# **Exploring Congressional Debates: Uncovering Key Topics from the 110th Congress**

**Introduction**

The floor debates of the 110th Congress offer a rich tapestry of discussions and arguments that shape the laws and policies of the United States. Understanding what topics are commonly discussed during these sessions can provide valuable insights into the political priorities and concerns of lawmakers at that time. For political scientists, these debates are more than just exchanges of viewpoints; they are windows into the issues that dominate the legislative agenda and reflect the broader socio-political climate of the era.

Analyzing these debates can reveal much about the key topics that concerned both political parties and how these issues were framed and debated. For instance, were there particular concerns that were repeatedly brought up by representatives from different backgrounds or political affiliations? Did male and female legislators focus on different issues, or was there a shared set of priorities? By examining the most frequently discussed topics, political scientists can better understand the legislative focus, partisan differences, and even the gender dynamics within Congress. This kind of analysis can also shed light on how certain issues, like healthcare or national defense, evolved over time and what arguments were used to support or oppose various policies.

This exploration is particularly intriguing for those interested in political communication and the policymaking process. By identifying common topics in congressional debates, researchers can trace how specific issues rise and fall in importance and how they are influenced by external events, public opinion, or shifts in political strategy. Understanding these patterns helps build a clearer picture of the political landscape and the forces that shape it. The data from the 110th Congress offers a unique snapshot of American legislative history, providing a foundation for deeper analysis and discussion on how political discourse reflects and shapes public policy.

**Analysis**

**Data Preparation:**

1. **Overview of the Data:** The dataset consists of a collection of text documents from the floor debates of the 110th Congress (House only). These documents provide a detailed record of the discussions and arguments made by lawmakers, organized into four subfolders: "female republican," "male republican," "female democrat," and "male democrat." Each text document represents a transcript of a debate formatted in an XML-like markup language (see figure 3).

To begin analyzing the data, we first read all the text files into a single DataFrame, combining the transcripts from all subfolders. Each transcript was labeled with the party affiliation and gender of the speaker based on the sub-file the document was sourced from. This structure enables us to explore not only the content of the debates but also how the topics and language may differ between groups.

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| Figure 1- Corpus Format | Figure 2- Male Republican Text Transcripts |
| Figure 3-Example Male Republican Raw Transcript | |
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1. **Data Loading and Cleaning:** Before diving into topic modeling, the dataset needed to be cleaned and pre-processed to ensure accurate and meaningful results. The pre-processing steps involve several tasks:
   1. **Extracting Relevant Text:** The transcripts often contain various tags and metadata that are not relevant for our analysis. The content between <TEXT> and </TEXT> tags was extracted to focus on the actual debate content.
   2. **Cleaning the Text**: The text is cleaned by removing numerals, punctuation, non-alphabetical characters, honorifics (such as "Mr" or "Mrs"), and any all-uppercase words that represented the speaker’s name. Single-letter words and extra whitespace were also removed to standardize the text format.
2. **Lemming, Tokenization and Vectorization:** Once the reviews were cleaned, the next step was to convert the text data into a numerical format suitable for model training and evaluation. This was accomplished through a combination of lemmatization, tokenization, and vectorization. These processes transformed the textual data into structured formats that could be used effectively in machine learning models.
   1. **Lemmatization:** Lemmatization involves reducing words to their base or root form, known as the "lemma." Unlike stemming, which merely cuts off word endings, lemmatization considers the context and converts words into meaningful base forms, which are more linguistically accurate. For instance, "running" and "ran" are both lemmatized to "run." In this project, lemmatization was performed using the WordNetLemmatizer, a tool from the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) library. By tagging each word with its part of speech (POS), the lemmatizer accurately transforms words based on their grammatical role, enhancing the quality of the text data for subsequent analysis.

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| **Sample Transcript Prior to Lemmatization :** | **Sample Transcript After Lemmatization:** |
| \*\*bolding added to highlight changed words | |
| |  | | --- | | Transcript of Ohio Speaker would like to thank Terry for the time and for those very kind **words** and Pallone for his support in this cause and the entire committee for **allowing** this to come forward. Speaker **rise** today as a voice for the **thousands** of **families** across America who have been **touched** by pediatric cancer, and most importantly, the **children** who will be **diagnosed** with the disease during this year alone. | | |  | | --- | | Transcript of Ohio Speaker I would like to thank Terry for the time and for those very kind **word** and Pallone for his support in this cause and the entire committee for **allow** this to come forward. Speaker I rise today voice for the **thousand** of **family** across America who have **be touch** by pediatric cancer, and most importantly, the **child** who will be **diagnose** with the disease during this year alone. | |

* 1. **Count Vectorization:** Vectorization involves splitting the text into individual words, known as tokens, which can then be analyzed. The text was tokenized into individual words, and word frequency was encoded using simple count frequency. This process breaks down the text into manageable pieces, making it easier to analyze and model.
     1. **Removing Stop Words:** During vectorization, common English stop words (e.g., "the," "and," "in") were removed using the stop\_words='english' parameter within the CountVectorizer from the sklearn library. Stop words are words that occur frequently in the language but do not contribute significant meaning to the text. By removing these words, the model focuses on more relevant terms that provide meaningful context and insights into the topics being discussed.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Figure 4—Cleaned, Lemmatized, and Tokenized Final Dataframe (48,523 Tokens)

* 1. **Visualizing Cleaned Data-set**
     1. **Word Clouds:** The word clouds reveal significant overlap in word usage across political and gender lines, highlighting common themes like governance and public service. However, distinct differences also emerge, reflecting nuanced focuses and rhetorical styles influenced by gender and political affiliation. Republican word clouds focus more on national identity and energy, while Democrat word clouds highlight support, healthcare, and welfare issues. Female speakers across both parties appear to prioritize social issues more heavily, whereas male speakers lean towards economic and policy discussions.

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| **Figure 5 - Word Cloud for Republican Females** |
| **Figure 6 - Word Cloud for Republican Males** |
| Figure 7 - Word Cloud for Democrat Female |
| Figure 8 - Word Cloud for Democrat Male |

* + - * **Republican Female vs. Republican Male**
        1. **Common Words**: Both the Republican female and male speakers frequently use words like "speaker," "people," "year," "time," "make," "say," and "American." These words suggest a focus on broad themes relevant to legislative discussions, governance, and national identity.
        2. **Differences**: The word cloud for Republican females places a slightly heavier emphasis on "energy," "congress," and "work," which might indicate a stronger focus on legislative action and policy specifics. On the other hand, the Republican male word cloud prominently features "just" and "come," perhaps suggesting a more conversational or narrative tone in speeches or debates.
      * **Democrat Female vs. Democrat Male**
        1. **Common Words**: Like their Republican counterparts, both Democrat female and male speakers use "speaker," "people," "year," "time," "support," "work," and "make." This overlap shows a shared emphasis on public service, legislative activities, and community impact.
        2. **Differences**: The Democrat female word cloud includes words like "support," "child," and "health," indicating a possible focus on social issues, healthcare, and child welfare. Conversely, the Democrat male word cloud prominently features "say" and "need," which could suggest an emphasis on addressing immediate requirements or calls to action.
      * **Republican vs. Democrat**
        1. **Common Words Across All Groups**: Words such as "speaker," "people," "year," "make," and "time" are universally frequent, suggesting that speeches across the political spectrum often center around common themes of governance, legislative progress, and public engagement.
        2. **Partisan Differences**:

**Republicans**: The word clouds for both Republican genders emphasize "energy," "American," and "government," which might reflect a focus on nationalistic themes, energy policy, and governmental operations.

**Democrats**: Democrat word clouds focus more on "support," "health," "child," and "congress," pointing to a likely emphasis on social support systems, healthcare, and child welfare legislation.

* + - * **Gender-Based Differences**
        1. **Females (Across Parties)**: Words like "support," "child," and "health" appear more frequently, suggesting a stronger focus on social policies and welfare issues.
        2. **Males (Across Parties)**: Terms like "say," "year," and "work" are more prominent, which could indicate discussions that are more directed towards economic and policy-making efforts rather than social issues.
  1. **Conclusions**: the word clouds reveal limited gender differences within parties, suggesting male and female politicians often use similar language in public speeches. Additionally, there's a surprising overlap in the language used by both Republican and Democrat speakers, which could indicate that politicians, regardless of party, tend to speak in similar manners as a professional class. Notably, there is an absence of highly polarizing terms such as "abortion," "immigration," and "guns," suggesting that public speeches might be more generalized and less focused on contentious issues than expected.

**Model/Methods**

**Model Training:**

In the model section, the analysis began with the application of Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), a widely used topic modeling technique that identifies underlying themes within a collection of texts. LDA assumes that each document is a mixture of various topics, and each topic consists of a distribution of words. This approach was employed to extract topics from the speech transcripts, offering insights into the hidden thematic structures and patterns present in the debates.

To determine the optimal number of topics (denoted as "k"), four LDA models were initially run with 5, 10, 20, and 30 topics. The models were evaluated for cohesion, which refers to how well the words within each topic are semantically related, and for interpretability, or how meaningful and distinct the topics are. Cohesion was assessed by examining the clarity and relevance of the top words within each topic, and whether these words collectively represented a coherent theme. Additionally, the interpretability of the topics was considered by reviewing whether the identified topics made logical sense in the context of the political discourse being analyzed.

After careful evaluation, the model with 20 topics was selected as the best-performing option, providing a balanced level of granularity without overfitting. Following this selection, the LDA models were rerun at this optimal level of k (20 topics) specifically on the Democrat and Republican subsets of the data. This allowed for a more focused comparison of the dominant themes across party lines, ensuring that the analysis captured the unique priorities and concerns of each political group during the 110th Congress.

1. **LDA with 5 Topics:**
   1. **Topic Words and Names:**
2. **Healthcare and Legislation**: year, support, health, president, work, need, make, speaker, iraq, legislation

A close-up of words

Description automatically generated

1. **Legislative Actions and Governance**: speaker, support, time, year, states, united, colleague, work, legislation, nation

A close-up of words

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1. **Geopolitical Issues and Foreign Policy**: people, say, states, united, country, iraq, come, speaker, make, American

A close up of words

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1. **Energy and Economic** Policy: say, people, energy, oil, year, think, just, want, make, know

A close-up of words

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1. **Taxation and Governmental Procedures:** speaker, time, say, amendment, year, tax, committee, make, house, chairman

A close-up of words

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* 1. **Analysis:** The model with 5 topics provides a broad categorization of the speeches, capturing key themes such as healthcare, legislative actions, geopolitical issues, and energy policy. There is significant overlap in terms of general legislative and political discourse, suggesting a common language used in political settings. The focus on general terms like "year," "support," "speaker," and "legislation" reflects the formal nature of political speeches, avoiding highly specific or controversial terms.

1. **LDA with 10 Topics:**
   1. **Topic Words and Names:**
2. **Energy Policy:** energy, oil, gas, price, year, country, need, make, use, America
3. **Immigration and Border Security:** border, states, united, people, texas, speaker, country, law, american, just
4. **Trade and Economic Agreements:** trade, housing, agreement, say, people, massachusetts, colombia, job, worker, work
5. **Energy and Public Sentiment**: oil, year, energy, say, just, think, people, talk, want, come
6. **Taxation and Legislative Process**: tax, speaker, year, say, time, make, amendment, house, program, committee
7. **Social Programs and Legislation:** support, speaker, program, legislation, year, time, work, provide, act, chairman
8. **Land Management and Federal Oversight**: time, year, chairman, say, speaker, amendment, support, land, make, need
9. **National Security and Foreign Policy:** speaker, support, security, united, intelligence, time, states, year, resolution, iraq
10. **General Legislative Discourse:** say, people, think, want, speaker, know, come, make, time, just
11. **Domestic Policy and Social Welfare:** speaker, people, year, child, iraq, president, american, health, make, time
    1. **Analysis:** With 10 topics, the thematic distinctions become more refined. There is a clear separation between energy discussions (Topics i and iv), border and immigration issues (Topic ii), and national security (Topic viii). Legislative discussions remain prominent across several topics, demonstrating the continued importance of policy and lawmaking in political discourse. The inclusion of both economic and social issues reflects a broader range of topics addressed by politicians.
12. **LDA with 20 Topics:**
    1. **Topic Words and Names:**
13. **Energy Policy**: energy, oil, gas, price, country, year, use, natural, need, fuel
14. **Border Security**: border, carolina, speaker, agent, drug, american, patrol, north, texas, illegal
15. **Trade Agreements**: trade, agreement, colombia, ohio, peru, job, investment, export, labor, bank
16. **General Statements**: say, people, think, want, talk, make, just, care, know, come
17. **Tax and Budget**: tax, budget, increase, year, speaker, american, people, family, money, make
18. **Legislative Processes**: support, speaker, time, year, program, legislation, committee, work, chairman, act
19. **Federal Programs**: year, time, support, program, chairman, legislation, federal, amendment, state, make
20. **Geopolitical Issues**: border, korea, north, south, korean, fence, frankly, terrorist, mugabe, africa
21. **Policy Discussions**: say, people, think, gentleman, want, time, make, know, amendment, chairman
22. **Domestic Policy**: people, american, speaker, year, president, make, say, congress, time, country
23. **Foreign Affairs**: iraq, war, united, states, government, people, iran, american, world, security
24. **Healthcare and Welfare**: support, year, legislation, work, health, child, provide, today, family, program
25. **Veteran Affairs**: veteran, care, veterans, speaker, service, nation, war, support, time, year
26. **Military and Defense**: speaker, iraq, child, people, day, life, say, human, today, time
27. **Governmental Oversight**: speaker, rule, committee, house, intelligence, time, congress, new, amendment, colleague
28. **Housing Policy**: housing, program, amendment, chairman, time, gentleman, work, year, make, fund
29. **Legislative Debate**: speaker, say, house, year, time, make, think, vote, committee, majority
30. **Economic Issues**: tax, budget, increase, year, speaker, american, people, family, money, make
31. **Social Programs**: support, speaker, program, legislation, year, time, work, provide, act, chairman
32. **Civic Engagement**: speaker, time, support, resolution, veteran, colleague, year, united, states, thank
    1. **Analysis:** At 20 topics, the model identifies more specialized themes, closely reflecting the range of discussions during the 110th Congress (2007-2009). This period was marked by significant focus on energy policy, healthcare reform, and economic recovery following the 2008 financial crisis. The model effectively captures topics on foreign affairs, particularly the Iraq War, and national security, consistent with the political climate of the time. The model also reflects ongoing debates about federal programs, social welfare, and economic policies, making it a well-rounded representation of the legislative focus.
33. **LDA with 30 Topics:**
    1. **Topic Words and Names:**
       1. **Energy Resources**: energy, oil, gas, natural, use, year, price, country, america, make
       2. **Law Enforcement and Drugs**: carolina, north, speaker, agent, border, congress, marine, house, drug, family
       3. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       4. **Oil and Drilling**: oil, energy, price, gas, want, drill, say, barrel, know, fuel
       5. **Fiscal Policy**: tax, budget, increase, money, year, spending, say, american, people, chairman
       6. **Infrastructure Development**: year, work, chairman, time, committee, program, transportation, support, water, amendment
       7. **Land and National Parks**: time, land, year, amendment, chairman, support, national, energy, today, make
       8. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       9. **Military Strategy**: say, iraq, time, chairman, troop, military, great, gentleman, war, defense
       10. **Public Services**: speaker, people, american, support, family, year, time, child, need, today
       11. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       12. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       13. **Education Policy**: student, education, support, program, college, work, year, school, act, time
       14. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       15. **House Proceedings**: speaker, house, committee, rule, time, say, majority, vote, tax, make
       16. **Foreign Military Engagement**: iraq, war, president, troop, people, speaker, military, administration, american, iraqi
       17. **National Security**: intelligence, terrorist, foreign, protect, attack, threat, act, law, security, need
       18. **Regional Politics**: alabama, everett, space, area, huntsville, terry, tennessee, intelligence, north, sure
       19. **Legislative Discussions**: people, come, speaker, say, states, energy, united, congress, iowa, make
       20. **Middle East Relations**: speaker, israel, support, chairman, resolution, work, time, lebanon, want, colleague
       21. **Service and Sacrifice**: speaker, time, support, colleague, illinois, service, national, year, committee, work
       22. **Legislative Negotiations**: people, say, make, want, think, know, just, year, american, congress
       23. **Parliamentary Debate**: say, people, amendment, gentleman, think, time, want, chairman, year, make
       24. **Healthcare and Child Welfare**: support, legislation, health, child, year, provide, today, program, family, work
       25. **Legislative Action**: support, speaker, legislation, time, act, year, provide, program, committee, chairman
       26. **Veteran Issues**: veteran, care, veterans, speaker, service, nation, war, support, time, year
       27. **Global Energy Policy**: oil, energy, world, year, use, percent, say, think, look, chart
       28. **Healthcare Policy**: health, care, year, speaker, time, medical, medicare, physician, patient, just
       29. **Noise/Irrelevant Terms**: zyuganov, forcible, forearm, fore, fordyce, fords, fordham, fordable, ford, forcing
       30. **Immigration and Nationalism**: states, united, people, border, texas, speaker, country, just, government, American
    2. **Analysis:** The 30-topic model offers highly granular themes, but some topics contain noise, indicating overfitting. This granularity provides insights into specific discussions but also highlights the challenge of balancing detail with relevance. The diversity of topics, ranging from economic policies to international relations, illustrates the complexity of political dialogue. However, due to the presence of several noisy or irrelevant topics, this model may not provide the most useful thematic breakdown.
34. **K-Topics Selection:** The 20-topic LDA model is selected as the best performing model. It provides a balanced level of granularity without overfitting. The topics identified align well with the significant issues addressed during the 110th Congress (2007-2009), such as energy policy, economic recovery, healthcare reform, and national security. The model effectively captures the breadth of discussions in political speeches, offering meaningful insights into the thematic content of the legislative dialogue.
35. **LDA Comparison of Parties**
    1. **LDA with 20 Topics for Democrat**
       1. **Infrastructure and Regional Issues** - iowa, florida, rail, business, amtrak, need, disaster, state, district, small
       2. **Retail and Fraudulent Activities** - kentucky, airborne, division, retailer, product, card, campbell, toy, fraudulent, rail
       3. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - shutting, soror, books, disco, tohono, documents, accesible, tallahatchie, lares, bajemos
       4. **General Statements and Opinions** - say, people, think, make, want, talk, just, know, come, president
       5. **Fiscal Policy** - tax, budget, speaker, year, american, family, increase, people, billion, money
       6. **Legislation and Security** - support, texas, legislation, states, united, year, security, speaker, act, committee
       7. **Energy and Economic Policy** - year, energy, new, time, make, support, chairman, country, legislation, speaker
       8. **National Security Concerns** / **Noise**- pennsylvania, reserves, coggon, stryker, tsos, homegrown, indistinguishable, merhige, radicalization, pornography
       9. **Amendments and Debates** - say, amendment, gentleman, people, want, time, think, make, chairman, committee
       10. **Social Issues and Healthcare** - people, year, speaker, president, american, make, child, time, health, Iraq
       11. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - shutting, soror, books, disco, tohono, documents, accesible, tallahatchie, lares, bajemos
       12. **Historical Context** - lincoln, illinois, emancipation, union, airport, gettysburg, save, slave, hall, liberty
       13. **Social Programs and Welfare** - support, speaker, year, work, today, program, family, provide, health, need
       14. **Middle East and War Policy** - iraq, war, oil, iran, people, iraqi, troop, company, united, home
       15. **Legislative Processes** - speaker, legislation, house, committee, support, year, act, time, provide, make
       16. **International Relations and Policy** - speaker, iraq, support, people, time, united, states, year, resolution, world
       17. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - shutting, soror, books, disco, tohono, documents, accesible, tallahatchie, lares, bajemos
       18. **Indigenous and Local Issues** - native, hawaii, hawaiian, hawaiians, louisiana, thank, home, area, business, make
       19. **Energy Policy and Economic Issues** - people, want, oil, energy, country, know, just, say, american, price
       20. **Legislative Collaboration and Debate** - speaker, time, support, committee, service, year, colleague, resolution, house, yield
    2. **LDA with 20 Topics for Republican**
       1. **Energy Resources** - energy, oil, gas, year, price, use, percent, natural, produce, country
       2. **Border Security and Law Enforcement** - agent, border, speaker, drug, case, smuggler, congress, marine, american, Texas
       3. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - buckhannon, combining, varying, barn, solvay, outlays, tanner, undetermined, odorless, agitator
       4. **Fossil Fuels and Energy Costs** - coal, price, fuel, cost, crude, want, oil, bring, supply, liquid
       5. **Fiscal Policy** - tax, increase, budget, year, people, say, make, want, money, spending
       6. **Legislation and Support** - program, time, support, speaker, year, chairman, amendment, work, yield, act
       7. **General Governmental Issues** - time, year, say, make, work, chairman, support, people, program, need
       8. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - buckhannon, combining, varying, barn, solvay, outlays, tanner, undetermined, odorless, agitator
       9. **Committee Work and Iraq War** - say, speaker, committee, people, time, iraq, know, make, come, just
       10. **Legislative Debates and Public Opinion** - speaker, people, american, time, year, congress, say, support, want, country
       11. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - buckhannon, combining, varying, barn, solvay, outlays, tanner, undetermined, odorless, agitator
       12. **Miscellaneous/Noise** - buckhannon, combining, varying, barn, solvay, outlays, tanner, undetermined, odorless, agitator
       13. **Social Programs and Collaboration** - support, year, program, speaker, colleague, today, legislation, provide, time, need
       14. **Global Energy Policy** - oil, world, year, states, united, just, use, say, way, people
       15. **Taxation and House Debates** - speaker, say, make, tax, house, american, people, time, majority, new
       16. **Healthcare** - health, care, year, speaker, time, medical, medicare, physician, just, patient
       17. **Intelligence and Security** - speaker, intelligence, house, time, committee, rule, vote, amendment, act, make
       18. **Earmarks and Fiscal Discipline** - earmark, say, year, just, program, fund, simply, amendment, time, chairman
       19. **Public Discourse and Opinion** - people, say, come, speaker, states, think, make, united, time, thing
       20. **Veteran Affairs and Support** - veteran, support, care, speaker, work, colombia, benefit, illinois, veterans, trade
36. **Comparison of LDA between Democrat and Republican Parties:** The LDA analysis comparing Democrats and Republicans reveals both shared and distinct themes in their political discourse. Common topics for both parties include discussions on legislative processes (Democrat Topics vi, vii, xv, xvi; Republican Topics vi, vii, xiii, xvii), social policies (Democrat Topics x, xiii; Republican Topics xiii, xvi), healthcare (Democrat Topics x, xiii; Republican Topic xvi), and national security (Democrat Topics xiv, xvi; Republican Topics xvii, xx). This overlap suggests that both parties frequently address core political functions such as lawmaking, public welfare, and national defense, reflecting their roles in governance.

However, differences are evident in specific areas of focus. Democrats are more likely to address social issues, education, and regional concerns (Democrat Topics i: Infrastructure and Regional Issues, xii: Historical Context, xviii: Indigenous and Local Issues), reflecting a broader focus on diverse social policies and historical topics. In contrast, Republicans more frequently discuss energy policy (Republican Topics i: Energy Resources, iv: Fossil Fuels, xiv: Global Energy Policy), fiscal policies (Republican Topic v: Fiscal Policy), and national security specifics (Republican Topics xvii: Intelligence and Security, xx: Veteran Affairs), highlighting a focus on economic and defense issues. The analysis shows that while both parties engage in political discourse around similar overarching topics, Democrats tend to emphasize social welfare and historical context, whereas Republicans prioritize economic policies, energy resources, and specific national security concerns.

**Conclusion:**

The analysis of floor debates from the 110th Congress gives a clearer picture of the topics that lawmakers focused on during this period. By examining the speeches made by both Democrats and Republicans, as well as by male and female legislators, the study highlights the key issues that were frequently discussed in Congress. While there are shared themes among all groups, such as lawmaking, social policies, healthcare, and national security, there are also distinct differences that reflect the unique priorities of each group.

Both Democrats and Republicans often talked about governance, legislative actions, and public welfare, which shows their shared commitment to these important functions of government. However, Democrats were more likely to discuss social issues, education, and local concerns, showing a broader focus on community and historical matters. On the other hand, Republicans frequently talked about energy policies, budget discipline, and specific security issues, emphasizing their focus on economic growth, resource management, and national defense. These differences illustrate how each party tailors its discussions to align with its values and the interests of its supporters.

An interesting area for further study would be to explore how these topics have shifted over time and to compare the focus of these debates with the parties' public statements and campaigns. By examining whether the issues emphasized in congressional speeches match the topics highlighted in party platforms and public discourse, researchers could gain deeper insights into the alignment—or divergence—between legislative actions and public messaging. This comparison could reveal how political priorities evolve and whether lawmakers' actions in Congress reflect the promises and concerns they express to the public. Such an analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of political strategies and the dynamics of policymaking.