

Editor's Corner

A pol from Iowa who is a friend of a friend came to town a few weeks ago. We breakfasted together and the conversation soon turned, as it usually does in Washington, to politics. We discussed the prospects of Tom Harkin and Berkley Bedell and Cooper Evans in the House and Roxanne Conlin in the governor's race. Soon the conversation moved from individual races to national trends like the effects of reapportionment, the emergence of a women's vote which is heavily tipped toward the Democrats, the number of seats the Republicans can expect to lose in the House, and even whether the parties are realigning—all topics in this issue of *PS*.

As for the net loss of House seats, I argued Edward Tufte's position. Looking at the state of the economy and recent presidential support scores, one would have to conclude that the Republicans are going to lose 45 seats. This seemed especially true to me if the degree to which President Reagan has produced Republican cohesion in Congress is taken into account. Reagan's program is an economic program, it is failing, and it is seen as a Republican program.

Gary, my friend's friend, who is a strong Democrat, was vehement in insisting that, as much as he wished otherwise, the Republicans were not going to lose more than 20 seats, if that many. He did not have any elegant theory to support his position, but he kept asking, "Where are the Democrats going to pick up those seats? I simply don't see it."

Friendly Bet

Counting on Tufte, I held firm and placed a friendly but serious bet with Gary that the Republicans would indeed lose 45 seats. He bet 20. The one of us who is closer on November 2 will be taken to

Sunday brunch at the Hyatt by the other sometime in November.

To tell the truth, having read Gary Jacobson and Samuel Kernell's *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*, I was well aware of the arguments which could support Gary's position, but the economy seemed determinative to me and still does. Our economic problems are more severe than they have been since the 1930s, and, as the party in control of the presidency, the Republicans are clearly identified with those problems.

Jacobson and Kernell tell us that Republican talent, money and organization are sufficient to overcome the political effects of a languishing economy and that those effects matter more to political elites than to the average voter in any case. Normally, elites make political decisions based on the state of the economy early in the campaign year and thus produce Tufte's results, according to Jacobson and Kernell. Despite the flagging economy, however, elites are supporting Republican candidates anyway this year, and Republicans are fielding good, creditable candidates. As a result, Republican elites have shortcircuited the relationship between the economy and midterm results which Tufte finds in the aggregate.

William Schneider, indirectly supporting Jacobson and Kernell in one sense, argues that partisanship and voting have become increasingly disjointed, a position which would imply that Republican losses will not be as great as the Tufte model predicts. At the same time, however, the depth of the recession may be so great that Republicans may have revived the New Deal agenda and, by implication, party voting (at least in 1982).

If one takes into account what Kathleen Frankovic tells us about women (that

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they tend to oppose Reagan's policies and now identify more heavily with the Democratic party than men) and what Charles Bullock demonstrates about reapportionment (that the Republicans did not capitalize on the opportunities which reapportionment offered), I think I have a good chance to be treated at the Hyatt for brunch in November. Still, Jacobson and Kernell make a compelling argument and one which makes my bet far from a sure thing.

Reprints Available

All the authors in this symposium have written predictive pieces which not only

make for exciting reading but which also make these articles especially valuable for classroom use. We are making reprints of "The 1982 Congressional Elections" available at \$2.00 per copy (pre-paid) for this purpose. Our book department has promised swift delivery. Orders may be made through college and university bookstores.

Those of you who like our new approach in *PS* should especially enjoy this issue. Tom Mann deserves special mention for his considerable help in assembling this symposium.

Catherine Rudder