

Beyond Coattails: Presidential Campaign Visits and Congressional Elections

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Abstract

The presidential coattails and surge and decline theories posit that presidential popularity may affect the outcomes of congressional elections. These theories assume presidents play passive roles in congressional elections, likening their influence to that of other parts of the political environment. We ask: What happens when a president actively campaigns for some of his party's congressional candidates? Using data for the 2002 midterm elections we test several hypotheses related to President Bush's decision to campaign for some House candidates and not for others. Next, we assess the impact of the president's campaign visits on the electoral success of Republican congressional candidates. We find pragmatic considerations involving the competitiveness of the race and the president's electoral self interest are very important in increasing the likelihood of a presidential campaign visit, but incumbents' party loyalty and presidential support in Congress have no impact. We also find that presidential campaign visits have a significant impact on candidates' prospects for success.

The theory of presidential coattails states that when popular candidates run for the presidency their campaigns provide enough momentum to help elect some of their party's congressional candidates who otherwise would not be elected. The surge and decline theory posits that during midterm elections, when the presidential voting is no longer an issue and fewer backers of the president's party turn out to vote, some of those candidates who rode the presidential candidate's coattails into office find their tenure in office cut short. Both theories treat presidential candidates as a part of a larger political environment that has the potential to influence congressional elections, despite the fact that presidential candidates might have been passive spectators in individual contests. We seek to turn these theories on their head and ask: What happens when a president moves beyond the passive role of spectator and actively injects himself into the midterm campaigns of some of his party's congressional candidates?

In 2002, President George W. Bush mounted one of the most extensive personal congressional campaign efforts by any modern American president. Bush made 108 campaign stops on behalf of 26 candidates for the House and 20 candidates for the Senate.¹ These visits—designed to attract publicity, motivate campaign volunteers, raise money, or some combination thereof—took the president to at least one state in every region, including Alaska, Connecticut, Iowa, Louisiana, and West Virginia. The vast majority of these visits were to assist candidates in competitive races, although some, such as a visit to House Speaker Dennis Hastert's district, were designed to create goodwill among safe incumbents holding congressional leadership posts. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when his popularity had ballooned to stratospheric levels, President Bush spent an extraordinary amount of time and energy

campaigning for House, Senate, and gubernatorial candidates. The questions we ask are: “Under what circumstances was Bush likely to visit a congressional candidate?” and “Did these visits matter?”

This study assesses the electoral impact of President Bush’s visits to the congressional districts of various Republican incumbents, challengers, and open-seat candidates. Using a new and unique data set, we begin with a descriptive overview of Bush’s visits. Next, we test several hypotheses to determine whether the president’s decisions to visit specific districts were informed by considerations of party loyalty, presidential support, the competitiveness of individual congressional elections, or his own performance in the previous presidential election. We then assess the impact of presidential visits on electoral outcomes. Of particular interest is the impact of presidential visits in close races—those in which one or more presidential visits might reasonably have been the deciding factor.

Presidential Coattails Revisited

Until recently, mid-term losses by the president’s party were the surest bets in American electoral politics. With the exception of the 1934 and 1998 elections, presidential parties lost seats in the House of Representatives during every midterm election in the 20th century. While some losses were relatively small (4 seats in 1962), others were extensive (45 in 1946 and 53 in 1994) and shifted the balance of power in the chamber. A sizable literature attempting to explain these losses has developed since the mid-1960s.² The literature revolves around two prominent—though not necessarily mutually exclusive (Campbell 1985, 1986)—explanations: (1) “surge and decline” (Campbell 1966) and (2) macroeconomics and presidential popularity (Tufte 1978).

According to the adherents of the surge-and-decline perspective, presidential election years are distinct from mid-term election years in the level and extent of national attention they receive. Presidential elections are “high-stimulus elections” (Campbell 1985:1141). As such, the level of media coverage and the amount of information disseminated is significantly higher than during mid-term elections. Because of the increased stimulus, voters mobilize during presidential elections, and far more voters with weak partisan ties vote in presidential elections as opposed to mid-term elections. These occasional voters are more likely to be influenced by media coverage, which tends to be more positive for the eventual winner of the presidential election (especially when the margin of victory is large). Support for the president during the election spills over into support for the president’s fellow partisans campaigning for Congress. Thus, “coattail” effects are manifest during the “surge” phase. Unfortunately for the president’s party, many of the voters drawn to the polls by the intense media coverage during the presidential election will not turnout during the mid-term election. The absence of these voters, who more often than not supported the president and his party, will manifest itself in the “decline” phase of the process.

Critics of the surge-and-decline theory argue it leaves little room for the impact of economic and political circumstances at the mid-term to influence the mid-term campaign (Tufte 1975, 1978). Mid-term circumstances that are hypothesized to influence congressional elections include: presidential popularity (Kernell 1977, Tufte 1978) and the state of the economy (Hibbs 1986, 1987). The evidence strongly suggests a relationship between macroeconomic circumstances, as measured by statistics such as the

level of real disposable income, and the success of the president's party during mid-term elections (Hibbs 1987).

As there is empirical support for both the surge-and-decline and the popularity-and-economics perspectives, neither appears to provide a complete picture of the partisan dynamics in mid-term elections. Campbell (1985) suggests that some synergistic meshing of the two perspectives would provide a useful perspective for understanding these electoral dynamics. Jacobson and Kernell (1983) argue there are important linkages between (1) presidential popularity and the economy, (2) the decisions of potential congressional candidates and contributors, and (3) the outcomes of congressional elections. They link aggregate theories of politics to the decisions of individual politicians and campaign contributors. In brief, their argument states that ambitious experienced politicians who are members of the president's party are more likely to run when there is a popular president and strong economy. Under the same national conditions, the opposite holds true for candidates who belong to the party that does not control the White House. Jacobson and Kernell present a compelling explanation of why the president's party is likely to perform well in congressional elections under favorable national circumstances and why it is likely to perform less well under less favorable conditions.

Unfortunately, none of these theories account for the seat gains of the President's party in the last two mid-term elections. All are missing a potentially important aspect of 21st century elections: the president as congressional campaigner. Surge and decline provides no role for mid-term factors at all. The popularity and economics perspective provides some room for the president to influence congressional elections but only in the

most indirect manners. These aggregate analyses, and Jacobson and Kernell's individual test of their linkages, neither define nor test an electoral role for an active president.

To understand why presidential efforts may have an influence beyond traditional coattails effects in congressional elections we must first explain why presidents would be willing to spend their valuable time and energy campaigning for House or Senate candidates. It is one thing to passively influence the outcome of an election campaign through the force of one's own popularity; it is something else to actively participate in an extensive array of activities designed to use that popularity to mobilize the president's fellow partisan voters in support of a congressional candidate and to win the support of independent voters, particularly those who are undecided in terms of their congressional vote choice. Because of the decrease in the number of marginal districts and the increase in partisan balance in Congress, presidents now have a greater incentive to move beyond trying to influence the conditions that promote coattail effects and more actively campaign for congressional candidates. With the decrease in marginal districts, it is easier for presidents to identify the most competitive districts, and with increasing parity in the House and the Senate, the potential marginal value of each seat is significantly greater. We believe that current political conditions have made it easier for presidential coattails to influence congressional elections and have made the manifestation of presidential campaign effects more valuable for the president. For these same reasons, we think the potential for significant presidential campaign effects beyond traditional coattails is considerable.

The relatively even balance between Republicans and Democrats in both houses of Congress ensures that control of either branch rides on the results from an

extraordinarily small number of races: fewer than two dozen in the House and fewer than ten in the Senate. If the balance of power was such that a large margin of victory (in seats) in any particular election was necessary to wrest control from the opposing party, the marginal value of each additional seat won is relatively limited. Thus the incentives for a president to invest valuable time and effort campaigning for members of Congress are relatively few. If the president's party has a 40-to-50 seat margin in the House (not uncommon for 20th century Democrats), the president hardly needs to campaign for House candidates. Likewise, if the president faces a similar seat deficit in the House, the president's efforts are unlikely to result in a change of partisan control.

In addition to the tight balance of power between the parties, parties are more distinct and internally-cohesive than they have been in decades, so the value of controlling the House is higher—for a president—than it has been in decades. Third, the control over campaign resources has been centralized making it easier to effectively target isolated races for attention (Francia et al 2003; Herrnson 2004). Fourth, the number of close races has declined, making it easier for the president, congressional candidates, and party organizations to effectively coordinate campaign efforts.

Exactly how presidents serve their party's electoral interests—assuming they do—is still unclear. Do presidents expend time and effort to campaign for party stalwarts, implicitly punishing party renegades as is outlined in the theory of responsible parties (Committee on Political Parties, 1950; Leyden and Borrelli, 1990; Cox and McCubbins, 1993)? Or do presidents simply focus their efforts on party candidates in the tightest races in an effort to maximize the size of the party in Congress in accordance with what might be called a “pragmatic parties” model (Jacobson 1985-86; Cantor and Herrnson

1997)? It also is possible that too much can be made of the president's roles and responsibilities as party leader. Presidents may simply mobilize their campaign efforts in support of "friends" and "allies" who have supported their legislative program in Congress.³ While it is likely that this explicitly non-partisan strategy would have some partisan implications, the partisan effects would be an unintended by-product. Finally, presidents might be driven, in whole or in part, by their own future electoral objectives. From an electoral self-interest standpoint, presidents may orient their visitation strategy toward those districts in which they ran particularly close races in the preceding election. We evaluate the empirical support for each of these perspectives and assess the impact of presidential visits on the outcomes of congressional elections.

The precise impact, if any, presidents can have on individual congressional elections has yet to be established. Jacobson, Kernell, and Lazarus (2004) show that presidents—even lame-duck presidents—can influence individual races through targeted fundraising efforts. Non-fundraising campaign visits also can convey legitimacy to a candidate's campaign. A somewhat less tangible, but equally important, effect of a presidential visit concerns media coverage. A visit by a president to a congressional district usually dominates the news. There are announcements in the media leading up to the visit, live television coverage of the visit itself, and reports in the newspapers usually one or two days after the visit. Congressional candidates, who otherwise might receive little media attention, receive substantial coverage during the visit, and anecdotal evidence suggests they gain increased attention after it. Moreover, presidential campaign stops so heavily dominate the news that these candidates' opponents are unable to garner free air time during this period. In addition, a presidential visit also may motivate

campaign volunteers and party activists to work harder for their candidate and can help a campaign improve its grassroots efforts, including recruiting volunteers and registering, canvassing, and mobilizing likely supporters. Finally, a presidential visit can directly affect voters. The spectacle of a presidential rally for a congressional candidate can introduce voters, many of whom may previously not even have been aware of the candidates' name, to the candidate in an extremely favorable light.

Republican Party officials clearly believed that presidential campaign visits were worth the effort in 2002. A major element of the Republican National Committee's 72 Hour Taskforce and the House Republicans' Strategic Taskforce to Organize and Mobilize People (STOMP) involved visits by President Bush, Vice-president Cheney and other GOP Leaders (Magleby 2004, 8). This further suggests that presidential campaign visits are a potentially powerful means to help candidates' garner votes and improve their electoral prospects.

Research on the role of the "president as congressional campaigner" is quite limited, and the precise impact, if any, presidents can have on individual congressional elections has yet to be established. Shaw's (1999a, 1999b, 1999c) studies suggest presidential campaign visits have an impact on their own elections (but see Reeves, Chen, and Nagano [2004] for significant counterevidence). This raises the possibility that presidential campaign stops on behalf of other candidates could matter to the outcomes of their elections. Jacobson et al. (2004) show that presidents can help congressional candidates raise money, raising the question of whether publicity-oriented presidential campaign stops have an impact on congressional election outcomes. Hoddie and Routh (2004) examine presidential campaign visits to various states, but their analysis does not

include presidential campaign stops that are made on behalf of specific House candidates in their congressional districts and it does not assess the impact of presidential campaign visits on congressional elections. Thus, no research explains (1) why presidents campaign for particular congressional candidates and not others or (2) what impact presidential visits actually have on specific congressional elections. Our research addresses these two important gaps in the congressional elections literature. Data and Methods

We draw on three data sources to analyze the factors that influence presidential visits on behalf of congressional candidates and the impact of those visits on the candidates' electoral success. Data for presidential visits were provided by Mark Knoller, a CBS News White House reporter who has tracked presidents' schedules for many years.⁴ The information about House candidates' campaign expenditures were furnished by the Federal Election Commission. House members' party unity scores and presidential support scores, and the president's share of the vote in individual congressional districts were collected from the *Almanac of American Politics, 2004* (Barone, Cohen and Ujifusa 2003). We include only data for House candidates running in two-party contested elections in order to maximize the generalizability of our findings. We exclude uncontested races because unopposed incumbents do relatively little campaigning. We omit incumbent-versus-incumbent elections because only a few occur every decade and because they are unusual in that the candidates' ties to voters, visibility, fundraising, and other campaign dynamics have little in common with a normal incumbent-challenger elections.⁵ After providing a descriptive overview of presidential visits, we use zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) regression to analyze the data.⁶ ZINB regression is appropriate for our analysis because our dependent variable is a count variable (number

of visits) that takes a value of “0” for the overwhelming majority of observations and because of the underprediction of zeros by the negative binomial regression model.⁷

Our first set of analyses tests competing theories of Bush visits. Our dependent variable is the number of visits by the President to a congressional district. We test the responsible-parties model using House members’ *party unity* scores, which are a standard measure of party loyalty. Similarly, our test of the friends-and-allies model relies on members’ *presidential support* scores, another standard measure. Because the pragmatic-parties model hypothesizes that presidential visits should be positively related to the level of competition a congressional candidate faces in the general election, we divide congressional races into groups. *Competitive elections* are those that were identified by *Congressional Quarterly* as either “Leaning Democratic,” “Leaning Republican,” or “No Clear Favorite” (CQ’s House Race Rankings 2002).⁸ These elections were coded one; all others were coded zero. The presidential electoral self-interest model relies on a measure that is coded as the absolute value of the difference between the percentage of the district vote for Gore and the percentage of the district vote for Bush. The variable has a theoretical range from zero to 100. In our sample, the actual range is 0 (the very closest races) and 87 (the races in which the margin of victory—for either candidate—is highest). *Bush vote* is a standard measure of presidential coattails, and it is included because a president who wishes to help members of his party is more likely to visit districts where he ran well in the previous presidential election than those where he ran poorly. We control for incumbency by using two dummy variables: *incumbent* and *challenger*. Open-seat candidates are the comparison group. Two campaign spending variables are used to measure the campaign effort put forth by each candidate: *Log of*

candidate receipts and *log of opponent receipts*. Using the natural logs enables us to control for the diminishing marginal effects of money on congressional elections (Jacobson 1980, 1990; Green and Krasno 1990).

Our second set of analyses assesses the impact of the President's visits on a Republican candidate's electoral prospects. The dependent variable is whether the candidate won or lost.⁹ The independent variable of primary interest is the *number of presidential visits*, which is coded zero, one, two, or three (the maximum number of visits). We control for candidate spending, the president's vote, and incumbency using the same variables included in the previous analysis.

For Whom did the President Campaign and Was He Successful?

Though the president's campaign visits to individual congressional districts garnered significant media exposure, they were relatively rare (see Table 1). Bush visited less than 10 percent of the districts where Republican candidates were running for the House, and he made return trips to slightly more than half of the districts he visited. In all, the president made three dozen discrete visits to 22 districts in which Republicans were competing in contested elections.¹⁰ Most of these visits occurred during the two months before Election day, well after professional prognosticators had drawn up their initial lists of competitive congressional races.

<<Table 1 about here>>

Presidential visits were not distributed randomly. Republicans competing in open-seat races were most likely to receive a presidential visit, and Republican challengers were least likely to receive presidential visits. Competitiveness also seems to have influenced the president's visitation strategy. Over 40 percent of all Republican

candidates in competitive races received a presidential visit, and nearly 70% of all visits were made to competitive districts (which made up less than 15% of all districts).

Though the relationships between visits and type of race and visits and competitiveness appear obvious, other factors might explain the president's visitation pattern equally well. As indicated earlier, explanations based on (1) the responsible parties model, (2) our "friends and allies" perspective, or (3) the presidential electoral self-interest model might also help us understand the distribution of presidential visits. The results from our multivariate analysis are presented in Table 2.¹¹

<<Table 2 about here>>

We find no evidence of the hypothesized relationship between party unity scores and presidential visits or presidential support scores and presidential visits, and thus we find no support for the "responsible parties" model or the "friends and allies" perspective.¹² There is, however, strong support for both the "pragmatic parties" model and the "presidential electoral self-interest" model. In the full sample, the first-order relationship between competitiveness and presidential visits holds up under the multivariate analysis; the president was far more likely to visit districts with competitive races than other districts. Similarly, there is a statistically significant and substantively important relationship between the competitiveness of the district in the 2000 presidential election and the likelihood that the president visited that district. Simply put, the president was more likely to visit districts where he had a close race in 2000 than districts in which he won or lost by a large margin.

We also find evidence of a relationship between incumbency and presidential visits and opponent spending and presidential visits. In contrast to the results presented in

Table 1, it appears that Republican incumbents are—*ceteris paribus*—more likely to get a visit from the president than *either* Republican challengers or Republicans competing for open seats. In hindsight, the first-order result for campaign type was probably largely an artifact of the inherent competitiveness of open-seat races. That is, the president visited many of these districts because so many of the races were competitive, not because they were open seat races *per se*. Finally, we find evidence that opponent effort—as measured by dollars spent—is negatively associated with the likelihood of a presidential visit.¹³

Overall, President Bush’s visitation pattern was clearly the function of a strategically oriented political calculus. Each visit was made with a purpose. The question is: To what extent were the president’s electoral purposes realized? Did his visitation strategy significantly influence electoral outcomes? The short answer is an emphatic “yes” (see Table 3). Whether we consider the results for all races or only those for competitive races, we find that Bush visits translated into Republican victories. The only other factors that register an impact in both the full sample and the sample of competitive races are the president’s popularity and challenger status. We see evidence of a traditional coattails result—though in an off-year election and in direct conflict with the expectations of “surge and decline” theory—and, not surprisingly, we find that challengers are far more likely to lose than incumbents or candidates vying for an open seat.

<<Table 3 about here>>

The statistically significant effects of a presidential visit are also substantively consequential. In the first set of results, those for the full sample of races, we see that a single Bush visit increased the probability of a typical open-seat candidate’s victory by

roughly 55 percent, while setting the other variables at their means (see Table 4). Two visits improved the candidate's prospects by an additional 10 percent. Although the per visit impact is substantially less for incumbents, it is not trivial: one visit increased the incumbent's prospects by 12 percent. Finally, though visits to challengers were quite rare, they did increase the likelihood of victory.¹⁴

<<Table 4 about here>>

For the sample of all races, we see that the Bush vote also impacted congressional candidates' prospects. For incumbents, challengers and candidates running in open seats, the greater the Bush vote in 2000, the better their chances of winning. While the difference between an average Bush vote and a very high Bush vote (2 standard deviations above average) changed incumbents' prospects relatively little, the same difference increased challengers' prospects by more than 70% and the prospects of open seat candidates by almost 60%. Incumbents in districts where Bush ran poorly had some chance of winning, but challengers and open seat candidates had almost no chance of winning.

Even when we limit the analysis to competitive races, the effects of presidential visits and presidential support persist. Bush visits had slightly more impact on incumbent races and slightly less for challenger races, but in both cases, the more visits the better for the Republican candidate. For incumbents in competitive races, Bush's electoral success was still positively related to the likelihood of victory, but incumbents were still very successful even in those districts in which Bush was relatively unpopular. Finally, the impact of Bush's electoral success on the prospects of open seat candidates in

competitive races was significantly less than the impact of Bush's electoral success on other open seat candidates.

Overall, the results are clear. The president's political advisers working in conjunction with the leaders of the National Republican Congressional Committee and the Republican National Committee, targeted presidential visits to candidates in the closest races and in the districts that were highly competitive in the 2000 presidential election. The visits, then, boosted electoral support for a number of candidates and, in more than a few cases, made the difference between a Republican loss and a Republican victory. While it is probably going too far to say that the president's visitation strategy made the difference between a Republican- and a Democratic-controlled House, it is evident that without the president's help, the Republican margin in the House would be smaller.

Conclusion

There is a long and storied literature on the impact of presidential coattails on congressional elections. To date, this literature has focused mainly on the passive influence of presidential popularity on House and Senate elections. We contribute to this literature by demonstrating that electorally-active presidents may tip the balance of power in Congress by campaigning for their fellow partisans. In 2002, President Bush spent considerable time and energy campaigning for representatives, senators and governors. In the case of the representatives, his campaign visits were often crucial to victory. They helped the Republican Party achieve a net gain of six House seats.

We find that the president's visitation strategy was a function of both the pressures faced by Republican congressional candidates and the electoral pressures the

president is likely to face in 2004. Not only did the president visit districts in which the House race was close, he also visited districts where he ran a close race in 2000—the same places he will likely face tight competition in 2004. We find this legislative-executive nexus—a nexus facilitated by partisan ties— especially interesting, and worthy of further research. As intra-party cohesion and inter-party differences increase, political connections between presidents and their fellow partisans in Congress are becoming increasingly important. Presidents willing to campaign for their fellow partisans may be in a position to alter the direction of subsequent policy debate and the substance of future policy. Given the electoral advantages of incumbency, these effects are likely to linger long after the election in question. The increasing partisan polarization of Congress (see e.g., Jacobson 2003) in an era of slim majority party margins makes these effects more valuable for the majority party.

We have just scratched the surface of the potential implications of the role of the president in congressional elections. But even this brief treatment suggests that the basis of executive branch power may be significantly broader than previously realized and the president’s role as party leader underestimated. For nearly 50 years, the president’s position as party leader is typically has been undervalued as a tool for achieving presidential policy objectives. Neustadt’s contention that “what the Constitution separates our political parties do not combine” (1960:29)—while not universally accepted (see Brady, Cooper and Hurley 1979; Patterson and Caldeira 1988; Rohde 1991; Chiou and Rothenberg 2003)—is still the conventional wisdom. Our findings suggest that the increased incidence and importance of presidential campaigning in congressional elections may require a new understanding of inter-institutional power dynamics.

These possibilities open a number of avenues of future research. First, an assessment of the generalizability of our findings is needed. To what extent did President Bush influence Senate election outcomes or gubernatorial outcomes? Previous work (Cohen, et al. 1991) suggests that presidents' campaign efforts have little impact on Senate elections. Have president's electoral influence increased in recent years? What strategies inform presidential visits to congressional districts during presidential election years? That is, does the competitiveness of a congressional election matter when presidents decide to visit congressional districts in which the vote for president is not expected to be close? What is the impact of presidential visits on congressional elections during presidential election years? And what impact do presidential visits in off-year elections have on the president's own electoral success in the next presidential election?

Second, it would be useful to assess the policymaking influence of presidents on those they help to elect. Are the candidates for whom presidents make campaign visits more supportive of the president's agenda in subsequent years? Are they more supportive of the president's agenda or the party leadership's agenda when the two agendas come into conflict?

Finding answers to these questions will help us develop a more nuanced and accurate characterization of presidential power. If the president is in a position to assume a more prominent—and effective—leadership role in the party, we need to recognize this and attempt to understand its significance. In an era of increasingly cohesive and polarized parties, the enhancement of the president's role as “first partisan” may drastically alter the policymaking landscape.

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Table 1. Distribution of Presidential Visits by Candidate Type and the Competitiveness of Race

Visits	All	Candidate Status			Competitiveness	
		Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seats	Competitive	Uncompetitive
0	94% (325)	93% (138)	99% (149)	81% (38)	58% (21)	98% (304)
1	3% (10)	3% (5)	1% (1)	9% (4)	17% (6)	1% (4)
2	3% (10)	3% (5)	1% (1)	9% (4)	22% (8)	1% (2)
3	1% (2)	1% (1)	0 (0)	2% (1)	3% (1)	0% (1)
	N=347	N=149	N=151	N=47	N=36	N=311

Notes: The relationship for visits by candidate status is statistically significant ($X^2 = 19.832, p < .003$). “Competitive” elections are those identified by Congressional Quarterly as either “Leaning Democratic,” “Leaning Republican,” or “No Clear Favorite”; “Uncompetitive” elections are all others (“CQ’s House Race Rankings” 2002). The relationship for visits by competitiveness is statistically significant ($X^2 = 87.350, p < .001$). The percentages sum vertically and some do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2. The Impact of Party Unity, Presidential Support, and Competition on the Likelihood of a Presidential Visit to Help a Congressional Candidate

	Incumbents	All Candidates
Party Unity	-.003 (.06)	---
Presidential Support	-.11 (.08)	---
Competitive Election	.63 (.72)	1.37*** (.48)
Competitiveness of Presidential Election	.13** (.06)	.04* (.03)
Incumbent	---	.62* (.39)
Challenger	---	-.06 (.86)
Log of Candidate Spending	-.15 (.78)	-.76 (.60)
Log of Opponent Spending	-.65** (.33)	-.39** (.22)
Constant	8.68 (12.77)	11.18 (9.98)
Log-likelihood	-25.01	-58.27
LR Chi Square	7.97	17.42
(N)	(149)	(347)

Notes: The coefficients were generated using zero-inflation negative binomial regression. Standard errors are in parentheses. Inflation factor estimates are in Table A1. *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.001, one-tailed test of significance.

Table 3. The Impact of the President's Visit on a Congressional Candidate's Prospects for Success

	All Races	Competitive Races
Bush Visits	3.06*** (1.22)	3.39** (1.77)
Log of Candidate Spending	.55 (.56)	.31 (1.00)
Log of Opponent Spending	-.63 (.37)	.28 (.73)
Bush Vote	.24**** (.08)	.37** (.21)
Challenger	-5.58*** (1.84)	-6.84** (3.55)
Incumbent	2.64*** (1.06)	1.96 (2.50)
Constant	-10.98 (8.70)	-26.08 (22.10)
LR Chi Square	433.23	30.47
Percent Correctly Classified	97.41	86.11
Pseudo R Square	.90	.61
(N)	(347)	(36)

Notes: The coefficients were generated using logistic regression. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.001, one-tailed test of significance.

Table 4. Probabilities of Electoral Victory By Candidate Status,
 Bush Vote, and Bush Visits

	Incumbents	Challengers	Open Seats
<u>All Races</u>			
Bush Visits			
0	.871	.003	.347
1	.991	.042	.896
2	.999	.419	.993
3	1.000	.922	1.000
Δ in Bush's Vote			
Mean	.900	.004	.415
+1 SD	.996	.088	.950
+2 SD	1.00	.719	.998
-1 SD	.254	.000	.026
-2 SD	.013	.000	.001
<u>Competitive Races</u>			
Bush Visits			
0	.756	.001	.382
1	.986	.015	.936
2	.999	.257	.997
3	1.000	.891	1.000
Δ in Bush's Vote			
Mean	.965	.001	.847
+1 SD	.997	.066	.986
+2 SD	1.000	.470	.999
-1 SD	.688	.000	.306
-2 SD	.149	.000	.034

Appendix

Table A1. Inflation Factor Estimates for Results on the Impact of Party Unity, Presidential Support, and Competition on the Likelihood of a Presidential Visit to Help a Congressional Candidate

	Incumbents	All Candidates
Challenger	---	.79 (2.12)
Log of Candidate Spending	-5.61**** (2.01)	-6.80*** (2.39)
Log of Opponent Spending	-1.05** (.49)	-1.56*** (.66)
Constant	93.79*** (32.15)	116.25*** (39.77)
Vuong Test	Pr>z = .0033	Pr>z = .0663
(N)	(149)	(347)

Notes: The coefficients were generated using logistic regression. Standard errors are in parentheses.
*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01, ****p<.001, one-tailed test of significance.

Notes

¹ These figures exclude presidential visits on behalf of gubernatorial candidates and party committees.

² See Flemming (1995) for a description of this extensive literature.

³ They also may wish to fight old enemies as Jacobson, Kernell and Lazarus (2004) suggest Clinton did in 2000.

⁴ The quality of Knoller's data is unrivaled: Jacobson, Kernell and Lazarus' (2004) study of the impact of Clinton visit fundraising in the 2000 election also was based on Knoller's data. Unfortunately, Mr. Knoller indicated to us that he did not have data comparable to the 2002 data for 1998 or any previous year. We have not included the 2000 data in this analysis because several of our rival hypotheses are based on the assumption that the sitting president will be working with future congresses (obviously not true in Pres. Clinton's case).

⁵ Omitting uncontested and incumbent-versus-incumbent elections results in our dropping a total of four elections visited by the president, and it works against our hypothesis tests.

⁶ There is some evidence of overdispersion in our data (i.e. the standard deviation of the dependent variable is significantly more than the mean), so the ZINB model is a more conservative choice than the zero-inflated poisson model (ZIP). However, the ZIP results are statistically and substantively comparable to the ZINB results.

⁷ In the context of our analysis, the negative binomial regression model assumes that every candidate has a chance to receive a presidential visit. Practically speaking, this is untrue. Challengers who have failed to raise significant campaign resources and who are extreme longshots, for example, have no realistic chance to receive a presidential visit. The ZINB model provides for this possibility and allows two distinct data-generating processes (one to separate the "always 0" observations from the others and one to determine the number of visits for those in the "not always 0" category). To further justify this choice, we present supporting statistical evidence from the appropriate Vuong tests. See Long (1997) and Long and Freese (2003) for a more complete description and explanation of this procedure.

⁸ Note that the "competitiveness" estimates were published in February of 2002, well before any presidential visits. This early in the election year it is also not clear that the distinction between the types of

close elections—leaning Democrat, no clear favorite, and leaning Republican—are particularly meaningful. In any case, there are too few observations in any one of these separate categories to conduct the analysis presented in Table 3. We use this early measure of competitiveness—determined prior to any Bush visits—to avoid endogeneity issues associated with the Bush visit variable.

⁹ We use a dichotomous won/lost dependent variable instead of a vote share dependent variable for two reasons. First, it is the variable of practical political interest (winning matters more than margin of victory). Second, a vote share variable would only be useful if a good indicator of *previous* vote share were available. For the 2002 elections, the first in new, post-redistricting congressional districts, no adequate indicator of previous vote share exists.

¹⁰ As noted earlier, we dropped uncontested and incumbent-versus-incumbent races from the study because the former are rarely characterized by significant campaigns and the latter are extremely rare and have unusual campaign dynamics.

¹¹ Table A1 (in the Appendix) provides the inflation factor results. Note that the reference category here is “no visit,” so a negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship between the independent variable and the likelihood of “no visit.” These results suggest that candidates in races in which *neither* candidate expends significant campaign resources are never considered for presidential visits.

¹² These results are based on the sample of incumbent candidates. Due to the nature of the independent variables of interest—votes scores based on actual floor behavior in Congress—we have no scores for challengers or candidates for open seats.

¹³ Given the inflation factor results, this suggests that the president avoided districts in which Democratic candidate spent very little and districts in which the Democratic candidate spent a great deal.

¹⁴ In both cases in which President Bush visited challengers’ districts, the challengers’ won.