How Does Party Position Change Happen? The Case of LGBT Rights in the U.S.

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Abstract

A partisan divide over LGBT rights has emerged in the U.S. Yet unlike other issues on which the parties have traded places or polarized, most of the change on gay rights has occurred within one party, the Democrats. How did this unusual change occur? LGBT rights was originally a fringe cause, rejected by most politicians in both parties. As gay rights activists slowly became more prominent in the Democratic Party, many politicians adapted, abandoning earlier positions in- formed by their personal backgrounds and state or district constituencies. Meanwhile, incorporating the religious right led most Republicans to maintain the anti-LGBT rights stand that was once common to both parties, even as public opinion shifted. The result was a partisan divide in this issue area that had consequences for policy. The role of adaptation by incumbents in producing it—contrary to some prominent models—is evident in both Congressional co-sponsorship and roll-call data. The growing party divide is also evident in platforms. These findings contribute to a broader un- derstanding of how party position change occurs.

"Attitudes evolve, including mine." – President Barack Obama on same-sex marriage. October 27, 2010.[1]

Beneath the apparent stability of the American two-party system, much change in parties' coalitions and policies occurs. Interest in these changes produced literatures on "realignment" (Burnham 1970, Sundquist 1983), "issue evolution" (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Adams 1997, Stimson 2004), "conflict extension (Layman et al. 2010) and "party position change" (Wolbrecht 2000, Wolbrecht and Hartney 2014, Karol 2009, Baylor 2017.)

I focus here on the question of how the divide between American parties on gay or LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) rights emerged. This cause has moved from the margins to the mainstream of U.S. politics. Yet the issue's development has been distinctive. Unlike other issues on which both parties changed, either trading places or polarizing, only one party has changed dramatically on LGBT rights. The growth in support has emerged chiefly among Democrats, producing the partisan divide on the issue. I find an explanation for this in parties' interest group coalitions and show -contrary to prominent models- that adaptation by incumbents was important in polarizing the parties as activists became more established in party coalitions. Party platforms also reflect this divergence.

Why Study Party Position Change on LGBT Rights?

Understanding the mechanism underlying party position change is important for several reasons. Party elites' issue positioning helps voters infer individual candidates' stands and shapes voters' views (Zaller 1992, Lenz 2012). If an issue becomes partisan, policy change may be limited absent unified government. The influence of an "advocacy coalition" (Sabatier 1988) in a policy area may depend on the strength of a political party if the issue becomes sufficiently

partisan. If incumbents fail to adapt, party repositioning and policy change must be slow, given the low rate of turnover in Congress, and reformers must work to elect new officials instead of persuading incumbents.

To understand this process, a focus on individual issues is necessary. There is a growing literature on LGBT politics in the U.S (Sherrill 1996, Lewis and Edelson 2000, Brewer 2003, Engel 2007, Mucciaroni 2008, Flores and Barclay 2016, Garretson 2018, Bishin et al. 2021). Yet only a few studies touch on party position change on LGBT rights. (Lindaman and Haider-Markel 2002, Lublin 2005, Bishin, Freebourn and Teten 2021, Kersting 2021, Proctor 2022).

If LGBT politics scholars seldom focus on parties, party specialists rarely explore gay rights. Scholars note that the parties have traded places on several issues. The best-known case is race, on which the "party of Lincoln" came to represent Southern whites while Democrats won over African-Americans (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Glaser 1996, Lublin 2004), but similar reversals occurred on women's rights (Wolbrecht 2000), fiscal policy (Burns and Taylor 2000), defense spending (Karol 2009) and trade policy (Shoch 2001.). The parties also polarized on the newer "social" or cultural issues of abortion (Adams 1997), gun control (Bruce and Wilcox 1998) and the environment (Karol 2019).

However, the LGBT case is distinctive. Unlike race, trade, women's rights, defense or fiscal policy, LGBT rights were *not* on the political agenda until the 1970s. Nor have Democrats and Republicans traded places on gay rights, as they did on those issues. The GOP was never more supportive than Democrats of LGBT concerns. Instead, the parties have polarized, with Democrats increasingly supportive of LGBT rights and the GOP remaining largely opposed. In that the parties have polarized, rather than traded sides, the dynamic of LGBT politics resembles those of gun control, abortion and environmentalism.

Yet when other social issues reached Capitol Hill, many Members of Congress (MCs) in both parties were found on each side of the debate. Other cleavages that cross-cut parties were important: a rural-urban divide for guns and environmentalism, a denominational one for abortion. Decades of polarization later, this is far less true. Pro-life Democrats and pro-choice Republicans are nearly extinct species on Capitol Hill. Democratic opponents of environmentalism and gun control and Republican supporters of them are similarly scarce. Both parties changed on all these issues.

The LGBT rights story is different. Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.), one of the most progressive legislators in her era, introduced the first gay rights bill in 1974 quietly without seeking cosponsors since even she saw the issue as "dangerous" (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999, 240). Only one co-sponsor emerged then, Rep. Ed Koch, now known to have been closeted.[2] All Democratic MCs now support LGBT rights, but this was not true until decades after the issue reached Congress, and Republicans have changed far less than Democrats.

The slowness of the parties' polarization on gay rights could stem from incumbents sticking to their original stands and low turnover in Congress. Alternatively, change may have been gradual because incentives for MCs to adapt increased slowly. If so, we should see change among long-serving MCs. Evaluating these competing explanations requires investigation.

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows. I briefly review theories of issue evolution and party position change as they relate to the role of conversion or adaptation by incumbents. I then present evidence of a growing gay-rights constituency in the Democratic Party. Next I examine Congressional behavior using co-sponsorship and roll call data from the House and Senate. I show how the association between MCs' personal and constituency characteristics and their LGBT rights positions declined over time, as the issue became partisan. I also demonstrate a

growing party divide on the issue in platforms at the same time. I conclude with discussion of the implications of these findings.

Theory

Scholars have long sought to understand change in parties' policies and coalitions. Here a central question is *how* party elites' issue positioning changes, be it a reversal in Democrats and Republicans' relative positions or a change in the extent to which divisions on an issue fall along party lines. The prevalent view has been that MCs do *not* adapt, making turnover or replacement, in Carmines and Stimson's words (1989, 63) "the principal agent" of change in party issue positioning in Congress. In this view, MCs fear appearing "inconsistent and unprincipled" (Stimson 2004,65.) Adams (1997) and Poole (2007) similarly claim reputational concerns induce consistency in MCs' voting patterns.

Others highlight a different mechanism. Wolbrecht (2000) finds conversion among MCs on women's rights, yet sees it as exceptional. Karol (2009) however finds much conversion by MCs on several issues. I argue that when a new group is "incorporated" in a party coalition, change in the party's issue positioning is gradual and conversion and turnover among elected officials both matter. Initially, some politicians form ties with a new group, gaining new backers and, if they are prominent, altering their parties' image. The new group's presence in the party encourages more politicians to appeal to it. Increased support from the party's officeholders then leads more members of the group to support the party, which in turn impels more party politicians to represent the group. This dynamic may play out over decades.

Incumbents may survive for a time without appealing to new elements in a party.[3] In such cases turnover may play some role. Yet ambitious politicians have an incentive to appease all

sections of their parties. Failure to do so may produce primary challenges, tepid support in general elections or difficulty in reaching higher office and leadership roles. The imperative to appeal to all party constituencies will eventually outweigh politicians' personal reservations and fears of seeming inconsistent.

The groups most focused on gay rights, LGBT activists and social conservatives, only became integrated into party coalitions after the issue first reached Congress in 1974. So the group incorporation model may apply. Change on LGBT rights has been slow, making Congressional turnover a plausible mechanism. If we find adaptation underlying party position change even on this topic, we should not be surprised to see it on other issues. Thus study of this case contributes to a broader understanding about how parties' policies and coalitions change.

One may ask if a focus on party-linked interest groups is needed to explain the growth in support for gay rights by Democrats, given that public support for these rights has greatly increased since the 1970s (Garretson 2018). Yet changing public opinion cannot fully explain the partisan gulf on the issue since even Republican and Democratic senators in the same states increasingly diverge on LGBT (and other) issues. In the 108thth Congress (2003-2004), thirteen states had a "mixed delegation", i.e. a senator from each party. These pairs of senators are useful to examine as they face the same electorate in the general election. The median rating from the Human Rights Campaign, the leading LGBT rights lobby, for Democrats in mixed delegations was 75%, as contrasted with zero for the median Republican senator from these states. The mean ratings were 68% for Democrats and 17% for Republicans (A couple of these mixed-delegation Republicans had high scores, including Lincoln Chafee, who later left the party.) In the 116th Congress (2019-2020) there were only nine mixed delegations and in those the median HRC rating among Democrats was 87% and the mean was 86%. For the Republicans the median was

still zero and the mean was 6%. (All these Republicans except Susan Collins received a zero rating.)[4] Similarly, Presidential nominees and party platforms increasingly diverge on LGBT rights, despite targeting the same "battleground states". Democratic MCs increasingly represent metropolitan and highly-educated gay-friendly constituencies and Republicans less-educated rural ones (Kersting 2021), but differences between the parties are not a simple reflection of attitudes in the states and districts they represent.

Legislators do not weigh all constituents' preferences equally. They may favor a "sub-constituency" (Bishin 2009) focused on an issue. MCs, who must win primaries, necessarily give extra weight to the views of co-partisans. Yet even partisans' attitudes do not explain Congressional divisions on LGBT rights. Polls long showed most Republican respondents favored a ban on employment discrimination based on sexual orientation[5], yet few GOP MCs did. Thus a federal ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity only came via the Supreme Court's 2020 *Bostock* ruling that the 1964 Civil Rights Act's bar on sex discrimination also encompassed these categories.[6] Similarly, recent surveys show 55% of Republican identifiers now support same-sex marriage, but in December 2022 Republicans still opposed it 169- 39 in the House and 36-12 in the Senate.[7]

In short, public opinion, even among partisans, cannot explain the growth in support in Congress for LGBT rights still being so concentrated in the Democratic Caucus. The parties' ties to interest groups focused on this issue can help explain what shifts in public opinion cannot. This is consistent with an understanding of parties as coalitions in which politicians are especially responsive to "intense policy demanders" (Bawn et al. 2012), who provide resources.

The combined effects of pressure from a rising group growing within a party's coalition and shifting public opinion induce careerist politicians to take new stands. I next briefly describe

the growing prominence of these groups in party coalitions followed by analysis of the changing positions of MCs.

The Religious Right and the Republican Party's Resistance to LGBT Rights

The partisan divide in Congress reflects a growth of activist constituencies focused on the issue in both parties. On the GOP side, the key development has been the Christian right's emergence as a constituency in the Reagan years (Wilcox 1992, Oldfield 1996, Layman et al. 2010, Karol 2014). This development was important for the emergence of the party divide on LGBT rights as well as abortion.

However, the dynamic on these two issues is different. State-level efforts to reform abortion laws in the 1960s revealed no partisan division on the issue (Karol and Thurston 2020) However, the religious right's alignment with the GOP led to diminished support from Republicans for reproductive rights, while feminist influence among Democrats made the pro-choice stand increasingly obligatory for Democratic candidates.

By contrast, the religious right's effect on LGBT issues has been to forestall change among GOP politicians. Republican elites were not supportive of gay rights before their alignment with the religious right, yet said little about a topic then widely seen as beyond the pale. Yet despite dramatic shifts in public opinion since then -even among Republicans- most GOP MCs remain unsupportive. This is understandable. Even if a majority of Republican voters now endorse gay rights, politicians give weight to "policy-demanding" activists who aid campaigns and may have extreme views on issues they care intensely about (Bawn et al. 2012). In 2020, U.S. Rep. Denver Riggleman (R.-Va.) lost re-nomination at an activist-dominated party

convention held at a church, with a major complaint being his officiation at a gay wedding.[8] GOP politicians may reasonably infer that most Republican identifiers who favor LGBT rights don't prioritize the issue or they wouldn't be Republicans in the first place. As a result, these politicians align with an intense minority rather than the median voter or even the median Republican on the issue.

Unlike abortion, on which they impelled some Republican politicians to reverse course, the impact of the religious right on LGBT issues has been to freeze GOP elected officials in place, retaining unsupportive positions that were once bipartisan, but which Democrats abandoned.

Democrats and LGBT Rights Activism

The modern American gay rights movement emerged with the rise of the Mattachine Society in the early 1960s and the Stonewall riot of 1969. That movement soon entered party politics. Gay rights activists sought recognition in Democratic Platforms starting in 1972 (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force was founded in 1973 and "strove to make the Democratic Party responsive to the gay community" (D'Emilio 2000, 469.)

The Task Force was joined in 1980 by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), now the leading LGBT lobby (Engel 2007, 66.) The HRC is formally non-partisan, but over 90% of its contributions have gone to Democrats since 1990.[9] These lobbies' budgets and campaign contributions grew in the 1980s and 1990s (Rimmerman 2000), increasing their visibility in Congress. The HRC began publishing scorecards rating MCs in 1989.[10]

Partisan gay rights activism also grew during this period; a gay and lesbian caucus emerged at the 1980 Democratic National Convention and in 1983 at the Democratic National

Committee.[11] LGBT Democratic clubs were founded (Proctor 2022) starting in 1972 (Fejes 2008,117). There were thirty clubs by 1988 and a short-lived National Association of Gay and Lesbian Democratic Clubs.[12] In 1998 the National Stonewall Democrats was founded as an umbrella organization linked to the DNC (Rimmerman 2000,68.) 72 chapters had an active web presence in June 2012.[13]

Democratic LGBT activism was not confined to gay groups or the formal party structure. In 2012 at least 1/6th of the "bundlers" raising $500,000 or more for President Obama's re-election were gay and at the grassroots level the Obama campaign directly recruited gays and lesbians to work on the President's campaign rather than via an LGBT group.[14] GOP gay rights activists also exist, but they are far fewer and, unlike their Democratic counterparts, are at odds with a larger party constituency, the Christian right.

In sum, public opinion is increasingly supportive of gay rights, but Democratic MCs have also faced a rising party constituency focused on the issue, while their GOP colleagues' coalition includes opponents of such reforms. Thus, Democratic MCs have had a growing incentive to take pro-LGBT stands while Republicans have had reason to reject them. Democratic MCs' incentive to change may outweigh concerns about consistency, but this matter requires closer investigation.

Cases

I now turn to a mix of analyses to better understand change in parties' positioning on LGBT issues in Congress and platforms. (Data sources are listed in the online Appendix.) I examine anti-discrimination bills, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and marriage rights, as well

as party platforms. In reviewing Congressional developments, I use a mix of floor votes and co-sponsorships. I reveal the growing partisan divide and the contribution made by to it by conversion and replacement among MCs. By focusing on specific bills, I insure that changes in the votes used to calculate interest group ratings are not driving the results. By using multiple data sources, I insure that my findings are not the artifact of a particular measure.

Evidence from Co-Sponsorship of Anti-Discrimination Bills

Co-sponsorship by MCs of the main anti-discrimination measure promoted by gay rights activists offers a useful window into developments. From 1974 to 1993 this was the "Civil Rights Amendment Act" (CRAA), which would have amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination in employment, education, housing and public accommodations based on "affectational or sexual preference" (later changed to "sexual orientation".) In 1993 LGBT lobbying shifted to the new, narrower "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" (ENDA), a bill that would not amend the Civil Rights Act.[15] ENDA was eventually broadened to protect transgender individuals. Starting in 2015, the leading LGBT rights measure has been the Equality Act, which moved beyond ENDA's focus on employment and returned to a broader ban on discrimination like the 1970s bills, but now encompassing gender identity. The CRAA was never voted on and ENDA never became law. Yet tracking MCs' co-sponsorship of them reveals the parties' changing positions on LGBT rights.

While roll calls are familiar, co-sponsorship requires discussion. MCs introducing or "sponsoring" a bill invite colleagues to "co-sponsor." Doing so lets MCs take stands on bills that may not reach the floor. Lobbies, including the Human Rights Campaign, use co-sponsorship along with votes to rate MCs. Wolbrecht (2000) uses co-sponsorship to track parties' stands in years in which the ERA was not brought up for a vote. For years there were few votes on LGBT

issues (Haider-Markel 1999a) and these often differed from one Congress to the next. Co-sponsorship data helps illuminate the fifteen years between the first gay rights bill in 1974 and HRC ratings in a way that informative studies based on those ratings, e.g. Bishin, Freebourn and Teten (2021), cannot.

Figures 1 and 2 show the number of U.S. Representatives and Senators cosponsoring the main anti-discrimination bill, be it the CRAA, ENDA or the Equality Act, from the 94_{th} through the 117_{th} Congresses (1975 to 2022.) [16] The figures report the number of cosponsors from each party in each chamber in each Congress.

Figure 1

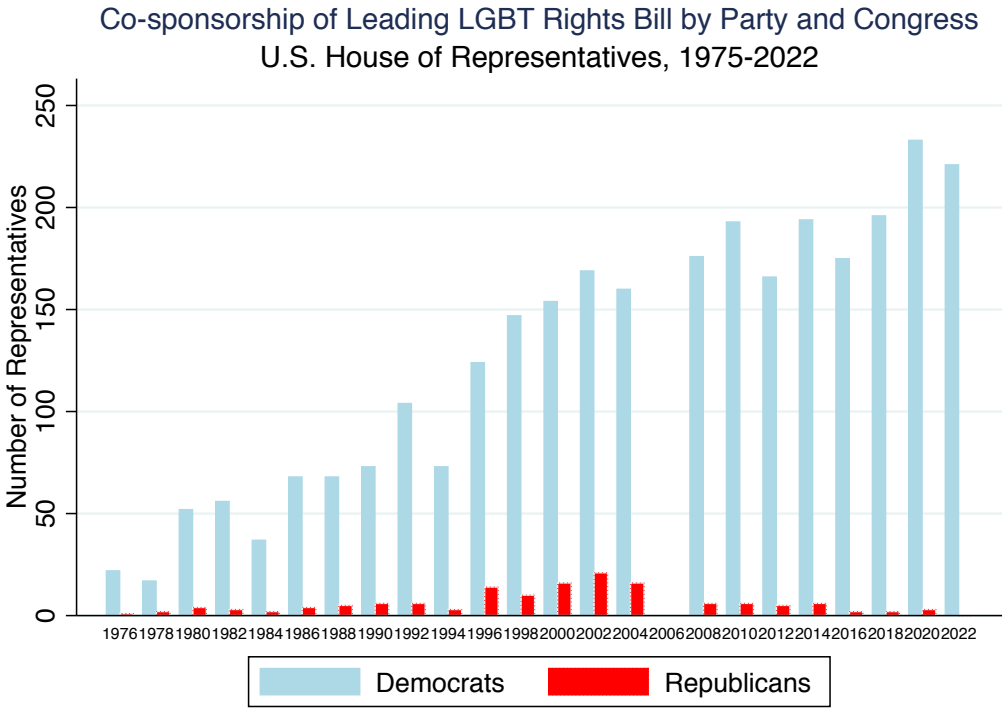
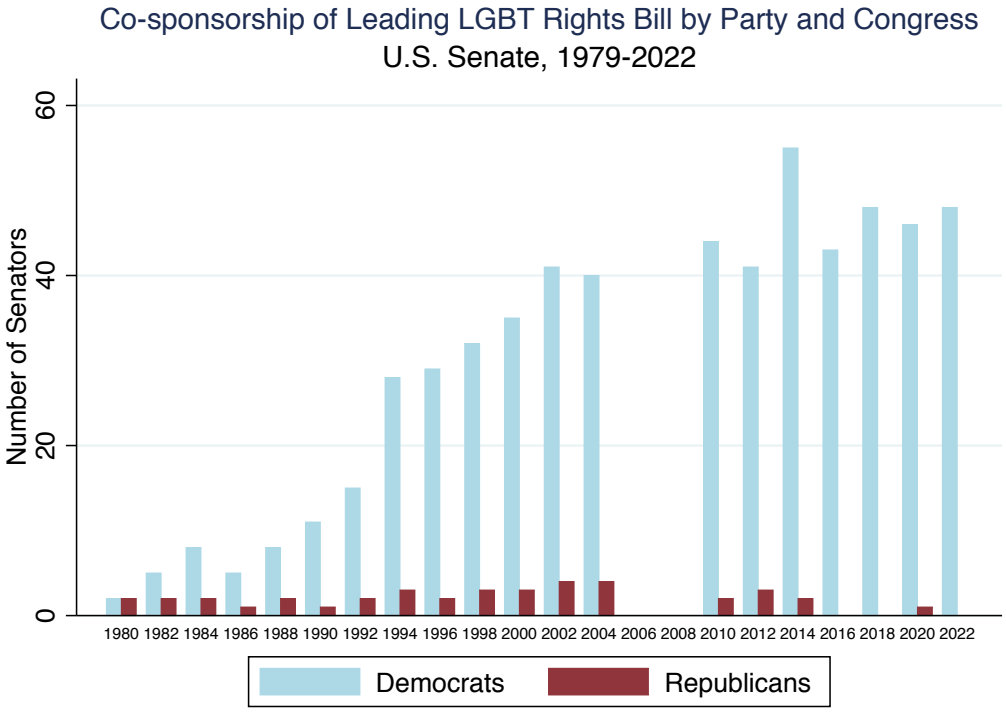

Co-sponsorship of Leading LGBT Rights Bill by Party and Congress
U.S. House of Representatives, 1975-2022
Number of Representatives
0
50
100
150
200
250
1976 1978 1980 1982 1984 1986 1988 1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018 2020 2022
Democrats
Republicans

Figure 2


Co-sponsorship of Leading LGBT Rights Bill by Party and Congress
U.S. Senate, 1979-2022
Number of Senators
0
20
40
60
1980 1982 1984 1986 1988 1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018 2020 2022
Democrats
Republicans

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate multiple points. First, co-sponsors of anti-discrimination measures were initially few, comprising less than 10% of Democratic Representatives in the first two Congresses examined (1975-1978) and only 4 Senators in the 96th Congress (1979-1980.) Secondly, from the beginning, most co-sponsors were Democrats. Third, support for LGBT rights has grown. Fourth, this growth has been slow. Fifth, the shift has come chiefly among Democrats. GOP co-sponsorship, always limited, declined after peaking in the early 2000s. Thus the growing partisan divide on LGBT rights differs from the broader polarization evident in Congress. While Congressional polarization stems chiefly from changes in the Republican Party (McCarty 2019), on this issue it is Democrats who have changed most.

Observing dramatic shifts in legislative behavior raises questions. If MCs divide over LGBT rights along partisan lines today, what was the nature of earlier divisions? For decades even most Democrats did not support gay rights. What then differentiated the supportive minority of Democrats from the rest?

From Voting Your Beliefs and Voting Your District to Voting Your Party

Table 1 reports logit regression models of Representatives' co-sponsorship of the leading LGBT rights bill: the Civil Rights Amendments Act in the 96th and 101st Congresses, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in the 106th and 111th Congresses and the Equality Act in the recent 116th Congress. Models are presented for Congresses ten years apart to show the trend in patterns of representation. Several variables besides party affiliation are included in models to assess the changing importance of other factors that might have oriented legislators on LGBT issues in the less polarized earlier decades.

Models include variables for constituency and MC characteristics including race, gender, age, education, and religion. The role of personal characteristics may be twofold. They may reflect MCs' personal beliefs to the extent that legislators share views prevailing in demographics to which they belong. Haider-Markel (1999a) and Lublin (2005) show an association between MCs' votes on LGBT rights and their religious affiliations. Karol and Thurston (2020) report similar findings regarding the role of religion and abortion stands among state legislators. Karol (2019) also found that younger, more highly-educated MCs were initially more likely to support environmentalism, consistent with surveys showing these demographics most favorable toward environmental regulations.

Yet personal characteristics may not just be a proxy for legislators' beliefs. An MC may cultivate support among those from her background as a political base and give disproportionate weight to their views. These two explanations -personal beliefs and personal constituency are not mutually exclusive.

We might expect younger, more highly-educated MCs, Jews, liberal church members, those with no religion and women to be especially supportive of LGBT rights, while those from conservative denominations would be less favorably inclined.[17]

Constituency factors likely to incline MCs to support LGBT rights include representing urban areas or non-Southern districts and -as the issue became associated with the Democratic Party, coming from a district in which the vote for the Democratic Presidential candidate was relatively strong.

Table 1

Logit Models of Cosponsorship of Leading LGBT Rights Bill

U.S. Representatives, Selected Congresses 1979-2020

	96th Congress 1979-1980	101st Congress 1989-1990	106th Congress 1999-2000	111th Congress 2009-2010	116th Congress 2019-2020
Democrat	1.7(.6)*	2.1(.53)*	2.7(.45)*	4.0(.6)*	8.5(1.5)*
Age	.05(.02)*	.02(.02)	-.01(.02)	.001(.02)	.04(.04)
Woman	-.71(.98)	1.5(.66)*	1.9(.6)*	-.36(.50)	.93(1.3)
Black	2.2(.92)*	.76(.71)	1.5(1.2)	.07(.94)	-2.2(1.7)
Jewish	2.2(.67)*	1.7(.57)*	2.5(1.2)*	1.7(1.1)	.54(2.9)
Liberal Church	.12(.69)	.75(.60)	.54(.72)	2.3(.84)*	-.46(2.4)
Conservative Church	-.65(.85)	.20(.61)	-1.1(.8)	-.96(.70)	-.36(1.2)
No Religion[18]	.61(.87)	1.7(1.1)	N/A	.13(1.5)	N/A
Education	.16(.15)	-.03(.15)	.47(.18)*	.26(.17)	-.08(.46)
LGB[19]	3.1(1.8)	2.8(1.4)*	N/A	3.3(2.1)	N/A
South	-2.8(.84)*	-2.2(.6)*	-2.4(.51)*	-1.8(.5)*	.52(1.0)
Dem Pres. Vote %	3.6(2.1)	2.9(1.0)*	16.3(3.6)*	9.6(2.7)*	.06(.05)
Urban	3.2(1.1)*	5.9(1.2)*	2.4(.97)*	4.1(1.2)*	.08(2.9)
Constant	-113.8(36.2)	-48.2(33.6)	10.8(40.3)	-14.1(36.3)	-91.9(85.4)
Pseudo R2	.39	.45	.65	.66	.92
Log-Likelihood	-102.7	-113.9	-99.1	-103.0	-24.8
N	442	445	429	446	427

The models presented in Table 1 reveal a few important points. The association between Democratic affiliation and co-sponsorship has grown. There were also strong associations between both personal and constituency characteristics and MCs' co-sponsorships in earlier Congresses.[20] Constituency factors were more consistently important, as northern urban Representatives from districts in which Democratic Presidential candidates ran well were most apt to cosponsor LGBT rights bills in the earlier Congresses. Both constituency and personal factors however have declined in importance as the party divide has grown.

This is not simply a question of "sorting". Both Congressional parties remain diverse in terms of the personal and constituency characteristics included in these models. Yet nowadays, these factors are not as strongly associated with MCs' stands compared to the role of party. The shift from personal and constituency factors to partisanship is important, but how did it occur?

How Did Party Positions Change?

Evaluating the Roles of Conversion, Replacement and Mobilization.

Massive turnover occurred on Capitol Hill over the decades depicted in Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1. Does turnover explain the change we see, with newer cohorts of Democratic MCs taking more pro-LGBT rights stands than their elders? Or do changes of position by legislators underlie the parties' increasing divide on the issue?

A formula developed by Rapoport and Stone (1994) permits disaggregation of change in a population into three categories: conversion, replacement and mobilization. It has been used in longitudinal studies of Iowa Caucuses (Rapoport and Stone 1994) and national convention delegates (Herrera 1995, Wolbrecht 2002 and Layman et al. 2010.) Much as turnout varied from year to year in the Caucuses, change in the share of Democratic MCs supporting LGBT rights

could stem from "mobilization" or addition of new members to the Democratic caucus in Congress (losses to Republicans would be considered demobilization) as well as conversion by incumbents and replacement of retiring MCs with new ones from the party who take new stands. Thus both the replacement and mobilization terms measure the effects of compositional change in the party caucus. The formula is:

$$T_2-T_1=(\beta\alpha)(S_2-S_{1)+}\ \beta(1-\alpha)(N_2-D_1)+(1-\beta)(N_2-T_1) \quad (1)$$

Where

T_1=The mean opinion of the party at time$_1$ T_2=The mean opinion of the party at time$_2$

β= The ratio of the number of MCs present at time$_1$ to time$_2$

α= The proportion of MCs present at time$_1$ who are also present at time$_2$

S_1=The mean opinion at time$_1$ among the MCs present at both time$_1$ and time$_2$

S_2= The mean opinion at time$_2$ among the MCs present at both time$_1$ and time$_2$

N_2=The mean opinion of New Members of Congress at time$_2$

D_1=The mean opinion of MCs dropping out by leaving Congress after time$_1$

Note that this formula provides a conservative estimate of conversion's role in producing party position change. If the incentives for MCs to a take a new stand are increasing new and returning MCs will be more likely to co-sponsor than those who left Capitol Hill at the end of the last Congress, if only because retiring MCs were not operating in the new environment. MCs leave Congress for many reasons including death, retirement, bids for higher office and defeat.

The counterfactual implied by this formula that *none* of the departing MCs would have adapted to changing conditions had they stayed in Congress is implausible.

In Table 2 I report results based on Rapoport and Stone's formula disaggregating change in House and Senate Democratic Caucuses' positions on the leading antidiscrimination measure, i.e. the Civil Rights Amendment Act from 1974-1992 and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act from 1993 to 2004. I report the share of change attributable to conversion, replacement and mobilization. The percentage shown in the final column is based on dividing conversion by the total effect of conversion, replacement and mobilization. In the more recent years a substantial replacement effect is visible on ENDA, however the sign for mobilization is negative in this case. So the contribution of the two terms relating to turnover in Congress is mixed, leaving conversion or adaptation by MCs to account for a majority of the net growth in support for gay rights among Democrats.

Table 2

Shares of Change in support for Civil Rights Amendment Act and Employment Nondiscrimination Act due to Conversion, Replacement and Mobilization: Senate and House Democratic Caucuses

Senate	Conversion	Replacement	Mobilization	Net Change	Conversion as a share of Net Change
CRAA (1979-1992)	.155	.033	.037	.225	68.9%
ENDA (1993-2004)	.194	.239	-.089	.343	56.5%
House					
CRAA (1975-1992)	.226	.071	.011	.308	73.4%
ENDA (1993-2004)	.167	.168	-.049	.286	58.4%

The results shown in Table 2 demonstrate that conversion by Democratic MCs, accounts for most of the growth in support for both the CRAA and ENDA. Democratic MCs who initially did not co-sponsor these anti-discrimination bills later did so in large numbers. Joe Biden, who was already a Senator when the first gay rights measure was introduced, never co-sponsored the CRAA and only signed on to ENDA in 2001, is one example. The role of conversion was greater on the CRAA than on ENDA. This may be the case because the CRAA was considered when gay rights was a new issue on the political agenda. The results from the Rapoport and Stone reveal a reality different from what prior studies lead us to expect.

Party Position Change and MCs' Positions on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

The issue of "gays in the military" offers a useful supplement to the examination of co-sponsorship of anti-discrimination bills. In this case recorded votes occurred seventeen years apart on the same policy. Recorded votes are more visible than co-sponsorship decisions and if a similar trend is clear on both it will increase our confidence that findings are not due to some quirk of co-sponsorship behavior. Moreover, the two votes also permit examination of the changing politics of LGBT rights in a different policy area from the Civil Rights Amendments Act and ENDA that may have had more emotional resonance.

Opposition to President Clinton's 1993 attempt to lift the ban on military service by openly gay and lesbian personnel in 1993 led Congress to pass and Clinton to sign a bill that codified Reagan's executive order stating "homosexuality is incompatible with military service." This law, coupled with a Defense Directive stipulating that applicants were not to be asked about their orientation, produced the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy that prevailed until 2010.

In 1993 a bipartisan majority favored DADT. GOP MCs overwhelmingly supported the restrictive policy, as did President Clinton, over half of the House Democratic Caucus and 25 of 55 Senate Democrats.

Gradually however, public opinion swung against the ban. Only 44% of respondents in the *ABC News/Washington Post Poll* favored allowing open gays and lesbians to serve in 1993, but by 2008 75% did. While Democrats were most supportive, by 2009 the *Gallup Poll* showed 58% of Republican respondents favored "allowing openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in the military". DADT's creators, including former President Clinton and Gen. Colin Powell, eventually endorsed repeal[21], as did all candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination from 2000 onward.[22] In 2005 a bill to repeal DADT was introduced. The number of co-sponsors grew from 122 Representatives in the 109th Congress (2005-2005) to 192 in the 111th Congress (2009-2010). In the 111th Congress, the first period of unified Democratic government since DADT was codified, the policy was finally repealed.

Table 3 comparing voting on the ban in the House and Senate in 1993 and 2010 shows that support for DADT greatly decreased among House Democrats, but slightly *increased* among House Republicans. As in the case of antidiscrimination bills focused on the private sector, much change is evident, but it is concentrated in the Democratic ranks.

Table 3
Voting On Policy Banning Gay & Lesbians in the Military by Party
All Members of Congress and Those Serving in 1993 and 2010 Compared

	1993		2010	
All Representatives	**Pro-Ban**	**Anti-Ban**	**Pro-Ban**	**Anti-Ban**
Democrats	134	121	26	223
Republicans	161	12	163	6
Representatives Serving in 1993 and 2010				
Democrats	31	44	12	61
Republicans	40	0	41	1
All Senators				
Democrats	25	30	0	58
Republicans	39	3	33	7
Senators Serving in 1993 and 2010				
Democrats	7	15	0	22
Republicans	9	0	9	0

Table 3 also reveals how the 115 Representatives present in both 1993 and 2010 voted. These MCs differed relatively little from their co-partisans on either occasion. Yet there is reason to expect that they would have been distinctive. Long-serving MCs often represent safe districts and have less need to take moderate stands. Thus, a majority of long-serving Democrats still in office in 2010 already opposed the ban in 1993. Still, as in the House as a whole, the ban was initially divisive among this group, with 31 in favor and 44 opposed. By contrast, all 40 Republicans present both years favored the ban in 1993. In 2010 the shift evident throughout Congress was also visible among veteran Democratic MCs. Instead of 31 votes for the ban, as in 1993, there were only 12 from the long-serving Democrats, and 61 against. Most Democrats who favored the ban in 1993 opposed it by 2010, while those who initially opposed it continued to do so. [23]

While much change is evident among long-serving House Democrats on DADT, this is not true of House Republicans. No GOP Representatives serving in both 1993 and 2010 favored lifting the ban in 1993 and only one did in 2010. Polarization on "Don't Ask Don't Tell" emerged among long-serving Representatives chiefly due to shifts among Democrats.

How did switchers differ from those who took consistent stands? The median D1 NOMINATE score of the Democrats who switched to the anti-DADT side in 2010 is -.35. By comparison, the median D1 NOMINATE score of the consistent Democratic DADT opponents was -.52. The median score among consistent anti-gay Democrats was -.24. The issue broke down on liberal-conservative lines within the Democratic Caucus and the switchers tended to be moderates. In a narrow accounting sense, turnover not conversion produced most of the change in the parties' positioning and the reversal in the House that led to the repeal of DADT. Given

the seventeen years between the two votes, massive turnover was inevitable, making it impossible for change among long-serving MCs to account for most of the shift that occurred.

Yet it does *not* follow that MCs were locked into positions and their departure from the scene was necessary for change to occur. The defeats, deaths and retirements that occurred in the many years between the two votes had little to do with legislators' stands on a policy that was barely discussed for much of that time. Thus there is reason to believe that the same changing party coalitions that led many long-serving Democratic MCs to switch sides would have also affected many who left office in the years between the two votes, had they remained in Congress.

Table 3 also reports the division among senators by party on a 1993 amendment stripping the ban on gays and lesbians serving openly in the military from a defense funding bill. Republicans rejected the amendment 31-3. Democrats were split, with 30 supporting it and 25 opposed. In the Senate, unlike the House, most Democrats already opposed DADT in 1993. Yet in both chambers Democrats were split, while Republicans were almost entirely opposed.

33 senators served both in 1993 when the Senate rejected the bid to lift the ban on openly gay and lesbian personnel and in 2010 when it was repealed. Of those 31 voted or made known their position on both occasions. Table 3 reports their stands. In this long-serving group of senators fifteen favored and sixteen opposed DADT in 1993. Thus, in this subgroup, the anti-gay rights forces were also initially in the majority, albeit more narrowly than in the Senate as a whole. This was so in part because Democrats were overrepresented in this group compared to their numbers in the Senate in 1993 or 2010, and also because long-serving Democrats were more supportive of gay rights than other members of their party.

In 2010 however, 22 of these 31 long-serving senators backed repeal, with only 9 opposed. In the intervening years seven senators adopted a newly pro-gay rights stand.[24] All of

the switchers were Democrats, including Specter, who had changed parties in the interim. One other Democratic DADT supporter in 1993, Shelby switched to the GOP in 1995. The vote switchers were Baucus, Conrad, Dorgan, Reid, Rockefeller and Kohl. The median D1 NOMINATE Score for this group is -.31, while that for the senators who consistently opposed DADT was -.396. As in the House, it was moderate Democrats who adapted.

These seven switches were consequential in two respects. Firstly, they made Senate Democrats unanimous for repeal. More importantly, the switchers were pivotal in producing the needed super-majority. Repeal passed by a 65 to 31 margin, but the cloture motion passed 63-33. Had even four of the seven switchers stuck to their original positions, cloture would have failed and DADT would have remained law. This case shows that votes as well as co-sponsorship behavior changed on gay rights among long-serving Democratic MCs, with policy consequences.

Party Position Change and MCs' Positions on Same-Sex Marriage

Marriage has been a controversial LGBT rights issue. The key federal legislation, prior to Supreme Court rulings in 2013 and 2015, was the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which stipulated that states were not bound to recognize marriages contracted in other states and that the federal government only recognized heterosexual marriages.

In 1996 a huge bipartisan Congressional majority voted for DOMA, which President Clinton signed. Yet a partisan divide later emerged. Starting with Massachusetts in 2003, several states allowed same-sex marriage. Public opinion also evolved. In 1996, when DOMA became law, only 25% of Americans supported same-sex marriage.[25] However, starting in 2011, polls showed majority support for same-sex marriage. While younger respondents are the most supportive, this trend has been evident in all age groups.[26]

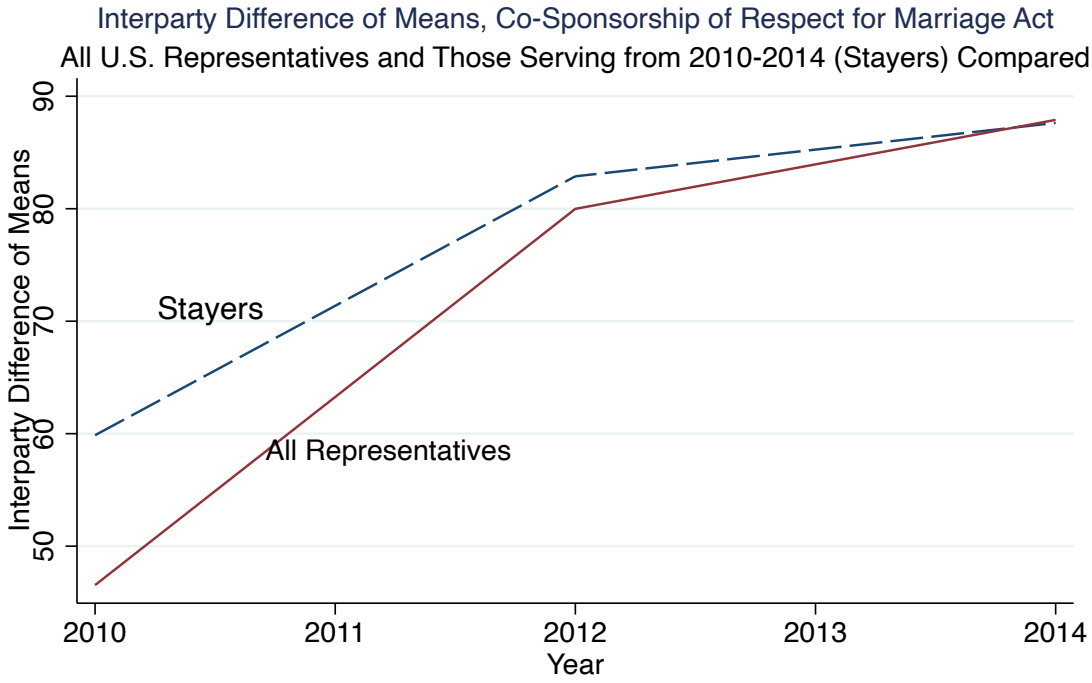
The issue re-emerged in Congress in 2009 when Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) introduced the Respect for Marriage Act (RFMA), which would have repealed DOMA. Co-sponsorship of the RFMA grew gradually. Yet the mechanism underlying this change requires investigation. The bill was not voted on until 2022 (years after Court rulings effectively ended DOMA), but we can observe legislators' evolving stands based on their decisions whether to co-sponsor the RFMA. In 2009-2010, only a minority of Democrats and no Republicans co-sponsored the RFMA. Yet the country was changing and Congress changed with it. In 2010 President Obama said his position was "evolving" and in 2012 he endorsed same-sex marriage, shortly after Vice-President Joe Biden did.[27] (Obama had actually supported same-sex marriage in 1996 at the beginning of his political career, before dropping this stand as he sought higher office.[28]) By the 113th Congress (2013-2014), most Democratic Representatives -but only two Republicans- supported the RFMA.

Obama and Biden opposed same-sex marriage in 2008. They embraced it in 2012. What about Members of Congress? There was much turnover between the 111th and 113th Congresses. In 2010, the year of the Tea Party, many Democrats were defeated or retired. In 2012 however, Democrats regained ground and redistricting unseated incumbents of both parties. Only 271 Representatives served continuously during this period.[29] Was the growing partisan divide in Congress on same-sex marriage due to this considerable turnover or was adaptation by incumbents important?

Figure 3 charts the growing party divide from the 111th through the 113th Congress, reporting the result for the House as a whole and for the 271 continuing MCs or "Stayers". If conversion was the chief mechanism, we should see big differences in the trajectory of these two groups of MCs. Instead, the same trend emerges in both categories. The Stayer category was

slightly more polarized from the beginning, which reflects the fact that long-serving MCs tend to represent safe seats for their party and were not dislodged in 2010 or 2012, unlike many moderates. But the difference disappeared in the two succeeding Congresses. Many Democrats who did not endorse DOMA repeal in the 111th Congress did so in the 112th or 113th. Like Obama and Biden, many Democratic MCs "evolved" on the issue of marriage, and -given the lack of change among Republicans- deepened the party divide on LGBT rights.

Figure 3


Interparty Difference of Means, Co-Sponsorship of Respect for Marriage Act
All U.S. Representatives and Those Serving from 2010-2014 (Stayers) Compared
Interparty Difference of Means
50
60
70
80
90
Stayers
All Representatives
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
Year

For a closer look, we can examine changes in the association between MCs' positions and their personal background and constituencies and their positions on marriage. In the models presented in Table 4 the dependent variable is a scale that has three values based on MCs co-sponsorship on RFMA and the Uniting American Families Act, a bill proposed in both the 111th and 113th Congresses, treating same-sex couples the same way heterosexual married ones were treated under immigration law. Results are presented in both Congresses for all Representatives and for those serving in both Congresses.

Table 4

OLS Models

Co-Sponsorship of Pro-Same Sex Marriage Bills (Respect for Marriage Act and Uniting American Families Act), 111th and 113th Congresses:

All U.S. Representatives and Those Present in Both Congresses (Stayers)

	All Representatives 2009-2010	**Stayers in 2009-2010**	**All Representatives 2013-2014**	**Stayers in 2013-2014**
Democrat	.34(.07)*	.55(12)*	1.2(.08)*	1.1(.11)*
Age	-.002(.003)	.0004(.004)	-.001(.002)	-.001(.003)
Woman	.17(.07)*	.20(.10)*	.04(.06)	.15(.08)
Black	-15(.13)	-.14(.15)	-.24(.10)*	-.10(.12)
Jewish	.47(.11)*	.34(15)*	.36(.10)*	.34(.13)*
Liberal Church	.09(.11)	.08(.14)	.11(.09)	.17(.12)
Conservative Church	.10(.08)	.04(.10)	.11(.06)	.000(.09)
No Religion	.52(.20)*	.32(.29)	.17(.15)	.32(.22)
Education	-.006(.02)	-.05(.03)	-.036(.02)	-.03(.03)
LGB	.18(.26)	.17(.35)	.26(.18)	.33(.29)
South	-.07(.06)	-.01(.09)	-.09(.05)	-.11(.07)
Dem Pres. Vote %	2.7(.36)*	2.3(.48)*	1.2(.28)*	1.3(.4)*
Urban	.51(.18)*	.41(.23)	.13(.14)	.20(.20)
Constant	2.6(5.2)	-2.0(7.3)	.75(4.1)	3.0(6.2)
R2	.58	.56	.76	.75
N	442	268	443	269

Table 4 shows that the basic trend – same sex marriage becoming a more partisan issue from the 111th through the 113 Congresses- is evident among both long-serving MCs (Stayers) and in the Congress as a whole, and that among continuing MCs the association between policy position and party grows, as more Democrats support marriage rights. At the same time, both Representatives' personal background and constituency characteristics become notably weaker predictors of their positions.

In all three cases examined, anti-discrimination legislation, DADT repeal and marriage rights, the pattern is the same; the parties polarized as Democrats became more supportive of LGBT rights while Republicans changed little. In each case this trend is evident among continuing MCs, who often took new stands, as Democratic Representatives' stands became more aligned with party and less related to personal background or constituency factors.

Evidence from Party Platforms

There are advantages to observing party activity in different settings. Congress is not the only place where parties take positions. While control of the legislative agenda influences roll-call based measures, parties are free to address whichever issues they want at whatever length they find appropriate in their platforms. Platforms reveal a similar trend on LGBT issues.[30] Despite lobbying by activists and some earlier supportive statements[32], the 1972 Democratic nominee, George McGovern, kept gay rights out of his party's platform, as did Jimmy Carter in 1976. In 1980 the two words "sexual orientation" were finally added to a list of characteristics regarding which Democrats opposed discrimination.

Later Democrats went further. In 1984 they denounced anti-gay violence. In 1988 Democrats termed AIDS a civil rights issue. In 1992 Democrats criticized discrimination

against gays and lesbians in the military. In 1996 Democrats endorsed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. In 2004 Democrats opposed the Federal Marriage Amendment, which would have put a heterosexual-only definition of marriage into the U.S. Constitution. In 2008 they pledged to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and the Defense of Marriage Act, which most Democrats had once backed, and also first listed "gender identity" as a protected status. In 2012 Democrats endorsed same-sex marriage. In recent platforms Democrats mention LGBT concerns throughout the text, often using language focusing on intersectionality.

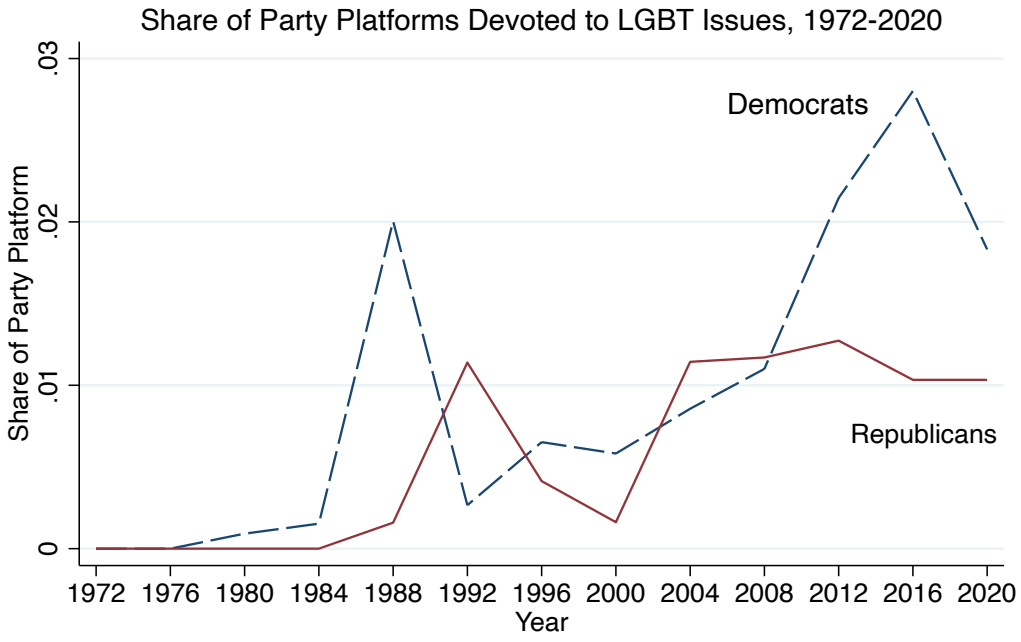
GOP platforms have never included support for LGBT rights. In the early years in which Democrats began to address gay rights, Republicans made little overt mention of the topic, although their platforms included growing references to "traditional morality." The terms "gay" and "lesbian" have yet to appear in a Republican platform. The term used is "homosexual." In 1980 the Republican Platform included "support for legislation protecting and defending the traditional American family against the ongoing erosion of its base in our society." This phrase was seen as a reference to the "Family Protection Act", which would have barred the Legal Services Corporation from suing to "adjudicate the issue of homosexual rights." [31]

As Democratic platforms began including more support for gay rights, Republicans became more explicit in their opposition, widening the partisan divide. In 1992 Republicans endorsed the Boy Scouts' ban on gay scoutmasters, condemned "efforts by the Democratic Party to include sexual preference as a protected minority" and backed "the continued exclusion of homosexuals from the military", a pledge repeated in subsequent years. The 1996 Republican Platform endorsed the Defense of Marriage Act. In 2004 Republicans called for a federal constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. In 2016 Republicans condemned the Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell* decision, establishing same-sex marriage nationwide. In 2020

for the first time Republicans failed to adopt a platform, an action some reports suggest stemmed in part from fears by Trump aides that activists would insist on a language defending "conversion therapy", something the strategists preferred to avoid.[32]

Figure 4 summarizes trends in party platforms, reporting the share of platform text that concerns LGBT issues. [33] This includes discussion of AIDS in the domestic political context, chiefly in the 1980s and 1990s, when it was seen as a gay rights issue. In the earliest years observed, 1972 and 1976, neither party mentioned gay rights, despite its increasing prominence in the media. Since then both parties have devoted a growing share of their platforms to the topic. (The spike in 1988 in the Democratic line is due to a shift in the denominator, as the Democratic Platform was very brief that year.) Democrats devote more attention to LGBT issues than Republicans, which is unsurprising, as their coalition contains groups focused exclusively on the issue, while even the Republican-allied religious right has other concerns, such as abortion.

Figure 4


Share of Party Platforms Devoted to LGBT Issues, 1972-2020
Share of Party Platform
0
.01
.02
.03
Democrats
Republicans
1972
1976
1980
1984
1988
1992
1996
2000
2004
2008
2012
2016
2020
Year

In sum, examination of party platforms reveals increasing discussion of LGBT rights and gradual polarization on the issue paralleling developments in Congress. Democrats have become more supportive of LGBT rights, while Republicans have become increasingly explicit in their rejection of such proposals. Both parties discuss the issue more than they once did.

Conclusion

Support for LGBT rights –limited to just two Representatives when the topic was first broached on Capitol Hill in 1974- is now mainstream. A topic absent from both party platforms as late as 1976 is now discussed at length. Yet growth in support for gay rights has been concentrated chiefly within the Democratic Party, making the issue one more case in which two parties are polarized. In 2022 some Republican MCs did support same-sex marriage, if not trans issues, but this recent shift is still limited to a small minority in the GOP.

The partisan divide on gay rights developed differently from other issues scholars have examined. The parties did not trade places on LGBT rights, as they had on race, women's rights, trade and fiscal policy. Nor did the issue go from cross-cutting to polarizing like other "culture war" controversies, including abortion, gun control and environmentalism. On those issues considerable support for the liberal positions once existed in the GOP, but it declined as Democratic support for them grew. Instead, this study shows that polarization on an issue can occur with only one party changing. Both party coalitions included interest groups that cared about LGBT issues, but one sought change and the other resisted it, producing today's stark partisan divide.

Much change among Democrats emerged via adaptation by incumbents. Contrary to the issue evolution model, many Democratic politicians gradually embraced LGBT rights, whether the issue was employment discrimination, military service or marriage rights. Conversion was

evident in both in co-sponsorship and voting. LGBT rights advocates initially found allies only on the liberal fringe of the Democratic Caucus. Yet now all Democratic MCs embrace the cause.

By contrast, GOP Congressmembers lagged not only overall public opinion, but a majority of Republican identifiers on repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell, barring employment discrimination and recognizing same-sex marriage. In so doing, they remained in good standing with a key party constituency- the religious right.

This case illustrates that remaining consistent in ideological and partisan terms often requires politicians to take new stands. Being a liberal or a mainstream Democratic politician in the 1970s did not entail support for gay rights. Yet it later came to and incumbents adapted. Even what it means to be "gay-friendly" has changed. Fifteen years ago, Democratic candidates could stll win LGBT support without supporting same-sex marriage or transgender rights. No longer. Ideological and partisan consistency are *not* policy consistency.

This study also showed shifts in representation that accompanied the rise of the partisan divide on LGBT issues. Legislators' personal characteristics and district demographics were once strongly associated with their positions on LGBT rights, but these factors' importance net of party affiliation has waned, even among long-serving incumbents.

Had few Democratic MCs taken new stands, change would have been even slower. Don't Ask Don't Tell might have remained law longer and the parties' images would have been less clearly defined on LGBT issues.

Even when a party shifts slowly, as Democrats have on LGBT rights, the inference that the gradualism stems from elite replacement being the key mechanism is mistaken. An explanation more consistent with the evidence is that politicians' incentives to adopt new stands only gradually increased.

These findings have implications beyond academic debates. They suggest that advocates for LGBT rights and other initially unpopular causes should not write off unsupportive incumbents. Elected officials do not alter their stands on a visible, emotional topic lightly, but under the right circumstances they will "evolve" and important policy changes may follow.

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Endnotes

[1] http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/1010/Attitudes_evolve_including_mine.html
[2] "The Secrets Ed Koch Carried" *New York Times*, May 6,2022
[3] Fenno (1978) discerned a "protectionist stage" late in MCs' careers when most did not seek new allies.
[4] https://www.hrc.org/resources/congressional-scorecard
[5] By 2004 64% of Republican respondents in the American National Election Study agreed, "laws should protect homosexuals against job discrimination." Rcent surveys show Republicans supporting a ban on employment discrimination on the bases of both sexual orientation and gender identity. See *The Economist YouGov Poll* October 6-8,2019 and "Poll: Large Majorities, Including Republicans, Oppose Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay and Transgender People by Employers and Healthcare Providers' *Kaiser Family Foundation* June 24,2020. On DADT, see "Broad Steady Support for Openly Gay Service Members' *Gallup* May 10,2010
[6] https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618_hfci.pdf
[7] "Record High 70% in U.S. Support Same-Sex Marriage" *Gallup.com* June 8,2021, https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/8404
[8] "Bob Good ousts Denver Riggleman at 5th District GOP nominating convention" *Richmond Times Dispatch* June 14,2020
[9] See www.opensecrets.org
[10] http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/new-hrc-scorecard-shows-lgbt-highs-and-lows-of-111thcongress
[11] "Have the Democrats Learned?" Palm Beach Post February 11,1983 P.A20.
[12] " 'ACDC' Wants to Be Heard." *Palm Beach Post* February 24,1988 1D
[13] For a list of local affiliates see: http://www.stonewalldemocrats.us/
[14] "Biden Comments on Same-Sex Marriage Expose Internal White House Divisions" *Washington Post* May 8,2012, "Seeing an Obama Army in Gay Pride Legions" *New York Times* June 25,2012.
[15] The key anti-discrimination Senate bill was not actually called "The Civil Rights Amendments Act" until the 99th Congress (1985-1986) and from 1979-1984 focused only on employment discrimination, as ENDA later would.
[16] Figure 1 begins in 1975, not 1974, because that was the first time co-sponsors were sought. A gay rights bill was only introduced in the Senate in 1979. In all figures and tables I include the sponsor of the bill along with co-sponsors, yet refer to co-sponsorship rather than constantly repeat "sponsor and co-sponsors."

[17] Churches coded as "liberal" include Unitarian Universalists, the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church, the "mainline" denomination most supportive of LGBT rights (Lublin 2005). Conservative denominations include Assembly of God, Baptists, Christian Science, the LDS Church, Nazarene, Reformed Church and Seventh Day Adventists.
[18] In the 106th and 116th Congresses all Representatives who had no religion cosponsored the LGBT rights bill, so a logit coefficient cannot be calculated in these models.
[19] In the 106th and 116th Congresses all LGB Representatives cosponsored the LGBT rights bill, so a logit coefficient cannot be calculated in these models.
[20] In some cases logit coefficients for the "No Religion" and LGB variables cannot be calculated because ALL MCs in these categories were co-sponsors.

[21] "Presidents Bush, Clinton Team Up in Toronto", *The Note* May 29,2009 blogs.abcnews.com, "Colin Powell Now Says Gays Should Be Able to Serve Openly in the Military" *Washington Post*, February 4,2010.
[22] "Officers Riled by Policy on Gays Proposed in Gore-Bradley Debate." *New York Times* January 7,2000, "Where do Candidates Stand on Variety of Issues?" *Burlington* (Iowa) *Hawkeye,* January 14,2004 p.26, "For 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Split on Party Lines." *New York Times* June 8,2007
[23] The number of Democrats in the long- serving group declines from 75 to 73 because Ralph Hall and Nathan Deal switched to the GOP between the first and second votes.

[24] Two Democratic Senators voting for repeal in 2010 had voted for the policy as Representatives in 1993 (Durbin and Menendez) while six others (Brown of Ohio, Cantwell, Cardin, Reed, Schumer and Wyden) along with Bernie Sanders –who caucuses with the Democrats- opposed DADT in 1993 in the House and in 2010 in the Senate.
[25] "Over Time a Gay Marriage Groundswell" *New York Times* 8/21/2010
[26] "Poll: Support for Same Sex Marriage Continues to Rise" *Los Angeles Times* November 3, 2011. "For First Time Majority of Americans Favor Legal Gay Marriage" *news.gallup.com* May 20,2011
[27] https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/05/09/president-obama-supports-same-sex-marriage, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/07/us/politics/biden-expresses-support-for-same-sex-marriages.html
[28] https://www.npr.org/2011/06/21/137321932/obamas-awkward-dance-on-gay-marriage
[29] Six Representatives were defeated in 2010 and made comebacks in 2012. They are included in the "Stayer" category.
[30] Platform texts are available at the American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/party-platforms-and-nominating-conventions
[31] See Flippen (2011,279). For CRS Summary of Family Protection Act see H.R. 3955 at Thomas.loc.gov for the 97th Congress.
[32] "Inside the Secret Talks to Overhaul the GOP Platform" *Axios* May 24,2000, "How the GOP Lost its Brain" *New Republic* February 21,2023
[33] Since Republicans simply reaffirmed the 2016 platform in 2020, their score for both years is based on that document.

Online Appendix

List of Bills used in Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 1 and Table 2 for Co-sponsorship Analysis. All bills and cosponsors are listed at www.congress.gov

House:

93rd Congress: H.R 15692. 94th Congress: H.R 166. 95th Congress: H.R. 451. 96th Congress: H.R. 2074. 97th Congress: H.R. 1454. 98th Congress: H.R. 427. 99th Congress: H.R. 230. 100th Congress: H.R. 709. 101st Congress: H.R. 655. 102nd Congress: H.R. 1430. 103rd Congress: H.R. 4636. 104th Congress: H.R. 1863. 105th Congress H.R. 1858. 106th Congress: H.R. 2355). 107th Congress: H.R. 2692. 108th Congress: H.R. 3285. 109th Congress: None 110th Congress: H.R. 3685. 111th Congress: H.R. 3017. 112th Congress: H.R. 1397. 113th Congress: H.R. 1755 . 114th Congress: H.R. 3185. 115th Congress: H.R. 2282. 116th Congress: H.R. 5. 117th Congress: HR 5.

Senate:
96th Congress: S.2081. 97th Congress: S.1708. 98th Congress: S.430. 99th Congress: S.1432. 100th Congress: S.464. 101st Congress: S.47. 102nd Congress: S.574. 103rd Congress: S.2238. 104th Congress: S.923. 105th Congress: S.869. 106th Congress: S.1276. 107th Congress: S.1284. 108th Congress: S.1705. 109th Congress NONE 110th Congress NONE 111th Congress: S.1584. 112th Congress: S. 811. 113th Congress: S.815. 114th Congress: S.1858. 115th Congress: S.1006. 116th Congress: S.788. 117th Congress: S. 393.

Table 1- Member characteristic variables are drawn from the Biographical Directory of Congress and the Almanac of American Politics for various **years.** Constituency data is from the Almanacs and Scott Adler's Congressional District Data: **https://sites.google.com/a/colorado.edu/adler-scott/data/congressional-district-data**

Table 3
1993: H.R. 2401
2010: H.R. 2965

Figure 3 Co-sponsorship data is available at **www.congress.gov**

111th Congress: H.R. 3567 **112th Congress: H.R. 1116 113th Congress: H.R. 2523**

Table 4. Dependent variable scale:
Uniting American Families Act
111th Congress: H.R. 1024
113th Congress: H.R. 519
Respect for Marriage Act
111th Congress H.R. 3567
113th Congress H.R. 2523
Member and constituency characteristics- same as Table 1.

Figure 4 Platform texts are at: the American Presidency Project.
https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/party-platforms-and-nominating-conventions