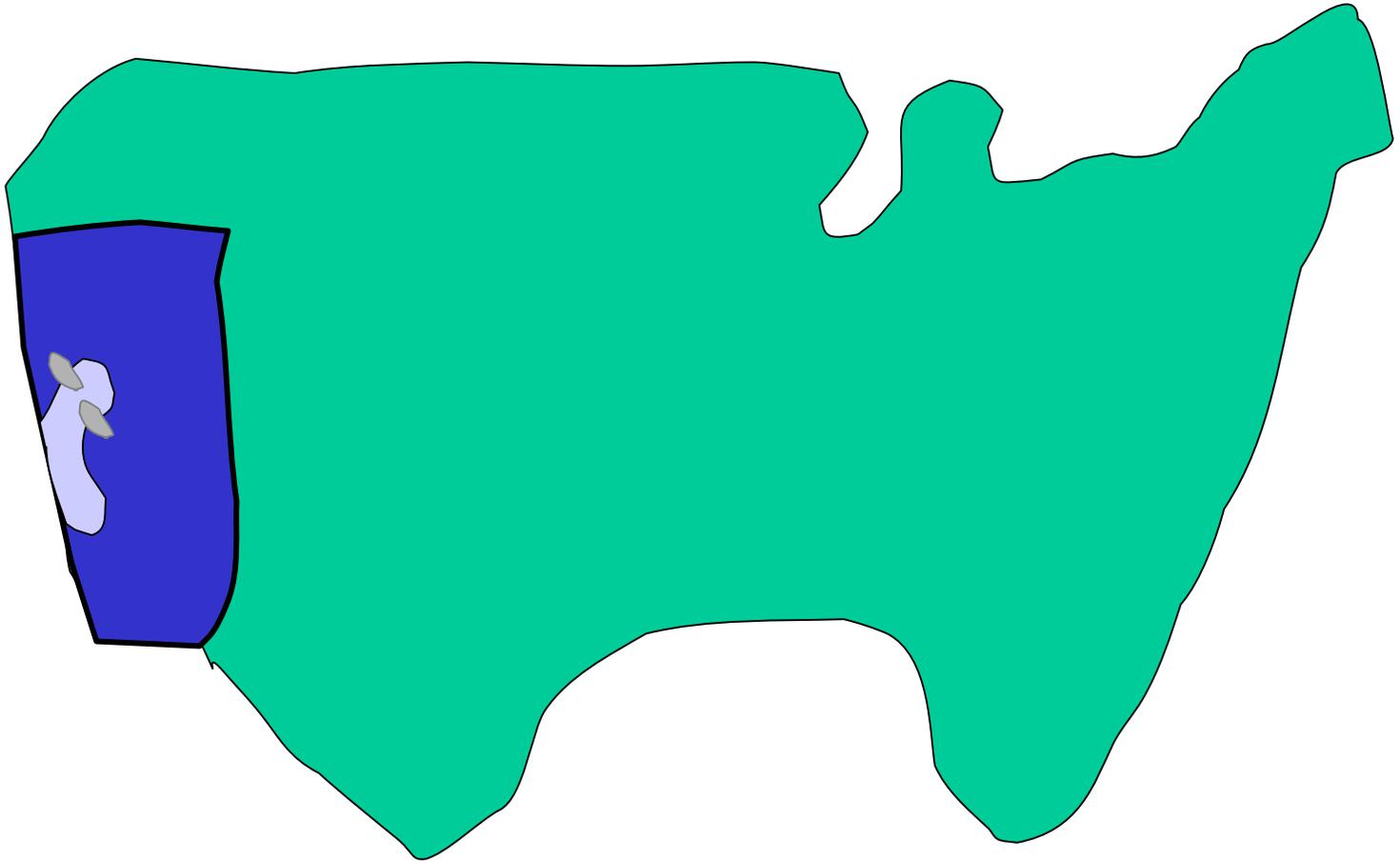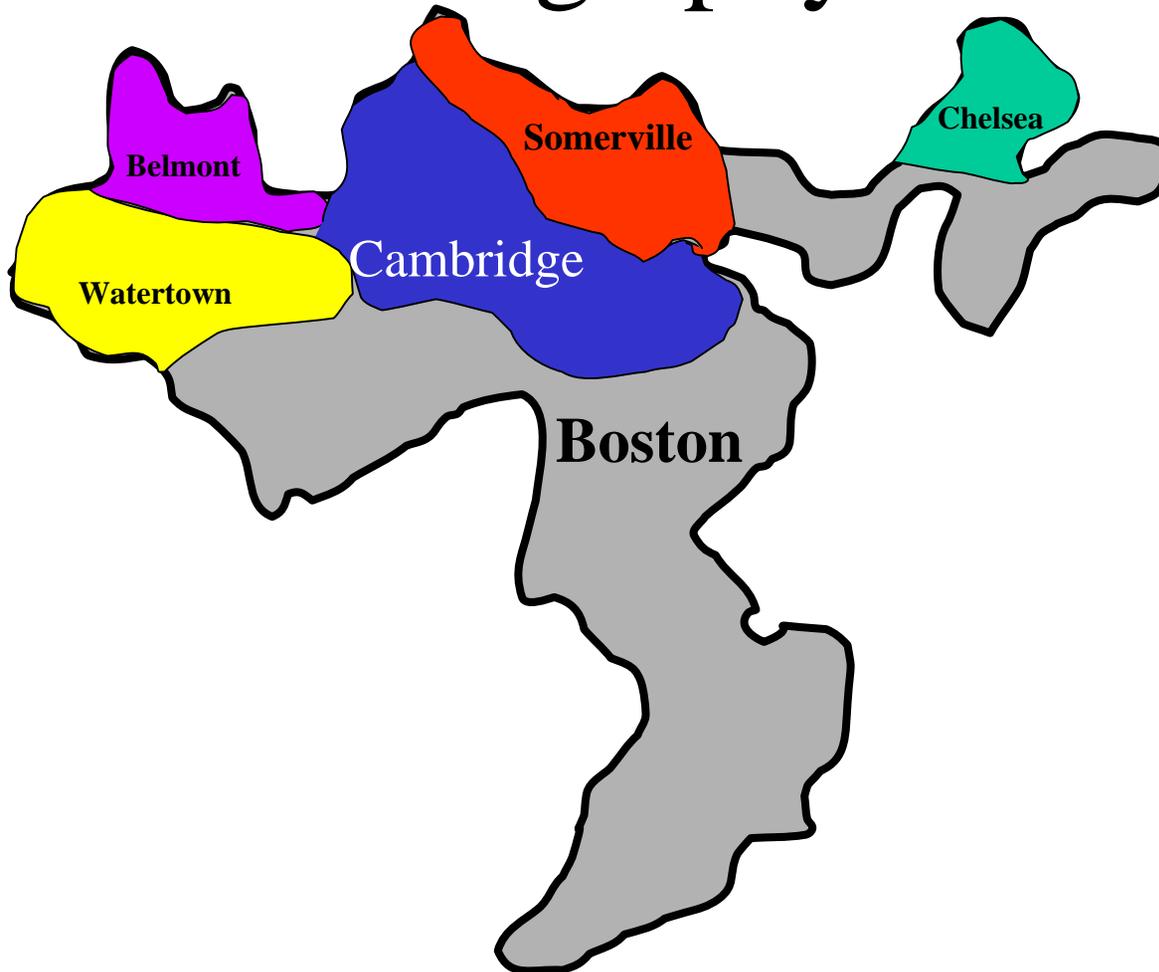# Congressional Candidates

17.251

Fall 2004

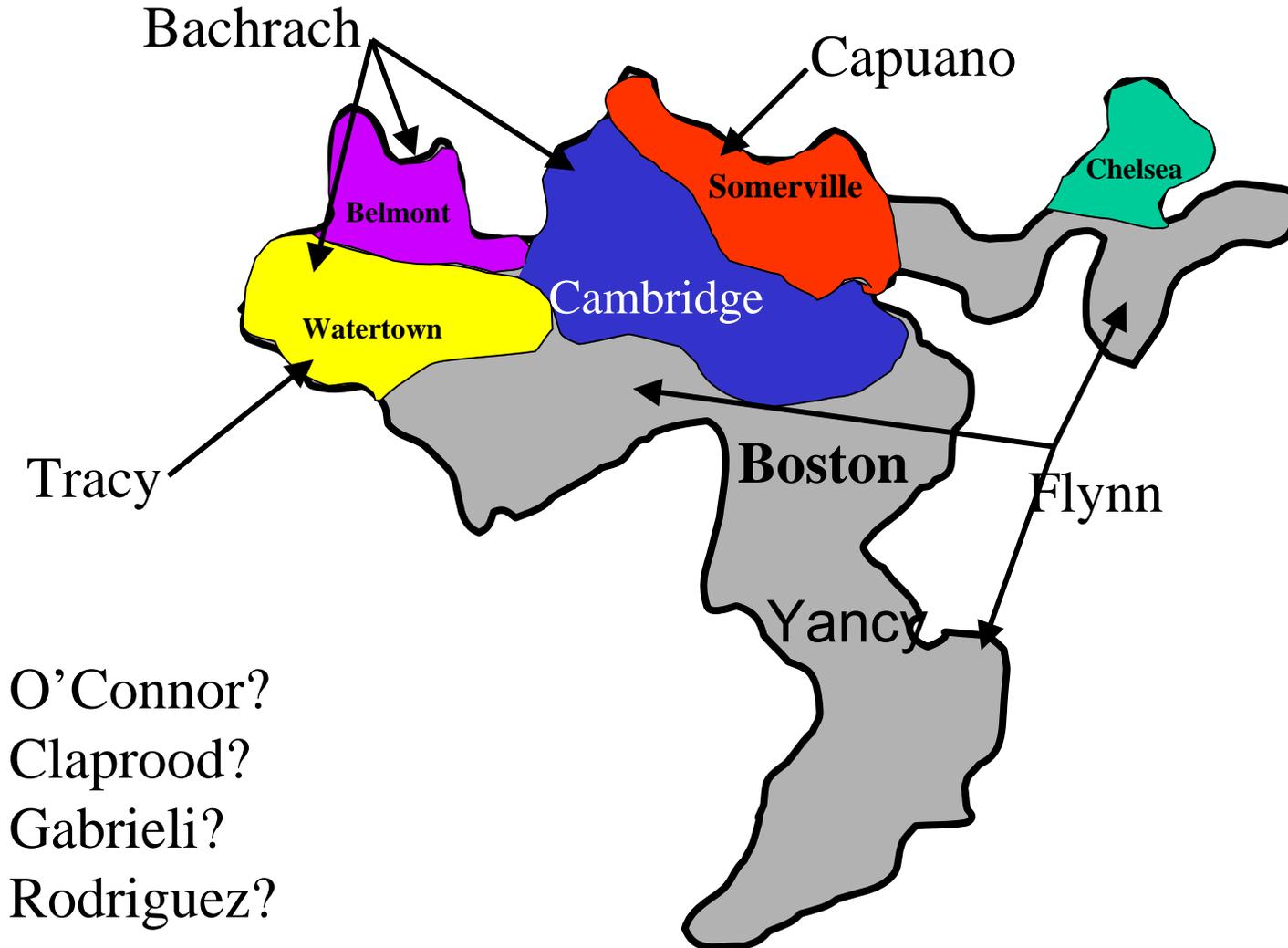# The Hierarchical Structure of Running for Office

8th District 1998 Geography

8th District 1998 Candidates

- Mike Capuano (Somerville mayor) (19,439)
- Ray Flynn (former Boston Mayor) (14,829)
- George Bachrach (former state sen.) (12,166)
- John O'Connor (rich husband) (11,035)
- Marjorie Claprood (former state rep & radio personality) (10,358)
- Chris Gabrieli (rich guy) (5,732)
- Chris Yancy (Boston city council) (4,460)
- Susan Tracy (former state. Sen.) (2,855)
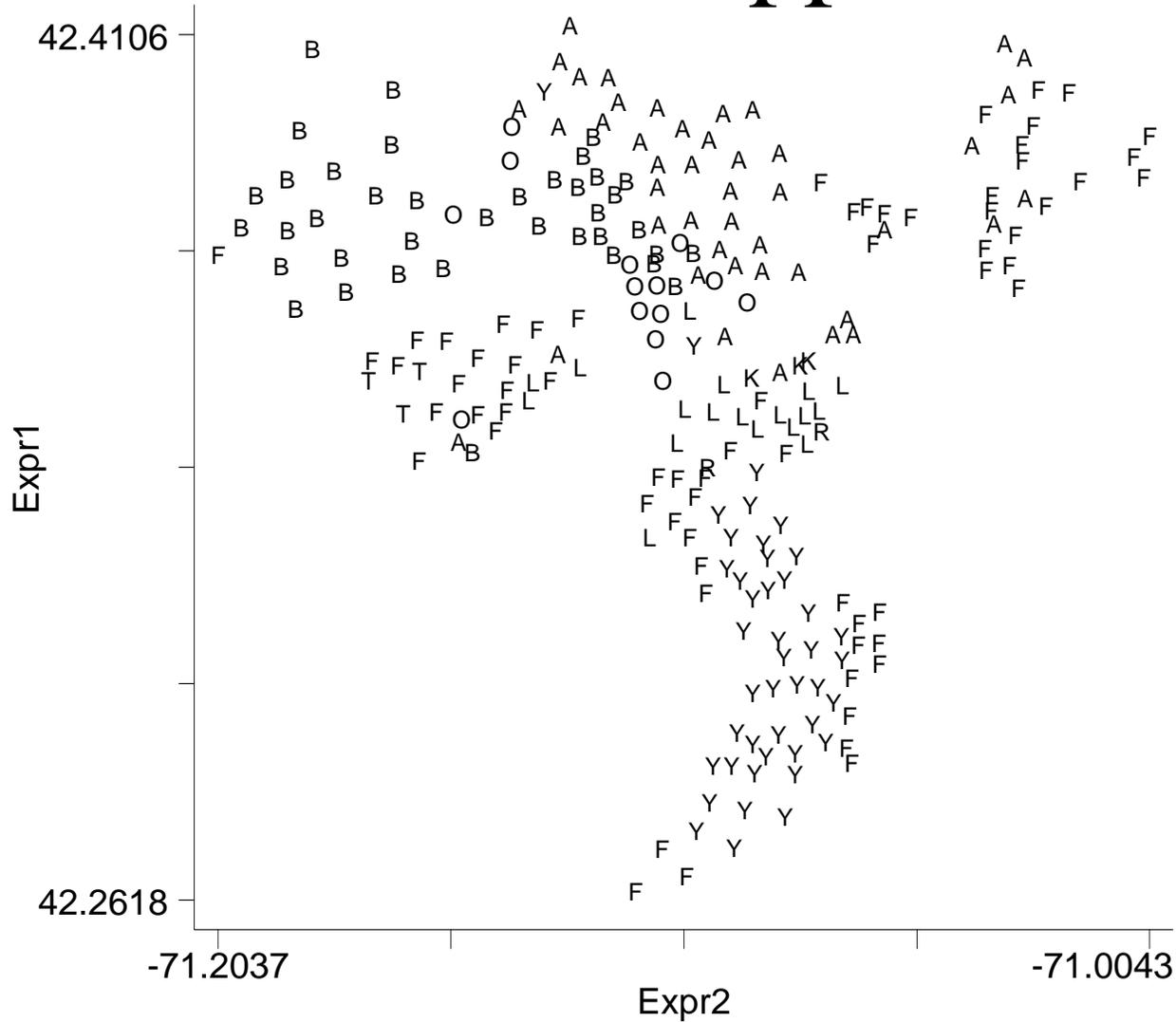- Tom Keane (Boston city council) (2,150)
- Alex Rodriguez (1,799)

8th District 1998
Schematic of support

Bachrach

Capuano

Chelsea

Belmont

Somerville

Cambridge

Watertown

Tracy

Boston

Flynn

Yancy

O'Connor?
Claprood?
Gabrieli?
Rodriguez?

8th District 1998 District Support

Strategic Choice and Political Careers

$$E(a_i) = P_i U_i - C_i$$

$$E(a_j) = P_j U_j - C_j$$

Some important considerations

- Variations in variable values
  - across time
  - cross-sectionally
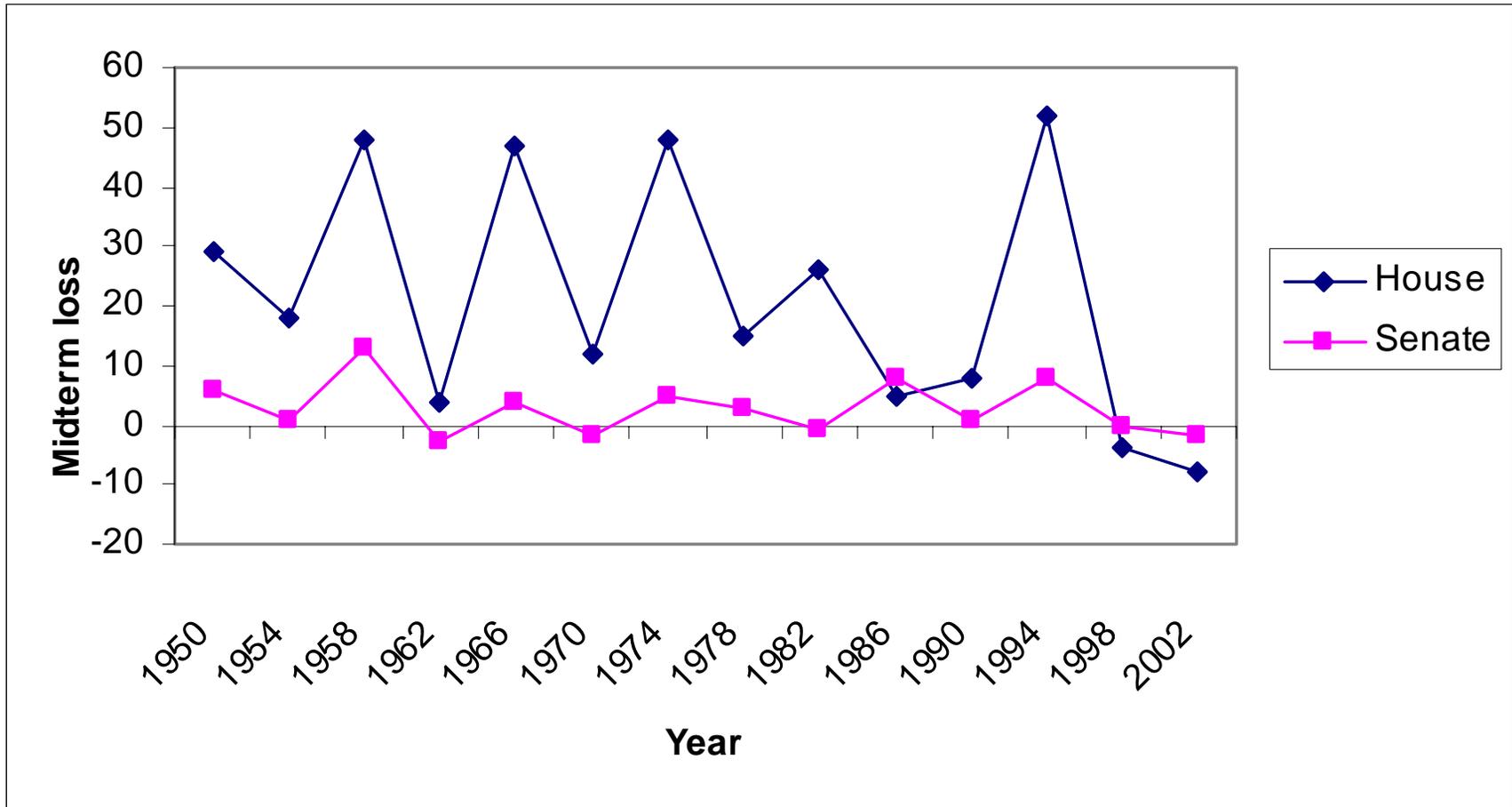- Factors that affect the calculus of progressive ambition

Factors that Affect the Calculus of Progressive Ambition

B_L vs. B_H	P_L vs. P_H	C_L vs. C_H
-Scope of legislative authority -Political and policy resources within the institution -Pay and perquisites -Springboard effects	-National forces -Party identification in the districts -Redistricting -Scandal	-Opportunities foregone -Number and quality of challengers -Fund-raising efficiency -Efficiency of translating money and volunteer time into votes

Pay and Perquisites (some examples)

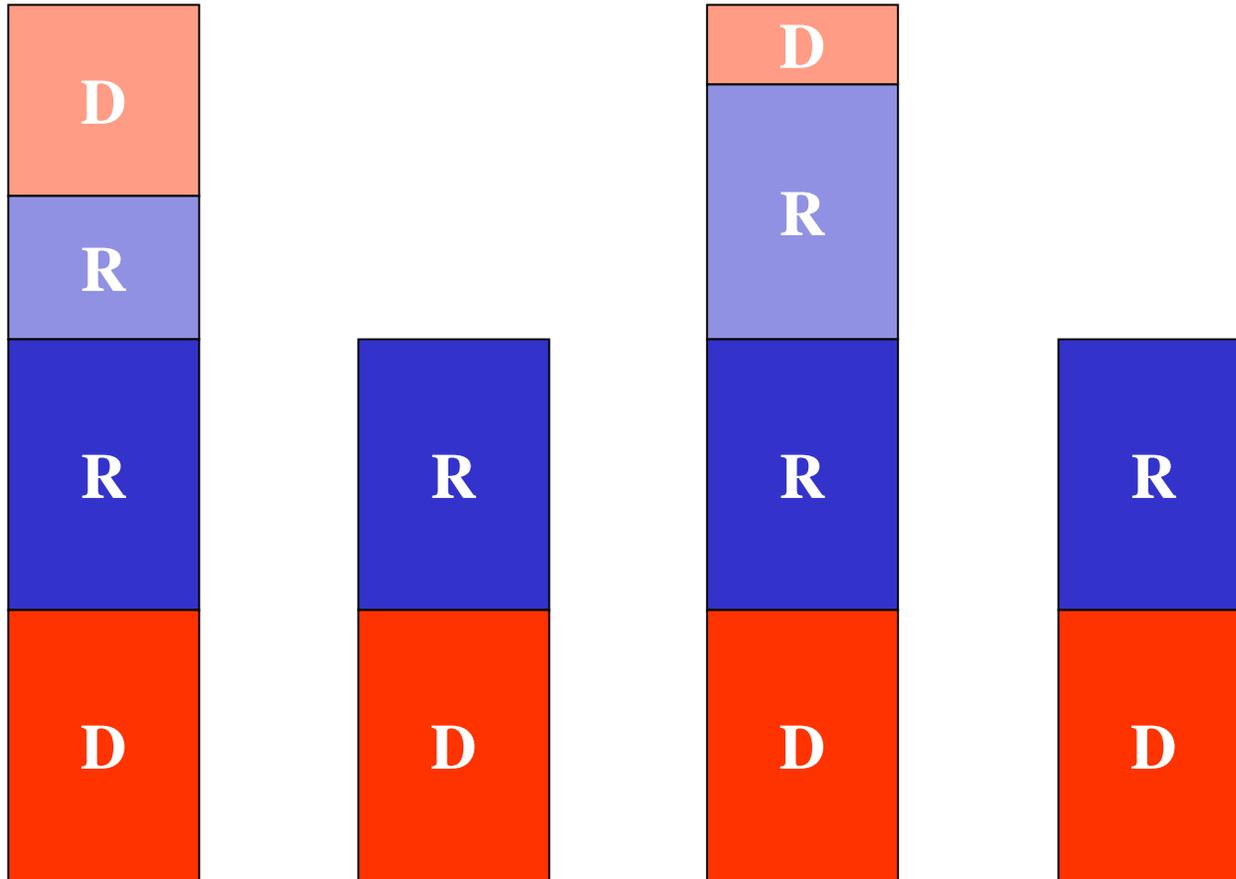| State	Stipend	Travel allowance
Alabama	$10/day (C)	$2,280/month plus $50/day for three days during each week that the legislature actually meets during any session
Georgia	$16,200/year	$128/day, set by the legislature.
Massachusetts	$50,122.80/year	From $10/day-$100/day, depending on distance from State House, set by the legislature.
New Hampshire	$200/two-year term	No per diem is paid.
Rhode Island	$11,236/year	No per diem is paid.
West Virginia	$15,000/year	$115/day during session, set by compensation commission. $150/Day for attendance during interim.

National tides

Why the midterm loss?*

- Surge and decline effect
- Strategic voters
- Strategic politicians
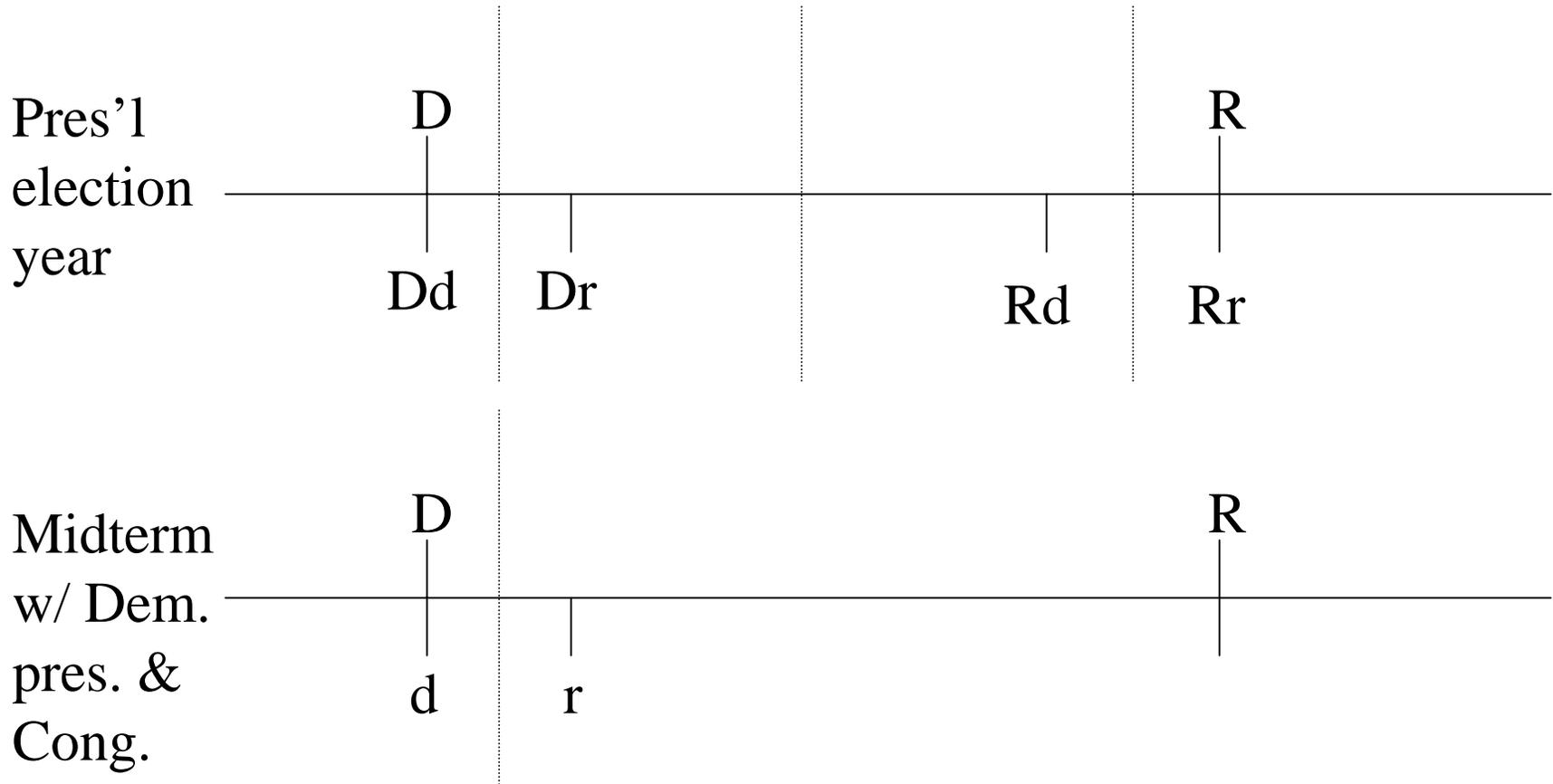
*And where did it go?

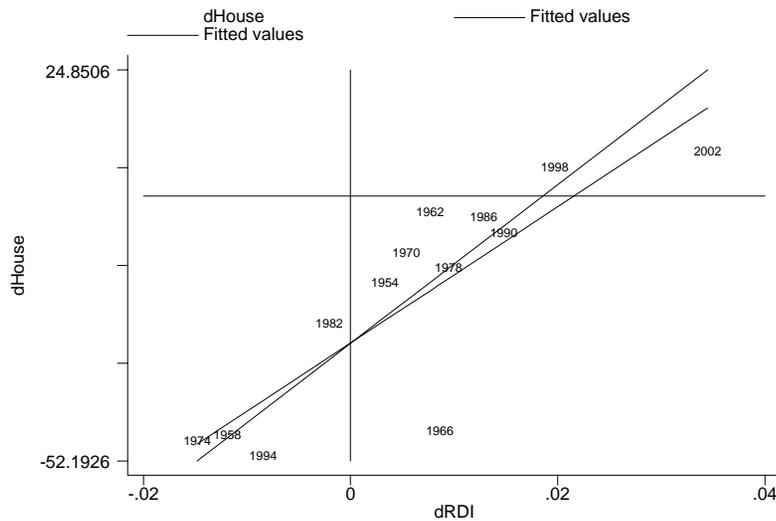# Surge and decline effect

Good Dem. Pres'l Year   Midterm   Good Rep. Pres'l Year   Midterm
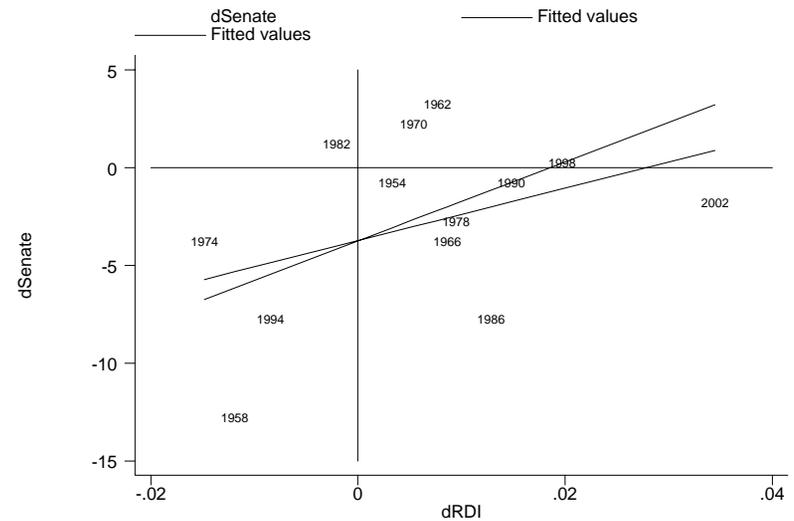
Strategic voters

Pres'l election year

          D   R

       Dd   Dr   Rd   Rr

Midterm w/ Dem. pres. & Cong.

          D   R

       d   r

Strategic Candidates

dhouse = -29.0+1343dRDI$_{q1}$

R^2 = .71

dsenate = -3.7 + 134dRDI

R2=.16

Incumbent-protection gerrymandering

Congressional District 8

Massachusetts(10 Districts)

Limit to incumbent protection

- By removing parts of the district from an incumbent in which s/he has developed an "incumbency advantage," an incumbent can be hurt, *even if added parts of the district share the incumbent's partisanship.*
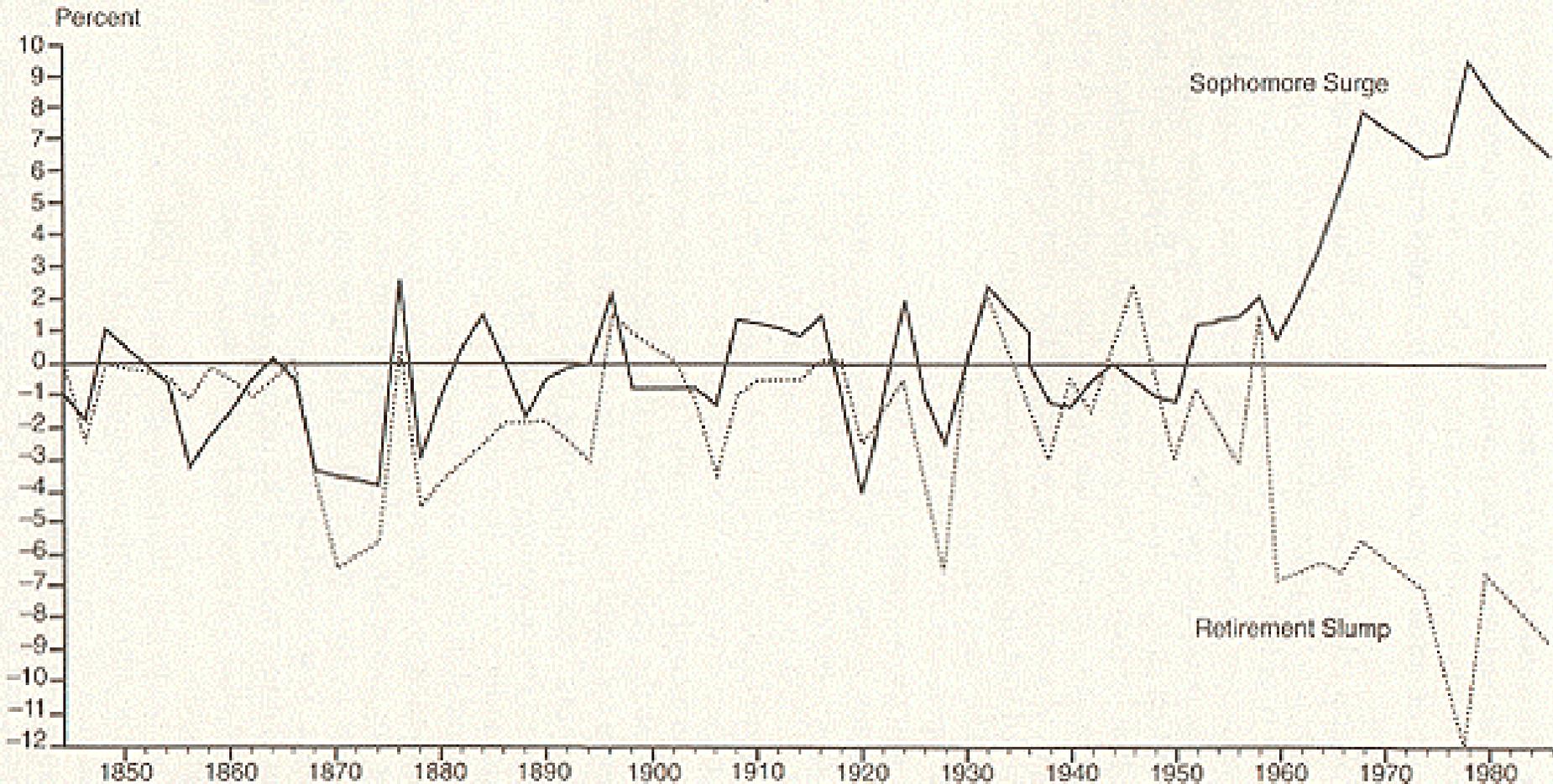
Incumbents, challengers, and open seat candidates

- Incumbents
  - Incumbency advantage
- Challengers
  - Challenger quality
- Open seat candidates
  - The free-for-all

Incumbency advantage: The Picture

FIGURE 9

U.S. HOUSE ELECTION WITH MAJOR PARTY OPPOSITION, 1846–1986

NOTE: No data shown for election years ending in "2" and "4".
SOURCE: John R. Alford and David W. Brady (1991: 23).

Incumbency advantage

- Why does it exist?
  - Franking, etc.
  - Constituency service
  - Redistricting
  - Smarter candidates