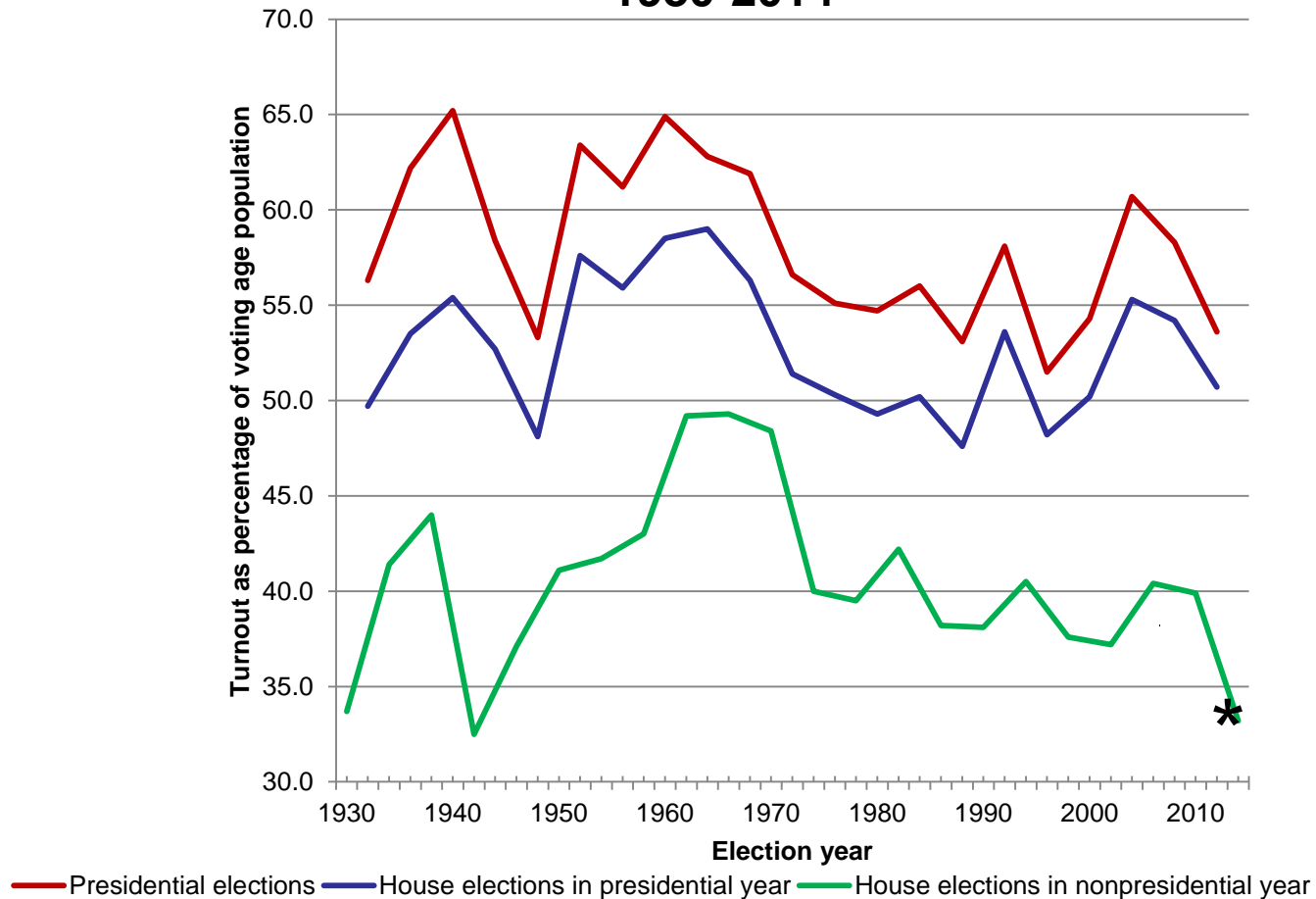# Congressional Voters

17.251/252

Fall 2015

Turnout
(Figure 5.1 updated)

Figure 5.1: Turnout in Congressional Elections, 1930-2014

*Actual congressional turnout is likely less than this.

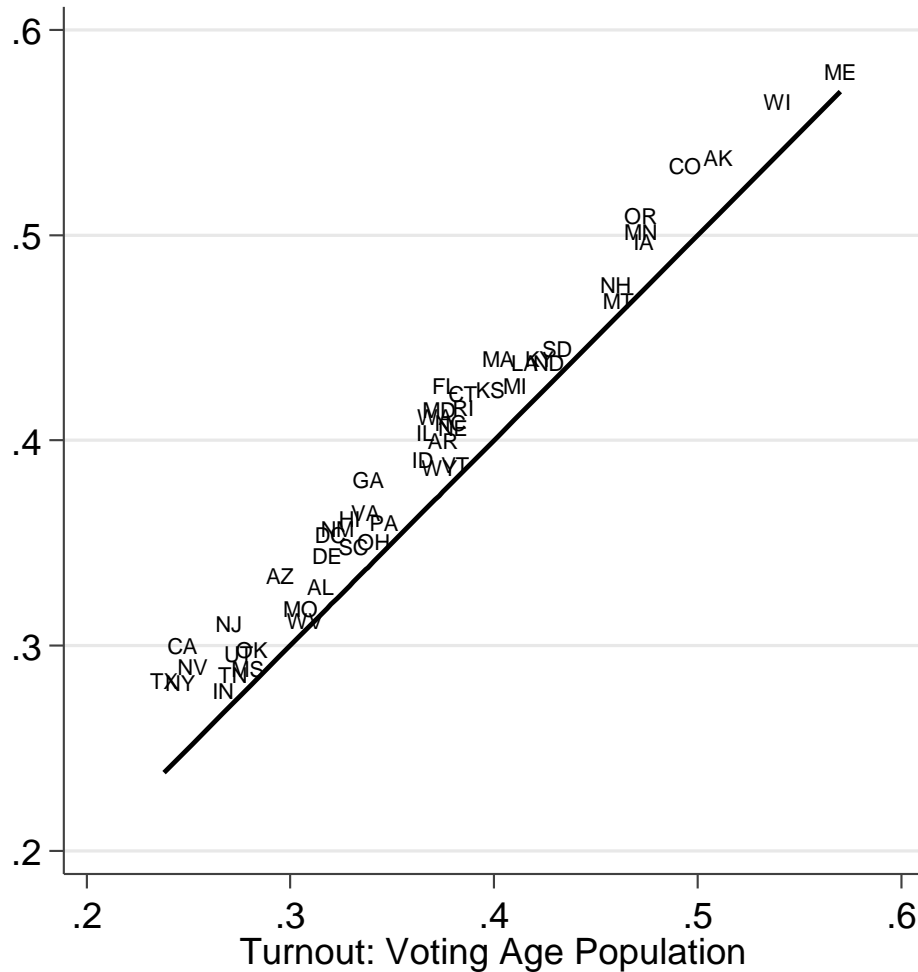# How to Calculate Turnout Pct.

- Turnout Pct. = Turnout / VAP

not

- Turnout / Registered

- New measure: Turnout / Voting eligible population
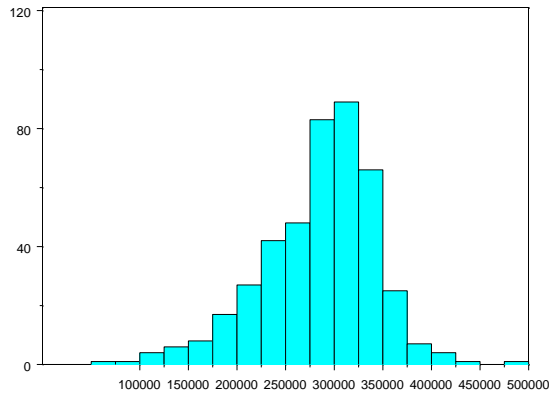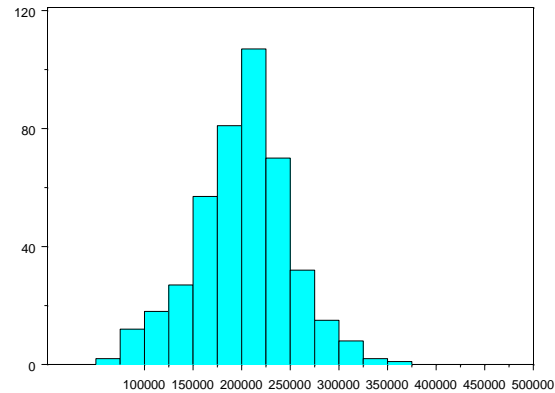
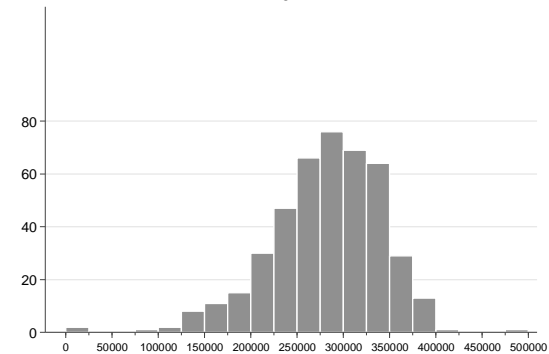# Turnout/VEP vs. Turnout/VAP 2014

Variation in Turnout
2008 & 2010 (c.f. Fig 5.2)
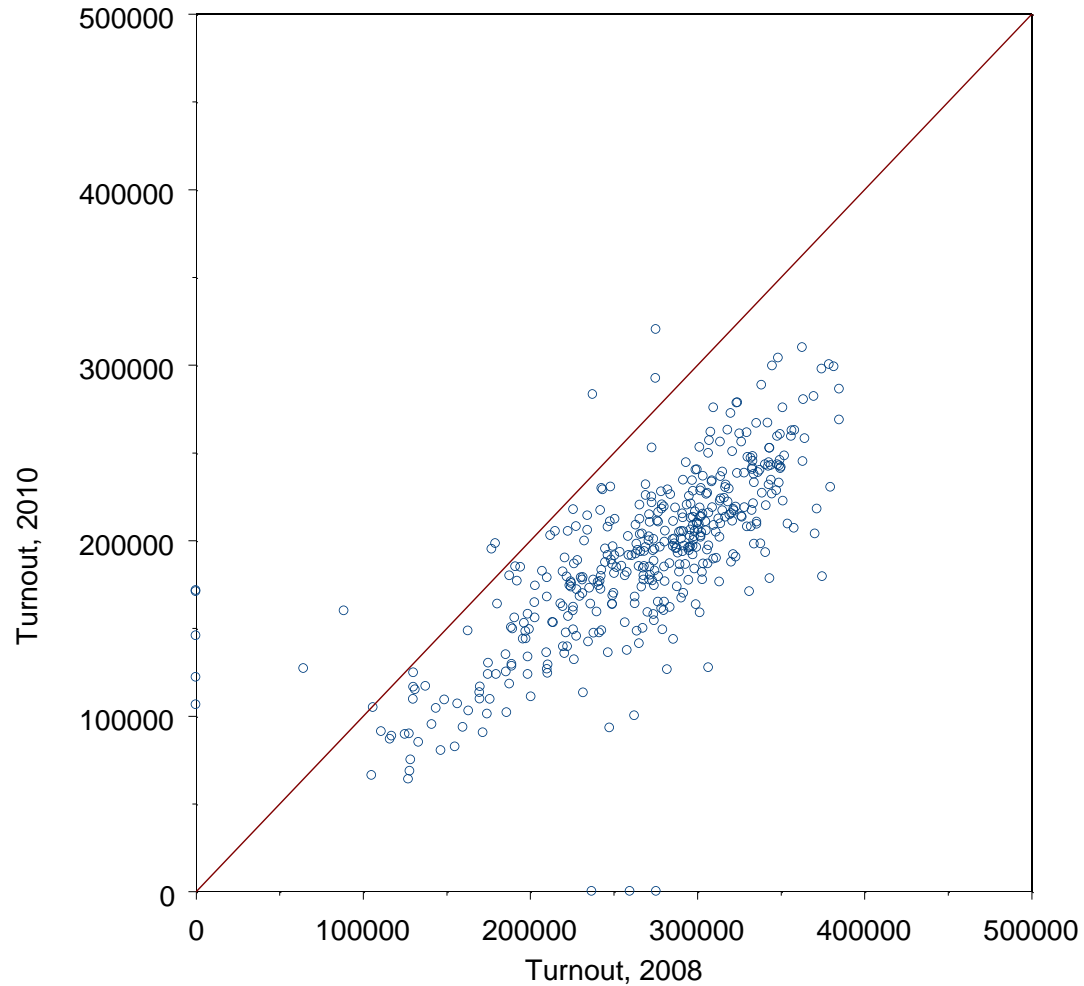

Mean = 285,084

Mean = 200,891

Mean = 281,255

Correlation in Turnout 2008 to 2010

Primary & General Election Turnout, 2000
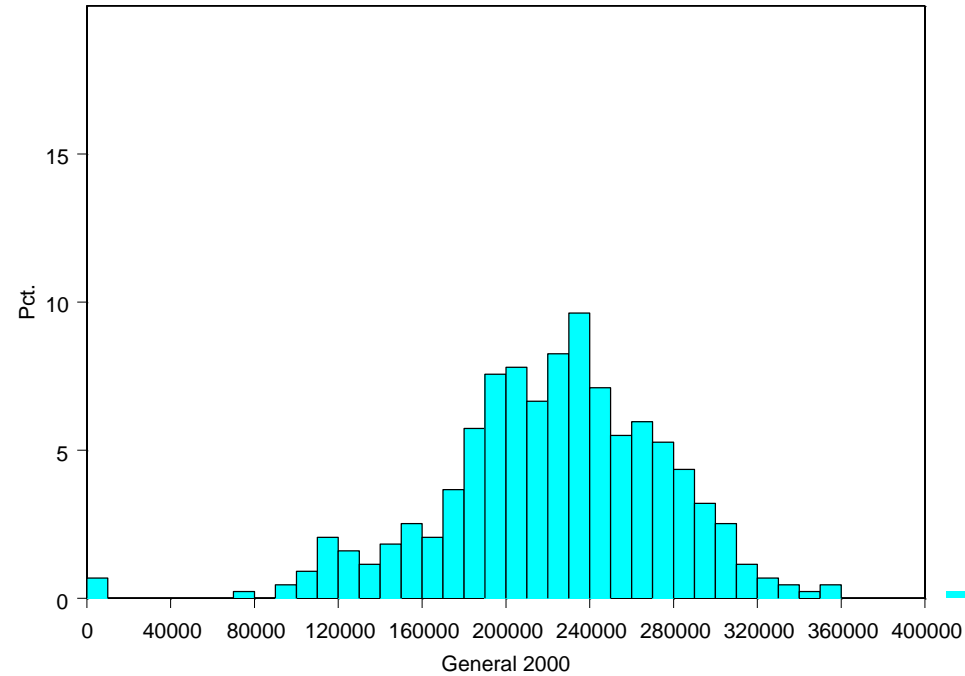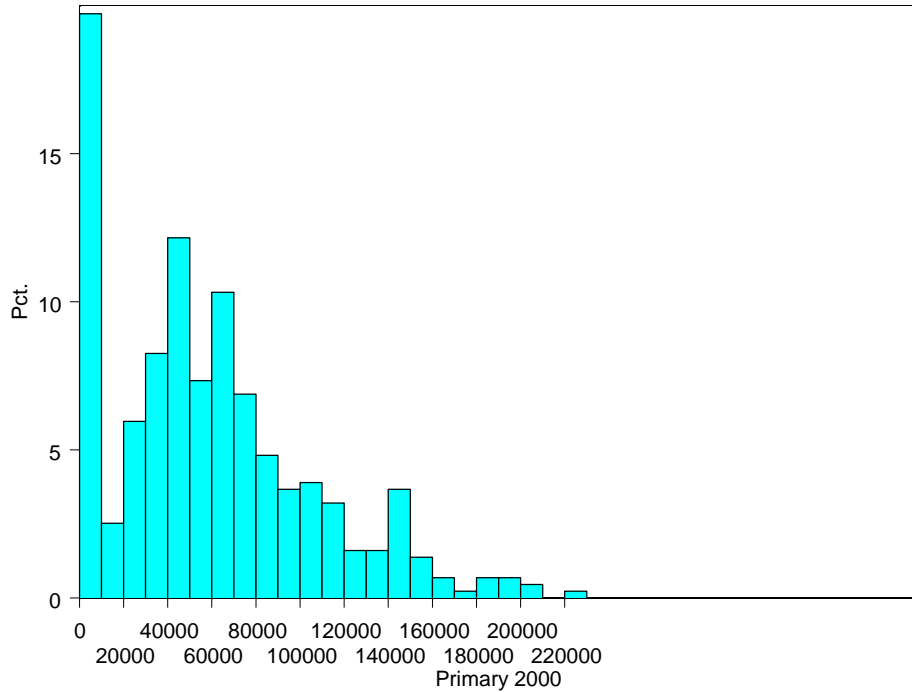
Explaining (Non-)Voting

- Expected value of voting =
  - Benefit the individual receives as a consequence of the election outcome
  - Minus the cost of voting

Explaining (Non-)Voting

State of the World w/out Citizen's Vote	Net Benefit if Citizen Abstains	Net Benefit if Citizen Votes	Condition under which Citizen Should Vote
D wins by more than 1 vote	$B^D_{Citizen}$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	Never
D wins by exactly 1 vote	$B^D_{Citizen}$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	Never
D and R tie	$(B^D_{Citizen} + B^R_{Citizen})/2$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	$(B^D_{Citizen} - B^R_{Citizen})/2 > c$
R wins by exactly 1 vote	$B^R_{Citizen}$	$(B^D_{Citizen} + B^R_{Citizen})/2 - c$	$(B^D_{Citizen} - B^R_{Citizen})/2 > c$
R wins by more than 1 vote	$B^R_{Citizen}$	$B^R_{Citizen} - c$	Never

Salvaging the Calculus

- Citizen duty
- Think about it probabilistically, not deterministically
  - Candidate differential
  - Costs of voting
  - Closeness of election
    - Voter attention
    - GOTV

Winning margin in 2012, pct.
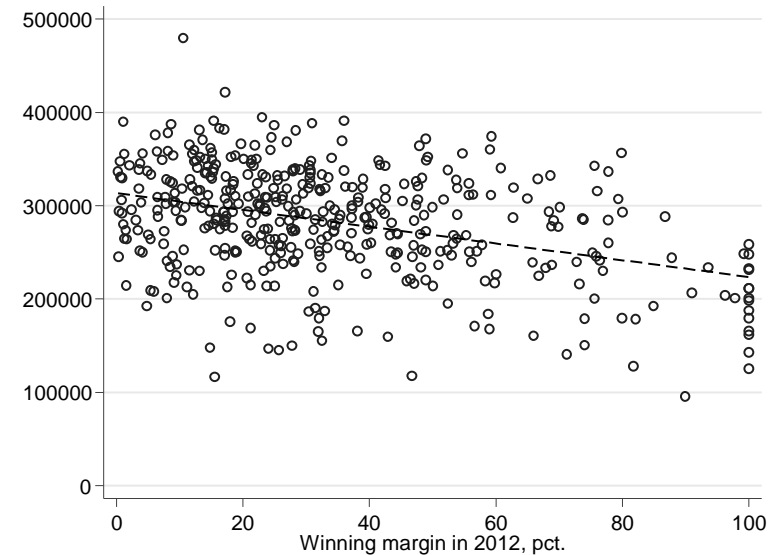
```
. reg t

      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =      433
-------------+------------------------------           F(  1,   431) =    72.45
       Model |  2.1029e+11        1  2.1029e+11         Prob > F      =   0.0000
    Residual |  1.2510e+12      431  2.9025e+09         R-squared     =   0.1439
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =   0.1419
       Total |  1.4613e+12      432  3.3826e+09         Root MSE      =    53875


------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    tvotes2012 |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    marginpct |  -897.7943   105.4763    -8.51   0.000    -1105.106   -690.4824
        _cons |   313335.6   4447.584    70.45   0.000       304594    322077.3
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- Naïve view: Dems helped by turnout

Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- District view: the "out party"

Campaign intensity
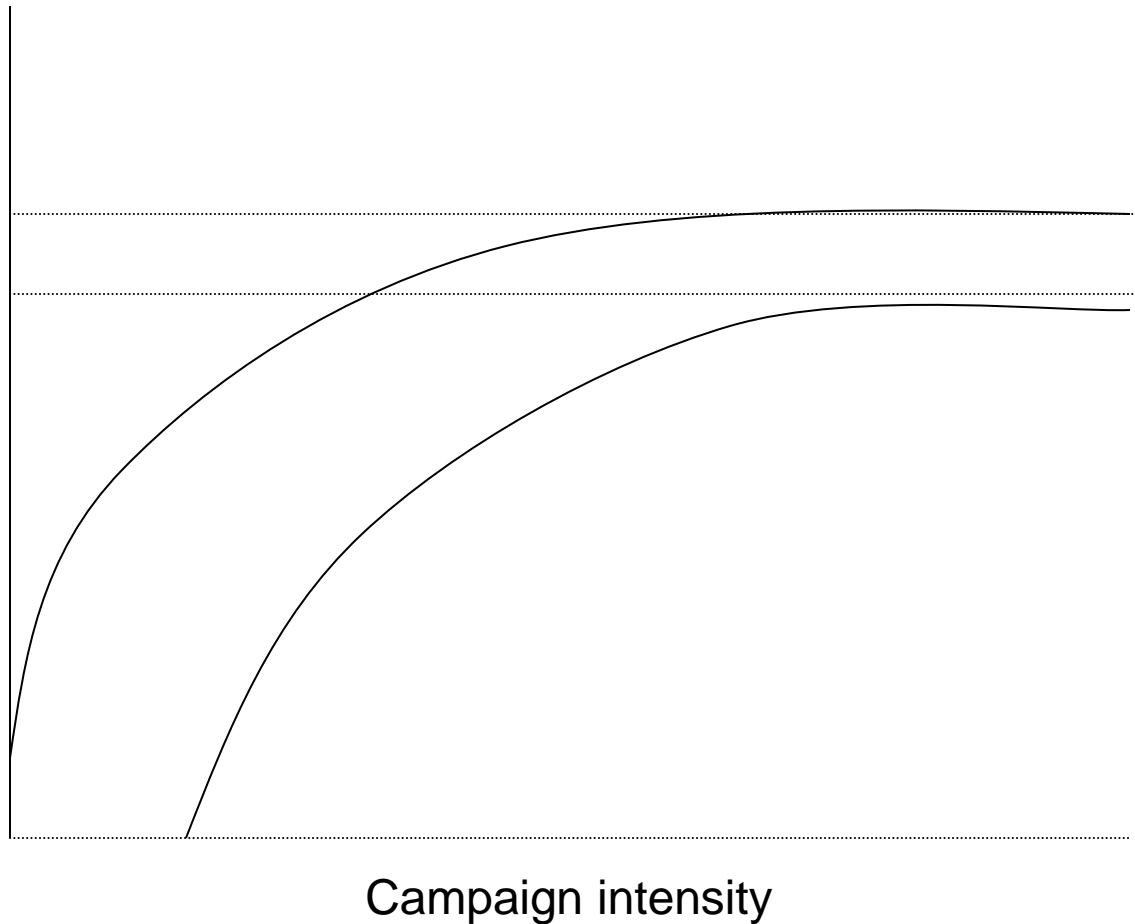
Deciding whom to support

- Ideology
  - Downsian logic directly

- Party ID
  - Downsian logic by proxy

PID x IDEO in 2014

	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Missing	Total
Liberal	10,927	2,742	380	797	14,846
Moderate	6,359	7,606	2,385	1,469	17,819
Conserv.	2,057	4,510	10,120	1,670	18,357
Missing	1,085	1,094	343	2,656	5,178
Total	20,428	15,952	13,228	6,592	56,200

Source: 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Party and Ideology Distance as Explanatory Factors in 2014 Cong'l Elections

House	Party of voter			
Ideol.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total
Lib.	.96	.86	.23	.92
Mod.	.88	.51	.14	.59
Cons.	.76	.11	.04	.13
Total	.90	.40	.06	.47

Source: 2014 CCES

Senate	Ideology of voter			
Ideol.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total
Lib.	.98	.90	.22	.94
Mod.	.90	.55	.17	.62
Cons.	.83	.09	.03	.12
Total	.93	.41	.05	.46

Overall voting effect, 2014 Cong'l election

		House	Senate
Party identification	Effect of changing from an Ind. to a Dem.	0.30 (0.003)	0.30 (0.01)
Ideology	Effect of changing from a mod. To a lib.	0.20 (0.003)	0.21 (0.01)
Democratic incumbent	Effect of changing from a open seat race to a Dem. Inc.	0.085 (0.002)	0.052 (0.009)
Constant		0.50 (0.002)	0.50 (0.007)
R^2		.58	.61
N		28,303	14,946

A Word about Primaries

- Party not a useful cue
- Not much research, but…..
  - Primary voters are different from general election voters
    - Primary voters are more ideologically extreme, but
    - Primary voters are more strategically sophisticated than general election voters
  - Don't underestimate the "friends and neighbors" effect

Voting rates in 2010 House primary

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall
Rep.	32.6%	2.6%	59.2%	0.6%	5.0%
Ind.	57.3%	12.4%	21.1%	3.0%	6.2%
Dem.	42.2%	49.1%	1.1%	0.7%	7.0%
Total	44.5%	23.7%	24.2%	1.4%	6.2%

Source: Cooperative Congressional Election Study, 2010
(Question not asked in 2014)

Average ideology of primary voters, 2010

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall	Total
Rep.	1.41	1.16	1.86	1.42	1.20	1.66
Ind.	0.15	-0.19	1.33	0.59	0.27	0.39
Dem.	-0.80	-0.91	-0.62	-0.97	-0.59	-0.84
Total	0.07	-0.71	1.66	0.44	0.14	0.29

-3 = strong liberal
0 = moderate
+3 = strong conservative

Std. dev., ideology of primary voters, 2010

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall	Total
Rep.	1.14	1.42	1.01	1.25	1.28	1.11
Ind.	1.36	1.37	1.17	1.48	1.40	1.43
Dem.	1.45	1.45	1.42	1.82	1.51	1.46
Total	1.58	1.50	1.14	1.66	1.58	1.69

-3 = strong liberal
0 = moderate
+3 = strong conservative