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**Who Should Govern Congress?
The Salary Grab of 1873 and the Coalition of Reform**

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Abstract

We examine the politics surrounding the “Salary Grab,” a legislative initiative passed on the last day of the 42nd Congress (March 3, 1873) that increased congressional salaries by 50 percent and made the pay hike retroactive to the first day of the Congress, nearly two years earlier. We argue that opposition within Congress to the Salary Grab was part of a larger reform movement in the early 1870s, which also targeted other areas of government excess and corruption, like congressional franking, spoils-based civil service appointments, and the *Crédit Mobilier* scandal. Specifically, we posit that a “coalition of reform” emerged in the 42nd Congress, composed of New England elites and anti-monopolist Midwesterners, who espoused a philosophy of “good government,” wherein public servants would be comprised of the “best men” possible, such as those from privileged backgrounds, who would act selflessly and promote the greater good. Examining congressional roll-call votes on the Salary Grab, franking, and civil service reform, we find significant overlap in individual-level vote choice, which is explained by variables that tap this coalition of reform. The liberal reformers were largely unsuccessful in creating a true reform party and expediting a broad reform agenda at the congressional level, but their efforts allowed reform to become a viable issue in party politics and in the press throughout the late 19th century. These early reform efforts helped set the stage for the Progressive Era reforms of the early 20th century.

I. Introduction

On March 3, 1873, the last day of the 42nd Congress, the congressional membership voted itself a 50 percent pay increase, from \$5,000 to \$7,500 per annum, which was also retroactive to the first day of the Congress. At the time of the vote, nearly half of the members were lame ducks, or non-returning, which meant they would be exiting the chamber with a \$5,000 going-away present. The press quickly framed the pay raise as the “Salary Grab,” and many newspapers connected it to the recent *Crédit Mobilier* scandal in charging the governing Republican majority in Congress with perpetuating a climate of corruption. These charges would take their toll, as the Republican Party would go on to suffer heavy losses in the state elections of 1873. Moreover, the public backlash against the Grab was so intense and lasting that Congress acted to rescind the pay increase at the beginning of the 43rd Congress.

In this paper, we investigate the determinants behind congressional voting on the Salary Grab. The historical literature echoes the reporting of the time, suggesting that the passage of the measure was a function of Republican arrogance combined with lame duck greed. We show, however, that Republicans and lame ducks were no more likely to vote in favor of the Salary Grab than Democrats or returning members of Congress. We posit, instead, that voting on the Salary Grab was part of a larger storyline of political reform that spanned much of President Ulysses S. Grant’s first term as President. Specifically, we argue that a “coalition of reform” emerged during the 42nd Congress, coalescing around a series of “good government” issues, such as civil service reform, elimination of congressional franking, as well as opposition to the Salary Grab. This coalition consisted of New England elites, who were concerned about the shape of Congress and believed elected representatives should serve out of a sense of *noblesse oblige*, and Midwesterners, who were concerned about corruption, particularly the corruption

associated with the patronage-based machine politics of the Republican Party. This coalition sought to clean up government and the Salary Grab was their most unifying issue.

In discussing the Salary Grab and the aforementioned coalition of reform, we endeavor to highlight a part of American political history that often receives scant attention in the scholarly literature on progressive reform. That is, most scholars of Progressive Era politics focus simply on events during the first quarter of the twentieth century, most notably the period spanning Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency. Our broader goal in this paper is to help place the Progressive Era in context, by tracing the origins of the political reform movement to the early 1870s. While the coalition of reform failed initially in its twin objectives of cleaning up the national political scene and creating a true "reform party," it succeeded more generally by helping to establish a viable reform element within the Republican Party and setting the stage for later legislative victories, such as the Pendleton Act in 1883 and state-level Australian ballot initiatives in the late-1880s and early-1890s, which presaged the Progressive Era.

II. Congressional Pay and the "Salary Grab"

According to one contemporary member of Congress, Morris Udall (D-AZ), congressional debate over salary increases has historically generated "more self-righteousness and more passionate oratory and more posturing and more nonsense...than almost any other subject" (quoted in Fisher, 1980, p. 25). This is because the Constitution places the sensitive duty of setting congressional salaries directly in the hands of Congress itself,¹ thereby giving members of Congress (MCs) a wonderful opportunity to grandstand. They also have an incentive to use a host of techniques to reduce transparency and hide blame, such as automating the salary increase or improving/enhancing non-salary perquisites like mileage reimbursements, franking, congressional staff, and retirement benefits. In order to garner support for

congressional pay increases in the nineteenth century, they were often backdated. For example, in both 1856 and 1865, when congressional pay was increased from \$8 a day to \$3,000 per annum and \$3,000 to \$5,000 per annum, respectively, the increase was backdated 15 months (Dwyer 2004).

In the nineteenth century, members of Congress did not enjoy the perquisites that we associate with MCs in contemporary times. While possessing the ability to frank postage to their constituents, for example, MCs were not provided with a professional staff; thus, if a given member of Congress circa 1870 chose to employ any personal clerks or administrators, he had to pay them directly out of his \$5,000 salary.² For a member of Congress who was *not* independently wealthy, this often meant financial hardship, as Washington was an extremely expensive city in which to live.³ For example, by 1853, the salaries of simple federal administrative clerks (albeit in the upper level) reached \$2,200 per year, an amount viewed by many at the time as inadequate (White 1954: 380-82). Thus, in early 1873, it was not at all unusual for a member of Congress, earning \$5,000 per annum, to have difficulty adequately clothing and feeding his family, providing a private education for his children, paying a sizeable rent within the capitol limits, and participating in the requisite social morays (such as hosting private dinner parties) of the time.

To stay afloat while living in Washington, many members of Congress pursued a second occupation on the side, so as to maintain an auxiliary source of income (Fisher 1980: 34). Typically, MCs would continue their pre-Congress professions back in their districts, usually during the considerable time-off during the “short session” of Congress. However, MCs also increasingly turned to the many individuals and firms that began lobbying Congress after the

Civil War. The incentive to act corruptly due to poor pay may have contributed to the congressional scandals of the time, such as *Crédit Mobilier*.⁴

The legislation that became known as the Salary Grab originated in the waning days of the 42nd Congress, amid the normal course of congressional business. The possibility of increasing members' salaries was first raised on February 7, in the House Judiciary Committee, which was chaired by Benjamin Butler (R-MA). Butler's approach was to amend the pay increase to the general appropriations bill, so that MCs would not be required to vote on the increase as a separate piece of legislation. The amendment stipulated that the President's annual salary, which had remained unchanged since the days of George Washington, would double to \$50,000, the annual salaries of Supreme Court Judges and Cabinet Officers would be raised to \$10,000, and the salaries of many civil servants – a key component of the patronage system – would also be increased. In addition, members of Congress would receive a pay hike of 50 percent, from \$5,000 to \$7,500 per annum. Moreover, the congressional increase would be *retroactive* to the beginning of the 42nd Congress, almost two full years earlier. Thus, all members of Congress would receive a lump sum payment of approximately \$5,000 for “services rendered” upon the close of the session. On February 10, Butler offered his amendment, the initial Salary Grab vote (RC446), on the House floor.⁵ It failed by an 81-119 vote (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, p. 1234).

On February 24, 1873, the House convened to conduct the routine procedure of hammering out a legislative appropriations bill. As the membership debated technical provisions, Butler again proposed to add an amendment to increase the salaries of several government officials. While this bill (RC506) was voted down 69-121 on February 28, the vote to reconsider and adjourn (RC507) – essentially keeping the salary bill alive – was passed 113-

60 (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, p. 1926). Robinson (1873, p. 30) claims that the second vote was important, indicating the House's cynical strategy of voting against an explicit pay increase, yet keeping the road to that increase open.

The next day, March 1, brought three roll calls. The first (RC508) was a motion to table the Salary Grab, offered by John Farnsworth (R-IL), which was defeated 67-106. If this tabling motion had passed, the debate over the salary increase would have been over. The next roll call (RC509) was a motion offered by Butler to reconsider the Salary Grab legislation, which was passed 105-79. The final roll call (RC510) was a motion made by James Garfield (R-OH) to accept a Senate amendment that stipulated a smaller salary increase for MCs, from \$5,000 to \$6,500, while eliminating allowances for mileage, newspapers, and stationary. If passed, the amendment would be tacked on to the legislative appropriations bill, which would then be sent to conference committee, where it could be further modified before a final bill was reported back to each chamber. This more modest salary increase passed by a 102-99 vote (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, p. 1977).

A stacked conference committee included Butler and Matthew Carpenter (R-WI), who sponsored the pay raise legislation in the Senate. After much internal wrangling, the committee reported out a bill on March 3, the final day of the Congress, which effectively mirrored the *original* proposal by Butler, reinstating the \$2,500 congressional pay raise.⁶ Thus, the scaled-back salary increase had merely been a ruse perpetrated by Butler and Carpenter, simply to get it to conference committee, where they could revise it back to their preferred levels. Thus, with only a few hours before adjournment, the House considered two more votes relevant to the Salary Grab. The first was a motion to order the main question on the conference report (RC515) and the second was to vote on the conference report (RC516). These final two roll calls

were on the entire appropriations bill, so voting on them may not reflect strict preferences over the Salary Grab. Both chambers acted quickly and passed the conference bill – the House by a 102-95 vote and the Senate by a 36-27 vote (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, pp. 2105, 2184) – and President Grant signed it into law (17 *Stat.* 486).⁷

The proposed increase in congressional salaries, though coupled with proposed increases for other governmental officials, was instantly controversial, even among MCs. First, Congress was still reeling from the *Crédit Mobilier* scandal, leading many members to caution against any actions – like a pay raise – that might further “stir the pot” as the congressional session came to an end. Second, the proposed pay raise was offered as an amendment to an appropriations bill, rather than as a separate bill, as all previous pay raises had been considered. Thus, some MCs worried that the public might view the pay raise as a “backdoor” attempt and thus yet another example of the institution’s (perceived) culture of corruption. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the pay raise amendment was considered in the “lame duck” (or “short”) session of Congress, when nearly 50 percent of the House membership was in its final days.⁸ That is, prior to the passage of the 20th Amendment in 1933, elections to the *subsequent* Congress took place *prior to* the short session of the *current* Congress, resulting in a legislative environment in which lame duck (or non-returning) members were freed from the shackles of electoral accountability. Thus, the retroactive element of the proposed pay raise meant that the lame ducks, who retained their voting privileges, walked away with an additional \$5,000 “free and clear” at the conclusion of their tenure, a clear conflict of interest.

To the chagrin of Butler and his supporters, the congressional pay raise prompted a public outcry. While some newspapers, like the *Titusville Morning Herald*, initially claimed that the salary increase was “reasonable enough,” and that a “liberal salary will leave the field of

competition open to poor men as well as rich, to the man of brains, as well as to the owner of dollars, to the lawyer as well as the banker,” the tide of public opinion quickly turned against the grabbers (March 5, 1873, p. 2, c. 1). Democratic and Republican papers alike proceeded to condemn the salary steal. The *Defiance Democrat* opined that, “This is a bold, defiant, flagrant robbery, particularly that portion of the law that is retroactive” (March 15, 1873, p. 1, c. 2). The *Grand Traverse Herald* – a Republican paper – published an editorial stating that, “This knavish trick will be remembered against every man who supported it. He can never again get office or honor among honest men” (March 27, 1873, p. 1, c. 3).

The Salary Grab, as described by newspaper reports, was an “easy” issue, one that could be processed at the gut level by all regardless of degree of sophistication or attentiveness to politics.⁹ As Josephson (1938: 186) details: “Puzzled by the charges and countercharges of the *Crédit Mobilier* episode, the honest yeomanry of the nation grasped clearly, however, the meaning of the ‘back-pay’ steal.”¹⁰ As a result, a wave of indignation swept the country and an electoral backlash targeted the governing Republican Party in the state elections of 1873, with many state legislatures falling into Democratic hands for the first time since before the Civil War. Attempting to repair damages, the Republican leadership back-pedaled on the salary increase upon the opening of the 43rd Congress in December 1873. This time around, the debate was lengthy and the newspaper editorializing heavy. Butler, Carpenter, and their allies fought hard to keep the pay raise or, at most, limit the reduction in pay to \$6,500. However, on January 13, 1874, Congress officially repealed the entire congressional pay raise, sustaining only the salary increases for the President and Supreme Court Justices.¹¹

III. History and Hypotheses

The historical literature proposes several hypotheses to explain the passage of the salary grab bill. Dunning (1907) and Josephson (1938) paint it as a wholly Republican initiative, resulting from the arrogance of a large and seemingly insurmountable majority in place since the Civil War. Peskin (1978) and Thompson (1985) conclude that most of the bill's support came from lame-duck members who were enticed by the sizeable retroactive benefits and the absence of an electoral cost. Theriault (2002) claims that the critical support came from southern Republicans, who foresaw the end of Reconstruction and the return of a Democratic South and chose to land with their "golden parachute" valued at \$5,000.

We find little empirical evidence to support these hypotheses. In both the House and the Senate, Republicans were nearly split. In the House, 61 Republicans voted in favor of the salary increase and 56 against, while in the Senate, 26 voted in favor and 21 against. The lame duck hypothesis finds minimal empirical support, as well. In the House, 53 lame ducks favored the salary increase while 40 opposed it. In the Senate, there is a bit more support, as 10 lame duck members voted for the increase and 2 against. Moreover, both southern Republicans and southern Democrats voted nearly unanimously for the Salary Grab. Our conclusion, then, is that there was a regional effect, though very limited party or lame duck effects, in the vote. This begs the question: what drove the regional vote?

We propose that the regional effect may in fact be indirect and offer an alternative hypothesis, specifically that the congressional pay raise was part of an ongoing battle over corruption in politics. While politicians like Butler benefited greatly from the spoils system and patronage politics and controlled well developed political machines – which helped fund their

reelection campaigns – many New England elites and Midwestern populists viewed the machine politics of the day with suspicion and revulsion.¹²

Members of the New England elite were descendants of Alexander Hamilton on this issue. They believed that the common people were often unfit to rule, wanted to raise voting qualifications, and favored the rich, educated, and wellborn as government leaders. Many of the New England elite ultimately ended up as members of the Progressive Movement, but at this point in time, they were generally quite conservative. Hofstadter (1955) describes them as:

the old gentry, the merchants of long standing, the small manufacturers, the established professional men, the civic leaders of an earlier era ... particularly in the East but also in the nation at large, the old-family, college-educated class that had deep ancestral roots in local communities and often owned family businesses, that had traditions of political leadership, belonged to the patriotic societies and the best clubs, staffed the governing boards of philanthropic and cultural institutions, and led the movements for civic betterment (137).

These elites, later known as Mugwumps, were generally well educated and wealthy. They attended private secondary schools and prestigious colleges and universities, but generally their wealth was inherited and maintained via participation in a trade such as banking or the law. Few industrialists would fit the bill; in fact, the “newly rich, the grandiosely or corruptly rich, the masters of great corporations” were the source of Mugwump dismay (Hofstadter 1955, p. 137).

Allied with the New England elite against the Salary Grab were the Anti-Monopolists from the Midwest. While they can be best described as descendants of Thomas Jefferson, that is, maintaining faith in the common people, wishing to broaden the franchise, and distrusting special privilege, these Midwesterners nevertheless saw eye to eye with the New England elites on a variety of reform issues. Both groups felt the Grant Administration abused the patronage, filling civil service positions with unqualified friends rather than skilled administrators; propped up illegitimate carpetbag and scalawag governments in the Reconstructed South, while denying

the vote to many leading white Southerners; and tied itself too closely to the emerging “Lords of Industry,” opening up the Republican Party to frequent opportunities for corruption. They quickly cited the Salary Grab as yet another example of Republican moral decline and corruption (Torok 1991, p. 292).¹³

These reformers had a fairly straightforward reform agenda with simple solutions to governmental problems. As Sproat (1968) notes:

Their special fears concerned corruption in politics and business, extravagant government, excessive taxation, and the general breakdown of order and morality in society. For the abuses that offended them they proposed the simple remedies of “good government,” economic orthodoxy, and moral rejuvenation. Put “good men” into positions of responsibility and power, they urged (6).

In the minds of the reformers, what government needed was an influx of the “best” elements in society. While members of the New England elite might differ with Midwestern populists regarding the specific qualities that constituted “best,” they each agreed generally that such men should not be corrupt or corruptible and, when in power, would guide the nation with a paternalistic hand.

In 1872, the reformers tired of the Grant Administration and attempted to break away from the Republican Party by forming their own Liberal Republican Party (Ross 1917).¹⁴ In March 1872, they held their nominating convention in Cincinnati, with the explicit goal of removing Grant and his allies from office and replacing them with liberal reformers. They did not succeed, however, in advancing a liberal platform. In fact, the convention attracted a mix of Republican dissidents with contradictory platforms. For instance, free traders and protectionists, civil service reformers and spoilsmen, and “Negro rights” advocates and Southern redeemers all attended (Sproat 1968, p. 6). Ultimately, the convention delegates passed over early leaders in the liberal movement and nominated Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune*, a man

of conflicting visions.¹⁵ His candidacy was later endorsed by the Democrats, further muddying the intended liberal message. Greeley won only 43.8 percent of popular vote and carried just six states: Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas.

Despite their November debacle, the Liberal Republicans made inroads into the public consciousness, thanks in part to the growing list of liberal newspaper editors of the time. In particular, charges of graft and corruption in national politics became almost ubiquitous, resulting in a growing sense of distrust in government. Thus, the remaining months of the 42nd Congress received close scrutiny, and with *Crédit Moblier* and then the Salary Grab, the liberal reformers helped define the terms of the congressional agenda. Their influence, especially as it related to emphasizing “good government,” could be seen in the congressional proceedings. This was especially true in the debates on the Salary Grab, as hints of the elite argument came through. For example, George Frisbie Hoar (R-MA), Butler’s leading opponent in the House, argued that a generous compensation package was not necessary for public servants:

I have been long of the opinion there are some classes of public servants which must derive compensation from conscientious discharge of public duty. There is a difference between the salary and the work. The judge, the clergyman, the teacher, the legislator, after you have reached the limits of a simple frugal livelihood, every increase in compensation makes the office an object of desire to men who seek it for that compensation mostly (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, 2/24/1873, p. 1676).¹⁶

On the pro-Grab side, spoilsmen entrenched in the machine politics of the time were also aware of the changing political context, and thus also framed the Salary Grab as a reform measure. They argued that higher salaries would act both as an efficiency wage to reduce corruption and as a mechanism for democratizing the institution. Thomas Bayard (D-DE) summarized the argument of the pro-Grab forces succinctly in the Senate debates: “If you make the pay of members of Congress too low, if you make it exceedingly small and economical, you

will fill your Halls with two classes of men, either very rich men or rogues” (*Congressional Globe*, March 1873). Matthew Carpenter (R-WI), Butler’s counterpart in the Senate, was more pointed in his defense of the Salary Grab and his attack on its opponents:

The real question is whether poor men shall be allowed to participate in the administration of the Government. Rich men are all opposed to increasing salaries. That is after their kind. They would abolish salaries altogether if they could, and then only rich men could hold the offices ... The most perfect equality between the sons of the rich and the sons of the poor that I ever saw was in the Military Academy at West Point ... The result of that system was that merit, industry, brains alone determined the standing of the cadet. And not unfrequently [sic] the cadet who graduated at the head of his class was the son of a poor and obscure man” (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, 3/1/1873, p. 2045).

Finally, not to be outdone, Butler himself weighed in on the subject, focusing specifically on the plight of the “common man” in Congress:

I think he ought to live as he does at home and receive enough to pay his family expenses and to educate his children. Now, that cannot be done on less than \$7,500. I am certain every man here ought to have his living expense, and that is my experience of the cost of living here (*Congressional Globe*, 42-3, 2/24/1873, p. 1676).

IV. Coalition of Reform: Civil Service Reform and Franking

To make the case that a “coalition of reform” emerged in the 42nd Congress, driven by a “good government” ideology espoused by MCs from New England and the Midwest, we must move beyond a narrow examination of the Salary Grab. Specifically, we need to uncover evidence that such a reform coalition operated on other, similar issues as well. Examining the proceedings of the 42nd Congress, we find that several issues on the legislative agenda could be characterized as “reform” measures. This section examines two such measures, civil service reform and the elimination of the franking privilege, for evidence of voting patterns similar to those on the Salary Grab. We find that a coalition of reform coalesced around those issues, and that this coalition cut across party lines.

Civil Service Reform

On March 3, 1871, the last day of the 41st Congress, Congress passed a bill giving the President the power to form a civil service commission, and in June 1871, Grant appointed such a commission. Hoogenboom (1961, p. 21) describes the early proponents of civil service reformers as elite New Englanders.¹⁷ The spoilsmen of the day, men like Butler to whom Grant had given the right to distribute local federal patronage, opposed the commission, even though Grant himself seemed genuinely interested in seeing it succeed.

The 42nd House had two opportunities to vote on civil service reform. The first was an amendment (RC246) introduced by Butler to cut the expenditures on the Civil Service Commission from \$50,000 to \$10,000. Passage of the amendment would effectively emasculate the commission, as it would possess significantly fewer resources to investigate and carry out reforms. The second was a motion (RC252) by Butler to recommit a bill to turn some of the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission into law.¹⁸ Voting “yea” on this motion would effectively kill the bill and thus hamper the progress of civil service reform.

Since Midwesterners and Northern elites generated the initial impetus for civil service reform, comparing the voting on the Salary Grab and civil service reform should provide some insight as to whether a more general “coalition of reform” was operating in the 42nd Congress. If our hypothesis is correct, we would expect there to be similar voting patterns, particularly among Republicans. Democrats on the other hand, may have been motivated to vote for civil service reform for pragmatic reasons, as they were the “out party” and thus not privy to federal patronage. By supporting civil service reform, they may have felt that they could weaken the governing structure of the Republican Party. The results are shown in Tables 1 through 3. We compare the vote on the motion to recommit with the motion to table the Salary Grab (RC 508).

As shown in Table 1, 73 percent of Congressmen switched their votes between civil service reform and the Salary Grab. Breaking this down by party, as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, 60 percent of Democrats switched their votes as did 79 percent of Republicans. This pattern of voting indicates that, particularly for Republicans, the Salary Grab and civil service reform were similar issues. Forty-five “corrupt” Republicans voted to kill civil service reform but keep the Salary Grab alive, while twenty-four Republicans voted in a pro-reform manner, supporting civil service reform and opposing the Salary Grab.

[Tables 1, 2, and 3 about here]

Franking

The franking privilege was another issue that led to accusations of corruption and appeared on the legislative agenda in the 42nd Congress. Franking allowed members of Congress to “inform their constituents” by sending material through the mail free of charge. The abuses of the franking privilege were criticized frequently, earning special notice by Twain and Warner (2002) in a story told by Hicks to Colonel Sellers:

Well Senator Balloon put fifteen cents worth of stamps on each of those seven huge boxes of old clothes, and shipped that ton of second-hand rubbish, old boots and pantaloons and what not through the mails as registered matter! It was an ingenious thing and it had a genuine touch of humor about it, too. I think there is more real talent among our public men of today than there was among those of old times—a far more fertile fancy, a much happier ingenuity. Now, Colonel, can you picture Jefferson, or Washington or John Adams franking their wardrobes through the mails and adding the facetious idea of making the government responsible for the cargo for the sum of one dollar and five cents? Statesmen were dull creatures in those days. I have a much greater admiration for Senator Balloon (261).

While this story may have been an exaggeration, similar rumors – such as the MC who sent his horse home through the mail – abounded, as franking (and claims of franking abuses) captured the public interest. After a long debate, the franking privilege was voted on and abolished in the

42nd Congress.¹⁹ Table 4 provides a comparison of voting on the elimination of the franking privilege (RC423) and the Salary Grab (RC508).

[Table 4 about here]

Those who voted to eliminate franking were slightly more likely to vote against the Salary Grab, while those who voted to keep franking were over ten times more likely to vote for the Salary Grab. As a whole, 65 percent of House members voted the same way on the two roll calls. This vote comparison, like the vote on civil service reform, indicates that a group of reformers existed in the House and was attempting to effect reform on several issues, while another group consistently opposed them.

V. Coalition of Reform

In recent years, congressional scholars have increasingly turned to Poole and Rosenthal's NOMINATE technology to analyze roll-call votes.²⁰ Simply put, NOMINATE is a multidimensional unfolding technique, similar to factor and principal-components analyses, that recovers the underlying "dimensions" from a set of roll call votes. Across time, on a Congress-by-Congress basis, NOMINATE recovers a single dimension that explains roughly 80 percent of individual roll-call vote choices. This dimension typically breaks down along party lines and separates members along a basic left-right ideological continuum. A second NOMINATE dimension often explains additional variance by tapping into cross-cutting cleavages, i.e., issues that divide the parties. Given that issues like the Salary Grab, civil service reform, franking, and Crédit Mobilier cut across party lines, the second NOMINATE dimension may be a good way to identify whether a "coalition of reform" existed during the 42nd House.²¹

One way to measure the predictive power of the NOMINATE dimensions, or any model of vote choice for that matter, is to calculate the Proportional Reduction in Error (PRE), which

measures the gain in classification success over the simple prediction that all members vote with the majority. The formula is: $(\text{Minority Vote} - \text{Classification Errors}) / \text{Minority Vote}$. The fewer the number of classification errors compared to the minority vote, the higher the PRE. The PRE can take a maximum value of one, but can actually be negative if there are more classification errors than votes in the minority. A PRE of zero indicates that the model performs no better than the simple (or naïve) prediction that all MCs vote with the majority.

In order to determine which issues in the 42nd House are categorized well by the second NOMINATE dimension, we run the W-NOMINATE program in two stages, first in one dimension and then in two dimensions, and calculate the PRE for all votes in both cases. We then rank order the votes by the size of the PRE difference. The larger the difference in one and two dimensions, the greater the importance of the second dimension in predicting a vote. Table 5 provides the ten votes for which the difference in PRE is the largest along with the PREs for the other reform roll calls. The Salary Grab emerges as the definitive issue on the second NOMINATE dimension for the 42nd House with *all* eight Salary Grab votes placing in the top ten. Also in the top ten is a vote to adjourn during the course of the Crédit Mobilier proceedings. More generally, all of the reform votes rank in the top half of the second dimension ordering.²² The issue for which the second dimension offers the least predictive power is civil service reform, but, as we noted earlier, patronage politics muddied the votes on this issue.

[Table 5 about here]

VI. Regression Analyses of the Salary Grab, Civil Service, and Franking

In this section, we proceed to a more systematic set of analyses in our search for a “coalition of reform” in the 42nd House. Our goal is to predict the vote choices of MCs on a range of reform measures, including the Salary Grab, civil service reform, and franking.²³ In the

regressions that follow, we incorporate several explanatory variables. To isolate traits that we associate with liberal reformers, we include measures to tap education and wealth. **Education** ranges from 0 to 3 and is equal to *secondary* + *college*, where *secondary* takes on the value of 1 if the MC went to a private secondary school and zero otherwise, while *college* takes on the value of 0 for no college, 2 if the college was either Ivy League or had a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and 1 otherwise. **Wealth** measures real and personal wealth for MCs, as reported in the 1870 Census.²⁴ We also include covariates to control for the typical explanatory factors discussed in the historical literature. **Party** is equal to 1 if Democrat and 0 if Republican. **Lame Duck** is coded 1 if the MC was not returning to next Congress and 0 otherwise. We also include a set of dummy variables – **West-MidWest**, **Mid-Atlantic**, and **South** (with New England representing the baseline category) – to tap potential regional influences on MC vote choice.

The Salary Grab

Both sides tried to sell the Salary Grab as a reform measure. The pro-Grab forces argued that higher salaries would act as an efficiency wage, reducing corruption and allowing the non-wealthy to serve in Congress. The anti-Grab forces viewed the salary increase as a form of corruption, particularly the retroactive feature, and saw higher salaries as reducing the power of the “best men” in Congress. In keeping with our “coalition of reform” argument, we expect that MCs with greater levels of elite education and higher levels of wealth are more likely to vote against the Salary Grab. Two separate factors drive our wealth expectation. First, those MCs with higher wealth have a lower marginal utility of money. Second, those MCs with higher levels of wealth were more likely to be members of the “elite” class and therefore would want to shape the membership of Congress by keeping salaries low.

Conflated slightly with the measures of wealth and education is region. The reformer sentiment originated in New England and the Midwest, regions from which MCs were considerably richer, relative to MCs from the South. This is illustrated in Table 6. The elite versus populist sentiment can be seen in the difference between the education index in the Midwest and New England. New Englanders were more likely to go to private secondary schools and elite colleges than MCs from any other region.

[Table 6 about here]

For our regression analysis we chose RC 508, which was a motion offered by Butler to table the Salary Grab.²⁵ It was defeated 67-106. If this motion had passed, the debate over the salary increase would have been over. Table 7 reports the results of the logit regression with RC 508 as the dependent variable. Our measures of elite interests, wealth and education, have the predicted negative signs and matter.²⁶ The baseline probability for voting to block the Salary Grab is 54.8 percent. A one standard deviation change in wealth increases the probability of voting to table the motion by 7.2 percentage points.²⁷ A change in education from a private high school degree to an elite college increases the probability by 21.3 percentage points. The regional dummy variables for the Mid Atlantic and South also matter and in a sensible way: Southern and Mid-Atlantic MCs were most likely to vote to keep the motion alive, given that these regions were tied strongly to the patronage and machine politics of the time. The results indicate that a non-party coalition of reform existed which was regionally based, and at least a part of which consisted of a social elite that was wealthier and better educated than the average.

[Table 7 about here]

Civil Service Reform

To examine civil service reform, we chose to estimate the determinants of voting on motion (RC252), which was a vote to recommit a bill to turn some of the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission into law. Voting “yea” on this motion would have the effect of killing the bill, and thus hamper the progress of civil service reform. We report the results in Table 8. In addition to the aforementioned covariates, we also include the age of MCs as a proxy for access to (and dependence on) patronage. Our argument is that older MCs will be more vested in the patronage-based machine politics of the time, and will thus have more to lose by supporting civil service reform. We find some weak support for wealth, though the coefficient is not very reliable, with wealthier Congressman opposing the recommittal motion. More generally, the results indicate that this was a party and regional vote. Democrats voted to keep the bill alive, most likely because they were on the losing side of the patronage war and believed that civil service reform could harm the governing Republican majority. The regions align as expected with support for reform coming from New Englanders followed by MCs from the West-MidWest and the Mid-Atlantic. The South was strongly supportive, reflecting the importance that carpetbag and scalawag governments placed on patronage as a means of staying in power. And, as expected, more senior MCs supported the recommittal motion, presumably because they were more deeply tied to the patronage system.

[Table 8 about here]

Franking

There was only one roll call in the 42nd House that dealt with revoking the franking privilege (RC423). There was also not much discussion of the issue, which we find surprising. Of most interest is that following the abolition of franking in the 42nd Congress, the

reinstatement of the privilege began in the *next* Congress (the 43rd). Table 9 presents our results on the franking motion. We do not have a great explanation for why education and wealth do not matter. The variables that matter most are Lame Ducks and MCs from New England who voted to abolish franking, while Southern MCs fought to maintain the privilege.

[Table 9 about here]

A Coalition of Reform

We continue to examine whether a “coalition of reform” existed in the 42nd Congress by aggregating across the three reform measures analyzed in the previous subsections. In effect, we endeavor to capture a systematic reform mentality by creating an index that spans from -3 to 3. A member of Congress received a 1 if he voted in the direction of reform on each issue that came to a roll call (the Salary Grab, civil service reform, and the abolition of franking), a -1 for each vote against reform, and a 0 for an abstention. Table 10 reports the results using a parsimonious estimation including only wealth and education. We find that wealth and education mattered for voting across the three reform issues.²⁸

[Table 10 about here]

As another cut at identifying the coalition of reform, we estimated the probability of tabling the Salary Grab (RC508) using the votes by MCs on killing civil service reform (RC252) and abolishing franking (RC423) as explanatory variables. The results, which are reported in Table 11, indicate a strong consistency of voting across the three issues.

[Table 11 about here]

Based on the estimates in Table 11, if a member of Congress voted both to maintain franking and kill civil service reform, there was only a 4.7 percent probability that he would vote

to kill the Salary Grab. While if a MC voted both to eliminate franking and preserve civil service reform, there was a 77.2 percent probability that he would vote to kill the Salary Grab.

Regression Analysis Overall

On the whole, we find substantial evidence that a “coalition of reform” existed in the 42nd Congress, that is, a group of MCs who believed strongly in the notion of “good government” and thought that Congress ought to be run by the “best men.” This group coalesced around a set of reform issues like opposition to the Salary Grab, the abolition of the franking privilege, and the furtherance of a merit-based civil service. Our measures roughly capture this movement, but they are clearly not perfect. For example, Butler, the ultimate opportunist who sponsored the Salary Grab, was from New England, college educated, and one of the wealthiest members of Congress. In short, creating a strong proxy for “liberal reformers” is difficult. Nevertheless, simply using wealth and education, we find a strong connection to support for reform measures in Congress. And support for one reform typically meant support for other reforms, lending credence for our coalition theory.

VII. Discussion

In this paper, we have presented an argument that a “coalition of reform” emerged in the 42nd Congress, in response to the growing public unease surrounding charges of graft and corruption in connection to the Grant Administration. These reformers, composed of New England elites and anti-monopolist Midwesterners, believed that the patronage-based machine politics that came to dominate the Republican Party after the Civil War were unacceptable. In their place, a philosophy of “good government” was espoused, wherein public servants would be comprised of the “best men” possible, specifically those from privileged backgrounds who

would act selflessly and promote the greater good. Growing weary of the Republican Party, these reformers attempted to start their own Liberal Republican Party, to challenge Grant and his associates in 1872. This endeavor proved to be a dismal failure, however, as the liberals found it difficult to organize effectively, and Grant was reelected by a sizeable margin.

Yet, this liberal reform wave, and the emergence of the Liberal Republican Party, produced indirect benefits. First, a public awareness for reform was created, thanks in part to a growing group of liberal editorialists and media outlets after the Civil War. As charges of graft and corruption emerged as “good media copy,” constituent monitoring of public officials increased, and politicians responded by (occasionally) toning down their antics. Second, the liberal reformers were successful in placing “reform” on the political agenda. While the 1872 campaign indicated that reform issues, by themselves, could not drive the political process, they could help define the terms of partisan debate. In effect, the liberal reform effort was successful in getting “reform” a place at the partisan table, especially within the Republican Party. That is, after the Civil War and through the mid-1870s, the Republican Party was run by the “Stalwarts,” a group close to the Grant Administration, who favored patronage-based, machine-style politics and supported a “crony” Republican regime in the Reconstructed South. Best known among the Stalwarts were Butler, Carpenter, and Roscoe Conkling (R-NY). Opposing them, were the “Half Breeds,” a group of moderate Republicans, led by James Blaine (R-ME), who were less enthralled with patronage politics, opposed the propped-up scalawag and carpetbag governments in the South, and worked to tie the party more closely to the growing industrial and commercial interests that emerged after the Civil War. There was typically a half-hearted reform interest within the Half Breed organization, but only narrowly and only when it was necessary. Thus, a third, smaller group of Reformers often proved to be pivotal within the Republican organization.

Composed of former Liberal Republican breakaways, like George Frisbie Hoar (R-MA) and Carl Schurz (R-MO), this group used its leverage to keep issues like civil service reform on the political agenda throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s.

Thus, the “coalition of reform” lived on, not as a separate political organization, but as a wing within the Republican Party. “Reform,” therefore, had a political voice, thanks in part to the liberal reform movement of the early 1870s. By carving out a political and elite-level constituency, these reformers ensured that “progressive” issues would remain on the political agenda, even if their initial coalition did not survive. And this is exactly what occurred. As detailed earlier, while the Salary Grab was rescinded in the 43rd Congress, the franking privilege was partially reinstated and civil service reform could not get off the ground. Yet, pressure for reform continued, and eventually a significant civil service reform, the Pendleton Act, was passed in 1883. Additional reform efforts were made at the state level throughout the late-nineteenth century, chief among them was the adoption of the Australian ballot, a government-sponsored ballot that made voting secret and thus reduced the coercive efforts of the national parties.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, a full-blown reform effort was underway, led by the strong voice of President Theodore Roosevelt. In addition to social reforms, like the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906), a host of political reforms were produced during this new Progressive Era, such as the creation of congressional primaries (early 1910s), the direct election of Senators (1913), and the extension of suffrage to women (1920). By this time, the reform effort permeated not only the Republican Party, but the Democratic Party as well. And, over time, reform initiatives became the hallmark of the Democratic organization, culminating in the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 and the emergence of the New Deal.

To conclude, our contention in this paper is that the continued reforms in the late-nineteenth century and the rise of Progressive Era politics in the early-twentieth century trace their origins to the liberal reform movement of the early-1870s. While the initial movement failed in its prime objective of creating a true “reform party,” and had minimal success in its secondary goal of expediting a broad reform agenda at the congressional level, its emergence and perseverance put reform on the political map. This allowed reform to become a viable issue in party politics and, with greater media attention and constituent oversight, gradually transformed a set of high-minded ideals into genuine public policy. In time, reform became a normal part of the political agenda, no longer seeming narrow or out-of-the-mainstream. This we take for granted in contemporary society, but it was not deterministic; rather, it required the sweat and sacrifice of a dedicated group of liberal reformers over 130 years ago.

Table 1: Entire House

| | | Table Salary Grab | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| Recommit C.S. Reform | Yes | 17 | 58 |
| | No | 35 | 18 |

Table 2: House Republicans

| | | Table Salary Grab | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| Recommit C.S. Reform | Yes | 14 | 45 |
| | No | 24 | 4 |

Table 3: House Democrats

| | | Table Salary Grab | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| Recommit C.S. Reform | Yes | 3 | 13 |
| | No | 11 | 13 |

Table 4: Franking and Salary Grab Votes: Entire House

| | | Table Salary Grab | |
|--------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| Eliminate Franking | Yes | 59 | 45 |
| | No | 3 | 32 |

Table 5: Second Dimension Gain of W-NOMINATE in 42nd House

| Roll Call | Rank | PRE Two Dimensions | PRE One Dimension | Difference | Issue |
|-----------|------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 516 | 1 | 0.7 | -0.09 | 0.79 | Salary Grab |
| 509 | 2 | 0.684 | 0 | 0.684 | Salary Grab |
| 510 | 3 | 0.737 | 0.061 | 0.676 | Salary Grab |
| 515 | 4 | 0.667 | 0 | 0.667 | Salary Grab |
| 493 | 5 | 0.59 | 0 | 0.59 | Crédit Mobilier |
| 506 | 6 | 0.589 | 0 | 0.589 | Salary Grab |
| 446 | 7 | 0.506 | -0.049 | 0.555 | Salary Grab |
| 508 | 8 | 0.567 | 0.015 | 0.552 | Salary Grab |
| 451 | 9 | 0.514 | 0 | 0.514 | Claims Commission |
| 507 | 10 | 0.492 | 0 | 0.492 | Salary Grab |
| 495 | 40 | 0.5 | 0.218 | 0.282 | Crédit Mobilier |
| 423 | 143 | 0.125 | 0 | 0.125 | Franking |
| 246 | 161 | 0.085 | -0.017 | 0.102 | Civil Service Reform |
| 252 | 237 | 0.3 | 0.262 | 0.038 | Civil Service Reform |

Table 6: Wealth and Education by Region

| | | South | Middle Atlantic | New England | West-Midwest |
|-----------------|--------|--------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Wealth | Mean | 44,619 | 65,622 | 71,778 | 64,179 |
| | Median | 12,375 | 30,000 | 27,000 | 15,000 |
| Education Index | Mean | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 0.95 |
| | Median | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| | Count | 67 | 59 | 27 | 77 |

Table 7: Vote to Table the Salary Grab

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | z-Statistic | Prob. |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------|
| C | 0.703836 | 0.615122 | 1.144222 | 0.2525 |
| EDUCATION | 0.481944 | 0.182856 | 2.635646 | 0.0084 |
| WEALTH | 1.75E-06 | 8.69E-07 | 2.011384 | 0.0443 |
| WEST-MIDWEST | -1.097759 | 0.683050 | -1.607145 | 0.1080 |
| MIDATL | -2.244833 | 0.704386 | -3.186934 | 0.0014 |
| SOUTH | -2.358570 | 0.718930 | -3.280667 | 0.0010 |
| LAME | -0.199726 | 0.391649 | -0.509962 | 0.6101 |
| PARTY | -0.214575 | 0.397481 | -0.539837 | 0.5893 |
| Mean dependent var | 0.397436 | S.D. dependent var | 0.490944 | |
| S.E. of regression | 0.439890 | Akaike info criterion | 1.204507 | |
| Sum squared resid | 28.63847 | Schwarz criterion | 1.360910 | |
| Log likelihood | -85.95154 | Hannan-Quinn criter. | 1.268031 | |
| Restr. log likelihood | -104.8255 | Avg. log likelihood | -0.550971 | |
| LR statistic (7 df) | 37.74792 | McFadden R-squared | 0.180051 | |
| Probability(LR stat) | 3.38E-06 | | | |
| Obs with Dep=0 | 94 | Total observations | 156 | |
| Obs with Dep=1 | 62 | | | |

| | Dep=0 | Dep=1 | Total |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| P(Dep=1)≤.5 | 79 | 29 | 108 |
| P(Dep=1)>.5 | 15 | 33 | 48 |
| Total | 94 | 62 | 156 |
| Correct | 79 | 33 | 112 |
| % Correct | 84.04 | 53.23 | 71.79 |
| PRE | | | 0.29 |

Table 8: Vote to Recommit (Kill) Civil Service Reform

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | z-Statistic | Prob. |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| C | -3.356147 | 1.306608 | -2.568595 | 0.0102 |
| EDUCATION | -0.205194 | 0.190071 | -1.079566 | 0.2803 |
| WEALTH | -1.75E-06 | 1.31E-06 | -1.332287 | 0.1828 |
| WEST-MIDWEST | 1.853476 | 0.658863 | 2.813145 | 0.0049 |
| MIDATL | 1.810998 | 0.691488 | 2.618988 | 0.0088 |
| SOUTH | 2.825259 | 0.757997 | 3.727269 | 0.0002 |
| PARTY | -1.798989 | 0.430352 | -4.180277 | 0.0000 |
| AGE | 0.057158 | 0.025311 | 2.258196 | 0.0239 |
| Mean dependent var | 0.547170 | S.D. dependent var | | 0.499343 |
| S.E. of regression | 0.458775 | Akaike info criterion | | 1.272789 |
| Sum squared resid | 31.78170 | Schwarz criterion | | 1.427199 |
| Log likelihood | -93.18669 | Hannan-Quinn criter. | | 1.335493 |
| Restr. log likelihood | -109.5018 | Avg. log likelihood | | -0.586080 |
| LR statistic (7 df) | 32.63023 | McFadden R-squared | | 0.148994 |
| Probability(LR stat) | 3.10E-05 | | | |
| Obs with Dep=0 | 72 | Total observations | | 159 |
| Obs with Dep=1 | 87 | | | |

| | Dep=0 | Dep=1 | Total |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| P(Dep=1)≤.5 | 44 | 17 | 61 |
| P(Dep=1)>.5 | 28 | 70 | 98 |
| Total | 72 | 87 | 159 |
| Correct | 44 | 70 | 114 |
| % Correct | 61.11 | 80.46 | 71.70 |
| PRE | | | 0.38 |

Table 9: Motion to Abolish Franking

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | z-Statistic | Prob. |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| C | 2.326746 | 0.751517 | 3.096067 | 0.0020 |
| EDUCATION | -0.210822 | 0.192777 | -1.093606 | 0.2741 |
| WEALTH | 2.11E-06 | 2.74E-06 | 0.768157 | 0.4424 |
| WEST-MIDWEST | -0.811917 | 0.852054 | -0.952893 | 0.3406 |
| MIDATL | -1.171398 | 0.881123 | -1.329437 | 0.1837 |
| SOUTH | -2.578874 | 0.849859 | -3.034472 | 0.0024 |
| PARTY | 0.055171 | 0.438497 | 0.125819 | 0.8999 |
| LAME | 0.963511 | 0.432419 | 2.228190 | 0.0259 |
| Mean dependent var | 0.757062 | S.D. dependent var | | 0.430074 |
| S.E. of regression | 0.402161 | Akaike info criterion | | 1.046857 |
| Sum squared resid | 27.33302 | Schwarz criterion | | 1.190412 |
| Log likelihood | -84.64688 | Hannan-Quinn criter. | | 1.105078 |
| Restr. log likelihood | -98.13636 | Avg. log likelihood | | -0.478231 |
| LR statistic (7 df) | 26.97897 | McFadden R-squared | | 0.137457 |
| Probability(LR stat) | 0.000336 | | | |
| Obs with Dep=0 | 43 | Total observations | | 177 |
| Obs with Dep=1 | 134 | | | |

| | Dep=0 | Dep=1 | Total |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| P(Dep=1)<=.5 | 12 | 9 | 21 |
| P(Dep=1)>.5 | 31 | 125 | 156 |
| Total | 43 | 134 | 177 |
| Correct | 12 | 125 | 137 |
| % Correct | 27.91 | 93.28 | 77.40 |
| PRE | | | 0.07 |

Table 10: Index of Reform

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob. |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
| C | -0.034007 | 0.060908 | -0.558332 | 0.5772 |
| EDUCATION | 0.072388 | 0.041823 | 1.730816 | 0.0849 |
| WEALTH | 2.99E-07 | 1.40E-07 | 2.144294 | 0.0331 |
| R-squared | 0.021332 | Mean dependent var | | 0.063890 |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.012312 | S.D. dependent var | | 0.574160 |
| S.E. of regression | 0.570614 | Akaike info criterion | | 1.729336 |
| Sum squared resid | 70.65532 | Schwarz criterion | | 1.775612 |
| Log likelihood | -187.2269 | F-statistic | | 2.364977 |
| Durbin-Watson stat | 1.526996 | Prob(F-statistic) | | 0.096369 |

Table 11: Motion to Table the Salary Grab

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | z-Statistic | Prob. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| C | -1.259113 | 0.801543 | -1.570861 | 0.1162 |
| Kill Civil Service Reform | -1.748749 | 0.478660 | -3.653428 | 0.0003 |
| Abolish Franking | 2.480794 | 0.812842 | 3.052001 | 0.0023 |
| Mean dependent var | 0.460784 | S.D. dependent var | | 0.500921 |
| S.E. of regression | 0.421252 | Akaike info criterion | | 1.093505 |
| Sum squared resid | 17.56787 | Schwarz criterion | | 1.170710 |
| Log likelihood | -52.76877 | Hannan-Quinn criter. | | 1.124768 |
| Restr. log likelihood | -70.38696 | Avg. log likelihood | | -0.517341 |
| LR statistic (2 df) | 35.23639 | McFadden R-squared | | 0.250305 |
| Probability(LR stat) | 2.23E-08 | | | |
| Obs with Dep=0 | 55 | Total observations | | 102 |
| Obs with Dep=1 | 47 | | | |

Probability of Voting “Yea” on RC 508 to Table the Salary Grab

| | | Eliminate Franking | |
|---------------------------|-----|--------------------|-------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Kill Civil Service Reform | Yes | 37.1% | 4.7% |
| | No | 77.2% | 22.1% |

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Notes

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¹ See Article I, Section 6: “The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States.”

² The lone exception involved standing committee chairmen, who were provided with an aide (and office space) at Federal expense. This explains, in part, the explosion in standing committees after the Civil War, many of which dealt with mundane matters and rarely (if ever) actually met.

³ Abigail Adams often complained about the low salary of her husband compared to what he could have earned as a lawyer in Boston.

⁴ As Welch (1971, p. 49) argues: “... for the public official without private means it was often a question of whether to scrimp or to barter the influence of the office for legal retainers and favorable stock options.”

⁵ Throughout the paper we will refer to the roll calls by their Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) codes.

⁶ Peskin (1978, pp. 365-66) claims that five of the six members of the conference committee supported Butler’s salary proposal. Only James Garfield, the chairman of the House Appropriations committee, opposed the initiative. Garfield eventually gave in and supported the proposal after several hours of tense discussions, because of two factors: (1) he was able to persuade the committee to eliminate a mileage stipulation in the plan, which would save the Treasury around \$200,000, and (2) he feared that voting down the legislative appropriations bill would force a special session of Congress, which would open up a new set of potential problems for the Republicans.

⁷ See Robinson (1873), Rhodes (1906), Peskin (1978), and Thompson (1985) for accounts of these proceedings.

⁸ Lame ducks in the House tallied 114 of the 243 members and 16 of 74 in the Senate.

⁹ For a discussion of “easy” versus “hard” issues, see Carmines and Stimson (1980).

¹⁰ See Rhodes (1906) and Fisher (1980) for similar arguments.

¹¹ Congressional salaries would not be raised again until February 26, 1907, when an increase to \$7,500 was once again passed (Dwyer 2004). Unlike the Salary Grab, this increase went into effect on March 4, 1908, at the beginning of the *following* Congress.

¹² Butler and members of the New England elite (the “Brahmins”) sparred on a number of issues over a number of years. For a detailed analysis, see Thompson (1982).

¹³ For an overview of the perceived moral decline in Congress during this period, see White (1958, pp. 51-54).

¹⁴ See, also, Foner (1988, pp. 488-511).

¹⁵ While an outspoken critic of the patronage practices of the Grant Administration, Greeley was also a long-time advocate of high tariff rates, which were anathema to the Midwestern liberals. His nomination thus underscored the divided nature of the convention proceedings.

¹⁶ Hoar apparently practiced what he preached. As Welch (1971, p. 49 *fn* 30) notes: “Hoar chose to scrimp and lived in two rooms of a Washington boarding house, where he cursed the flies and missed the cuisine of New England.”

¹⁷ “Most of them were lawyers, editors, clergymen, professors, and businessmen whose interests were mercantile and financial rather than industrial. The typical reformer came from an old-established New England family and was a descendant of merchants, clergymen, and public servants. He inherited wealth and consequently deplored the crass materialism of the new rich whose prominence, based on vast fortunes, eclipsed his own. The typical reformer was either an Episcopalian or a Unitarian and was a Harvard graduate. Proud of his Anglo-Saxon heritage, he patterned his thoughts and actions after English models; John Stuart Mill was his philosopher and William E. Gladstone his ideal statesman.”

¹⁸ More specifically, the crux of RC252 was to recommit H.R. 787, a bill providing for the independence of the several departments of the government, without instructions. In typical legislative parlance, a motion to recommit without instructions is a not-so-veiled attempt to kill a bill.

¹⁹ The franking privilege was partially reinstated in the 43rd Congress, and gradually broadened until it was fully reinstated in the 51st Congress (Pontius 1995).

²⁰ For a systematic explanation of the NOMINATE methodology, as well as the various ways in which NOMINATE scores can be applied, see Poole and Rosenthal (1997).

²¹ The substantive interpretation of the second NOMINATE dimension changes with time. Poole and Rosenthal argue that since the 1970s the second dimension has been quite weak, as American politics has moved more cleanly to a one-dimensional issue space. During the nineteenth century, the second dimension was quite strong at times and typically picked up regional cleavages, such as slavery, bimetallism, and public land issues.

²² There were a total of 517 roll calls for the 42nd House.

²³ We do not, however, examine the vote on the motion to stop the investigation into the Credit Mobilier because it was a pure party vote. But, we stress the scandal should be viewed as a backdrop to the other votes, since Congress was under the media’s microscope and the public was an avid consumer of scandals.

²⁴ Our wealth variable was generated primarily by Joe Ferrie of Northwestern University from the 1870 Census reports. Those MCs who had no wealth reported were keyed in as a zero if wealth was reported for any other individual on that Census page. The observation was dropped if wealth was not reported for any other individual on that Census page. In this, we followed the suggestion of Ferrie. We supplemented this initial data with additional Census data assembled by Terry Seip of the University of Southern California.

²⁵ Results from analyses of other Salary Grab votes give almost identical results. We also created an index of all Grab votes, ran the same model, and uncovered similar results. Thus, the results for the RC508 analysis are robust.

²⁶ MCs voting to table the motion had twice as much wealth on average as those who voted to keep it alive.

²⁷ The education variable is set equal to one, and the dummy variables are set so that the baseline is a non-lame-duck midwestern Republican.

²⁸ When we add regions the signs and magnitudes of the coefficients remain similar though the significance levels fall. This is not surprising given our narrative and earlier results indicating that the coalition was partially regional.