

Abstract

This study aimed to qualify the interplay between legislator bipartisanship, ideology, and effectiveness through the lens of specific social issues. Partisanship refers to the influence of party on political beliefs, having caused greater non-cooperation in Congress in recent years. Political typology groups are statistically significant clusters of individuals who share similar beliefs. Like the traditional left-right scale, typology measures ideology, highlighting key similarities and differences between and within parties regarding specific political beliefs that may not be as visible through a left-right scale. While designed for the public, these groups were applied to legislators by identifying the values espoused in their bills and finding which typology best matched each legislator's specific combination of beliefs. Typology was then correlated with numerous other previously identified measures of legislator behavior. Ultimately, the political typology distribution of the 114th Congress, in comparison to that of the general public, demonstrated the ideological polarization and sorting of Congress. Bipartisanship was associated with higher levels of legislative effectiveness and leadership—especially so for ideologically extreme legislators, who tended to be the most partisan and thus would have most to gain from bipartisan behavior. Perhaps most importantly, this study underscores the existence of divisions between legislators that exist beyond party lines. Increased recognition of these divisions through bipartisan efforts and typology analyses would allow legislators of *any* ideology to better represent the values of their constituents and achieve greater legislative effectiveness without compromising the values espoused in their work.