Review-Journal</i>	Bilbray	59	1,692	2.9	598	26.8
<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i>	Stokes	34	1,136	2.6	445	20.0
<i>Hartford Courant</i>	Kennelly	25	1,125	2.6	434	19.5
<i>Rock Hill Herald</i>	Spratt	47	1,632	3.9	427	19.1
<i>Buffalo News</i>	Quinn	82	1,301	3.3	421	18.9
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Beilenson	59	1,404	3.6	405	18.2
<i>San Diego Union-Tribune</i>	Filner	22	943	2.4	398	17.8
<i>Lewiston Morning Tribune</i>	LaRocco	99	1,591	4.3	393	17.6
<i>Baton Rouge Advocate</i>	Baker	41	1,145	3.3	357	16.0
<i>Phoenix Gazette</i>	Kyl	39	1,118	3.4	341	15.3
<i>Bloomington Pantagraph</i>	Ewing	63	1,053	3.3	335	15.0
<i>York Daily Record</i>	Goodling	67	974	3.1	332	14.9
<i>Orlando Sentinel Tribune</i>	McCollum	30	684	2.4	296	13.3
<i>Norfolk Ledger-Star</i>	Pickett	35	775	2.9	277	12.4
<i>Louisville Courier-Journal</i>	Mazzoli	26	587	2.3	264	11.8
<i>Boston Globe</i>	Moakley	20	637	2.6	255	11.4
<i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>	Lipinski	15	518	2.3	228	10.2
<i>Idaho Falls Post Register</i>	Crapo	34	839	4.0	221	9.9
<i>Newsday</i>	King	8	406	2.1	197	8.8
<i>Houston Chronicle</i>	Archer	8	337	1.8	192	8.6
<i>Tucson Citizen</i>	Kolbe	35	484	3.2	161	7.2
<i>Seattle Times</i>	McDermott	10	316	2.2	147	6.6
<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	Dellums	14	287	2.3	132	5.9
<i>Washington Times</i>	Wynn	4	250	2.0	130	5.8
! Total		962	23,392		8,003	
! Median Representative		34	943	2.9	332	14.9
! Median Representative Per Month		1.5	42.3		14.9	

Coding: Articles include news stories, editorials, opinion columns, letters, and lists. Total Mentions in Text is a count of all references to a representative's last name in the body of an article. Mentions Per Article includes both headline and text mentions.

Notes: All counts are from the first data set. Monthly averages are based on 22.3 months. Table is rank-ordered by the number of articles per month. Each median is the median for a single column of data.

Los Angeles Times

* Beilenson	364 †
Berman	334
Waxman	306
Waters	281
Harman	207
McKeon	174
Moorhead	145
Tucker	118
Horn	98
Becerra	94
Dixon	93
Torres	80
Roybal-Allard . . .	72
Dreier	62
Martinez	53

Chicago Sun-Times

Rostenkowski . .	868
Rush	332
Reynolds	283
Gutierrez	208
* Lipinski	203 †
Hyde	192
Collins	148
Yates	125
Porter	100
Crane	85
Fawell	53

San Francisco Chronicle

Pelosi	294
Eshoo	136
* Dellums	132
Miller	113
Stark	90
Woolsey	60
Baker	60
Lantos	39

Houston Chronicle

Andrews	377
Green	257
Washington	251
Fields	227
Delay	170
* Archer	125 †

Newsday

* King	197
Ackerman	173
Levy	163
Lazio	156
Hochbrueckner . .	148

San Diego Union-Tribune

Schenk	481
* Filner	387 †
Hunter	338
Cunningham . . .	307
Packard	189

Washington Times

Moran	240
Hoyer	192
Byrne	162
Morella	142
* Wynn	119 †

Boston Globe

Kennedy	471
Frank	281
Markey	266
* Moakley	254 †

Cleveland Plain Dealer

* Stokes	445
Fingerhut	400
Hoke	387
Brown	304

Phoenix Gazette

* Kyl	341
Coppersmith . . .	328
Pastor	142
Stump	94

Orlando Sentinel Tribune

* McCollum	245 †
Mica	205
Brown	163

Seattle Times

Cantwell	178
* McDermott	147
Dunn	141

Baton Rouge Advocate

Fields	419
* Baker	357

Buffalo News

* Quinn	421
LaFalce	393

Louisville Courier-Journal

Hamilton	284
* Mazzoli	264

Norfolk Ledger-Star

* Pickett	277
Scott	32

Tucson Citizen

* Kolbe	161
Pastor	119

Tulsa World

* Inhofe	566 †
Synar	547

Notes: All counts are from the third data set.

Median representative had 192 articles (8.6 articles per month).

* Representative also included in the first data set.

† Representative with fewer articles identified by the search routine used for the third data set than were identified by the more exhaustive search routine used for the first data set (Table 2.1).

	Articles in Paper #1	Articles in Paper #2	Articles in Paper #1	Articles in Paper #2
1. <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>				
2. <i>Chicago Tribune</i>				
Rostenkowski	868	745		
Rush	332	219		
Reynolds	283	249		
Gutierrez	208	162		
* Lipinski	203 †	164		
Hyde	192	222		
Collins	148	121		
Yates	125	102		
Porter	100	245		
Crane	85	211		
Fawell	53	106		
Total	2597	2546		
Median	192	211		
1. <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>				
2. <i>San Francisco Examiner</i>				
Pelosi	294	281		
Eshoo	136	47		
* Dellums	132	137		
Miller	113	64		
Stark	90	71		
Woolsey	60	38		
Baker	60	39		
Lantos	39	40		
Total	924	717		
Median	102	56		
1. <i>Washington Times</i>				
2. <i>Washington Post</i>				
Moran			240	189
Hoyer			192	251
Byrne			162	168
Morella			142	148
* Wynn			119 †	121
Total			855	877
Median			162	168
1. <i>Boston Globe</i>				
2. <i>Boston Herald</i>				
Kennedy			471	207
Frank			281	152
Markey			266	149
* Moakley			254 †	251
Total			1272	759
Median			274	180
1. <i>Seattle Times</i>				
2. <i>Seattle Post-Intelligencer</i>				
Cantwell			178	162
* McDermott			147	186
Dunn			141	150
Total			466	498
Median			147	162
1. <i>Tucson Citizen</i>				
2. <i>Arizona Daily Star</i>				
* Kolbe			161	204
Pastor			119	117
Total			280	321
Median			140	161

Notes: All counts are from the third data set.

Median representative had 157 articles (7.0 articles per month).

* Representative also included in the first and second data sets.

† Representative with fewer articles identified by the search routine used for the third data set than were identified by the more exhaustive search routine used for the first data set (Table 2.1).

Newspaper	Representative	Total Articles	Articles Per Month	Percent Opinion Coverage	Percent Negative Valence	Percent Position Taking
Tulsa World	Inhofe	617	27.7	20	36	26
Las Vegas	Bilbray	598	26.8	23	53	43
Cleveland	Stokes	445	20.0	8	12	22
Hartford	Kennelly	434	19.5	6	14	33
Rock Hill	Spratt	427	19.1	34	35	22
Buffalo News	Quinn	421	18.9	12	16	21
LA Times	Beilenson	405	18.2	14	28	41
San Diego	Filner	398	17.8	22	41	27
Lewiston	LaRocco	393	17.6	28	38	17
Baton Rouge	Baker	357	16.0	6	23	31
Phoenix Gaz.	Kyl	341	15.3	29	52	21
Bloomington	Ewing	335	15.0	28	17	35
York Record	Goodling	332	14.9	17	23	28
Orlando	McCollum	296	13.3	14	29	36
Norfolk	Pickett	277	12.4	21	28	21
Louisville	Mazzoli	264	11.8	8	13	34
Boston Globe	Moakley	255	11.4	11	15	10
Chicago Sun	Lipinski	228	10.2	17	21	37
Idaho Falls	Crapo	221	9.9	16	11	31
Newsday	King	197	8.8	15	22	43
Houston	Archer	192	8.6	7	29	56
Tucson Citizen	Kolbe	161	7.2	11	16	25
Seattle Times	McDermott	147	6.6	33	23	18
SF Chronicle	Dellums	132	5.9	13	16	27
Wash. Times	Wynn	130	5.8	2	19	59
! Total		8,003				
! Median Representative		332	14.9	15	23	28

Coding: Opinion Coverage includes editorials, opinion columns, and letters to the editor. Percent Negative Valence is from Table 3.4. Position Taking includes cosponsoring or endorsing bills, taking positions on roll-call votes, taking positions on bills pending on the floor, and offering views on bills at some intermediate stage.

Notes: All counts are from the first data set. Table is rank-ordered by the number of articles per month. Each median is the median for a single column of data.

Newspaper	Representative	Cosponsor or Endorse Bill	Express Some Views on Bill	Firm Position on Pending Bill	Actual Position on Roll-Call Vote	Total
Las Vegas	Bilbray	25	45	9	177	256
LA Times	Beilenson	24	38	13	90	165
Tulsa	Inhofe	15	42	10	95	162
Hartford	Kennelly	20	89	14	22	145
Bloomington	Ewing	21	45	7	44	117
Baton Rouge	Baker	8	32	6	65	111
San Diego	Filner	8	34	14	53	109
Houston	Archer	6	24	1	77	108
Orlando	McCollum	4	37	-	67	108
Cleveland	Stokes	10	55	12	21	98
York Record	Goodling	14	46	4	30	94
Rock Hill	Spratt	11	24	3	55	93
Buffalo News	Quinn	7	18	6	58	89
Louisville	Mazzoli	13	20	4	52	89
Chicago Sun	Lipinski	2	9	7	67	85
Newsday	King	7	33	16	29	85
Wash. Times	Wynn	-	17	3	57	77
Phoenix	Kyl	5	20	1	44	70
Idaho Falls	Crapo	2	51	2	13	68
Lewiston	LaRocco	3	30	9	25	67
Norfolk	Pickett	3	29	-	25	57
Tucson Citizen	Kolbe	10	12	5	14	41
SF Chronicle	Dellums	3	24	-	9	36
Boston Globe	Moakley	3	13	3	7	26
Seattle Times	McDermott	5	15	1	5	26
! Total		229	802	150	1201	2382
! Median Representative		7	30	5	44	89

Coding: Cosponsor or Endorse Bill refers to an explicit endorsement or cosponsorship of a bill introduced by another representative. Firm Position on Pending Bill refers to a commitment to vote a certain way on a bill that had emerged from committee and was pending on the House floor. Express Some Views on Bill refers to any other mention of a representative's views on a bill. Actual Position on Roll-Call Vote refers to a vote that has already taken place.

Notes: All counts are from the first data set. Table is rank-ordered by the total number of articles reporting position taking. Each median is the median for a single column of data.

Newspaper	Representative	Bills Introduced	Committee Activities	Leadership Activities	Minus Multiples	Total
Lewiston	LaRocco	80	14	1	9	86
Las Vegas	Bilbray	57	22	2	5	76
Tulsa World	Inhofe	38	2	12	1	51
Hartford	Kennelly	11	22	10	1	42
York Record	Goodling	26	18	6	10	40
Cleveland	Stokes	4	28	21	18	35
LA Times	Beilenson	24	8	5	3	34
Seattle Times	McDermott	29	2	1	1	31
Rock Hill	Spratt	14	4	12	3	27
Phoenix Gaz.	Kyl	26	-	-	-	26
Buffalo News	Quinn	13	8	3	1	23
Boston Globe	Moakley	3	15	17	15	20
San Diego	Filner	8	10	2	-	20
Baton Rouge	Baker	7	11	1	2	17
SF Chronicle	Dellums	3	12	12	12	15
Tucson Citizen	Kolbe	9	2	4	-	15
Bloomington	Ewing	13	2	-	-	15
Houston	Archer	9	4	4	3	14
Chicago Sun	Lipinski	1	10	1	-	12
Idaho Falls	Crapo	6	5	1	-	12
Newsday	King	9	1	2	-	12
Louisville	Mazzoli	6	6	5	6	11
Orlando	McCollum	3	4	8	4	11
Norfolk	Pickett	5	3	1	-	9
Wash. Times	Wynn	1	3	1	1	4
! Total		405	216	132	95	658
! Median Representative		9	6	3	1	20

Coding: Bills Introduced are from Table 5.1, Committee Activities from Table 5.2, Leadership Activities from Table 5.3. The next column includes adjustments for 87 articles that included two activities and 4 articles that included three. The final column shows the total number of articles that had any coverage of bills introduced, committee activities, or leadership activities.

Notes: All counts are from the first data set. Table is rank-ordered by the number of articles that mentioned a representative's law-making activities. Each median is the median for a single column of data.

Newspaper	Representative	About Own Party's Primary	About Other Party's Primary	About General Election	Total Campaign Articles	Campaign Articles as Percent of All Articles
Running for the Senate:						
Tulsa World	Inhofe	38	2	114	154	25
Phoenix Gaz.	Kyl	20	21	98	139	41
Running for Reelection:						
Rock Hill	Spratt	1	3	142	146	34
Lewiston	LaRocco	3	31	98	132	34
LA Times	Beilenson	4	30	90	124	31
Buffalo News	Quinn	-	40	39	79	19
Las Vegas	Bilbray	5	7	61	73	12
Bloomington	Ewing	1	10	55	66	20
Norfolk	Pickett	-	9	31	40	14
Boston Globe	Moakley	4	10	19	33	13
San Diego	Filner	-	1	32	33	8
Tucson Citizen	Kolbe	8	3	18	29	18
Hartford	Kennelly	-	-	28	28	7
Idaho Falls	Crapo	-	1	21	22	10
Baton Rouge	Baker	18	-	2	20	6
Cleveland	Stokes	5	-	13	18	4
Chicago Sun	Lipinski	-	-	16	16	7
Newsday	King	5	-	8	13	7
Seattle Times	McDermott	3	-	3	6	4
SF Chronicle	Dellums	-	-	4	4	3
Wash. Times	Wynn	1	-	2	3	2
Running Unopposed:						
Orlando	McCollum	-	1	9	10	3
York Record	Goodling	1	2	5	8	2
Houston	Archer	4	-	2	6	3
! Total		121	171	910	1,202	15
! Median Representative		2	2	20	29	9

Notes: All counts are from the first data set. Romano Mazzoli did not run for reelection. Richard Baker won a majority in the open primary on 10/1/94, thus avoiding a general election. Table segments are rank-ordered by the number of campaign articles. Each median is the median for a single column of data.

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Citations for Newspaper Stories

<i>ADS</i>	<i>Arizona Daily Star</i>
<i>BG</i>	<i>Boston Globe</i>
<i>BH</i>	<i>Boston Herald</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Buffalo News</i>
<i>BP</i>	<i>Bloomington Pantagraph</i>
<i>BRA</i>	<i>Baton Rouge Advocate</i>
<i>CPD</i>	<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i>
<i>CST</i>	<i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Chicago Tribune</i>
<i>HCH</i>	<i>Houston Chronicle</i>
<i>HCO</i>	<i>Hartford Courant</i>
<i>IFPR</i>	<i>Idaho Falls Post Register</i>
<i>LAT</i>	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>
<i>LCJ</i>	<i>Louisville Courier-Journal</i>
<i>LMT</i>	<i>Lewiston Morning Tribune</i>
<i>LVRJ</i>	<i>Las Vegas Review-Journal</i>
<i>NDAY</i>	<i>Newsday (Long Island)</i>
<i>NLS</i>	<i>Norfolk Ledger-Star</i>
<i>OST</i>	<i>Orlando Sentinel Tribune</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Phoenix Gazette</i>
<i>RHH</i>	<i>Rock Hill Herald</i>
<i>SDUT</i>	<i>San Diego Union-Tribune</i>
<i>SFC</i>	<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>
<i>SFE</i>	<i>San Francisco Examiner</i>
<i>SPI</i>	<i>Seattle Post-Intelligencer</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Seattle Times</i>
<i>TC</i>	<i>Tucson Citizen</i>
<i>TW</i>	<i>Tulsa World</i>
<i>WP</i>	<i>Washington Post</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>Washington Times</i>
<i>YDR</i>	<i>York Daily Record</i>

Newspaper stories are cited in the text with a minimalist citation: source abbreviation, date, section, and page (e.g., *SDUT* 1/1/94 B12).