Governmental Transparency through Data

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Outline of our Analysis of the US Senate

1. About the data

2. Senate members & political parties

3. Passing bills through the US Senate

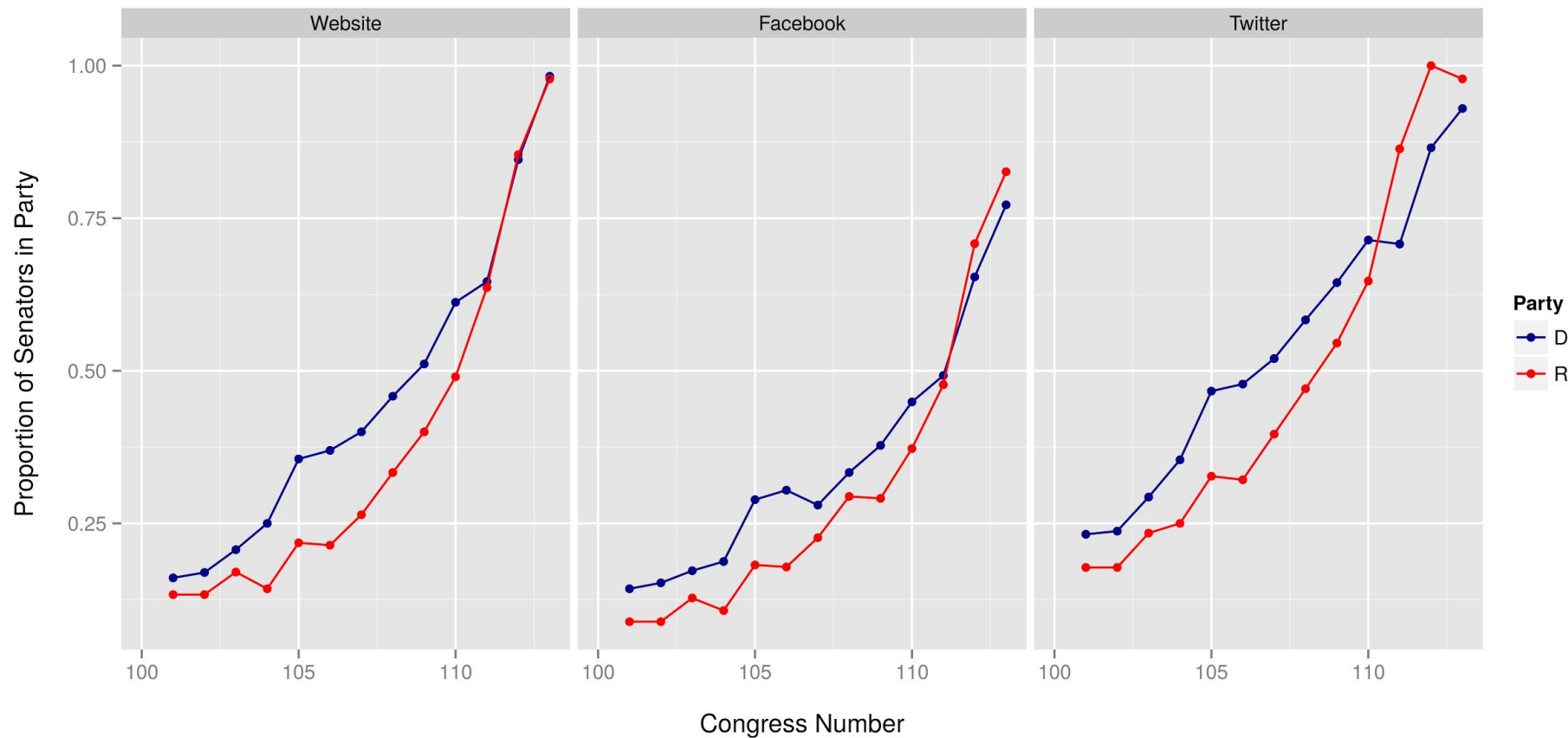4. Individual senator voting patterns

About the Data

- Congresses 101 to 113 (1989 to 2014)
  - NY Times Congress API: Characteristics of senate members
  - Senate.gov: Roll-call bills
  - Govtrack.us: Individual votes by senator

How have senators adopted web platforms (such as social media)?

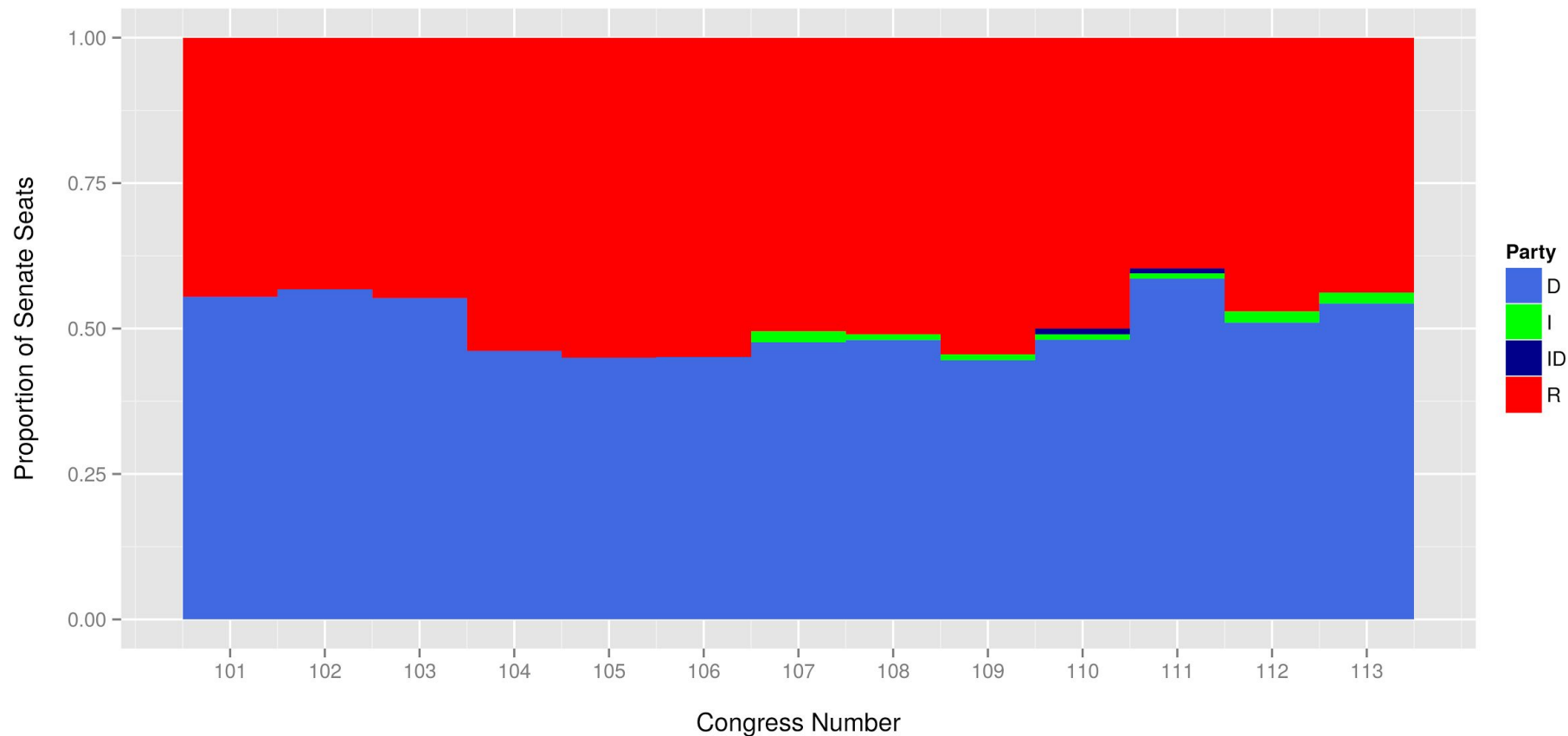Senators Who Have Ever Used a Web Platform In Their Political Career

Facebook Appears to Lag Behind Websites and Twitter

What are the dynamics of political parties in the US Senate over time?

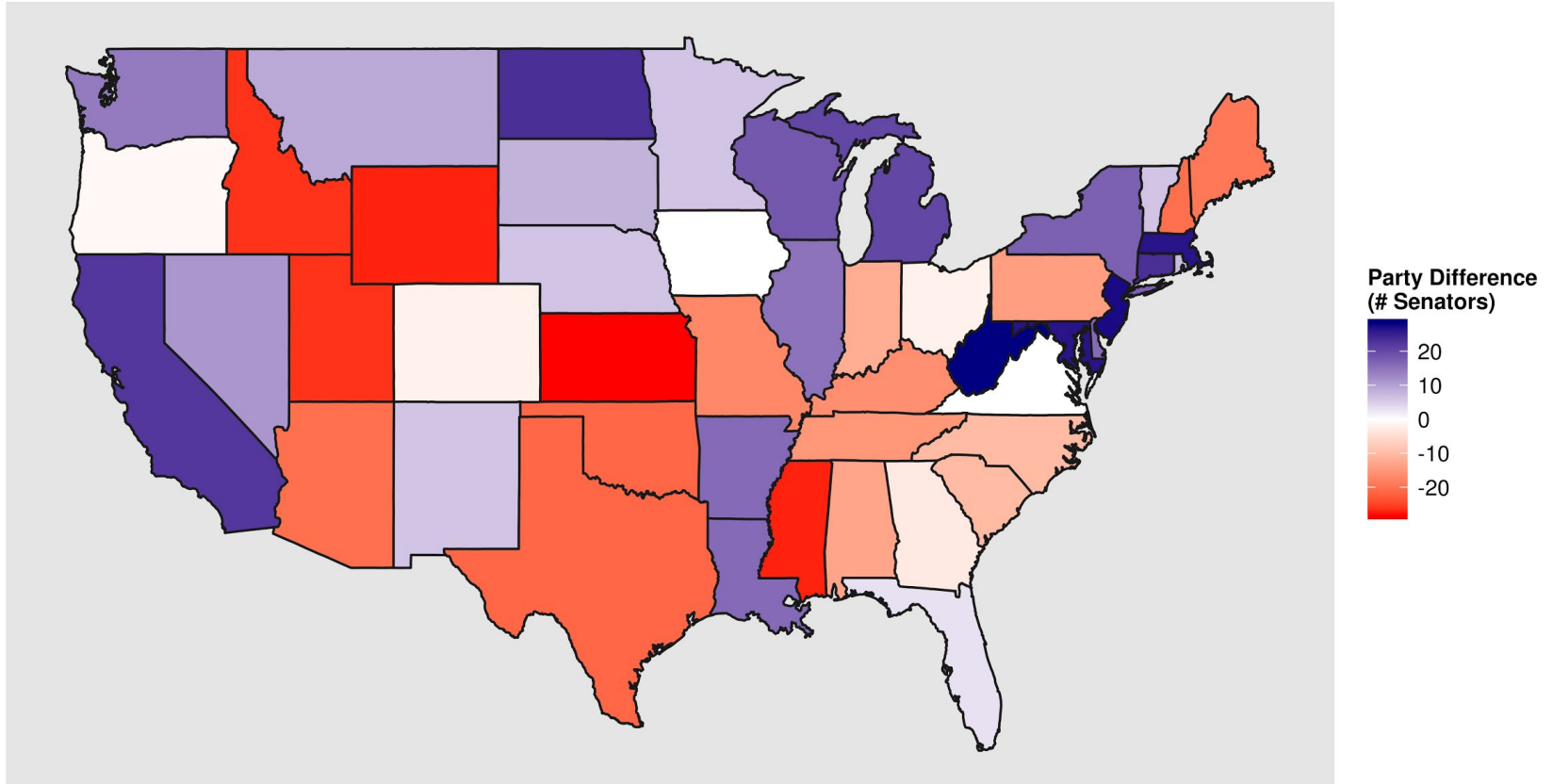Senate Seats Held Per Party Is Fairly Stable over Time

Republicans and Democrats Hold Majority of Seats; Independents New on the Scene

Do certain states prefer certain political parties?

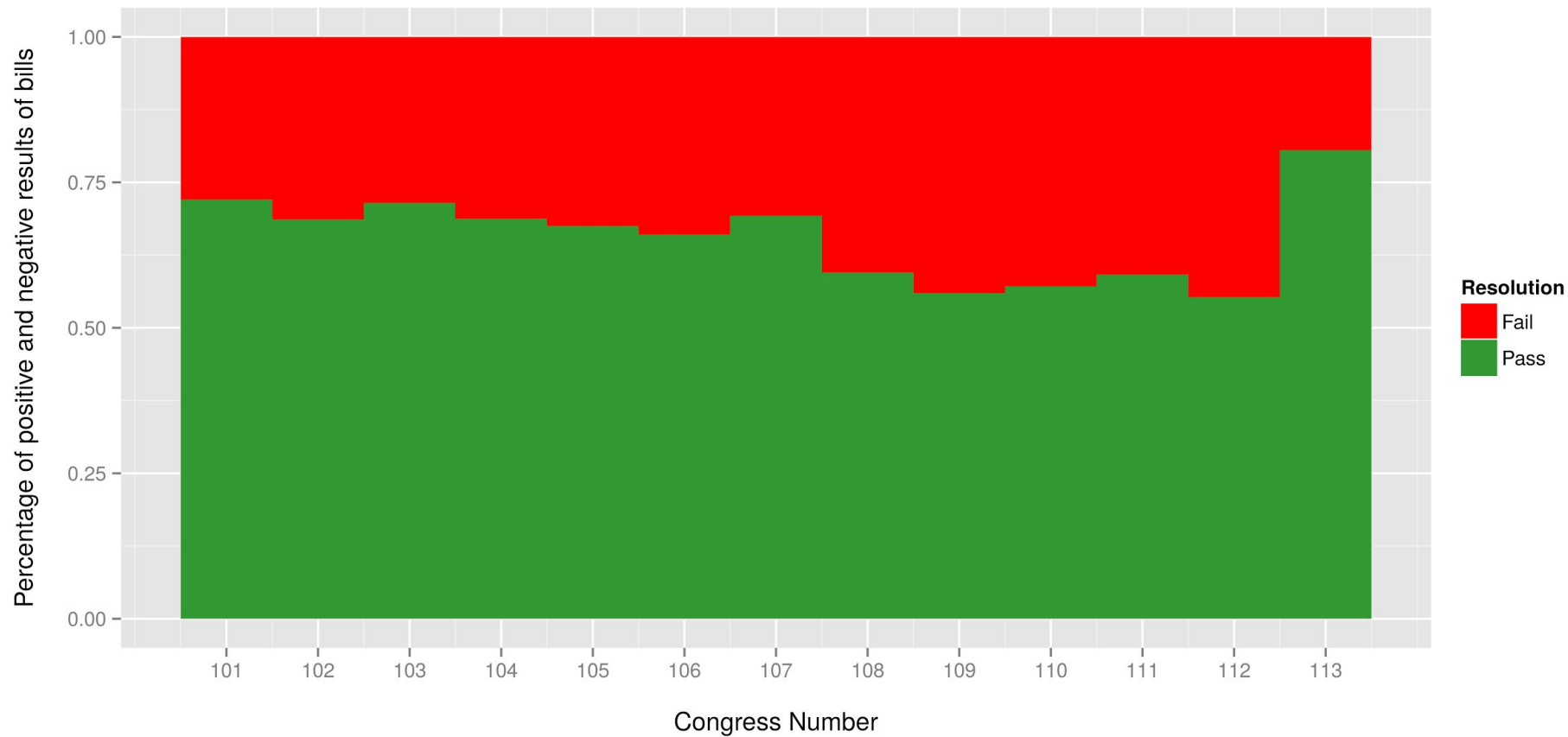# Party Preferences By State as Determined by Senate Seats

Republicans (Red) vs. Democrats (Blue)

Party Difference (# Senators)

20
10
0
-10
-20

How does the percentage of passed bills change over time?
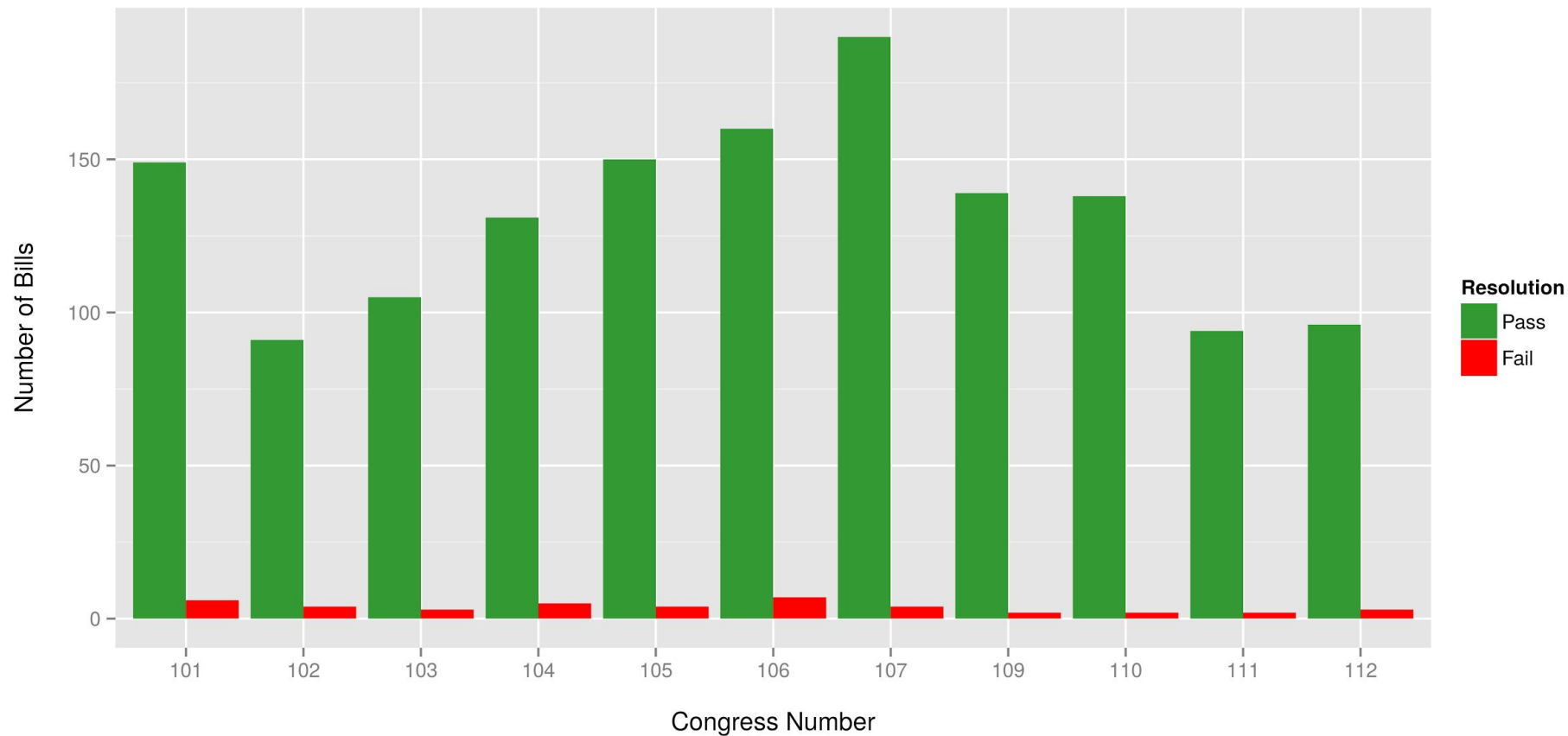
Percentage of Bills Passed Per Year

Pass Rate Decreases Before Peaking in 113th Congress

Are bills that received unanimous votes typically passed or failed?
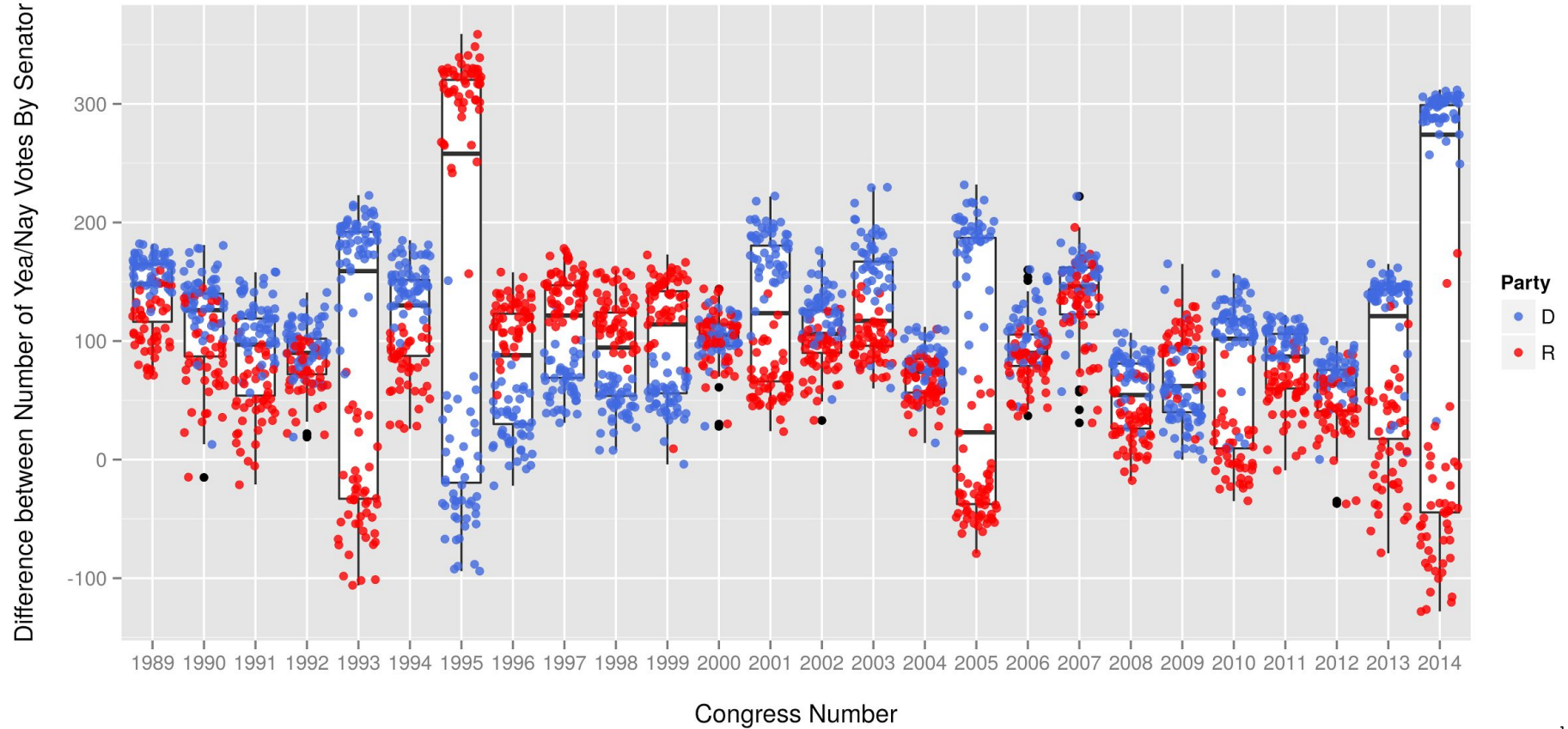
Number of Bills Resolved Unanimously Per Congress

Bills with 5 or Fewer Dissenting Votes

Do trends exist in senator voting patterns based upon year and party?

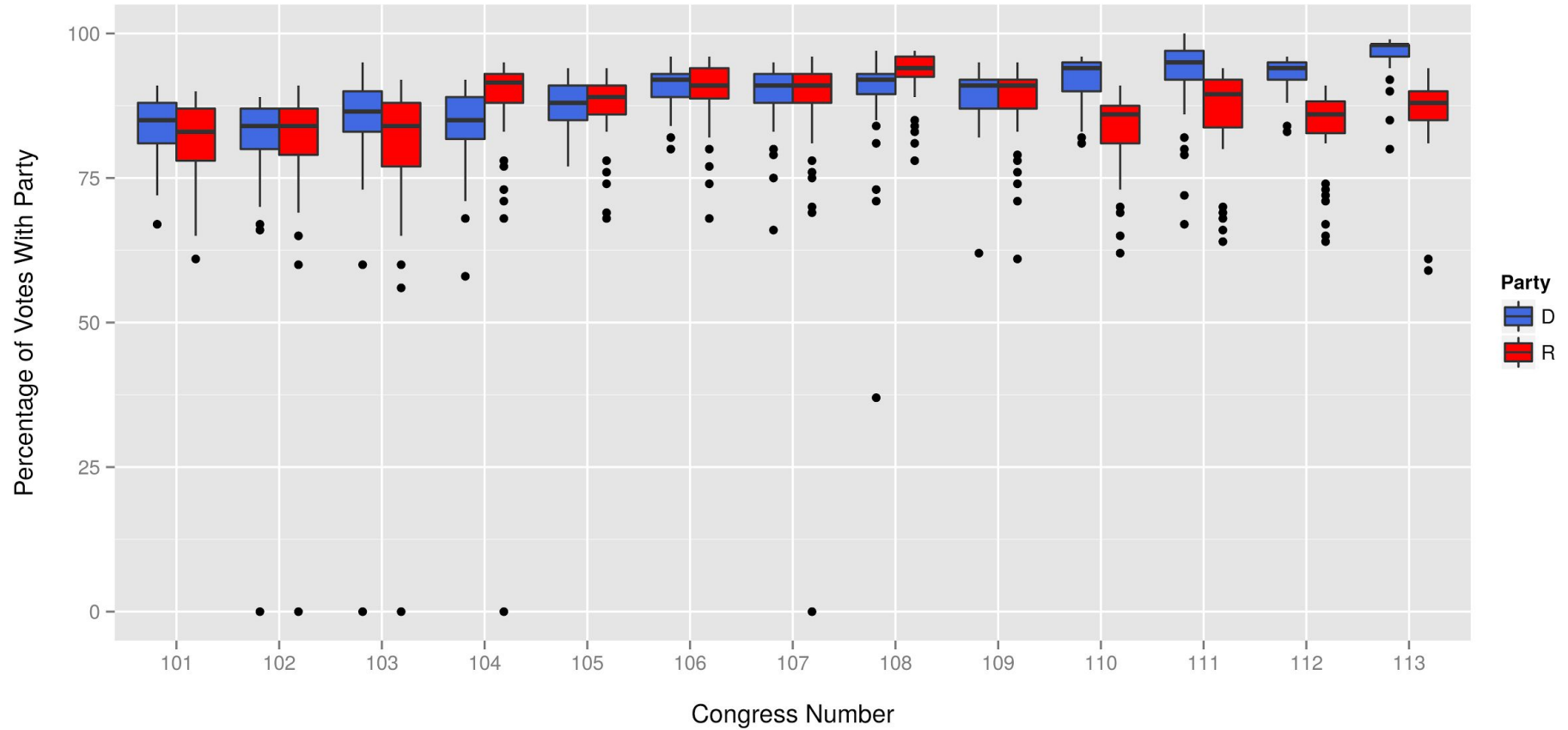Number of Bills Approved By Senators Changes by Year

There is Clear Separation of Party Voting Patterns in Many Congresses

How frequently do senators vote against their party?

Senators Typically Vote Along their Party Lines

% of Votes Has Increased Among Democrats in Recent Years

Developing a Workflow for Gov. Transparency

Avg. Percentage of Votes Missed by State Senators
Congress Number: 101