Ambition and Conflict in State Legislatures

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Abstract

Many state legislators aspire to become members of Congress. We argue that this progressive ambition reduces bipartisanship in state legislatures. To test our theory, we identify elements of the political environment that make it more plausible for state legislators to win election to Congress and examine how these factors shape legislative behavior. Comparing across states, we find that there is more roll call polarization and less bipartisan cosponsorship in chambers with a low ratio of state legislative seats to the number of congressional seats. Comparing legislators within states, we find that legislators whose state legislative districts overlap with a winnable congressional district vote in more extreme ways and are less likely to collaborate on bills with members of the opposite party. These results highlight how national polarization can lead to partisan conflict in subnational arenas.

Word Count: 10,358

Introduction

In *Insecure Majorities*, Lee (2016) describes how competition for majority status produces partisan conflict in Congress. The minority party can influence public policy by bargaining and collaborating with the majority party, but this obscures differences between the two parties and makes it harder for the minority to gain seats in the next election. If the majority coalition is secure enough that a change in power is unlikely, then the minority has nothing to lose by collaborating and may compromise to obtain limited policy influence. On the other hand, if majority status is hotly contested and either party could plausibly win, then the minority withholds cooperation and focuses instead on drawing sharp and favorable contrasts between itself and the majority.

Applying this theory to state legislatures yields some anomalies. California and Massachusetts are both Democratic-dominated states in which Republicans have no chance of winning a majority in the foreseeable future. Massachusetts conforms to the expectations of the theory. Its Republicans bargain with the Democrats to secure limited but real policy concessions. California does not. Its Republicans fight fiercely but unsuccessfully against the inevitable Democratic tide. In 2020, the difference in the median NP scores (Shor and McCarty 2022) for the two parties, a widely used metric of legislative polarization, was 1.28 in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and 1.22 in the Massachusetts Senate. It was more than twice as large, 2.90 and 3.03, in the corresponding chambers in California. What accounts for this difference?

We argue that progressive ambition plays an important role. In California, most Republicans in the state legislature represent parts of the state where they could plausibly run for Congress and win. None of the Republicans in Massachusetts do. As a result, California Republicans face a tradeoff that is altogether foreign to Massachusetts Republicans. If they cooperate with Democrats, that may help them to enact more moderate policies in California, but it may also alienate conservative donors, congressional primary voters, or other Republican elites whose support is necessary to successfully run for Congress.

This paper develops a theory of how ambition shapes conflict in state legislatures and systematically tests the hypothesis that the desire to get elected to Congress reduces bipartisan collaboration. We use bill cosponsorship and ideal point-based measures of polarization to measure the proclivity of legislators to cooperate with members of the other party. Our studies examine whether these measures of bipartisanship are lower in places where legislators are most likely to think they have a realistic chance of winning a seat in Congress. At the state level, we find that legislators are less inclined to work with members of the other party in states where there are many congressional seats relative to the number of state legislators. In other words, when there are fewer strong competitors for a congressional seat, state legislators choose conflict over collaboration. Similarly, when comparing legislators in the same state we find that legislators whose state districts overlap with winnable congressional districts are substantially less likely to cooperate with members of the other party. Finally, a within-legislator design examining redistricting-induced changes in viability shows legislators respond by decreasing cross-party collaboration.

While our paper focuses specifically on the United States, the theory is broadly applicable. Ambitious politicians in local, regional, or lower-level federal institutions across a variety of countries often behave in ways that best position them for advancement (Alemán, Micozzi, and Ramírez 2018; Carella 2024; Dockendorff 2019). Most of this work does not consider the effects of ambition on partisan conflict or polarization, however.[1] Our theory posits that these politicians will be pressured embrace partisanship and polarization if doing so helps them win election for some higher office they desire. Whether this calculation leads to polarization depends on who chooses the candidates for this higher office. In the contemporary American context, we argue that primary elections

[1]Lucas and Sheffer (2025) do find that surveyed Canadian mayors and municipal councilors who report a high probability of running for provincial or federal office have higher levels of affective polarization, but our paper examines the consequences for observed behavior in office rather than self-reported attitudes.

are the main winnowing stage that determines which candidates (state legislators or otherwise) advance to Congress. In other electoral contexts, this might be party elites who choose lists for a proportional representation system, interest groups with influence over candidate selection, or some other selectorate.

Our paper makes two contributions to the study of polarization. First, our findings highlight the importance of studying polarization spillovers in federal political systems. When politicians can move between different levels of political office, partisan incentives at a higher level can shape the actions of politicians at a lower level. The theory developed here provides guidance on when to expect spillovers of this sort. Second, we highlight empirical ambiguity in prior studies on progressive ambition (e.g., Herrick and Moore 1993; Treul 2009) and candidate pool-induced polarization (Aldrich and Thomsen 2017; Hall 2019; Phillips, Snyder, and Hall 2024; Thomsen 2017). In both cases, researchers seek to explain a behavior (partisanship in the former studies, the decision to run in the latter) with a disposition (ambition in the former, extremity in the latter). In practice however, these dispositions are measured using endogenous behaviors and neglect to take into account the possibility of causality flowing in the opposite direction. This paper introduces an original research design that overcomes this issue.

Why Ambition Leads to Conflict in State Legislatures

Progressive ambition, defined as the desire to attain a more prestigious office than the one currently occupied, influences how politicians approach their jobs (Schlesinger 1966; Victor 2011). For example, Treul (2009) shows that United States senators who at some point in their career run for president vote with their party more frequently than those who do not. She argues that legislators with presidential aspirations anticipate that they will need the support of the party base to win their party's nomination, and they believe that voting with the party is a prerequisite for obtaining that support. Similarly, Herrick and

Moore (1993) find that members of the US House who go on to secure a leadership spot in the chamber vote in more partisan ways beforehand, a finding they interpret as evidence of a purposive effort to improve their chances of securing that leadership position.

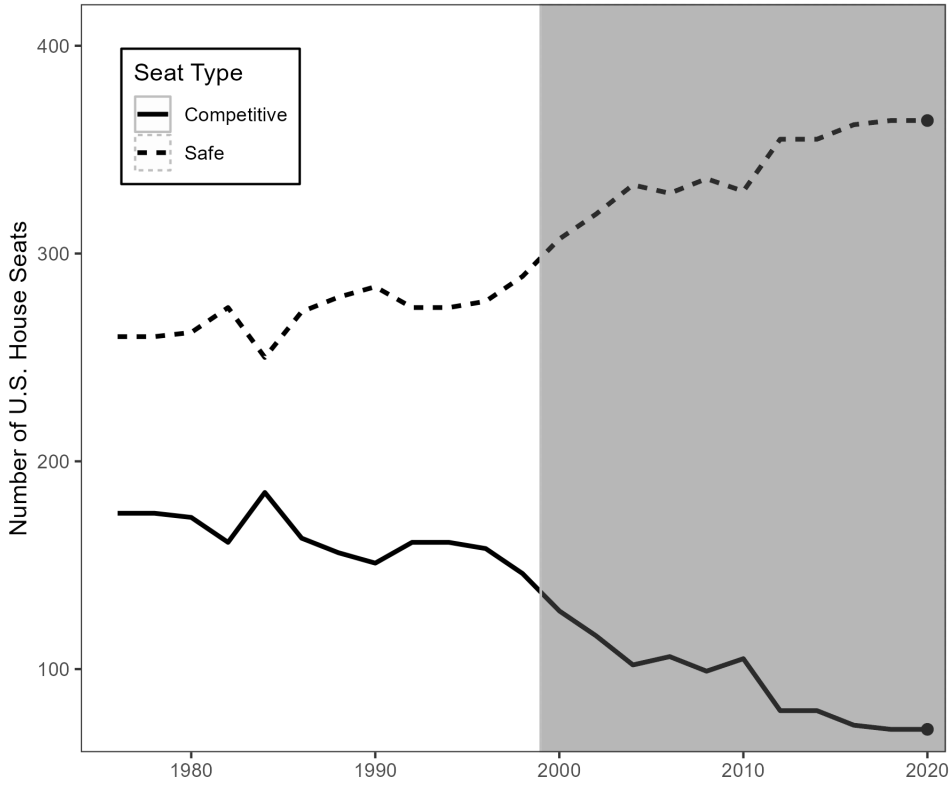
In general, politicians who seek a specific office will be motivated to take actions in their current environment that maximize their chances of advancement. This framework makes it simple to posit what the effect of progressive ambition should be for any particular set of politicians. The first question to ask is what, if any, higher office those politicians seek. The second question to ask is who (or what) determines which candidates are selected for that office. Returning to the Herrick and Moore study of leadership ambitions among U.S. House members, a key selection criterion is loyalty to the party on procedural and substantive votes (Sinclair 1998). House members who want to climb the party hierarchy thus have an incentive to toe the party line when it comes to roll call voting.

This framework can be applied to state legislators. Beginning with the first question, one of the main forms of progressive ambition for state legislators is running for Congress. The single most common pathway to entering Congress is first serving as a state legislator; approximately half (48.5%) of nonincumbent general election-winners between 1996 and 2016 had previously served as state legislators (Phillips, Snyder, and Hall 2024). While many state legislators do not ever run for Congress, many do, and a congressional candidacy is surely on the minds of more who for a variety of contextual reasons do not end up running. The best data on the congressional ambitions of state legislators comes from Maestas (2003). In a survey of 416 state legislators from 8 different states, 19% indicated that they planned to "seek a congressional seat". An additional 35% reported they were "not sure of future plans", while the remaining 46% had specific future plans that did not entail running for Congress.

The second question to answer is how state legislators would best position themselves to win a congressional seat, if this is a goal of theirs. In recent years, for most congressional districts the main winnowing stage is the primary election. Most districts today lean

heavily towards one party or the other, which means that winning the primary election is tantamount to obtaining the seat in Congress. Figure 1 shows the growth in one-party safe districts over time, as measured using the district's Cook PVI score.[2] As the figure shows, in recent years between 80-85% of districts are safe for one party or the other.

Figure 1 – Most Congressional Districts Today Are Partisan and Noncompetitive in the General Election



Note: The figure displays the number of US House districts in each election cycle that are safe for one of the two major parties versus competitive. Competitive seats are defined as seats whose partisan lean over the past two presidential election cycles are between -5 and +5 percentage points, while competitive seats are all seats outside of this window. The gray shaded area depicts the time period of the analyses in this paper.

In districts such as these, winning a primary election requires taking clear partisan

[2]A competitive district is defined as a district for which the partisan lean, measured over the previous two presidential election cycles, is between -5 (five percentage points more Democratic than the national average) and +5 (five percentage points more Republican than the national average). All other districts are considered safe districts.

positions. Prior research has provided considerable evidence that primary electorates favor partisan candidates over moderates (Boatright 2013; Brady, Han, and Pope 2007; Nielson and Visalvanich 2017, though see Hirano and Snyder 2019 for an opposing perspective). In surveys American lawmakers report rejecting bipartisan compromises they would otherwise support due to a fear of primary voters, who legislators believe reward uncompromising stances (Anderson, Butler, and Harbridge-Yong 2020).

Additionally, early fundraising performance is an essential element of a successful congressional candidacy (Bonica 2017). Individual donors, who are the largest source of campaign funds for non-incumbents, give more money to political extremists (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; La Raja and Schaffner 2015; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024). Taking divisive actions such as attacking out-party members or spreading partisan conspiracy theories can boost candidate recognition and pay fundraising dividends (Ballard et al. 2023; Hilden and Kistner 2025; Oklobdzija 2017).

Finally, obtaining the support of party elites should also incentivize state legislators to take partisan positions. Oftentimes local party organizations choose and endorse particular candidates for open congressional seats, playing a key role in who runs and wins (Lawless 2011; Maisel and Stone 2014). Survey evidence of these local party elites shows that Democratic party leaders prefer more extreme candidates to more centrist candidates by a 2 to 1 margin, while Republican party leaders prefer extremists by a 5 to 1 margin (Broockman et al. 2021). Support from current members of a state's congressional delegation – which, in recent years, tend to be polarized – can also be key to winning an election.

Based on these findings, we argue that courting primary voters, donors, and party elites all push ambitious state legislators in the same direction: towards partisan positions and away from compromise with members of the other party. While it is impossible to determine the exact weight state legislators place on congressional primary voters versus donors versus party elites when considering what actions to take while in office, the

incentives each group provides are the same. Though moderation can provide a benefit in the general election, most state legislators who reach that stage will not face real competition due to the lopsided partisan nature of most contemporary congressional districts. Even in the few districts that are competitive in the general election, the extremism penalty in recent years is small and declining (Bonica and Cox 2018; Canes-Wrone and Kistner 2022).[3]

To summarize, our theory is that many (though not all) state legislators harbor aspirations for congressional office. Achieving this goal requires first obtaining the support of primary voters, donors, and party elites who by and large dislike moderation. State legislators with congressional ambitions may take these considerations into account and choose to eschew compromise and embrace conflict, aiding their future chances. As a result, progressive ambition helps to explain why some state legislators behave in extreme ways and why some state legislatures are as polarized as they are.

Extremity, Candidate Pools, and Running for Congress

A separate line of research has documented a connection between legislators behaving in extreme ways and legislators running for higher office, focusing on how the ideological extremity of the pool of viable congressional candidates contributes to partisan polarization in Congress (Aldrich and Thomsen 2017; Hall 2019; Phillips, Snyder, and Hall 2024; Thomsen 2017). If mostly extremists run for Congress, then the winner of the election must be extreme. Many of the most credible candidates for Congress hail from state leg-

[3]This discussion highlights important scope conditions for our theory. While in recent years primaries are the more salient winnowing stage, in earlier years winning a general election might have been a greater consideration on the minds of state legislators, and the benefits of compromise and moderation greater. During an era when Congress, donors, and party activists were less polarized, ambition would not lead to conflict. More generally, progressive ambition should only lead to partisan conflict when embracing extremism helps lower-level politicians advance to higher office.

islatures, so these studies have used state legislatures to approximate the pool of strong candidates.

The studies differ in their particulars. Aldrich and Thomsen (2017) and Thomsen (2017) advance a theory of *party fit*, which posits that legislators who are outside the ideological mainstream of their state legislative party but within the ideological mainstream of their party in Congress are more likely to leave the former for the latter.[4] Hall (2019) argues that extremists have more to gain from pulling policy in their preferred direction and more to lose if the other party pulls policy away from them, so they are more motivated to run. Phillips, Snyder, and Hall (2024) are agnostic as to the mechanism by which extremists are more or less likely to run, but they cite the above work in motivating their analyses. The common understanding throughout this entire literature is that the positive correlation between ideological extremity and running for Congress comes from more extreme legislators deciding to run. State legislators vie for congressional seats because they are extreme.

Both the candidate pool and progressive ambition literatures offer a positive correlation between behaving in extreme ways and running for higher office as their evidence, but they use this evidence to reach opposite conclusions. The problem is that both are interested in the effect of a disposition on behavior, but, in each case, the disposition is measured using the behavior that the other wants to explain. The literature on the candidate pool uses roll call votes, campaign contributions, and survey responses (depending on the specific measure used) as behavioral proxies for the legislator's ideology. It then tests whether ideology predicts who runs for Congress. Similarly, the literature on pro-

[4]In principle, there could be a state party that is extreme relative to Congress and a legislator in that state who is moderate relative to their state party but within the mainstream of their party in Congress. In that state, the party fit theory predicts moderate legislators would be more likely to run. However, the party fit theory's most important contribution in Thomsen (2017) is to explain why so few moderates run for Congress, so, in contemporary politics, state parties are generally more moderate than congressional parties and extremists are more likely to run. This yields functionally similar predictions to Hall's work.

gressive ambition uses running for office as a behavioral proxy for whether that legislator had ambitions to attain that office all along, then tests whether ambition predicts how legislators vote. Each can credibly claim that their preferred disposition confounds the other's analysis. Perhaps roll call votes only predict running for Congress because both are actually caused by nascent congressional ambition, or perhaps running for Congress only predicts roll call call votes because both are caused by ideology.

So, in addition to extending the literature on progressive ambition to a new application, it is necessary for us to devise a research design that is more discriminating than those that have been used so far in either of these literatures. We must provide evidence that congressional ambitions produce partisan conflict that cannot be explained by the possibility that temperamentally more extreme legislators are more likely to run for Congress.

To be clear, finding that congressional ambitions produce partisan conflict would not eliminate the possibility that, in addition, legislators who happen to be more ideologically extreme for reasons exogenous to their congressional ambitions are also more likely to run for Congress. Both could be true at the same time, so each needs to be tested separately. We focus on evaluating the effect of congressional ambitions on partisan conflict in this paper, which requires us to test the effect of congressional ambitions using an independent variable that is not rooted in whether the legislator actually ran.

Our Research Design

To that end, we look to environmental factors that moderate the effect of ambition on partisan conflict. If an ambitious legislator is in an environment where, no matter what they do, there is little chance they can get elected to Congress, then their ambition won't have much of an effect on their behavior (Maestas et al. 2006; Maisel and Stone 2014). If compromise or moderation seems attractive because it allows them to influence public

policy, they will not be deterred by the expectation that it will make it tougher for them to win election to Congress, because they aren't getting elected to Congress either way. If, on the other hand, the ambitious legislator is in an environment where they have a realistic chance of getting elected to Congress and they believe that taking extreme positions could improve their prospects, then they will eschew compromise and moderation.

Our design tests whether bipartisanship is lower in environments where legislators have a better chance of getting elected to Congress. We present two separate tests based on two different environmental factors, one affecting ambition at the macro-level (state) and one affecting ambition at the micro-level (specific legislators).

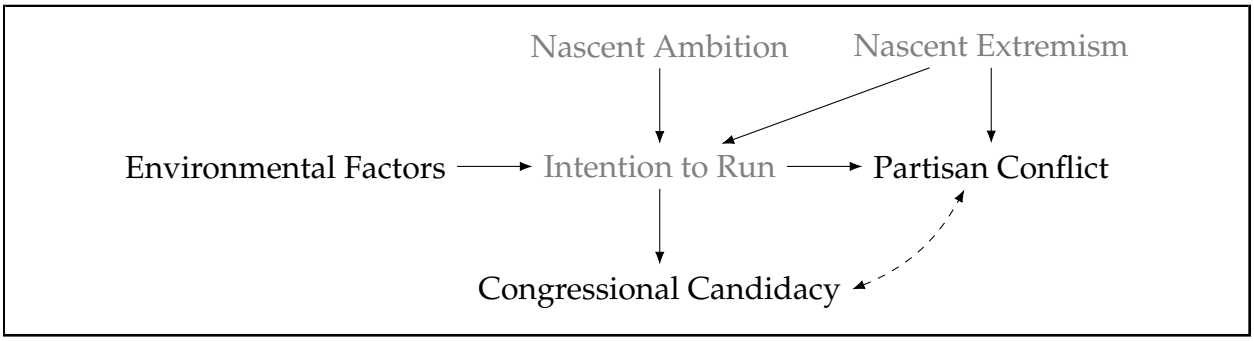
Our first analysis focuses on the ratio of seats in the state legislature to the number of seats that state has in Congress. The number of seats a state has in Congress is determined by its population relative to the rest of the country - a factor over which the state legislature has only remote influence. It is typically set by the state's constitution and rarely changes. There have been no changes in state legislature size over the past two decades, the span of our analyses, so we can treat this as an approximately exogenous variable.

Our second analysis looks to whether a legislator's state district overlaps with a congressional district that is winnable for a member of that legislator's party. District lines are drawn by state legislatures, so we include analyses that restrict the sample to members of the minority party, who have little input in the process.[5] Additionally, only the legislator who is in office when the lines are drawn could plausibly affect this process, but the lines persist even after that legislator leaves office.

Figure 2 illustrates the key independence assumptions underlying our design and how they relate to prior research. Ideally, we would regress congressional candidacy on nascent extremism and partisan conflict on nascent ambition, but nascent ambition

[5]To justify this exogeneity assumption, Appendix B finds no evidence of a relationship between a minority party legislator's collaboration with the majority before redistricting and change in their overlap with a winnable congressional seat after redistricting.

Figure 2 – Causal Diagram of Ambition and Extremism



Note: The diagram displays our research design, which seeks to isolate the effect of ambition on partisan conflict, despite potential confounding. Variables in black are observed, while variables in gray are unobserved. Dashed bidirectional lines indicate the possibility of confounding variables. The effect of ambition is identified via exogenous variation in environmental factors that make a congressional candidacy more or less feasible.

and nascent extremism (as well as intention to run) are unobserved. We must work with variables that we can observe, which in the prior literature has meant measures of partisan conflict and actually running for Congress. If not for the arrow running from the decision to run to partisan conflict, researchers could regress congressional candidacies on measures of partisan conflict, such as NP scores, and interpret the relationship as the effect of nascent extremism on whether a legislator runs to Congress. If not for the arrow between nascent extremism and intention to run, researchers could regress partisan conflict on congressional candidacies and interpret the relationship as the effect of nascent ambition on partisan conflict. But each literature calls the other's assumption into question. We must allow for the possibility that nascent extremism influences intention to run and we must allow for the possibility that intention to run influences partisan conflict.

Our design adds a third type of observable variable: environmental factors that moderate the effect of nascent ambition on intention to run, namely, the seat ratio and overlap between congressional and state legislative districts. There is no arrow that directly connects nascent ambition and partisan conflict; we assume that nascent ambition affects partisan conflict only through its effect on whether a legislator intends to run for Congress. If our environmental factors affect a legislator's intention to run for Congress (and we will

show that, at the very least, they are well correlated with whether the legislator actually runs for Congress), then we can use them to block the pathway from nascent ambition to partisan conflict. If partisan conflict is higher when the environmental factors are favorable to a run for Congress than when they are not, that implies that intention to run must cause partisan conflict, which suggests that nascent ambition causes partisan conflict.

For this design to work, we must assume that our environmental factors affect partisan conflict only through their effect on intention to run. Our environmental factors are not themselves caused by a legislator's inclination toward bipartisan collaboration, which precludes many possible violations of this assumption, but it could be violated if, for example, members of Congress lobbied copartisan state legislators whose districts overlapped with theirs to take hardline positions on state issues. Given the size of the effects we estimate in our analyses, we think it is unlikely that they are caused by these kinds of violations.

Data and Measurement

The first contextual factor influencing progressive ambition is the ratio of state legislative seats to congressional seats in a state. The more state legislators there are for each congressional seat, the greater the potential competition for each seat and thus the smaller the chances that any given state legislator can win. For instance, in New Hampshire, 424 state legislators compete for just four spots in the United States Congress, making the odds that any particular legislator successfully runs for Congress very low. On the other hand, in California 120 state legislators compete for over fifty seats, so each state legislator has a much higher chance of advancing. The ratio between the two seat counts is straightforward to calculate. Data on the number of state legislative seats for each state come from National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), while data on the number of congressional seats during each redistricting cycle come from Congress.gov.

For our micro-level environmental factor, we consider whether a state legislator's district overlaps with a congressional district that they could plausibly win. As a shorthand, we refer to these legislators as *viable for Congress*. We say that a legislator could plausibly win in a congressional district if that district is either a swing district or a safe district for their party, as measured by the Cook Partisan Voter Index. A Democrat is viable for Congress if their district overlaps with a congressional district that is R+5 or better, and a Republican is viable for Congress if their district overlaps with a congressional district that is D+5 or better.[6] In Appendix F, we use an alternative measurement strategy that also classifies the legislator as viable for Congress if they serve in a state where they could plausibly run for Senate and win - that is, a D+5 or better state for Republicans and an R+5 or better state for Democrats. While it is rare that a state legislator runs directly for a U.S. Senate seat and wins, it is theoretically possible, and the potential of an eventual Senate seat (even in the far future) might plausibly affect the strategic calculations of a forward-looking state legislator. Appendix F shows that the results of our analysis are robust to a measure of viability that uses viability of the state as well as viability of House districts.

Data on state legislators comes from an updated version of the State Legislative Election Returns dataset (Klarner 2018). Boundaries for both state legislative districts and congressional districts were obtained from the US Census's Redistricting Data Program. In our main analyses, we classify a state legislative district as overlapping with a congressional district if at least 0.1% of its area is inside the congressional district. Appendix F show that the results are robust to more stringent overlap requirements: 25%, 33%, and 50% of the state legislative district's voting age population within a winnable congres-

[6]Legally, a legislator can run to represent a congressional district without actually living in the district. However, legislators running for Congress in a geographically different district would lose the benefit of name recognition and personal reputation that they have built with their current constituents. For this reason changing districts entirely for a congressional run, while not unheard of, is uncommon.

sional district.

This measure of viability for Congress is closely correlated with who actually wins election to Congress, consistent with our assumption – depicted in the bottom diagram of Figure 2 – that our environmental factor (district overlap) affects expressed ambition (running for Congress).[7] Of the 161 state legislators who won election to Congress, only 4 were classified as not viable for Congress according to our measure. Of those, one (Parker Griffith) immediately switched parties after winning his election to Congress. Even accounting for the fact that most state legislators represent districts where they are viable for Congress, legislators whom we classify as viable for Congress are 6 times as likely to actually run for Congress and win.

Each of these two approaches has their advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of the seat-ratio measure is that it allows us to use a state-level factor to assess the effect of bipartisanship in the aggregate, arguably the quantity of most interest for assessing the policy implications of our findings. Another benefit of using state-level congressional seat ratio measure is that it is not affected by the possibility of legislators moving to different districts within the state, however uncommon. On the other hand, it leaves no within-state variation to exploit, making it potentially vulnerable to some form of unobserved confounding between states with high Congress to state legislature seat ratios and partisan conflict, a concern that doesn't apply to our within-state district overlap analyses. Additionally, the district overlap design allows us to identify the effect of progressive ambition on individual state legislators, providing further confidence in the mechanism we are isolating. As each of our two measures has unique benefits, we include analyses that use both.

For our outcome variables, we offer two measures of proclivity towards bipartisan-

[7]To determine whether a state legislator runs for Congress, we match state legislators to their identifiers in the Bonica Database on Ideology and Money in Politics (Bonica 2023), which identifies congressional candidacies. More details on the matching procedure can be found in Appendix A.

ship. The first is rooted in ideal points derived from roll-call votes (Shor and McCarty 2022). At the state-level, we use the distance between the median member of each party, a popular measure of partisan polarization. At the individual-level, we use the distance from a given legislator to the median member of the opposite party.

These roll-call based measures are widely used in the literature, and therefore help to compare the results of our study to others. However, they also have two major drawbacks. First, recent research (Handan-Nader 2024) provides strong evidence that common ideal point scaling procedures produce biased estimates of partisan conflict. Second – and relatedly – measures based on roll-call voting are sensitive to partisan agenda control. Even if rank-and-file legislators want to work across party lines, majority party leaders can stack the agenda, preventing bills where moderate majority party state legislators will vote with minority party members from receiving a vote (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Shor and Kistner 2024).

For these reasons, we also use a cosponsorship-based measure of bipartisanship. Cosponsorship provides a natural scale for assessing the degree to which members of different parties work together that is less subject to agenda-based confounding given that bills can be cosponsored as soon as they are introduced. Our cosponsorship data come from Legiscan, which provides public datasets of bills introduced in all fifty state legislatures beginning between 2007 and 2011, depending on the state. Legiscan lists the identities of all sponsors and cosponsors on any given bill. Unfortunately, what constitutes a sponsor versus a cosponsor differs from state to state in ways that preclude interpreting the distinction substantively. While it would be interesting to distinguish between legislators who write bills that appeal to members of the other party versus those who are inclined to cosponsor the other party's legislation, many state legislatures in the data do not distinguish between sponsors and cosponsors. Other states that do distinguish between sponsors and cosponsors allow for a large or unlimited number of sponsors, such that sponsors in these states are akin to original cosponsors in the congressional context.

Accordingly, we refer to all legislators who have sponsored or cosponsored as a bill as cosponsors. We use data from 2007 to 2022 to analyze how progressive ambition shapes bipartisanship.

To measure a legislator's proclivity towards bipartisan collaboration, we take each bill cosponsored by the legislator and calculate the proportion of cosponsors on that bill who are members of the opposite party. We then average that proportion across all bills the legislator cosponsored in a given two-year period to calculate our measure of bipartisan collaboration, which we term the *bipartisan cosponsorship score*. The bipartisan cosponsorship score captures both a legislator's efforts to write bills that can attract cosponsors from the other party as well as their willingness to cosponsor bills that appeal to the opposing party.[8] We also use roll call vote-based measures derived from NP scores, which we will describe for each test separately.

Our state-level research design considers whether bipartisan cosponsorship is lower where the ratio of congressional to state legislative seats is high. Our legislator-level research design considers whether legislators are less likely to cosponsor with members of the other party when their state legislative district overlaps with a viable congressional district. We supplement these two between-legislator designs with a within-legislator design that characterizes how legislators' behavior changes before and after a redistricting that gave them overlap with a winnable congressional districts. All three designs yield substantively similar conclusions: environmental factors that inflame progressive ambition decrease bipartisan collaboration.

[8]In states that do separate sponsorship versus cosponsorship, we can analyze whether there are differences between these two forms of bipartisanship. The correlation between our bipartisan cosponsorship score and one constructed using only the percent of opposite-party cosponsors on bills a member sponsors themselves (i.e., the ability to attract opposite-party support) is 0.85. The correlation between our bipartisan cosponsorship score and one constructed using only the percent of bills cosponsored by the legislator that are sponsored by an opposite-party member (i.e., the willingness to provide opposite-party support) is 0.73. Reassuringly, our measure appears to correlate well with both forms of bipartisanship.

Ambition and Bipartisanship in the States

We begin by examining whether state legislators act in more partisan ways when there are more congressional seats to run for and fewer state legislators to compete with. To aggregate our cosponsorship outcome variable to the chamber-level, we average our bipartisan cosponsorship score across all legislators in the relevant chamber. For our roll-call vote measure, we use the distance between the NP scores of the median member of each party.

For all 50 states, we calculate our seat ratio variable as the number of state legislative seats divided by the number of U.S. House seats. This seat ratio variable is then logged to prevent outliers (e.g., New Hampshire with its ratio of 212 to 1) from being overly influential. Likely for this reason, the logged version of the seat ratio variable is more strongly correlated with the number of congressional candidacies than the non-logged measure is. Appendix D confirms that the logged seat ratio is strongly associated with the proportion of legislators who actually run for Congress ($|r| \geq 0.43$).

To evaluate whether members respond to these incentives with less bipartisanship, we run a series of regressions. In the most basic specification, we regress the outcomes on the logged seat ratio variable. We estimate this model both with and without control variables, to account for any differences in states with high versus low ratios that might also affect bipartisan collaboration. In the control variable models, we control for the partisanship of state legislative districts using the presidential vote share in each state legislative district (data come from an update of Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2013). We include controls for the Democratic presidential vote share in the median district, as well as the majority and minority party's vote share in the median majority and minority party district, respectively. We control for the percentage of seats the majority party controls, as minority members may be less likely to cooperate in chambers where slim margins separate the majority and minority parties. We also include a binary indicator of whether the chamber majority is Republican versus Democrat, a binary indicator for numerical limits on cosponsorship, and the percent of state legislators that are women. Finally,

we include a binary variable indicating whether a single party controls both legislative chambers and the state's governorship, as divided government may necessitate more bipartisanship. All regressions include state-chamber and election year fixed effects as well as clustered standard errors.

In addition to this reduced form regression model, we also estimate two-stage least squares models, where the logged seat ratio measure is used as an instrument for the percent of state legislators running for Congress in any given cycle. These instrumental variable models confirm that the effect of the logged seat ratio measure on bipartisanship is in fact operating through congressional ambition, as opposed to some other channel, further validating the causal diagram shown at the bottom of Figure 2.[9] As with the reduced form regressions, we present these results both with and without control variables.

The results are shown in Table 1. The coefficients in columns 1 and 2 (which show the reduced form results for the NP score measure without and with controls, respectively) reveal that as the number of state legislators competing for a fixed number of congressional seats increases, roll call polarization decreases. In other words, where congressional candidacies are less common, state legislators are more likely to vote with members of the opposite party. Similarly, the coefficients in columns 5 and 6 show that where congressional candidacies are less common, state legislators are more likely to cosponsor bills with members of the opposite party.

The coefficients in the second row of Table 1 (columns 3, 4, 7, and 8) present the second stage results of two-stage least squares instrumental variables models where the seat ratio is used to instrument for the percent of state legislators running for Congress. After instrumentation, the coefficient suggests that a 1% increase in state legislators running for Congress is associated with 1.5% fewer opposite party cosponsors for the average legislator in the chamber as a whole, as well as between 0.07 to 0.09 increase in roll call

[9] Another way to view the reduced form versus instrumental variable estimates is providing the intent-to-treat effect of changing seat ratios as opposed to the direct treatment effect of expressive ambition.

Table 1 – The Effect of Seat Ratio on Roll Call Voting and Cosponsorship

	Dependent Variable:							
	Roll Call Polarization				Bipartisan Cosponsorship			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Seat Ratio	-0.425***	-0.345**			0.062**	0.066***		
(Logged)	(0.096)	(0.134)			(0.026)	(0.016)		
Pct. Ran for Congress			0.093**	0.057**			-0.015***	-0.014*
(Instrumented)			(0.041)	(0.026)			(0.004)	(0.007)
Years	1999-2020				2009-2020			
Num.Obs.	1,069	876	1,069	876	485	440	485	440
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
State-Chamber FEs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Election Year FEs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note: *p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

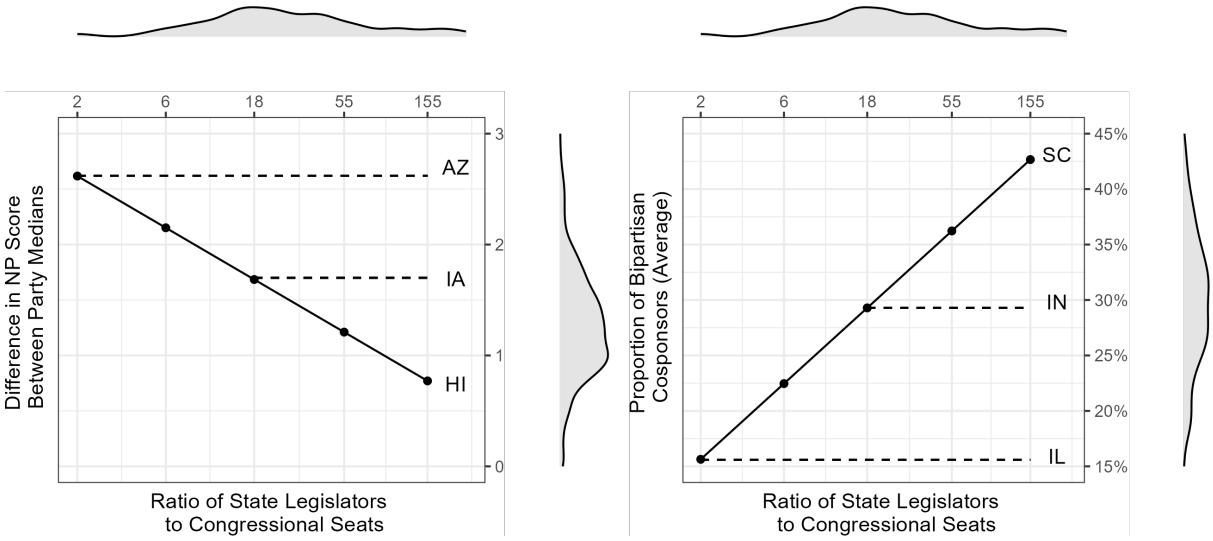
The outcome in all regressions is the aggregated bipartisan collaboration score in a given chamber in a given two-year session, as described in the text above. In the first two columns, which display the results of OLS regression models, the independent variable is the logged ratio of state legislative to congressional seats. In the second two columns, this ratio variable is used as an instrument in a two-stage least squares model for the percent of state legislators in a given chamber that ran for Congress. Models with control variables include controls for the seat share of the majority party, an indicator for Republican majorities, a divided government indicator, the presidential vote share in the median state legislative district, and the party vote share in the median majority and minority district. All specifications include chamber and session fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by chamber.

polarization, approximately 14-18% of a standard deviation.

To help contextualize the substantive significance of these effects, Figure 3 displays the predicted amount of roll call polarization and cross-party sponsorship at differing ratios of state legislators to congressional seats, using the estimates from columns 1 and 5 of Table 1. Example state houses (circa 2020) are provided at the high, intermediate, and low ends of the outcome variable predictions, so readers can assess what the estimates mean in substantive terms. For instance, the model predicts that a legislature with the smallest ratio of state legislators to congressional seats would have similar levels of polarization to the Arizona House, a chamber described in recent years as "hyper-partisan"

and "contentious" (MacDonald-Evoy 2023). In contrast, at the highest observed seat ratios the model predicts polarization approximately at the level of the Hawaii statehouse, where a small handful of moderate Republicans are more more left-leaning than many Democratic legislators in other states.

Figure 3 – Predicted Roll Call Polarization and Opposite-Party Cosponsorship by Seat Share Ratio



Note: The figure plots the estimates from models 1 and 5 from Table 1 at varying ratios of state legislative to congressional seats. The left-hand side plots the predicted roll call polarization, measured as the difference in the NP score of the median Democrat and the median Republican. The right-hand side plots the predicted percent of opposite-party cosponsors on the average bill for the average member. Distributions of the seat ratio variable (log-scale) and outcome variables are shown on the X- and Y-axes, respectively. For each high, intermediate, and low prediction, an example state house is shown that approximately matches the predicted level of the outcome variable.

The bipartisan cosponsorship estimates, shown on the right-hand side of 3, are even more directly interpretable. In a chamber at the lowest end of the seat ratio distribution, the average bill cosponsored by the average legislator has approximately 17.5% opposite-party cosponsors (similar to the Democrat-dominated Illinois Assembly under Speaker Madigan's tenure). In a chamber at the highest end of the seat ratio distribution, the equivalent number is 42.5%, meaning close to perfect partisan parity (roughly equivalent

to the South Carolina House, where minority party members occasionally chair committees). While we do not have direct ideological measures of the bills themselves, prior work shows cosponsorship patterns strongly correlate with the substantive policy content of legislation (e.g., Woon 2008). Thus, while suggestive rather than dispositive, there is good reason to believe congressional ambitions shape policy output in state legislatures as well as legislative behavior.

Ambition and Bipartisanship among Legislators

To confirm that differences in progressive ambition by state legislators are responsible for the state-level findings, we next turn to examining behavior by individual legislators. We consider whether legislators who are viable for Congress, as defined earlier, are less likely to collaborate across party lines. Our goal is to estimate how the bipartisan cosponsorship scores would change among legislators who are viable for Congress if those legislators were not viable for Congress - the average treatment effect on the treated.[10] We use a matching approach because legislators who are viable for Congress could differ from those who are not in many ways that might influence their propensity to collaborate across party lines – they might hail from different states, they might serve at different times, they might represent more extreme districts, and they might have more experience in the state legislature. To adjust for these potential confounders, we use coarsened exact matching (Iacus, King, and Porro 2012) to match each legislator who is viable for Congress to another who is not, but who comes from the same party in the same state, serves at the same time in the same chamber, represents a similarly secure state legislative district, has served a similar number of years in their state legislative chamber, and has

[10] As a robustness check, we also report a simple regression-based analysis in Appendix E and find similar results.

the same gender.[11]

To get a sense of where the identifying variation of our coarsened exact matching comes from, consider an actual matched pair in our data: Assemblyman Chad Lupinacci and Assemblyman Mark Johns of New York, who were matched together for the 2017-2018 legislation session. Both were experienced Republicans (Johns was in his 4th term, Lupinacci his 3rd) and both represented state legislative districts that gave a slight majority of its presidential votes to Hilary Clinton in 2016 - 52% for Johns and 54% for Lupinacci. But Lupinacci's district was located in Suffolk County on Long Island and overlapped with the Republican-leaning NY-1 Congressional District, where a Republican like Lupinacci could plausibly run for Congress and win. Johns' district, on the other hand, was comprised primarily of the city of Rochester, where it was entirely nested within the heavily Democratic 25th Congressional District. In our language, Lupinacci was viable for Congress and Johns was not. Consistent with our argument, 31.2% of the cosponsors on legislation that Johns cosponsored that session were Democrats, indicating an openness to bipartisanship. For Lupinacci, it was only 7.5%, a firm partisan record.

Our coarsened exact matching procedure insists on a match from the same party in the same state in the same chamber during the same year who are of the same gender. The algorithm automatically chooses its tolerance for how close the state legislators must be in terms of how safe their state districts are and how many years they have served in the chamber. Since all matches are within state, chamber, and year, it is not necessary to explicitly adjust for state-level variables, such as the size of the chamber or the majority party's seat share.

Table 2 shows that legislators who overlap with a viable congressional district collab-

[11] We do not attempt to control for a legislator's ideology. Ideology could be influenced by the decision to run for Congress, so controlling for it would risk post-treatment bias. In Appendix G, we also adjust for whether the legislator is a party leader, whether they are a committee leader, and whether they held an elected office before their service in the state legislature. To preserve power, we exclude these variables from the main analysis.

orate with the other party significantly less. The table splits the results by the legislator's party. The first column for each outcome includes all legislators, the second column includes only majority party legislators, and the third column includes only minority party legislators. The estimated effect is significant only at the the $p < 0.10$ level for minority party legislators for the bipartisan cosponsorship score and not significant for extreme roll call voting, as measured by the distance between the legislator and the median member of the other party.[12]

The estimates suggest that representing a state legislative district that overlaps with a viable congressional district leads the proportion of opposite party cosponsors on bills the legislators sponsors or cosponsors to drop by 1.1% and moves their NP score 0.034 away from the median member of the other party.

We can benchmark the size of this effect by comparing it to other factors known to affect bipartisan collaboration: the partisan skew of the state legislator's district (Kessler and Krehbiel 1996) and the competitiveness of majority status within the chamber (Lee 2016). We cannot infer these from a matching analysis that has state-chamber-party-cycle fixed effects, so we estimate them with a linear regression of a legislator's bipartisan cosponsorship score on whether they are viable for Congress, the most recent two-party vote share of their party's presidential candidate within their district, and the majority party's seat share within their chamber. Using the coefficients associated with presidential vote share and the majority party's seat share as reference points, we find the 1.1% effect on cosponsorship is equivalent to the most recent presidential candidate from the legislator's party winning their district by an additional 6.9% (about half of a standard deviation). The amount by which viability increases extremity is equivalent to that presi-

[12] Appendix F provides an alternative measure of viability for Congress based on overlap with both House districts and entire states (reflecting the potential of a US Senate candidacy). It yields less variation which weakens the power, but the aggregate results are similar to what we find here. Appendix H confirms that legislators with low bipartisan cosponsorship scores are indeed more likely to run for Congress.

Table 2 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for House of Representatives

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	-0.011^{**} (0.005)	-0.013^{**} (0.006)	-0.013^{*} (0.008)	0.034^{*} (0.020)	0.053^{*} (0.028)	0.018 (0.022)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.123^{***} (0.034)	-0.155^{***} (0.037)	-0.138^{***} (0.050)	1.225^{***} (0.156)	1.217^{***} (0.201)	1.083^{***} (0.172)
Years Served in Legislative State Chamber	0.001^{*} (0.001)	0.001^{**} (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.007^{**} (0.003)
Female	-0.016^{**} (0.007)	-0.016^{**} (0.008)	-0.010 (0.009)	0.085^{***} (0.030)	0.184^{***} (0.050)	0.058^{*} (0.030)
Observations	1408	609	896	1408	609	896
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: The analysis pre-processes the data with coarsened exact matching. The outcomes are the average proportion of cosponsors from the other party on bills the given legislator has sponsored or cosponsored (the bipartisan cosponsorship score) and the distance between the legislator's NP score and that of the median member of the opposite party (extremity). The treatment is whether the legislator's state district overlaps with a congressional district where their party is viable. The coarsened exact matching matches on the partisan tilt of the legislator's state district (based on presidential vote share), the number of years the legislator has served in their chamber, state, party, and election cycle. The results show that viable legislators are substantially less likely to cooperate with the other party on legislation than otherwise similar peers. The outcome regression includes fixed effects for the full cross of state, chamber, party, and election cycle. It clusters standard errors by legislators.

dential candidate winning the district by an additional 3.8% (about a quarter of a standard deviation). By these estimates, viability for Congress is not quite as substantial of a factor as the gold standard of district partisanship, but it is far from negligible.

Appendix C tests the degree to which the results of this analysis are driven by legislators who are viable because they overlap with safe House districts versus legislators who are viable because they overlap with swing House districts. Consistent with our argument that ambitious legislators eschew bipartianship because they see the major hurdle as securing a partisan nomination, we find that these results are driven mostly by legislators who overlap with safe districts.

Changes to Viability and Bipartisanship

One question that the between-legislator viability comparison above does not address is whether legislators who are extreme select into viable congressional districts, as opposed to viability causing them to act in more extreme ways. As discussed earlier, disentangling these two related but distinct possibilities is challenging.

To address this question, we turn to a within-legislator design that adapts our micro-level test to study how a given legislator's behavior changes after they suddenly become viable for Congress when they were not before. District boundaries change through redistricting, and a state legislator's district can gain or lose overlap with a winnable congressional district. Here we restrict our attention to only those legislators whose districts gained overlap with a winnable congressional district. For state legislators whose district overlapped with a winnable congressional district before redistricting but not after, the name recognition and reputation the state legislator has fostered among their old constituents would not disappear, and their desire to capitalize on their relationship with their old constituents could still inform their behavior in the state legislator, preventing a clean comparison.

We therefore focus on characterizing the effect of a state legislator who was not previously viable for Congress becoming viable during the timespan of our panel data. Our data contain 164 unique legislators whose districts are not originally viable but later become viable (compared to 1,930 legislators whose districts are never viable). Our goal is to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated - how much more or less legislators who become viable for Congress due to redistricting would have collaborated across party lines than they would have if they had not become viable. For this within-legislator analysis, we unfortunately cannot use the NP scores as an outcome variable, as these scores are constructed to be static over time.

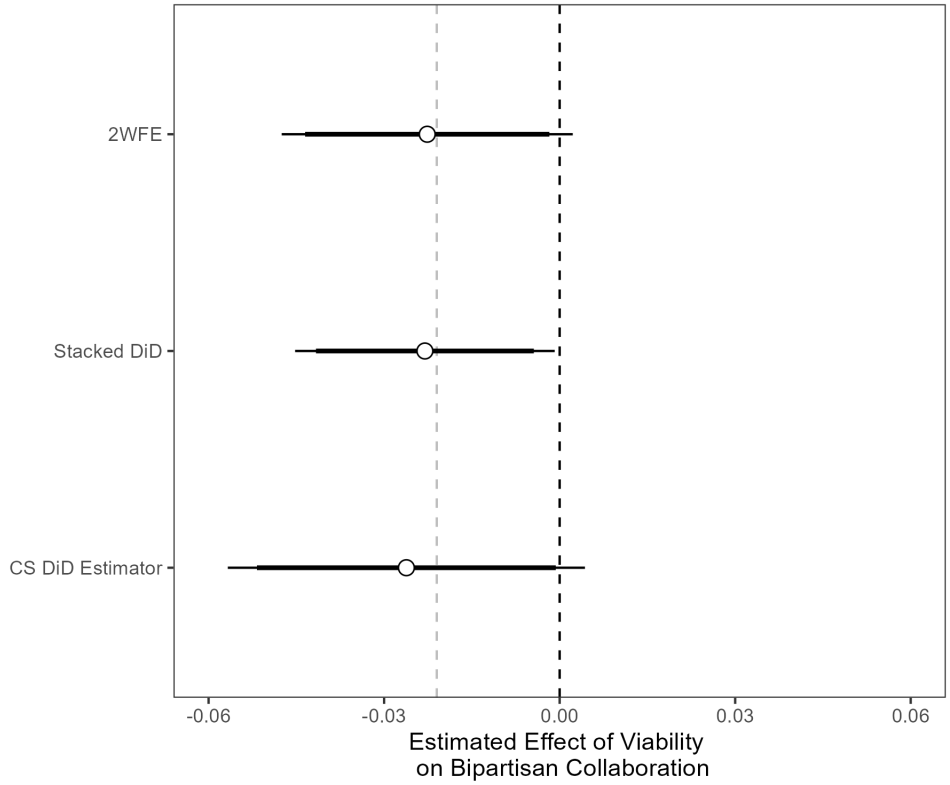
To conduct a within-legislator analysis that draws its variation from changes in behavior after redistricting, our design incorporates legislator-level fixed effects. We also incorporate session-level fixed effects to ensure that our results are not confounded by aspects of redistricting that affect all legislators equally or political changes that happen to coincide with redistricting. The dependent variable is a state legislator's bipartisan collaboration score in the legislative session. The main independent variable is a binary viability indicator, coded as 1 if the state legislator's district overlaps with a winnable congressional district in that legislative session and 0 otherwise.[13] The model contains the same time-varying controls shown in Table 2.

Because changes in viability occur at different times for different state legislators, the treatment is staggered, which can cause technical issues with a traditional two-way fixed effects specification (Baker, Larcker, and Wang 2022). We present the results of the traditional two-way fixed effects estimator in Figure 4 for the sake of transparency, but we

[13]In Appendix I, we demonstrate that changes in the viability of a state legislator post-redistricting are associated with a higher probability of running for Congress, an approximate 50% increase over the baseline probability of a congressional candidacy. Additionally, while in the analysis shown below we continue to define viability as any amount of overlap with a winnable congressional district, we show in Appendix J that the results do not change appreciably if we instead define viability requiring a minimum overlap threshold of 25%, 33%, or 50%.

focus on an alternative stacked difference-in-difference estimator, which constructs a control cohort for each redistricting from all legislators whose viability had not changed up to that point (Cengiz et al. 2019). As a robustness check, we also implement the Callaway and Sant'Annna (2021) difference-in-differences estimator, an alternative option for addressing the same problem.

Figure 4 – Difference-in-Differences Estimates of the Effect of Viability on Bipartisan Collaboration



Note: The figure displays the estimated effect of new viability on a state legislator's bipartisan collaboration score, i.e., the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT). Open circles show the point estimate, thin lines display the 95% confidence intervals, and thick lines display the 90% confidence intervals of the effect size. The black dashed line shows the zero point (no effect), while the gray dashed line shows the average estimated effect size produced by the matching and regression procedure shown in Table 2.

Figure 4 presents the results, which are consistent with our previous findings. When a state legislator gains some overlap with a winnable congressional district due to redistricting, they collaborate less with members of the other party. The point estimates

of these within-legislator difference-in-differences specifications (open circles) are quite similar to the point estimate obtained by the between-legislator matching and regression design (gray dashed line). The effect is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level for the stacked difference-in-differences estimator and falls just shy of that threshold for two-way fixed effects analysis ($p < 0.075$) and the Callaway-Sant'Anna difference-in-differences estimator ($p < 0.087$), which may be attributable to the small number of treated legislators (164).

To summarize, the within-legislator redistricting analysis returns quite similar estimates to the between-legislator analysis. Importantly, however, the results suggest that our earlier findings are not solely the result of selection by extreme and ambitious legislators into districts that serve as a leaping off point for a congressional candidacy. Legislators for whom a congressional candidacy becomes more likely respond by acting in more partisan ways in the state legislature.

Discussion

Our findings show how congressional ambitions contribute to partisan conflict in state legislatures. When state legislators represent districts that overlap with winnable congressional seats, they are less likely to work and vote across party lines. Similarly, when states have a low ratio of state legislative to congressional seats, making congressional candidacies more viable, there is less bipartisanship in the aggregate. In states where progressive ambition has an opportunity to thrive, compromise and collaboration wither.

We study cosponsorship and voting because these activities provide a window into larger, harder to quantify features of state policymaking. For example, members are more likely to collaborate across party lines when a bill is well crafted and carefully researched, so reductions in bipartisan collaboration could reflect legislators investing less effort into writing high-quality bills. Additionally, bipartisan collaboration in the early stages of

the legislative process allows expert legislators to signal to their less informed colleagues on the floor that a bill is high-quality (Krehbiel 1992). If legislators refuse to cosponsor cross-party bills, it becomes more difficult for the floor to identify high-quality legislation coming out of committee. The outcomes we study are important and easy to measure, but the patterns we identify are likely common to a wide swath of policy outputs.

The key scope condition for our argument is that ambitious legislators believe it will be more difficult to achieve their ambitions if they work and vote with members of the other party. In contemporary American politics, the overwhelming importance of winning primary elections, the campaign finance ecosystem, and the disposition of local party elites jointly work together to ensure this scope condition is met. As Appendix C shows, the effects we identify appear to be weaker when state legislators overlap with swing districts than when they overlap with districts that are safe for their own party.

Alternative institutional environments could lead legislators to believe that collaborating with the other party would actually help their chances of advancing could weaken or even reverse the results. Open primaries could lead yield more bipartisanship from ambitious legislators than closed primaries, as could non-partisan primaries rather than partisan primaries, ranked-choice voting rather than first past the post, campaign finance systems dominated by access-seeking PACs rather than ideological individual donors, or local party systems organized around patronage rather than shared ideological commitments. Our findings imply that changing federal election rules could influence the level of partisan conflict in state legislatures, but establishing the precise effect of different rules must be left to future studies with research designs better tailored to that task.

A central insight of this paper is that research studying the effect of ambition on extremism or extremism on ambition must be done carefully, as causality likely flows in both directions. Although our results show that progressive ambition induces more partisan behavior, they do not rule out the possibility that more ideologically extreme legislators are, all else equal, more inclined to run for higher office as well. However, establish-

ing that relationship requires evidence other than a positive correlation between running for higher office and behaving in extreme ways. To establish that the relationship runs in both directions, as we suspect, future studies must offer research designs that somehow control for or hold constant the nascent ambition of legislators.

Finally, the theory and research design introduced in this paper open up new possibilities for studying the effects of progressive ambition on partisan conflict in a variety of institutional settings. As we have shown, one consequence of a federalist system is that polarization has the potential to spill over from one level to another, if politicians view their current office as an audition for some higher office where polarizing pressures prevail. Future work could explore even lower-level offices (e.g., positions in local politics) in the United States, or consider whether similar dynamics exist in other countries. So long as researchers are able to identify contextual environmental factors that make progressive ambition more or less plausible, the identification strategies pursued here have the potential to shed light on the important question of how ambition shapes conflict.

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Supplementary Materials

Ambition and Conflict in State Legislatures

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A Identifying Which State Legislators Run for Congress

To determine which state legislators run for Congress, we match the state legislators in our dataset – which originates from an updated version of the State Legislative Election Returns (SLERs) dataset (Klarner 2018) – to candidates in the Bonica Database on Ideology and Money in Elections (DIME; Bonica 2023).

We conduct this matching using a two step approach. First, we automatically match all state legislators in the two datasets in the same state, chamber, party, and election cycle who share the exact same first and last name, and for whom there are no alternative matches. The vast majority of names in our original dataset are matched via this code, although it ocassionally omits matches for which first names might not match exactly. For example, a state legislator listed as Michael Brady in one of the two datasets might be listed as Mike Brady in one of the other datasets.

To address these non-matches, we then take all unmatched state legislator names in our Klarner-based dataset, then subset the Bonica dataset to all unmatched state legislators from the same state, chamber, party, and election-cycle. We then used the ChatGPT API to assess likely matches in this subset. We use the following prompt as an instruction:

"Read these instructions carefully. Consider the following input name: *name_to_match*. The list below contains names of possible matches, followed by a Candidate ID in parentheses. If you think one of the names in the list is the same person as the input name, return the Candidate ID of the matched name. If you don't think any of the listed names match the input name, return 'NO MATCH'. Please note that names might not match exactly, which is fine. There might be a middle initial in one and not the other, the input name might be Mike but the match name might be Michael, there might be Jr. in one and Junior in the other, etc.

List of names: ..."

After using the above prompt for all unmatched names and getting additional matches, we audited a random sample of 100 of the additional matches, as well as 100 state leg-

islator names where matches in the Bonica dataset were not found. Of these, 98 out of the 100 ChatGPT-identified matches were confirmed to be correct, and 100 out of the 100 non-matches were confirmed to not have a match in the Klarner dataset. The balanced accuracy across both matches and non-matches of 99% was deemed to be acceptable. To the extent that this procedure produces some small number of false positives, the relationship between our environmental factors and congressional candidacies (such as those depicted in Figure D.1) are likely to be even stronger were we to not have the false positives.

B Redistricting and Bipartisan Collaboration

The identification strategy for our analysis assumes that minority party legislators' bipartisan collaboration does not cause them overlap (or not overlap) with a winnable congressional district. To test this assumption, we investigate the 2010 redistricting. These new maps were drawn up between the 2010 and 2012 elections, or, in the case of states with odd-numbered election years, between the 2009 and 2011 elections. We construct a data set of minority party legislators who were in the state legislature for both of these cycles. There are 1001 such legislators in our dataset. We define their change in viability for Congress as +1 if the legislator was viable after redistricting but not before, -1 if the legislator was viable before redistricting but not after, and 0 if they were viable both before and after or not viable both before and after. We regress their change in viability for Congress on their bipartisan cosponsorship score in the cycle before redistricting, with state-level fixed effects. If, within a given state, legislators who cosponsored with the majority party more often before redistricting became more viable after redistricting, that would falsify our identification assumption.

That is not what we find. The coefficient for the bipartisan cosponsorship score is 0.0186, with a standard error of 0.061. This coefficient falls well short of statistical significance. We find no evidence that redistricting rewarded more accommodating minority party legislators with districts that made them viable for Congress.

C Weakened Effects for Swing Congressional Districts

We argue that our results rely on three key factors: legislators must obtain the support of primary voters, donors, and local party elites to mount a successful congressional campaign, and all three of these groups tend to prefer more extreme candidates to more moderate candidates. Even legislators who, if nominated, will face a competitive general election are subject to these forces, but, on balance, they should be less sensitive to changes in their viability for the House of Representatives.

The analyses in Table C.1 mostly support these mechanism test. The analysis is exactly the same as the coarsened exact matching analysis in Table 2, except that in the outcome model, there is an additional covariate for whether the legislator is viable for the House of Representatives only because their district overlaps with a swing district (between R+5 and D+5), not because it overlaps with any districts that are safe for their party. Because the model includes both viable for the House and viable for the House through a swing district, the latter captuers how being viable through a swing district moderates the main effect of being viable.

As we can see, legislators who are viable through a swing district are generally less extreme than those who are viable through at least one safe district. That moderation effect does not quite hold for the minority party, and does not hold for the bipartisan cosponsorship score either. Part of the problem is that most of the legislators who are viable overlap with at least one safe district. As the second row of Table C.1 shows, the confidence intervals for the coefficients associated with viability through a swing district are quite wide; each of them is consistent with the possibility that being viable through a swing district rather than a safe district completely nullifies the main effect.

Table C.2 repeats the regression-based analysis from Appendix E, with this viability through swing district variable added. This regression analysis preserves the whole sample, and therefore offers a great deal more power. Here, the results are unambiguous. Being viable through a swing district, rather than a safe district, substantially attenuates

Table C.1 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for House of Representatives with Interaction for Swing Districts

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	-0.010^{*}	-0.012^{*}	-0.017^{*}	0.052^{**}	0.072^{**}	0.023
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.025)	(0.031)	(0.029)
Viable for House of Representatives through Swing District	-0.001	0.004	0.008	-0.054^{*}	-0.084^{**}	-0.012
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.037)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.124^{***}	-0.154^{***}	-0.132^{**}	1.193^{***}	1.193^{***}	1.074^{***}
	(0.034)	(0.038)	(0.052)	(0.155)	(0.200)	(0.174)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.001^{*}	0.001^{**}	0.001	-0.003	-0.003	-0.007^{**}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Female	-0.016^{**}	-0.016^{**}	-0.010	0.085^{***}	0.186^{***}	0.058^{*}
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.030)	(0.049)	(0.030)
Observations	1408	609	896	1408	609	896

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: The design is exactly the same as in Table 2, except the outcome model includes an additional control variable for whether the legislator is viable through a swing district. This gives the marginal effect of being viable through a swing district, above and beyond the effect of being viable.

the effect of viability for both outcome variables and all subsamples.

Table C.2 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for Congress on Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score Without Matching

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	-0.017^{***}	-0.008^{**}	-0.020^{***}	0.067^{***}	0.068^{***}	0.069^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Viable for House of Representatives through Swing District	0.011^{***}	0.009^{***}	0.014^{***}	-0.048^{***}	-0.051^{***}	-0.044^{**}
	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.147^{***}	-0.134^{***}	-0.169^{***}	0.874^{***}	0.901^{***}	0.825^{***}
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.031)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.000^{***}	0.000^{***}	0.001^{***}	-0.006^{***}	-0.005^{***}	-0.006^{**}
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	0.001	0.002	-0.001	0.028^{***}	0.019^{*}	0.044^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Observations	23,284	15,229	8,055	23,284	15,229	8,055

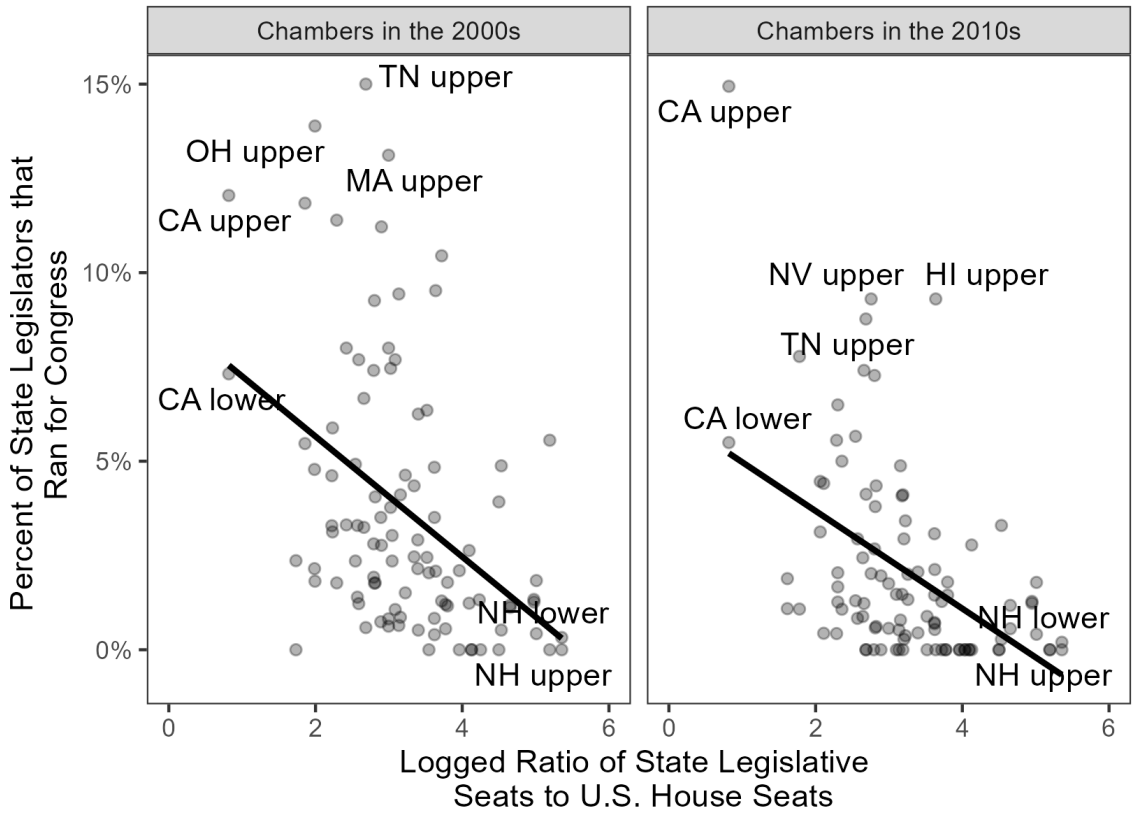
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The design is exactly the same as in Table E.1, except the outcome model includes an additional control variable for whether the legislator is viable through a swing district. This gives the marginal effect of being viable through a swing district, above and beyond the effect of being viable.

D The Logged Seat Ratio is Correlated with the Percentage of Legislators who Ran for Congress

As Figure D.1 shows, the relationship between the logged seat ratio measure and congressional candidacies is strong. The figure shows a scatterplot where each point indicates a state-chamber during one of the two redistricting cycles in our data. The x-axis shows the logged ratio of state legislative seats to U.S. House seats, while the y-axis shows what percent of state legislators who served in the state legislature during that time period ran for Congress, a variable that ranges from 0% to over 15% depending on the state and chamber. The correlation coefficient is -0.43 for chambers in the 2000s, and -0.47 during the 2010s (in both cases, the two-tailed p-value is less than 0.01 and the f-statistic above 20). More state legislators run for Congress when there are fewer seats in the state legislature relative to the number of seats in Congress.

Figure D.1 – Ratio of State Legislative To Congressional Seats and Congressional Candidacies



Note: The figure displays the relationship between the (logged) ratio of state legislative to congressional seats in each state and the percent of state legislators running for Congress from each chamber during the 2000s redistricting cycle (left-hand side) and the 2010s redistricting cycle (right-hand side). The correlation coefficient is -0.43 during the 2000s and -0.47 during the 2010s. Solid black lines indicate the OLS regression fit.

E Micro Analysis Using Regression without Matching

In our main analysis, we use coarsened exact matching to match legislators who are viable for Congress with a similar legislator who serves in the same chamber at the same time. This matching analysis ensures that our treated legislators (those who are viable for Congress) are really comparable to our control legislators (those who are not). In the process, it excludes states where all of the legislators are viable and legislators who represent districts with very heavy partisan tilts from the analysis, because neither can be credibly matched to another legislator with the opposite treatment status. To show that our results are robust to the inclusion of these legislators, Table E.1 repeats the analysis without the coarsened exact matching. It simply regresses the outcomes on viability for the House, the partisan tilt of the state legislative district, the number of years the legislator has served in the chamber, and state-party-chamber-cycle fixed effects. The results are very similar to the matching-based results. The only difference is that the coefficient for viability in the majority party with the bipartisan cosponsorship score is no longer statistically significant.

Table E.1 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for Congress on Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score Without Matching

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	-0.013^{***}	-0.006	-0.014^{***}	0.050^{***}	0.057^{***}	0.051^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.016)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.155^{***}	-0.140^{***}	-0.179^{***}	0.906^{***}	0.933^{***}	0.856^{***}
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.030)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.000^{***}	0.000^{***}	0.001^{**}	-0.006^{***}	-0.005^{***}	-0.006^{***}
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	0.001	0.002	-0.001	0.028^{***}	0.019^{*}	0.044^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Observations	23,284	15,229	8,055	23,284	15,229	8,055

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The analysis uses a linear regression without coarsened exact matching. Each specification includes state-chamber-party-cycle fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by state-chamber.

F Micro Analysis with Alternative Measures of Overlap

Our baseline analysis counts a legislator as viable for Congress if either they serve in a state where a member's state legislative district at all overlaps with a winnable congressional district. Table F.1 replicates the coarsened exact matching analysis with progressively more demanding measures of viability. Each row corresponds to a replication of the original analysis. The first row repeats the original analysis. The second row adjusts the definition of viability for the House so that, in order for a legislator to be viable, at least 25% of the voting age population in their state legislative district must live in a winnable congressional district. The third row raises the threshold to 33% and the fourth row raises it to 50%. The results from the main analysis are robust to all of these definitions, except that the results for the minority party falls short of statistical significance with the 25% overlap threshold.

Table F.2 replicates the matching analysis with an alternative measure of viability that depends both on overlap with a winnable House district and whether the legislator lives in a state where the Senate is winnable for members of their party (where winnable a winnable state is defined using the same Cook PVI-based measure as a winnable House seat). As Table F.2 shows, the results from the baseline analysis are generally robust to this alternative measure. There is, however, one important difference. The effect for the majority party and minority party subsets are no longer statistically significant. By restricting the amount of within-state variation, this alternative measure massively reduces the post-matching sample size from a respectable 618 to a paltry 18.

However, this difference begins to subside as the threshold for viability for Congress becomes more strict.

Table F.1 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for Congress on Bipartisanship with Different Overlap Thresholds

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority			
Viable for House of Representatives (Any)	-0.011^{**}	-0.011^{*}	-0.013^{*}	0.034^{*}	0.053^{*}	0.018
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.022)
Viable for House of Representatives (25%)	-0.010^{**}	-0.014^{***}	-0.011	0.034^{*}	0.073^{***}	0.012
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Viable for House of Representatives (33%)	-0.010^{**}	-0.013^{***}	-0.013^{*}	0.057^{**}	0.161^{**}	0.011
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.027)	(0.069)	(0.023)
Viable for House of Representatives (50%)	-0.012^{***}	-0.018^{***}	-0.015^{**}	0.056^{**}	0.126^{**}	0.043^{*}
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.026)	(0.060)	(0.024)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The analysis replicates the coarsened exact matching analysis with different thresholds for what makes a legislator viable for the House of Representatives. Each row corresponds to a different matching analysis. For brevity, estimates of the other coefficients in the outcome model are omitted.

Table F.2 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for Congress (Including Senate) on Bipartisanship

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for Congress	-0.021^{*}	-0.005	-0.014	0.017	0.010	-0.002
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.012)	(0.036)	(0.084)	(0.033)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.075	0.375	-0.189^{**}	1.268^{***}	2.830^{***}	1.088^{***}
	(0.087)	(0.341)	(0.086)	(0.303)	(0.836)	(0.284)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.000	0.008^{**}	-0.002	-0.011^{**}	0.016	-0.008^{*}
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.004)
Female	0.010	-0.061	0.012	-0.053	-0.261^{*}	-0.036
	(0.014)	(0.040)	(0.014)	(0.047)	(0.137)	(0.041)
Observations	455	18	532	455	18	532

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The analysis pre-processes the data with coarsened exact matching. The outcome is the average proportion of cosponsors from the other party on bills the given legislator has sponsored or cosponsored (the bipartisan cosponsorship score). Viable legislators are substantially less likely to cooperate with the other party on legislation than otherwise similar peers. The outcome regression includes fixed effects for the full cross of state, chamber, party, and election cycle. It clusters standard errors by legislators.

Table F.3 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for Congress (Including Senate) on Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score with Different Overlap Thresholds

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for Congress (Any)	-0.021^{*}	-0.005	-0.014	0.017	0.010	-0.002
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.012)	(0.036)	(0.084)	(0.033)
Viable for Congress (25%)	-0.020^{*}	-0.049^{***}	-0.015	0.026	0.142^{**}	0.005
	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.038)	(0.060)	(0.034)
Viable for Congress (33%)	-0.020^{**}	-0.049^{***}	-0.018^{*}	0.026	0.142^{**}	0.003
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.037)	(0.060)	(0.033)
Viable for Congress (50%)	-0.018^{*}	-0.047^{***}	-0.017^{*}	0.051	0.171^{***}	0.051
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.038)	(0.048)	(0.036)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The analysis replicates the coarsened exact matching analysis with different thresholds for what makes a legislator viable for Congress. Each row corresponds to a different matching analysis. For brevity, estimates of the other coefficients in the outcome model are omitted.

G Micro-Level Regression with Additional Controls

The main matching analysis adjusts for the partisan tilt of the state legislator's district, how long the legislator has served, and the legislator's gender. However, legislators who are viable for the House of Representatives may be more or less likely to run for leadership positions than their non-viable peers, and these differences may explain differences in bipartisan cosponsorship scores.

The simplest way to adjust for this possibility would be to incorporate them into our matching design. The Center for Effective Lawmaking offers the fairly comprehensive data on whether state legislators are party leaders or committee chairs (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2025). However, this data only extends through 2018 and has some idiosyncratic missingness within states.

If we dropped observations where these variables were missing, the loss of power significantly weakens our matching analysis. As an illustration, Table G.1 replicates our matching analysis using the subset of observations for whom the party leader and committee chair variables are non-missing. It *does not* attempt to match on either of those variables. This simply shows what would have happened if we had attempted our analysis in this smaller sample. The number of matched observations drops by around 30%, and as a result the key coefficients in the full sample and the minority sample are no longer significantly different from zero. And, to reemphasize, this is all without attempting to actually match on party leadership or committee chair status. We simply do not have enough data to replicate our analysis with these variables.

We can, however, replicate the regression-based analysis from Appendix E. The samples are, again, about 30% smaller than in the original analysis, but the regression analysis places far fewer demands on the data, so the power problems are not as severe. Table G.2 shows that the main results are mostly robust to addition of these covariates and this pruning of the data. In the full sample and minority sample, the coefficient for viability for the House is still negative and statistically significant (albeit only at the $p < 0.10$ level

Table G.1 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for House of Representatives on Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score (with Observations Missing Committee Chair or Party Leader Excluded)

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			NP Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	−0.007	−0.011	−0.008	0.035	0.054*	0.006
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.026)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	−0.129***	−0.137***	−0.171***	1.199***	1.135***	1.162***
	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.060)	(0.174)	(0.193)	(0.205)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.000	0.002	−0.001	0.001	0.001	−0.003
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Female	−0.006	−0.016	0.003	0.110***	0.212***	0.089**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.041)	(0.052)	(0.041)
Observations	1019	474	587	1019	474	587

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: This analysis replicated the baseline matching analysis from Table 2, but restricts the sample to observations where the committee chair and party leader variables are non-missing. This restriction leads to an underpowered analysis.

in the later case). The coefficient for the majority sample is now insignificant. In all three cases, the coefficients are still negative and the original coefficients from Table E.1 are still within the 90% confidence intervals.

Table G.2 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for House of Representatives on Bipartisanship (with Additional Controls

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			NP Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	-0.009^{**}	-0.002	-0.010^{*}	0.042^{***}	0.050^{**}	0.039^{**}
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.156^{***}	-0.139^{***}	-0.185^{***}	0.923^{***}	0.949^{***}	0.871^{***}
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.031)	(0.040)	(0.042)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.000^{**}	0.000^{**}	0.000	-0.005^{***}	-0.005^{***}	-0.005^{***}
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.030^{***}	0.025^{**}	0.037^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.012)
Committee Chair	0.004^{***}	0.002	0.019^{***}	-0.036^{***}	-0.026^{***}	-0.143^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.024)
Party Leader	-0.008^{***}	-0.005^{**}	-0.014^{**}	0.007	0.019^{*}	-0.017
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Observations	17,649	11,494	6,155	17,455	11,363	6,092

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note:

Table G.3 adds a control for whether the legislator held an elected office before their service in the state legislature, as reported in Hansen and Treul (2024). Unfortunately, their data extends only to state legislators first elected between 2013 to 2017, which leaves us with far too little data to construct a credible analysis. However, incorporating their data provides two sources of comfort. First, Table **??** shows that the point estimates for viability are still negative and of nearly the same magnitude as Table E.1, except for the ma-

jority subsample. Second, for those legislators for whom the prior elected office variable is non-missing, the prior office and viability variables are virtually uncorrelated: $r < 0.03$. This makes it very unlikely that prior elected office confounds the relationship between viability and the bipartisan cosponsorship score.

Table G.3 – The Legislator-Level Effect of Viability for House of Representatives on Bipartisanship (with Additional Controls

	Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score			NP Extremity		
	All	Majority	Minority	All	Majority	Minority
Viable for House of Representatives	−0.012	0.006	−0.019	0.037	0.056	0.022
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.039)	(0.053)	(0.052)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	−0.144***	−0.122***	−0.185***	0.827***	0.758***	0.914***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.027)	(0.085)	(0.117)	(0.106)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	0.001	0.001	0.001	−0.011**	−0.013**	−0.008
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)			
Female	−0.001	0.002	−0.005	0.036*	0.021	0.061*
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.035)
Committee Chair	0.005	0.005	−0.008	−0.073***	−0.058**	−0.364*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.208)
Party Leader	0.021	0.038**	−0.020	0.072	0.041	0.138
	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.036)	(0.064)	(0.071)	(0.111)
Prior Elected Office	0.006*	0.007**	0.004	−0.048*	−0.033	−0.075
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.046)
Observations	3,208	2,134	1,074	3,208	2,134	1,074

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note:

H Low Bipartisan Collaboration Predicts Actually Running for Congress

As an additional plausibility check for our research design, we confirm that legislators who engage in more bipartisan collaboration are in fact less likely to run for Congress. Our argument here is explicitly correlational rather than causal. We do not expect refraining from bipartisan collaboration causes people to run for Congress. Rather, nascent ambition to run for Congress causes state legislators to refrain from bipartisan collaboration because they expect it will make it easier for them to win election to Congress.

To test this hypothesis, we adopt a similar approach to Phillips, Snyder, and Hall (2024). Their goal is to understand why polarization in Congress has increased, and one hypothesis they test is that ideologically extreme state legislators are disproportionately likely to run for Congress. Their pool-based analysis finds that more extreme Republican state legislators, as measured by NP scores, are significantly more likely to run for Congress (although they find no effect for Democrats).

Our goal is to replicate their analysis with three changes. We replace NP scores with our measure of bipartisan collaboration through cosponsorship, we adopt a more permissive measure of what constitutes overlap between a state legislative and congressional district (theirs is based on the share of the district's population that lives in the overlap, which we show in Appendix E), and we include a control for the party's presidential vote share in the legislator's state legislative district.

We first determine which state legislators ran for a seat in the US House of Representatives between 2006 (the start of our cosponsorship data) and 2020. We then identify all members of their party in the same state legislative chamber whose districts overlapped with that seat and define this group as the pool of candidates from the state legislature. For example, if a Republican from the Indiana Senate ran to represent Indiana's 6th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives, their pool would be all

Republicans in the Indiana Senate whose districts overlapped with the 6th Congressional District.

We regress whether each legislator from the pool ran on their bipartisan cosponsorship score, as well as their party's presidential vote share in their state legislative district (to adjust for their own electoral security) and the number of years they have served in their state legislative chamber. Following Phillips, Hall, and Snyder, we incorporate pool fixed effects so that all variation is drawn from within the pool, and we cluster standard errors by state.

The first and third columns of Table H.1 shows that legislators who habitually collaborate with the other party on bills are less likely to run for Congress, both in the majority party and in the minority party. The second and fourth columns of Table H.1 test whether this result is explained by legislators scaling back bipartisan collaboration (because they are too busy running for Congress) by instead using a lagged version of the bipartisan cosponsorship variable (i.e., bipartisanship in the period two to four years prior to their congressional campaign). Since these coefficients are significantly negative as well, we can rule out a busy campaign season explaining the results in the first and third columns.

Table H.1 – Legislative Cooperation with the Other Party and Who Runs for Congress

	Majority	Lag Majority	Minority	Lag Minority
Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score	-0.943^{***}		-0.433^{***}	
	(0.214)		(0.152)	
Lag Bipartisan Cosponsorship Score		-0.733^{***}		-0.934^{**}
		(0.249)		(0.344)
Party's Presidential Vote Share (State District)	-0.070	-0.057	0.089	-0.103
	(0.136)	(0.213)	(0.159)	(0.271)
Years Served in State Legislative Chamber	-0.001	-0.001	-0.004^{*}	-0.006
	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.007)
Observations	983	502	579	314

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The outcome is whether a legislator ran for Congress in a given cycle. The main independent variable is the average proportion of sponsors and cosponsors from the other party on bills the legislator has sponsored or cosponsored (the bipartisan cosponsorship score). The specification includes chamber-election fixed effects, so the analysis compares legislators who ran to other legislators from the same chamber who overlap with the same district who could have ran. Standard errors are clustered by state.

I Changes in Viability and Congressional Candidacies

In the section on Changes to Viability and Bipartisanship, we use a difference-in-difference design based on redistricting-induced changes to congressional the viability of a state legislator, arguing that legislators who gain overlap with a viable congressional district experience an exogenous increase in the prospects of successfully winning a congressional race, which our theory suggests should lead them to behave in more partisan ways in the state legislature.

As a validity check, we want to confirm that state legislators who gain viability are in fact more likely to run for Congress. To confirm these, we estimate a two-way fixed effects model where the dependent variable is whether a state legislator runs for a congressional seat in a given election cycle. The primary independent variable of interest is *Viable for House of Representatives*. The coefficient on this variable should be positive if changes in viability are in fact associated with changes in the probability the member runs for Congress. We include similar control variables as the main analyses, controlling for the partisanship of the state legislative district as well as the seniority of the state legislators. Note that the inclusion of legislator fixed effects here means that we do not need to control for fixed characteristics such as a legislator's gender.

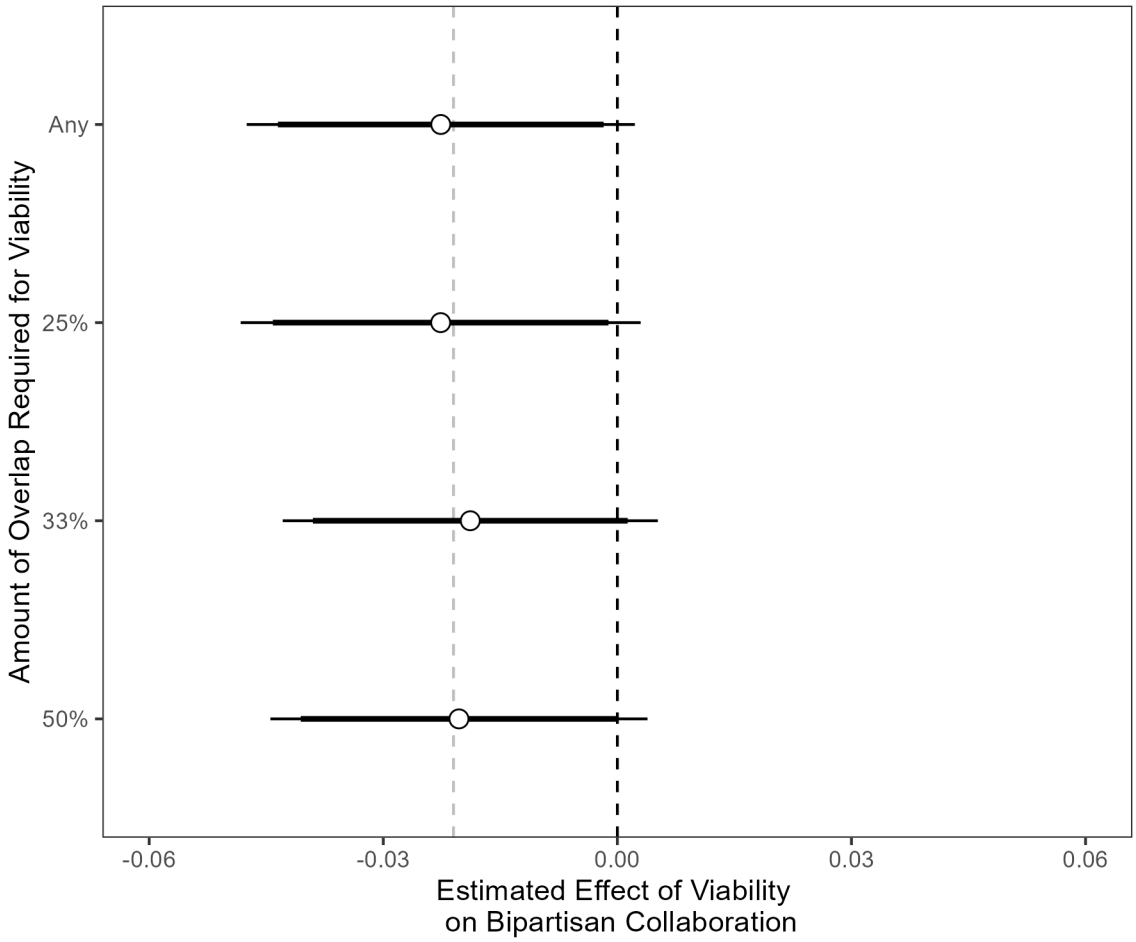
The results of this validity check are shown in Table I.1 below. As can be seen in the table, in election cycles where their districts are viable, state legislators are more likely to run for Congress. Because the dependent variable is binary and the estimator is OLS, the model shown is a linear probability model and the increase in probability can be interpreted directly. Relative to a baseline probability of 0.008 (i.e., a 8 in 1000 chance of running in any given congressional election), members in a viable district have a 0.004 higher probability of running for Congress, a 50% increase over the baseline probability.

Table I.1 – Changes in Viability and Running for Congress

	Ran for Congress
Viable for House	0.004*
of Representatives	(0.002)
Party's Presidential Vote	−0.007**
Share (State District)	(0.007)
Years Served in	-0.001*
Legislative State Chamber	(0.000)
Baseline Probability of Running for Congress	0.008
Observations	29,833
Election Year FEs	Y
Legislator FEs	Y
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

J DiD Analysis with Alternative Measures of Overlap

Figure J.1 – The Within-Legislator Effect of Viability for Congress on Bipartisanship with Different Overlap Thresholds



Note: The figure displays the estimated effect of new viability on a state legislator's bipartisan collaboration score, i.e., the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) using the 2WFE implementation. Open circles show the point estimate, thin lines display the 95% confidence intervals, and thick lines display the 90% confidence intervals of the effect size. The black dashed line shows the zero point (no effect), while the gray dashed line shows the average estimated effect size produced by the matching and regression procedure shown in Table 2.