

**Is The South Still Different?
Democrats in the House of Representatives 1981-1990**

**Donald Beachler
Ithaca College**

For several decades southern Democrats constituted a conservative bloc within the Democratic caucus in the House of Representatives. After the enfranchisement of southern blacks in the 1960s and the development of a two party system in the South, many southern Democratic representatives began to compile more moderate voting records. By the 1980s, some scholars were emphasizing the greater unity of the Democratic caucus. This paper examines regional differences among House Democrats in several policy areas. It is argued that, on most issues, the Southern Democratic delegation is still a distinctly conservative bloc within the Democratic caucus.

Since the New Deal era, the tendency of conservative southern Democrats in Congress to oppose the more liberal positions of northern Democrats has been widely noted. A conservative coalition of southern Democrats and Republicans often thwarted liberal legislation (Manley, 1973). In the 1930s southern Democratic opposition to the New Deal agenda occurred on legislative proposals that threatened the southern radical system (Key, 1949; Sitkoff, 1978). Southern Democrats also opposed New Deal labor legislation that strengthened labor unions and promoted the nationalization of wages and working conditions that undermined the low wage southern economy (Patterson, 1967; Bensel, 1984).

By the 1960s, southern Democratic opposition to the legislative agenda of liberal northern Democrats was not confined to racial and labor issues. The expansion of the domestic welfare state during the Johnson administration and the growth of opposition to the Vietnam war within the Democratic party heightened intra-party sectional divisions. (Shannon, 1972; Sinclair, 1982).

By the 1970s, southern Democratic representatives had begun to respond to new political and institutional circumstances. In the South a newly enfranchised black population was a vital part of the electoral coalition of many Democrats (Black and Black, 1987; Lamis, 1988). The House reforms of the mid 1970s, which provided for the election of

committee chairs by the Democratic Caucus offered a further incentive for southerners to vote with their Democratic colleagues (Rohde, 1991). Southern Democrats began to vote with their non-southern counterparts on a number of issues. (Rohde, 1989; Rohde, 1991). Overall party unity increased within the Democratic caucus (Ginsberg and Shefter, 1990). Greater liberalism on the part of southern Democrats in Congress was especially notable on civil rights issues. (Stern, 1985). Despite the widespread defections of southern Democrats that aided in the passage of the Reagan budget and tax proposals in 1981, by the middle of the decade most southern Democrats were voting more like their northern colleagues on budget matters (Rohde, 1992). In the view of two scholars of roll call voting by southern Democratic House members "... southern Democrats have changed their voting behavior in a profound way. ... Simply put, behavior change among southern Democrats is related to liberal voting (Whitby and Gilliam, 1991, 506).

Despite the reports of increasing liberalism by southern Democrats in Congress, there are reasons to believe that Democratic representatives will not compile voting records nearly as liberal as those of Democrats from the North. Many southern Democrats win elections by constructing bi-racial alliances of blacks and whites. (Lamis, 1988). In presidential elections southern whites vote Republican by large margins (Ladd, 1985, 1989). To win both black and white votes, many southern Democrats depict themselves as moderates (Black and Black, 1987).

This paper explores the extent to which the northern and southern Democratic delegations in the House of Representatives have compiled similar voting records.¹ The research presented here seeks to supplement the extant literature by examining regional differences in a systematic way across several areas of public policy. It does not attempt to explain variation within the southern House delegation as other researchers have done (Black 1978; Bullock 1981 and 1985; Whitby 1985). The paper goes beyond previous research in that it delves into four major policy areas - national security, civil rights and racial matters, economic policy, and social issues (abortion, gay rights and sexual morality, gun control, criminal justice, flag burning, and school prayer) to explore the extent of regional convergence among House Democrats. In addition to examining the roll call voting of northern and southern Democrats across several issue areas, this paper provides a measure of regional difference on several issues.

Roll call votes on race and civil rights were included because southern Democrats, functioning as the defenders of white supremacy in their region, consistently opposed civil rights in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century (Key, 1949; Shannon, 1972; Sitkoff, 1978).

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A regional divergence on national security issues emerged when the Democratic party was divided by the Vietnam War (Shannon 1972; Rohde, 1992). After Vietnam southern Democrats were more supportive of high levels of military spending than were northern Democrats.

A majority of Southern Democrats in Congress supported many of the domestic spending initiatives of the New Deal (Key, 1949). However, most southern Democrats were opposed to New Deal policies that expanded the capacity of labor unions to organize new members throughout the country (Katznelson, Kryder, and Gyger, 1993). In the 1960's, many of the Great Society spending programs of Lyndon Johnson were opposed by a majority of southern Democrats (Shannon, 1972).

The emergence of a variety of social issues other than race caused a wide split between the northern and southern wings of the Democratic party in the House of Representatives (Beachler, 1992).

In addition to covering a broad spectrum of issues, the policy areas included in this article are those in which previous research has found wide regional divergence within the Democratic party. On national security and economic policy appropriate homogenous interest group ratings were available.² Such ratings permit the measurement of changes across time.

For civil rights and social issues no appropriate interest group ratings were available. Fortunately, relatively few votes were cast on these controversial matters and thus all major roll call votes in the 1980's could be included.

National Security Issues

Representatives' positions on military issues have been measured by the National Security Index of the conservative American Security Council. When interest group ratings are used over a period of two decades, it is important to ascertain whether the interest group has been consistent in the types of issues that have gone into the ratings of members of Congress. For the NSI ratings produced by the American Security Council, all the roll call votes used to determine scores are explained in the bi-annual pamphlets that are issued by the ASC. An examination of the issues included by the ASC obviously indicates change over time. There were no votes on funding for the Vietnam war in the 1980's and the Nicaraguan Contras were not an issue before the Reagan years. However, the NSI votes indicate general consistency over time in the types of roll calls included in the index. Included in the rankings from 1970 to 1990 were votes to increase the overall levels of military spending, votes on specific weapons programs that

were supported by conservatives and opposed by liberals, and U. S. efforts to contain, weaken, or depose radical and allegedly radical regimes.

In the 1980's NSI ratings focussed on members' votes on Central American issues, specific weapons programs and the overall level of military spending. Those voting for aid to the government of El Salvador and the Nicaraguan Contras, the development of every weapons system proposed by the Reagan administration, and higher defense spending were in accord with the ASC's positions on these issues. The ASC produces a bi-annual index that rates members on votes cast in the preceding Congress. An NSI score of 100 would indicate that a Representative cast votes in agreement with the ASC in all cases included in the index.³ The mean scores of northern and southern Democratic representatives were calculated for every Congress from 1969 through 1990. To illustrate regional differences, the mean non-southern Democratic score was subtracted from the mean southern score for each Congress. The results of these calculations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that, as a whole, the conservatism of southern Democrats on national security policy moderated in the 1980's. The mean NSI score for southern Democrats rose in 1981-1982, the first two years of the Reagan administration. However, in the four Congresses from 1983 through 1990, the mean scores were in the moderate range. (55.0 to 64.4).

Despite the moderation in mean southern Democratic scores on the NSI index in the 1980s, there was no regional convergence between the non-southern and southern Democratic delegations on national security issues. Table 1 indicates that the regional averages were at least 41 points apart in every Congress after 1980. The drop in overall southern Democratic conservatism on national security issues was accompanied by an equally large drop among non-southern Democrats after 1982. By the mid 1980's there simply were not many hawkish Democrats from outside the South left in the House of Representatives.

The regional divergence within the House Democratic caucus was also evident in the January 1991 roll call that authorized President Bush to take military action to oust Iraq from Kuwait. Sixty-five percent of southern Democrats voted in favor of the use of force resolution. Eight-two percent of northern Democrats opposed the president's position.

Social Issues

There is no reliable index of members voting on social issues. Thus, the relatively few votes on social issues from 1981 through 1990 will be examined individually. Social issues will refer to matters of criminal

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Table 1

Index of Military and Foreign Policy Conservatism

	<u>Southern Democrats</u>	<u>Non-Southern Democrats</u>	<u>Regional Difference</u>
1970	94.1	47.5	46.6
1972	90.7	33.7	57.0
1974	76.4	37.5	38.9
1976	80.9	34.0	46.9
1978	77.4	35.5	41.9
1980	65.3	25.9	39.4
1982	83.6	37.0	46.6
1984	64.4	16.5	47.9
1986	55.0	10.4	44.6
1988	59.0	14.3	44.7
1990	60.0	18.8	41.2

Note: The NSI ratings are biennial and are based on the year listed in the table and the preceding year.

justice, gun control, school prayer and church state issues, abortion, and matters of sexual morality. For each roll call vote the percentage of southern and Non-southern Democrats supporting a particular legislative item will be calculated. A measure of regional difference will also be provided.

Gun Control

Three major roll call votes on the issue of gun control occurred in the 1980's. The McClure-Volkmer Act of 1986, which eased federal restrictions on the sale of firearms, was strongly supported by the National

Rifle Association and other opponents of firearms restrictions. In 1988, Florida Republican Bill McCollum offered an amendment to the drug bill that deleted a provision that would have imposed a seven day waiting period for those who purchase handguns. Also included in the gun control votes was a 1990 amendment that severely weakened restrictions on semi-automatic assault weapons. Voting on these three measures is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Roll Call Votes on Gun Control

	Southern Democrats	Non-southern Democrats	Regional Difference
McClure- Volkmer	83.4	39.9	43.5
McCollum Amendment	70.0	33.3	36.7
Weaken Restrictions on Semi-automatic Weapons	80.0	31.3	48.7

Note: Numbers are percentages voting for the measures.

Table 3

Church, State and Patriotism Issues

	Southern Democrats	Non-southern Democrats	Regional Difference
Perkins Amendment	86.0	30.9	55.1
Walker Amendment	66.2	12.3	53.9
Flag Burning Amendment	62.2	27.1	35.1

Note: The numbers are the percentage of those voting in favor of the respective measures.

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In the 1980's the House of Representatives never voted on a constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the nation's public schools. However, in 1984 the House voted on two amendments to spending bills that sought to permit some forms of religious expression by public school students. An amendment offered by Kentucky Democrat Carl Perkins required that school districts that permit student organizations to meet in school buildings, also permit student religious groups to meet on school grounds. The House considered an amendment introduced by Pennsylvania Republican Robert Walker that would have denied federal funds to school districts that had policies prohibiting silent or vocal prayer. Voting on the Perkins and Walker amendments is presented in Table 3.

A 1989 Supreme Court decision holding that citizens had a constitutional right to burn the American flag generated a great deal of public controversy. Supported by President Bush, opponents of the Court's ruling sought to overturn the decision by amending the constitution to read that federal, state, and local governments were free to punish those who physically desecrated the American flag. The 1990 roll call vote on the flag burning amendment is included in Table 3.

The 1984 Crime Control Act contained two features that conservatives championed. The act tightened the rules for defendants employing the insanity defense and it allowed for preventive detention of some defendants. The act was passed by voice vote, but the amendment to add it to an appropriations bill in 1984 drew substantial opposition. A vote for the amendment is regarded as a vote in favor of the Crime Control Act. Representatives' positions on criminal justice matters can also be assessed by examining two votes taken on amendments to the Omnibus Drug Bill of 1988. One amendment was designed to weaken the exclusionary rule and the other provided for the death penalty for those convicted of drug related murders. In 1990 the House voted on amendments to a crime bill that sought to limit appeals to federal courts by condemned prisoners, restrict the use of habeas corpus procedures to win federal review of state convictions and allow persons sentenced to death to challenge their sentences on the ground that the death penalty had been imposed in a racially discriminatory manner. The votes on all these matters are presented in Table 4.

Only a few votes were cast on issues that might be called matters of sexual morality. (Votes that attract virtually unanimous support, such as bills to restrict child pornography, are not included in this index.) The roll call votes on morality issues are presented in Table 5.

In 1981 Georgia Democrat Larry McDonald introduced an amendment to the bill re-authorizing the Legal Services Corporation that prohibited the use of L.S.C. funds to promote, protect, or defend homosexuality. The rights of homosexuals were also an issue in 1989 when

Table 4 Morality

	Southern Democrats	Northern Democrats	Regional Difference
McDonald Amendment	86.3	44.9	41.4
Wylie Amendment	64.1	19.0	45.1
Weaken Gay Rights in D.C.	70.4	27.7	42.7
Punish NEA	86.5	57.7	29.8
Restrict NEA	54.2	12.2	42.0

Note; The numbers are the percentage voting in favor of the measures.

the House voted on a measure to restrict the gay rights laws of the District of Columbia.

In 1985, Ohio Republican Chalmers Wylie offered an amendment to delete funds for the Library of Congress' production of a Braille edition of Playboy Magazine.

Also included in Table 5 were two votes that occurred after there was considerable controversy over granting National Endowment for the Arts funds to artists who produced work that was alleged to be pornographic and/or blasphemous. In 1989 the House passed an amendment to cut the NEA's budget by \$45,000, the amount granted to the artists whose works were generating immense controversy. In 1990 the House rejected a measure that would have prohibited NEA funds from going to any project that was pornographic, obscene, or that denigrated anyone on the basis of his/her race, sex, religion, national origin, or disability.

Votes on abortion, family planning and the Equal Rights Amendment are included in this section under the category of women's rights issues. Abortion roll calls have involved the issues of whether Medicaid funds could be used to pay for abortions in the case of rape or incest or whether such funds would only be available in cases where the life of the mother would be endangered by continuation of the pregnancy.

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Table 5
Criminal Justice

	Southern Democrats	Non-southern Democrats	Regional Difference
Crime Control Act	63.5	23.5	40.0
Weaken Exclus. Rule	71.9	33.6	38.3
Death Penalty	85.9	45.2	40.7
Limit Death Penalty Appeals	74.7	27.7	47.0
Restrict Habeas Corpus	79.2	31.3	47.9
Permit Civil Rights Challenges to Death Penalty	52.9	90.7	37.8

Note: Numbers are percentages of those voting in favor of the measures.

Because of the prominence of the abortion issue in 1989, a roll call vote on federal funding of medicaid abortions in cases of rape and incest has also been included.

Votes on federal funding of family planning and the resubmission of the Equal Rights Amendment to the states are included in Table 6. On every social issue except those concerning women's issues there was wide regional divergence with the Southern Democratic caucus voting far more conservatively than northern Democrats. Southern support for the Equal Rights Amendment, while not as strong as that of northern Democrats, was substantial and noteworthy, especially when southern Democratic conservatism on other social issues is recalled. It is interesting to note that

Table 6
Women's Rights Issues

	Southern Democrats	Non-southern Democrats	Regional Difference
Limit Abortions 1983	44.8	39.8	5.0
Limit Abortions 1988	47.4	32.9	14.5
Limit Abortions 1989	32.9	27.2	5.7
Permit Military Abortions	68.1	68.2	.1
Family Planning	75.8	74.1	-1.7
ERA	70.1	91.9	20.8

Note; Numbers are percentages of those voting in favor of the respective measures.

on the issue of federal support for family planning, southern Democrats offered slightly greater support than did northern Democrats.

Southern Democratic support for women's rights issues may well be a product of the alliance between the Christian Right and the Republican party (Bruce, 1990; Edsall 1992). As socially conservative religious voters are mobilized into the Republican party, they are less likely to support Democrats of any ideological stripe. Thus, southern Democratic representatives need to pay greater attention to the views of liberal and moderate constituents.⁴

Civil Rights

As is well known, racial issues have often dominated southern politics. V. O. Key noted that behind virtually every southern political practice and custom lurked a concern with preserving white supremacy.

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Southern voting in Congress was traditionally most unified when the federal government threatened to intervene in southern race relations. By the 1970's, Southern Democrats were increasingly likely to support civil rights legislation.

A few major civil rights bills were voted on in the Reagan years. Seven roll calls on civil rights are included here. In 1981 the House renewed the Voting Rights Act and two years later it passed legislation establishing Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday. The most contentious civil rights battle occurred over the 1988 Civil Rights Restoration Act, which overturned the Supreme Court's ruling in the Grove City College case that federal funds could only be withheld from the division of an institution practicing discrimination rather than the institution as a whole. The major lobbying on the Grove City bill occurred after President Reagan's veto of the bill. Therefore, the roll call on the successful vote to override the veto is included here rather than the vote on the initial passage of the bill. Also included in Table 7 is the widely supported bill to strengthen fair housing legislation.

Also, included in the civil rights roll calls is the 1981 vote to prohibit the Justice Department from bringing legal actions that could result in court ordered bussing. In a slap at the Reagan administration, the House in 1983 passed a bill to permit the removal of members of the Civil Rights Commission only for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office, rather than at the prerogative of the president. Also included in Table 8 is the 1986 Savage Amendment to increase from five to ten percent the proportion of Pentagon contracts that must go to minority owned businesses.

In 1990 the House voted on a civil rights bill designed to reverse a series of 1989 Supreme Court decisions that weakened the chances of minority plaintiffs in employment discrimination cases. The bill, which the President labeled a quota bill and successfully vetoed, is the last item included in Table 7.

The House voted on several bills to impose sanctions on South Africa. While such measures are not civil rights bills, they might be considered a measure of a Representative's concern to please black constituents, especially if on such votes southern Democrats depart from their moderate conservative voting on foreign policy. Votes on three sanctions bills have been included in Table 7. The first is the vote on the successful attempt to override President Reagan's veto of sanctions. The second was the 1988 vote on Representative Ronald Dellums' bill to ban all trade with South Africa, except for the importing of strategic minerals. Finally the Kyl Amendment to the Dellums bill would have permitted military and intelligence cooperation with South Africa when such actions were judged by the president to be in the national interest. The Kyl

Amendment has been included because it includes a matter with both racial and national security implications.

Table 7
Civil Rights

	Southern Democrats	Non-southern Democrats	Regional Difference
Restrict Busing	85.2	43.3	41.9
Change CRC procedures	92.1	98.3	6.2
Voting Rights Act	91.1	99.4	8.3
King Holiday	85.5	99.4	13.9
Grove City (Veto override)	94.1	97.7	3.6
Savage Amendment	78.7	91.9	13.2
Fair Housing	100	100	0
Sanctions 1986 Veto override	93.7	100	6.3
Dellums Bill	89.3	98.1	8.8
Oppose Kyl Amendment	34.3	2.4	31.9
1990 Civil Rights Act	87.2	98.9	11.7

Note: Numbers represent the percentage voting in favor of the respective measure.

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Only on the busing amendment did southern Democrats oppose the liberal civil rights position. Voting on civil rights issues in the 1980's indicates the continuation of the trend of rising southern Democratic support for civil rights noted by several scholars. (Black, 1978; Stern, 1985; Bullock, 1985).

The most interesting of the civil rights votes may be that taken in 1988 to override President Reagan's veto of the Grove City bill. Members of Congress were lobbied heavily on this bill by members of the Religious Right and by Reagan administration officials eager to sustain the president's veto. On this issue southern Democratic support for the override is especially striking because of the strong opposition of fundamentalist Christian groups who are especially strong in the South.

Previously scholars of civil rights voting explored the demographic characteristics of southern House districts to determine what variables correlated with a Representative's roll call votes on civil rights. For Democrats, such analysis is no longer useful because their support for civil rights measures is so overwhelming. Opposition to civil rights measures is strongest among southern Republicans.⁵ The fact that many southern Democrats now support civil rights legislation even when they have few black constituents may indicate that as racial conservatives are mobilized into the Republican party, many southern Democrats no longer perceive hard core opponents of civil rights as being part of their reelection coalitions (Fenno, 1978).

By the 1980's the former party of white supremacy in the South was sending Representatives to Washington who, on most issues, were more supportive of civil rights than were northern Republicans, who two decades earlier had provided essential votes to pass major civil rights legislation. Opposition to civil rights was strongest among southern Republicans. The Republican party in the South has developed as a largely white party and the nearly monochromatic tone of the southern GOP is evident in the roll call votes of southern Republican representatives, nearly all of whom voted against every civil rights bill.⁶ (Black and Black, 1987).

Economic Policy

Southern Democratic voting on economic policy will be measured from scores on the AFL-CIO Cope ratings that are issued annually. AFL-CIO ratings, with rare exceptions, focus on economic policy. The AFL-CIO favors greater domestic spending for social welfare measures and the development of economic infrastructure. To receive a high COPE rating, a Representative should vote for greater government regulation of the

Table 8 Economic Policy Liberalism

	<u>Southern Democrats</u>	<u>Non-southern Democrats</u>	<u>Regional Difference</u>
1969	34.0	90.9	56.9
1970	37.8	88.4	50.6
1971	46.0	84.7	48.7
1972	39.0	86.2	47.2
1973	51.4	90.5	40.1
1974	44.3	93.3	49.0
1975	47.2	89.4	42.2
1976	50.5	80.4	29.9
1977	48.6	82.0	33.4
1978	41.6	75.3	33.7
1979	42.1	80.5	38.4
1980	45.7	75.0	29.3
1981	54.6	81.6	27.0
1982	50.0	95.3	45.3
1983	62.1	90.6	29.5
1984	57.2	79.3	22.1
1985	59.1	84.7	25.6
1986	65.1	88.8	23.7
1987	70.6	90.8	20.2
1988	81.4	95.0	13.6
1989	62.9	89.2	26.3
1990	64.2	88.9	25.7

Note; Numbers are the means of the scores for members of each group.

private sector, higher taxes for the affluent, government action to protect domestic industries from foreign competition, and fiscal policies designed to promote full employment.⁷ As was done with NSI ratings, mean scores were calculated for southern Democrats and non-southern Democrats.

The scores in Table 8 indicate that southern Democrats were positioned in the middle of the spectrum on economic issues in the 1980's. However, as the decade progressed they moved closer to the liberal position of non-southern Democrats. (Even the low scores of 54.6 and 50 in 1981

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and 1982 were among the highest mean AFL-CIO scores ever recorded for southern Democrats.) In the 100th Congress the southern Democratic delegation compiled the relatively high 70.6 in 1987 and 81.4 in 1988. However, their mean scores in the 101st Congress declined to 62.9 in 1989 and 64.2 in 1990. The abnormally high scores of southern Democrats in the 100th Congress are attributable, in part, to the vigorous efforts of House Speaker Jim Wright to impose unity on the Democratic caucus and to use persuasion and coercion to induce Democratic conservative to support legislative initiatives favored by the party caucus.(Dodd 1989, Barry, 1989). However, while the mean southern Democratic scores declined in 1989 and 1990, they were still high by historical standards.

An examination of the regional variation column in Table 8 indicates a decline in the gap between northern and southern Democrats. Non-southern Democratic means, while subject to some variation, were consistently high.

It is apparent that, while southern Democrats are more conservative than northern Democrats, the gap between the regional wings of the Democratic party has declined. The source of this decline has clearly been the increased liberalism of southern Democrats. Northern Democrats' scores have, with some variation, been consistently high over two decades. Thus, the decline in the regional difference is due to an increase in liberalism by the southern Democratic delegation.

Despite the general decline in the regional difference on the economic policy index, it cannot be concluded that there has been complete regional convergence within the House on economic policy. With the exception of 1988, the regional difference in mean scores was never less than twenty percent. On economic issues, the southern Democratic delegation is still a conservative bloc within the House Democratic caucus.

Conclusion

It is clear from the data presented in this paper that regionalism remains a relevant and important concept when ideology within the House Democratic caucus is examined. With the exception of civil rights and women's issues southern Democrats were substantially more conservative than northern Democrats on every policy area investigated. The Southern Democratic caucus was not as uniformly conservative in the 1980s as it was in the 1960s and 1970s. However, it is premature to speak of regional convergence between the northern and southern wings of the Democratic party in the House of Representatives.

The mixed record compiled by the southern Democratic delegation

is in consonance with the electoral imperatives that many of its members face. To win elections, southern Democrats must gain black votes and also appeal to moderate whites. They have sought black votes by supporting civil rights measures and greater government spending.⁸

Southern Democrats must present themselves as moderates on many issues to have any chance of success in the South. They have been able to depict themselves as moderates by compiling relatively conservative records on social issues and also on national security matters.

The most notable exceptions to the pattern of southern Democratic conservatism were civil rights and women's rights issues. These exceptions lend support to Fleisher's view that where conservatism is well developed, southern Democratic representatives are more dependent on liberal support (Fleisher, 1993). The Republican party in the South has attracted racial conservatives and the Religious Right which emphasizes traditional "family values." Neither, of these constituencies is likely to support a Democrat. Thus, southern Democrats are free to cultivate liberal constituencies on these issues.

Southern Democrats play a key role in determining the outcome of many roll call votes in the House. For example, during his first two years in office, Ronald Reagan had great success in securing passage of his tax and budget proposals because he was able to induce a majority of southern Democrats to support his initiatives (Stockman, 1987). Likewise, Republicans have been able to pass many conservative bills on criminal justice policy because of the strong support they have received from southern Democrats.

On issues like civil rights and abortion, where a majority of southern Democrats have sided with their colleagues from the north, liberal positions have triumphed in the House. However, such measures have often failed to pass by margins large enough to overcome a presidential veto. When a Democratic president enjoys a Democratic majority in the House, liberal positions should prevail on civil rights and abortion.

After the 1992 elections, the liberalism of the southern Democratic House delegation is likely to increase. As a result of redistricting under current voting rights law, the number of black Representatives from the South increased from five to seventeen. In the 1980s, the black representatives from the South compiled very liberal voting records. Thus, in the 1990s, there are likely to be roughly a dozen new very liberal Democrats from the South.

Republicans also made substantial gains in the South in the 1992 elections. After the 1990 elections there were 77 Democratic and 39 Republican representatives from the South. The 1992 elections saw the elections of 77 Democrats and 48 Republicans from the region.⁹ The

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addition of nine Republicans and a dozen black Democrats, along with the subtraction of ten white Democrats should mean that the region's delegation as a whole will compile a more liberal record. The regional divergence between the northern and southern wings of the Democratic House caucus documented in this paper is likely to decline somewhat in the 1990's.

The creation of new black majority districts in many southern states also means that a large number of white Democrats will find themselves with far fewer black constituents. An interesting question will be whether these Democrats will continue to offer strong support for economic programs that are especially beneficial to blacks. With fewer black constituents in many districts, the trend of Republican gains in southern House seats is likely. It would be ironic if the effect of the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act in a manner consistent with the desires of civil rights organizations lessened southern Democratic support for civil rights bills and other issues of special concern to blacks. Time will tell.

Shelley titled his 1983 study of the Conservative Coalition The Permanent Majority (Shelley, 1983). Given the mix of liberalism and conservatism compiled by the southern Democratic House delegation in the 1980's, a future study might be called The Partial Majority.

Endnotes

1. The South is defined as the eleven states of the old Confederacy.
2. A homogenous interest group rating contains votes in only one issue area. Heterogenous group ratings like those issued by the Americans for Democratic Action or the American Conservative Union employ a wide spectrum of issues. Such rating scales do not permit the measurement of representatives' votes on discrete area of public policy.
3. The NSI index is explained and employed in Ray, 1981.
4. The work of Richard Fleisher indicates that southern Democrats are more liberal when Republican strength increases in a district. Fleisher attributes this finding to the fact the most conservative voters almost invariably support Republicans. See, Fleisher, 1993.
5. Party is the most important variable for predicting southern Representative's scores on the ratings issued by the Leadership Conference

on Civil Rights. See, Bullock, 1985.

6. The most notable source of minority support for the GOP has been the strong Republican voting of Cuban-Americans in South Florida. After the 1992 elections there were two Cuban-American Republican Representatives from South Florida and one Mexican-American Republican representative from Texas.

7. As was done with the NSI scores provided by the American Security Council, the actual votes included in the COPE index were reviewed for each of the years in the table. The summary in the text of the positions taken by the AFL-CIO is based on this review.

8. Detailed case studies of white Democratic representatives Tim Valentine of North Carolina and Robin Tallon of South Carolina, both elected in 1982, indicate that both voted for civil rights legislation despite opposition from some whites in their districts. See, Swain, 1993.

9. The South gained a net total of nine after the 1990 census. Florida received four new seats, Texas three, and North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia one each. Louisiana lost one seat. Nationwide, the Republicans registered a net gain of ten seats in the House. Nine of these seats were in the South.

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