Principled Moderation: Understanding Parties' Support of Moderate Candidates

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Abstract:

Recent scholarship has argued that parties strategically support more moderate, and thus more electable, candidates. Using interviews with party elites and new data on the party support and the ideology of primary candidates for the US Senate, I show that parties do support moderate candidates. However, using evidence from districts with different levels of competitiveness and over time, I find that support of moderate candidates appears not to be strategic. Rather, party support of moderate candidates appears to be the result of the ideological preferences of party leadership rather a strategic effort to win elections.

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"...getting a general-election candidate who can win is the only thing we care about"
-Rob Collins, NRSC Executive Director[1]

"I think that is a recipe for winning elections, if we find strong effective candidates who can communicate a pro-growth conservative message – with a smile.
-Ted Cruz (R-TX), NRSC Vice-Chairman in charge of recruitment[2]

As battles over federal campaign finance have been fought over the past two decades, they have changed the path that money follows in politics. One of the most notable changes to the campaign finance system since 2002 has been the movement of campaign dollars away from party organizations as the result of the banning of soft money used to fund "party-building activities."[3] This change, coupled with a number of Supreme Court decisions that have reduced regulations on outside groups, has weakened party organizations relative to ideological outside groups by limiting their ability to serve as a channel for campaign funds (Barber 2016; La Raja and Wiltse 2011).

Although some have argued for increased campaign finance regulations (including further restrictions on parties) as a means to increase democratic responsiveness and decrease political polarization (Drutman 2016), others have argued that further disempowering party organizations will only increase ideological polarization. Central to this latter argument is the

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[1] Hunt, Kasie. 2013. "In Shift, GOP Vows to Fight for More Electable Candidates in Senate Primaries." *NBC News*.

[2] Goldmacher, Shane. 2013. "Why Would Anyone Ever Want to Run for Congress?" *The Atlantic*.

[3] The FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations legislation relaxed the restrictions on donations to parties and allowed donors to give almost $300,000 to parties for the purposes of supporting party conventions, providing for the acquisition and renting of buildings, and funding recount or other legal efforts in addition to the $32,400 donations they were already able to give to parties for political activities. Although the fundamental authorization legislation did not change, these increases in the limits that donors could give to parties are closer to the unlimited donations for "party-building activities" that parties could accept prior to McCain-Feingold (Garrett 2014).

assumption that party leaders and insiders are pragmatists who are willing to sacrifice ideological principles in order to capture office and use the resources of formal party organizations to do so (May 1973; McCarty 2015; Persily 2015; La Raja and Schaffner 2015).[4]

So far, however, the causal relationship between party strength and ideological polarization has been derived either from examining the downstream effects of variance in campaign finance rules on state legislative polarization, or from examining party support and outside group support of incumbents in general elections. These tests present two problems. First, looking at downstream effects raises the possibility of spurious correlation of campaign finance rules with other unmeasured aspects that may also reduce polarization in the state and legislature. There are many factors that influence the ideology of candidates that run that may also be spuriously related to campaign finance rules. For instance, the personal and professional benefits to ideologically moderate and extreme candidates decline as parties' ideologies become more polarized (and also change preferences for campaign finance laws) and changes in the costs of running can also change the incentives for moderate candidates to run in the first place (Hall 2017; Thomsen 2014, 2017). In short, state campaign finance regulations are not exogenous and it is possible that the relationship between campaign finance and polarization is spurious. Moderate politics and more robust party politics may move in tandem rather than being causally related.

Second, looking only at party donations in the general election to incumbent politicians or at legislative behavior ignores that this relationship might be explained by the fact that candidates facing general elections that are competitive also tend to be more moderate because of

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[4] Exactly where insiders end and outsiders (purists) begin is fuzzy although insiders are generally recognized as being connected to the official party organization and "generally prefer the vehicle of the formal party organization to deploy electoral resources" (La Raja and Schaffner 2015, 8).

the nature of the districts in which they are running. Moreover, because incumbents are already in office and rarely face a challenger from within their own party (Boatright 2014), the party's ability to make an ideological choice is available exclusively (with the exception of a few high profile cases) in primary elections without incumbents.[5] Looking only at general elections ignores the important role that parties play in primaries which are the first step in getting politicians into legislative office (Bawn et al. 2014; Dominguez 2011; Hassell 2016).

Even if parties do support more moderate candidates in primary elections, there are good reasons to believe that party preferences for moderate candidates may be sincere rather than strategic. Recent evidence suggests that parties' efforts are not focused on nominating moderate nominees (Boatright, Malbin, and Glavin 2016). Recent scholarship on parties and primary elections has argued the extended party network (if not the party itself) has strong incentives to prefer loyalists who can be trusted to implement their preferred policies after the nomination (Bawn et al. 2012; Cohen et al. 2008; Masket 2009). And even the official party organization can be taken over by "activist insurgents… [who] create party platforms and recruit statewide (and sometimes legislative) candidates who conform to their ideological preferences" (La Raja and Schaffner 2015, 22). Moreover, local party elites and county party chairs are more supportive of more extreme candidates, in part because they believe that more extreme candidates are more likely to have electoral success (Bawn et al. 2014; Broockman et al. 2017).

This work provides direct evidence of parties' actions in primaries and provides insight into the motivations of party support. This paper shows that in recent election cycles, parties

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[5] Even in these high profile incumbent primaries it is not clear that parties really have a choice about who to support. Party organizations, and specifically the Party Hill Committees, were originally instituted as an incumbent defense fund. Although this has changed slightly, for the most part party committees unilaterally support incumbent re-election campaigns (Kolodny 1998; Laffey 2007; Menefee-Libey 2000).

have supported more moderate candidates. On the whole, party supported candidates are more moderate than candidates without party support.

However, while parties are more likely to support candidates who are significantly more moderate than their competitors, this is *not the case* not in primaries that lead to competitive general elections. In addition, I also show that party preferences have shifted over time (even when national preferences have remained relatively constant (Hill and Tausanovitch 2015), perhaps reflecting changes in the preferences of party elites connected to the party. Combined, these findings suggest that party preferences for moderate candidates are not strategic attempts to win elections. As such, strengthening parties and their influence in the campaign finance system is likely to increase the support of more moderate candidates and help these moderate candidates win nomination in the immediate future, but that party preferences for candidates of a particular ideological stripe may be susceptible to shifts in preferences over time.

Moderate Parties?

Recent research has argued that parties offer strategic support to moderate candidates because they are more likely to win elections (McCarty 2015; Persily 2015; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). Under these assumptions, stronger parties would encourage more moderate politics selection in party by putting parties "in better position to ward off extremist challenges" in nomination contests (Persily 2015, 128). These arguments appear to be the scholarly heir to May's (1973) Law of Curvilinear Disparity which argues that voters and top level party officials are more moderate while middle-level party activists are extreme in their *policy* preferences. Yet, party strategic preference for moderate *candidates* in primaries has not been tested directly. Moreover, previous work attempting to validate May's argument that top level party officials are

more moderate than sub level activists has met with mixed results (Dalton 1985; Herrera and Taylor 1994; Smith and Tsutsumi 2014). In the American context specifically, Herrera and Taylor (1994) show that the structure of *policy opinions* within the various strata of the Democratic and Republican parties do not conform to the expectations of May's Law.

Indeed, there are good reasons to believe that parties may not strategically support moderate candidates. Parties have the biggest impact on candidate ideological preferences in the nomination process and party coalitions and party elites have strong incentives to prefer loyalists who can be trusted to implement their preferred policies (Bawn et al. 2012, 2014; Cohen et al. 2008; Masket 2009).[6] Survey experiments investigating party elite support of hypothetical candidates have provided mixed results. While Doherty, Dowling, and Miller (2016) find that local party leaders have a preference for candidates who embrace compromise, Broockman et al. (2016) find that local party leaders actually are more extreme in their preferences of candidate ideology than the general public.[7] However, neither of these surveys of local leaders are good tests of how strengthening *national* party organizations might change politics through the candidates who would benefit from a strengthened party.

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[6] Although the policy demander theory of parties has little to say about the role of formal party organizations, what little it does say implies that these organizations reflect the coalition of groups that make up the party rather than pragmatic insiders. Notably, Kolodny and Dwyre (2017) find that most nonparty groups act in support of the same candidates that party organizations support.

[7] Even those who advocate for theories of pragmatic parties recognize that certain parts of parties are more likely to support moderates than others. La Raja and Shaffner (2015) write that "legislative parties (such as the DCCC and NRCC)…are controlled by leadership in the legislature, with minimal direct influence of activists…[while] county-based committees…nurture some of the most ideological activists in the party" (22) and recognize that "activist insurgents from local parties often try to take over [state-central committees]" (22).

Parties in Primaries

Part of the reason that preferences of party insiders in primary elections have been left unconsidered is that it is difficult to observe formal party actions in primary elections. When parties have become publicly involved in the nomination process they have been subject to inter and intra party criticism. As a result, parties do not publicize their support in primary elections, nor is that information available after the election.

In spite of this, scholars (and other political observers) have long recognized the efforts of parties and party elites connected to the party to be an active participant in primaries by recruiting candidates (Broockman 2014; Herrnson 2005; Kazee and Thornberry 1990; Maestas, Maisel, and Stone 2005; Seligman 1961), providing those candidates with necessary resources (Dwyre et al. 2006; Herrnson 1986; Kolodny and Dulio 2003), and even actively discouraging unwanted candidates from running (Hassell 2016; Herrnson 1988; Niven 2006). Formal party organizations routinely act as a conduit between party-connected donors and candidates by explicitly or implicitly directing donor to support preferred candidates (Dwyre et al. 2006; Dwyre and Kolodny 2014; Hassell 2016; Herrnson 2009; Kolodny 1998). Coordinating donors is one of the ways that party insiders employ the "formal party organization to deploy electoral resources" (La Raja and Schaffner 2015, 8). Although parties generally do not publicly support candidates in primary elections, they are actively engaged in the primary nomination process.

Party actors connected with the formal party organization who coordinate together in support of preferred candidates have a strong effect on the outcomes of primary elections (Dominguez 2011; Hassell 2016; Masket 2009). In short, the party's preferences are important for determining which types of candidates are nominated and not just whether incumbents are retained. Thus, the ideological preferences (either strategic or sincere) of those connected to the

party organization should have a significant effect on the ideology of the candidate selected to run in the general election.

Because of the key role that parties play in primary elections and the influence they have on the ideology of the nominee, this paper seeks to answer the following questions. First, when multiple options arise in the primary election, do parties support moderate candidates? And second, if parties do support more moderate candidates, is their support a strategic decision aimed to help win marginal districts?

To answer these questions I do two things. First, I talk with party leaders, party staffers, candidates, and donors to understand what party elites and leaders connected to the party are looking for in an ideal candidate, or a candidate that they would want to run. These interviews allow me to understand the process and gain insight into the underlying motivations for candidate support. Second, combining data on candidate ideology and party support, I examine the relationship between candidate ideology and party support in primary elections over time and across different levels of partisan competition.

Understanding Party Support: What They Say

I begin by presenting findings from interviews and conversations with a snowball sample of twenty-six party leaders, party staffers, donors, and candidates from a wide variety of states and both major parties between 2013 and 2015.[8] While these twenty-six individuals are not a representative sample of the universe of active political party elite actors, they have many years of experience, come from both parties and from a wide range of states and regions (Lynch

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[8] Respondents had worked or been involved in party politics in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC

2013).[9] Full details on the methodology of the interviews are available in the online appendix and a more detailed accounting of these interviews and accounts can be found in [citation redacted].

In these interviews, political elites from both parties indicated that they and other elites were different ideologically from the party's low level activists. Party elites said they were far more willing to accept ideologically moderate candidates compared to the parties' rank and file membership. Why that was, however, was not always clear. On the one hand, some party elites argued that they were just more focused on winning. One major donor put it this way.

> Winning is always part of the equation, except for the most radical activists on the left or the right, but you don't have to move too far off of that and winning becomes a bigger and bigger factor.

Many party elites indicated that ideological extremism (or purity) was not a necessary aspect for a potential candidate, in part perhaps because the party elite cared more about winning.

On the other hand, others, however, noted that donors and activists were different in their policy agendas and priorities which led them to prefer different types of candidates. As one former Democratic state party chairman explained,

> [Party activists] are not donors. I mean it's a different group of people…There absolutely is a disconnect between the elites – party leaders and donors – and party activists (sic). There has been historically. They're focused on different things. They're different types of people.

Some party elite respondents viewed themselves as different from the activists and party base that regularly attended precinct caucus meetings or county party meetings.

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[9] Because party structures and the political actors in them vary significantly across states and regions (Bawn et al. 2014; Masket 2009) and we were interested in drawing generalalizeble information about the party coordination no information from these interviews is included that was not confirmed by another individual with a background from another state.

In short, while party elites argued that they were different from primary voters, whether these differences were the result of different ideological principles, the pragmatism of party insiders, or an interest in access benefits, however, was not clear from the interviews. While some partisan elites claimed there were ideological differences, others maintained that they had the same underlying ideological principles and instead framed themselves as pragmatic idealists with a greater vision that allows them to compromise to achieve success.[10] Moreover, there is clear evidence that party leaders routinely view their own ideological preferences as more electable (Broockman et al. 2017; Heersink 2017).

However, even those who argued that party elites were pragmatic at the same time also suggested that this search for viable candidates was targeted within the network of party elites who held similar ideological views. In their search for candidates, party elites acknowledged that they searched among a set of known commodities and that party coordination is easiest when it occurs behind a candidate that is well known (Lewis 1969; Schelling 1960). As one Republican donor explained when discussing what helps a candidate to be the one the party coordinates behind:

> It's a boon to have some sort of a profile in politics if you're in elected office, and if you're not to have some sort of connection or relationships in the business community or in the community at large.

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[10] Although some party insiders indicate that they choose who to support on the basis of general election electability, these statements do not preclude the support of candidates on the basis of ideological preferences. Electoral success may be achieved in a number of different ways as majority electoral coalitions could be formed from appeals to a number of different sections of the electorate. As a result, the ideology of viable candidates for one set of individuals may be different from another. In addition, intra-party ideological battles are often fought with both sides claiming their ideological preferences promise more electoral success (Heersink 2017).

When attempting to coordinate on a particular candidate that the party can support, party insiders tend to focus on well-known candidates within the network or who are prominently visible to the network.

In addition, these individuals are all part of the same network. As one former party staffer explained,

> [The party's elite] are all connected to each other. They all know each other. And if they don't know each other, they all know somebody who knows somebody who knows them. It's a small group where information is shared.

Given that these political networks are often grouped by ideological ideals (even within parties), this makes the identification of a potential candidate and coordination behind that candidate more likely to be biased towards the preferences of those in the group (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2009; Masket et al. 2012; Sinclair 2012). Thus, party preferences for moderate candidates may not necessarily be the result of a pure desire to promote the candidate most likely to win but instead the result of an insular search that leads to the party to support candidates hold ideological preferences similar to those connected to the party.

Understanding Party Support: What They Do

Interviews with elites suggest that parties do prefer more moderate candidates, but do not explicitly clarify the motivation behind this preference. Using data on candidate ideology and party support in primary elections, I consider quantitatively whether party-supported candidates are consistently more moderate than their primary opponents.

Using this data we can also examine whether parties are strategically supporting moderate candidates in primaries where the nominee's ideology would have the biggest effect on general election success. To do so, I examine whether party support of moderate candidates is

consistent in primaries that lead to competitive and non-competitive general elections. If parties

are supporting moderate candidates for pragmatic reasons, we should expect parties to support

moderate candidates in primaries that lead to competitive general elections. It is less strategically

important, however, that parties moderate their preferences in primaries that do not lead to

competitive general elections. In non-competitive districts, the ideology of the candidate is

unlikely to change the election outcome. In contrast, if party preferences for moderate candidates

are reflections of their sincere ideological preferences, we should expect parties to support

moderate candidates in primaries leading to non-competitive general elections, but not

necessarily in competitive elections where other candidate characteristics may be more important

to help ensure electoral victory.

Lastly, an additional test of whether party support of moderate candidates is sincere or

strategic is whether the ideology of party preferred candidates has changed over time. Given the

lack of change in the ideological preferences of the general public (Hill and Tausanovitch 2015),

if parties are strategic, they should be relatively consistent in their ideological preferences over

time. If parties are sincere in their preferences for candidates of a particular ideological stripe, we

should see changes over time as the makeup of party leadership changes.

Data and Procedures

To examine the relationship between candidate ideology and party support, I use data on

party support for candidates ran in a primary for United States Senate and filed with the Federal

Election Commission (FEC) between 2004 and 2014.[11] This data identifies party supported

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[11] Between 2004 and 2014 regulations on donations to parties and candidates were consistent with only moderate increases in donation limits to account for inflation. The FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations bill changed the limits on donations to parties beginning in 2016 and allowed

candidates in the primary are those that received the most donations from individuals who also gave money to the party's Senatorial Campaign Committee (the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) for Democrats and the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) for Republicans) during the primary. Senate Hill Committees are the primary party organization focused on Senate races and provide more support for those candidates than do the Republican National Committee or the Democratic National Committees which are primarily focused on presidential elections (Kolodny 1998). Moreover, advocates for strengthening parties have explicitly argued that "Legislative parties… are more likely to provide a natural home for [pragmatists] than executive-centered parties (such as the DNC and the RNC)" (La Raja and Schaffner 2015, 22). Connecting candidates to party support from party senatorial campaign committees, thus, is the best test of the party moderation theory. Using the number of donors a candidate shares with his or her party's senatorial committee matches accounts of the party organizations as the center of a coordinated effort to direct campaign funds to favored candidates (Herrnson 1988, 2009; Koger et al. 2009; Kolodny 1998).[12]

This measure allows us to identify, in each of the 199 contested Senate primaries containing 494 candidates over the time period, the candidate with the highest level of party support and to compare that candidate's ideological placement to the ideology of the candidates in those races without party support.[13] The 199 contested Senate primaries are roughly split

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donors to give almost $300,000 to parties (Garrett 2014). I use the years 2004 to 2014 to maintain consistency in party donor behavior.

[12] As Hassell (2016) notes, this measure effectively matches many journalistic accounts of party support of certain candidates in primary elections (e.g. Ken Buck versus Jane Norton in the Colorado Republican Senatorial primary in 2010).

[13] We might be skeptical of these results because perhaps the party does not always pick a favorite. However, the results are the same if we identify party supported candidates as only

evenly between primaries that lead to an uncompetitive general election (97) and a competitive

general election (102). There are more Republican contested primaries than Democratic

contested primaries (117 compared to 82), and many more contested primaries without an

incumbent (146) than those with an incumbent (53).

Previous research also allows us to be relatively confident that party support is not merely

the result of parties jumping on the bandwagon of already viable candidates. Using this same

data, Hassell (2016) finds that in Senate primaries parties are not merely supporting candidates

who enjoy significant fundraising success. Rather, party support Granger causes candidate

fundraising. While party support predicts future fundraising, fundraising is not a significant

predictor of future party support. Nor are these donations the primary source of candidate funds.

Party-supported candidates received on average 7.1% of all their donations in the primary from

party-connected donors (with a standard deviation of 4.1%) while their opponents received on

average 1.8% of their donations from party-connected donors (with a standard deviation of

3.4%).[14]

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those candidates that have strong support from the party relative to their opponent. Increasing the
share of party donors who have given to a candidate in the primary race necessary to be
identified as the party supported candidate from merely having the most donors to having 65% of
the party donors has no effect on any of the figures shown here. These alternative results are
available in the online appendix.

[14] One note is that this measure of party support does not capture levels of party support for
candidates who can self-finance. Thus it could misidentify party supported candidates. However,
most self-funders also raise significant amounts from outside donors as well as only a very few
individuals can self-fund the full cost of a Senate campaign and 35% of candidates who self-
funded their campaign with more than $1 million were also the most party supported candidate
in their primary. Moreover, self-funders who were not identified as the party supported candidate
were on average more moderate than candidates who did not donate large amounts of money to
their campaign (self-funders had an average CFscore of 0.91, other candidates without party
support had an average CFscore of 1.23, p<.05, two-tailed test). In addition, this effect is driven
by self-funders in non-competitive races. The difference between self-funders and other non-
party-supported candidates is significant in non-competitive races (self-funders's CFscore: 0.81;

As a measure of candidate ideology, I rely on the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME).[15] DIME provides ideological ideal point estimates for candidates who received money from at least two unique contributors who gave to at least two candidates during the election cycle (Bonica 2014).[16] This ideological placement maps candidates onto a liberal-conservative scale using data on individual contributions under the assumption that individual donors prefer candidates who are ideologically closer to themselves over candidates who are more ideologically distant. Each candidate is given a common-space campaign finance score (CFScore) that is comparable over time in a way similar to DW-Nominate (Bonica 2014). This data enables us to locate every viable candidate who competed in a primary election on an ideological scale rather than just incumbents.[17] To standardize the measure of ideological extremism for both Republicans and Democrats, I take the absolute value of the candidate's ideological placement as measured by the candidate's CFScore. This makes it so that ideologically extreme candidates, whether extremely liberal or extremely conservative, have higher values.

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other non-party-supported candidates' CFscore: 1.41, p<.1, two tailed test), but not significant in competitive races. In short, if our analysis is miscoding non-party supported self-funders incorrectly, the correct coding of these individuals would merely magnify the effects shown here.

[15] The data from the Database on Ideology, Money, and Elections is available at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/O5PX0B.

[16] This measure includes only donations over $200 required to be reported to the FEC and does not include contributions from PACs. Full details on this measure can be found at http://data.stanford.edu/dime and in Bonica 2014.

[17] While a small number of candidates who did not raise sufficient money do not receive a CFscore, these under-funded candidates are largely long-shot candidates who run for reasons other than winning (Canon 1993).

Although these measures do not provide particularly good estimates of individual donor ideology within parties (Hill and Huber 2017), they do provide good estimates of candidate ideological placement that correlate to political behavior once in office (Bonica 2014). Moreover, ideology is more than just roll-call votes and may incorporate a wide range of factors such as which issues a candidate will prioritize (see Hall and Thompson (2017) for more details).

While Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, and Snyder (2003) argue that contributions are best understood as ideological consumption goods, Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2017) point out that "a number of factors that could influence donations [beyond ideology]... For instance, ideologically extreme voters may be more likely to donate to…more outspoken candidates. Similarly, ideologically extreme voters may be more likely to donate to candidates who specialize in attacking the opposing party. There are many other possible non-ideological drivers of these behaviors" (173). Likewise, it could be that party donors identified by Bonica's measure as moderate because they are more likely to give to candidates in competitive races who are also more likely to be moderate, and as such the other candidates to whom those donors give are also more likely to be viewed as moderate. However, party donations are only a small fraction of the total donations a candidate receives (about 7% for party supported candidates and about 2% for candidates without party support). The overwhelming majority of donors who are the basis for the measure of candidate ideology are not biased in their measurement because of incentives to support moderate incumbents. As Bonica (2014) notes "the vast majority of donors give amounts so diminutive that it is difficult to conceive of the contribution [as anything other than a sincere revelation of preferences]" and that "that individual contributors select recipients primarily on the basis of ideology" and "concerns about bias introduced by strategic behavior are largely unfounded" (370).

However, to address this concern, I also looked at two other measures of ideology, DW-Nominate (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006) and Shor and McCarty's (2011) state legislator ideology data that were available for very small subsamples of the candidate population (Ns of 78 and 59, respectively). Although the drastic reduction in sample size limits the ability to draw distinctive conclusions from this data, the results of that analysis shows that party supported candidates are more moderate than non-party supported candidates (p<.11, one-tailed test), consistent with the findings presented here. More details are available in the online appendix.

Because theories of parties as pragmatic ideological moderators would predict that parties would especially support more moderate candidates in districts that are perceived to be competitive we and less likely to support moderates in districts that are uncompetitive, we need a also means to identify district competition. To identify competitive Senate elections I use Cook Political Report's assessment of general election competitiveness at the beginning of the electoral year.[18] In addition, I also include controls for variables that may be related to party support. I code a variable for candidate quality (measured with a dummy variable indicating whether a candidate has held previous elected office consistent with past practice (Hassell 2016;

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[18] I use Cook Political Reports in part because it provides a prospective evaluation of district competitiveness. Moreover, Cook Political Reports has a strong track record of identifying the winning and losing campaign. From 1984 until 2010 Cook correctly identified the winning campaign in approximately 95 percent of the seats identified as "Likely Democrat" or "Likely Republican" and almost 87 percent of those seats identified as "Lean Democrat" or "Lean Republican" (Campbell, 2010). That said, however, it is possible that this measure of competitiveness misestimates the potential competitiveness of a race. To control for this possibility, I also estimated competitiveness using a measure of vote share in the general election. Classifying races that were decided by 10 points or less (or 5 points or less) has no significant effect on the results shown here.

Jacobson and Kernell 1981) and state party ideological extremism (measured using Tausanovitch

and Warshaw's (2013) measure of political ideology of partisans within states).[19]

Testing Party Support of Moderate Candidates

On the whole, the data show that parties support the more moderate candidate only a little

more than half the time (56.7%) in contested primaries (but only 48.5% of the time in contested

primaries without an incumbent). Figure 1 shows the differences in the ideological placement of

party supported candidates and non-party supported candidates for US Senate.[20] On the whole,

however, parties do support more moderate candidates.

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[19] More information about data on the ideology of partisans within a state is available at
http://americanideologyproject.com/

[20] Although the DIME data eliminates candidates who are most likely non-viable candidates
because they received fewer than two donations from donors who gave to two or more
candidates, one concern might be that this is not sufficient for eliminating candidates who are not
realistic options for most voters. It could be that more extreme candidates are also less likely to
be quality candidates for other non-ideological reasons. To account for that possibility, I also re-
ran all comparisons in the text excluding candidates who lost the primary election by more than
20 percentage points as well as candidates who were not one of the top-two vote getters in the
primary. These additional restrictions do not change the substantive outcomes or the significance
to any of the results shown here and are available in the online appendix.

Figure 1: Ideological Differences between Party Supported and Non-Party Supported Primary Candidates
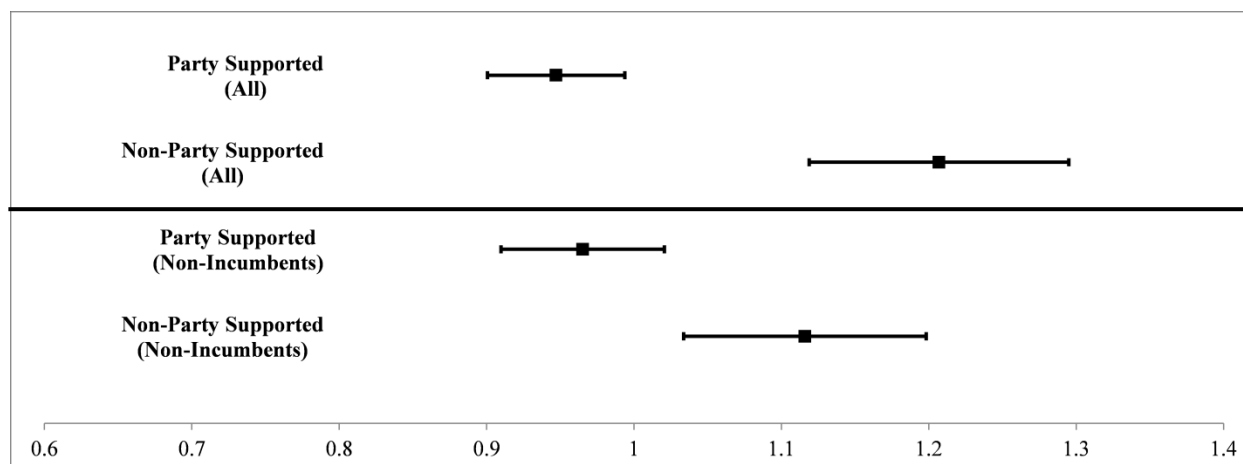
Note: Ideological extremism estimates are the absolute value of ideology point estimates calculated from candidate donations taken from the Database on Ideology and Money in Elections (DIME). The bottom portion of the figure excludes all candidates running in a primary where an incumbent was also running. 95% Confidence intervals included. There are 494 observations for full sample and 385 observations for all non-incumbent primaries.

Even after excluding incumbents we continue to find significant ideological differences between the preferences of party actors and non-party actors. Non-incumbent candidates (n=130) supported by the party received on average an ideological score of 0.97, compared to 1.11 for their opponents (n=255) which is significant at the p<.01 level on a one tailed test.[21] In general, primary election candidates who are more moderate ideologically are more likely to garner party support, although the strongest moderating force is the party's defense of its own incumbents from primary challenges.

Party Support by General Election Competitiveness

While this overall perspective does provide some information on the preferences of party elites, it groups all types of races together. Table 1 reports the relationship between party support and candidate ideology, controlling for a number of other important factors. The first model

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[21] Because all of the hypotheses about party's supporting more moderate candidates are explicitly are one-tailed hypotheses I use one-tailed tests.

reports OLS regression with controls for incumbency, a candidate's previous political experience and state party extremism. The second model reports a fixed-effects model to account for shared dependence that arises from the fact that two candidates are competing in a single district and to control for unobserved primary election race level characteristics that might influence candidate ideology.[22] The third and fourth models in Table 1 look at the ideology of the candidate relative to the most moderate candidate in the race rather than looking directly at ideology. These models examine the premise that as a candidate becomes more extreme relative to the other options in the race, the party should decrease its support of that candidate. What we find in this second pair of models, is consistent with model 1 and model 2 in Table 1.

As outlined above, if parties are pragmatic in their support of moderate candidates we would expect two things. First, we would expect parties to be more likely to support moderate candidates in races that lead to competitive general elections. Second, because the median general election voter has not shifted drastically over this time period, we would expect the ideology of party supported candidates to remain relative consistent over time.

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[22] A fixed-effects model is preferable to a random-effects model in this instance because a random-effects model may be biased because variations in the intercepts are incorporated into the error term rather than explicitly accounted for through dummies. Comparing fixed-effects to random-effects coefficients using the Hausman-styled test allows to identify whether there is any inconsistency in the coefficients between the two models. This test provides a test statistic of 14.35 (p<.01), indicating we must reject the null hypothesis that there is no inconsistency in coefficients between the two models. This indicates that there is inconsistency in the random effects model. However, even if we use that model, we find the same effects on the variables of interest.

Table 1: Party Support and Candidate Ideological Extremity

	(1) Ideological Extremity	(2) Ideological Extremity	(3) Relative Ideological Extremity	(4) Relative Ideological Extremity
Party Supported Candidate	0.035	0.121		
	(0.055)	(0.102)		
Percent of Party Donors			-0.106	0.121
			(0.080)	(0.240)
Uncompetitive State	0.267**		0.288**	
	(0.088)		(0.095)	
Uncompetitive State * Party Supported Candidate	-0.418**	-0.455**		
	(0.110)	(0.132)		
Uncompetitive State * Pct. of Party Donors			-0.492**	-0.606**
			(0.136)	(0.165)
Democrat	0.051		-0.128	
	(0.086)		(0.086)	
Democrat * Party Supported Candidate	0.192	0.151	0.246	0.035
	(0.105)	(0.138)	(0.126)	(0.169)
Incumbent	-0.173**	-0.442**	-0.079	-0.410**
	(0.055)	(0.152)	(0.054)	(0.157)
Candidate Quality	-0.305**	-0.323**	-0.231**	-0.318**
	(0.055)	(0.079)	(0.056)	(0.079)
State Party Extremism	1.467**		0.058	
	(0.211)		(0.192)	
2006 Cycle	0.078		0.005	
	(0.098)		(0.061)	
2008 Cycle	-0.008		-0.014	
	(0.082)		(0.065)	
2010 Cycle	0.217**		0.134*	
	(0.081)		(0.065)	
2012 Cycle	0.290**		0.167*	
	(0.076)		(0.068)	
2014 Cycle	0.388**		0.243	
	(0.104)		(0.099)	
Constant	-0.438	1.333**	0.332	0.605**
	(0.225)	(0.047)	(0.187)	(0.049)
Observations	494	494	494	494
Primary Race Level Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
R-Squared	0.241	0.059	0.158	0.068

Regression Coefficients. Standard errors (clustered by primary race in Models 1 and 3) in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The results from Table 1 suggest that parties are *not* systematically supporting more moderate candidates in primary elections that lead to competitive general elections. Party elites are not systematically showing any preference for more moderate candidates in competitive districts. In competitive districts, whether we consider in absolute or relative terms, we actually find is that party elites are supporting more ideologically extreme candidates, although the differences are not statistically significant. We find that there is no significant correlation between party support and candidate extremism (relative or absolute) in primaries that lead to competitive general elections. This shows that parties are not strategically moderating their preferences in attempts to win competitive districts. However, what we do find is that parties are more likely to support moderate candidates in non-competitive districts.

Figure 2 shows the differences in ideological positions of party supported and non-party supported candidates in primaries without an incumbent in Senate elections identified as competitive and uncompetitive, which largely mirror the results from Table 1. What we find suggests that party support of moderate candidates is not the result of a desire for electoral success. An analysis of party supported candidates and their opponents in competitive and non-competitive states shows that parties are *not* strategically encouraging moderate candidates in those races where moderate ideological candidates would likely make a difference in the election outcome.

As Table 1 and Figure 2 show, in competitive states there is no significant difference in the ideological location of party supported candidates (1.01, n=76) and their opponents (1.06, n=151) in non-incumbent primaries. If parties were strategic in their support of moderate candidates we would expect to see parties support moderate candidates in competitive districts where ideological moderation might change the outcome of the election. Yet, in these primaries,

party supported candidates are just as likely to have extreme ideological views candidates without party support. If anything, the results in Table 1 suggest that party supported candidates in these competitive districts are more polarizing, the opposite of what other scholars have previously hypothesized although they do not reach standard levels of statistical significance.

Figure 2: Ideological Differences Between Party Supported and Non-Party Supported Primary Candidates in Competitive and Non-Competitive States
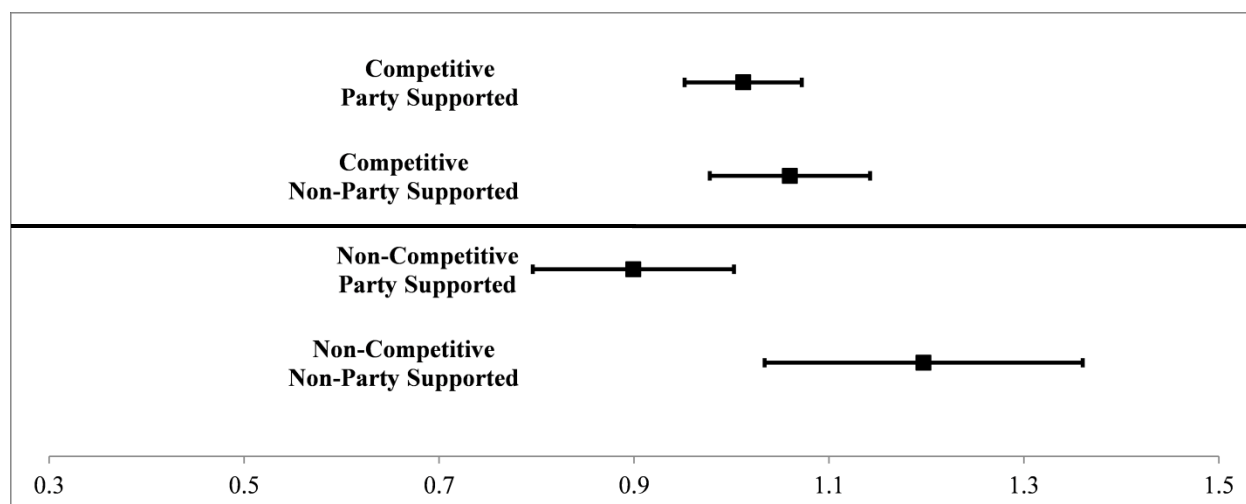
Note: Ideological extremism estimates are the absolute value of ideology point estimates calculated from candidate donations taken from the Database on Ideology and Money in Elections (DIME). Data excludes candidates running in primaries where there is an incumbent. The top portion of the figure looks at primaries leading to general elections that Cook Political Report identified as competitive and the bottom portion of the figure looks at primaries leading to general elections that Cook Political Report identified as uncompetitive. 95% confidence intervals included. There are 227 candidate observations for competitive general election sample and 158 candidate observations for all non-competitive general election primaries without incumbents.

Parties were, however, more likely to support moderate candidates in primaries leading to uncompetitive general elections. Table 1 and Figure 2 also show the statistically significant ideological differences between party-supported candidates (0.90, n=54) and their opponents (1.20, n=104) in primaries in states that Cook Political Reports did *not* indicate were competitive, a difference significant at the p<.01 level. This effect is manifest both in safe seats (Party supported: 1.01; Non-Party supported: 1.17) and unwinnable seats (Party supported: 0.87;

Non-party supported: 1.21), although it only reaches statistical significance for unwinnable seats because of the small number of candidates running in non-incumbent safe seats (n=41).[23]

This evidence suggests that party support of moderate candidates is not the result of parties strategically supporting moderate candidates in races where ideological extremism could have a significant influence on the outcome of the general election. In primaries that lead to competitive general election races and instances where ideological differences might have an influence on the outcome of the election, there are no ideological differences between the party supported candidate and the non-party supported candidate. In these races, parties do not appear to be strategically supporting moderate candidates. Parties do consistently support moderate candidates in uncompetitive districts where there is little incentive to be strategic in their support.

These effects do not appear to be driven entirely by one party or another. The interactions in Table 1 show that the effect of party support is not differentiated by party. Moreover, if we divide the sample in to Democrats and Republicans, as is done in Table 2, results are largely the same. Table 2 shows a fixed effects model only but the OLS results (not displayed) are identical in their effects. While the party support non-competitive state interaction coefficient for Republicans does not quite reach statistical significance in model 2, the coefficients for Republicans are not statistically different from the coefficients for Democrats in any of the two sets of models.

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[23] It could be the case that the party may be concerned about its national brand making it so that in safe seats the party has an incentive to nominate a candidate that matches its image. Previous research has indicated, however, that party coordination is less likely to happen in primaries that lead to uncompetitive general elections (Dominguez 2005) which makes active party planning at this level unlikely in these uncompetitive states. Moreover, this preference for moderate candidates is found both in safe seats where the party's brand is likely to be affected, and in unwinnable seats where the party's nominee is unlikely to generate much attention. As such, it is more likely that these preferences for moderate candidates are the sincere preferences of party leaders rather than strategic decisions designed to affect the party brand.

Table 2: Party Support and Candidate Ideological Extremity by Party

	(1) Ideological Extremity (Democrats)	(2) Ideological Extremity (Republicans)	(3) Relative Ideological Extremity (Democrats)	(4) Relative Ideological Extremity (Republicans)
Party Supported Candidate	0.234	0.101		
	(0.165)	(0.115)		
Percent of Party Donors			0.682†	-0.025
			(0.409)	(0.294)
Uncompetitive State * Party Sup. Candidate	-0.660**	-0.272		
	(0.197)	(0.174)		
Uncompetitive State * Pct. of Party Donors			-0.836**	-0.413†
			(0.237)	(0.219)
Incumbent	-0.139	-0.676**	-0.093	-0.619**
	(0.222)	(0.202)	(0.220)	(0.214)
Candidate Quality	-0.178	-0.369**	-0.217†	-0.358**
	(0.128)	(0.097)	(0.130)	(0.098)
Constant	1.170**	1.409**	0.463**	0.661**
	(0.078)	(0.057)	(0.082)	(0.060)
Observations	169	325	169	325
Primary Race Level Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-Squared	0.064	0.071	0.038	0.079

Regression Coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.
** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<0.1$

Yearly Effects

Further evidence that party support of moderate candidates is not strategic can be found

in the ideology of party supported candidates over time. In the past few years, candidates have

increasingly taken on more extreme ideological positions. The median voter, however, has not

changed substantially over the same time period however (Hill and Tausanovitch 2015). If party

support is strategically aimed at supporting candidates with the greatest general election appeal, we should expect relative ideological consistency across time for party supported candidates.

Figure 3 shows the ideological positioning of candidates with and without party support over time. The ideological differences between party and non-party supported candidates are not consistent. While in most years there is only a small ideological gap between party and non-party supported candidates, the difference in 2010 is twice the difference of any other year.

Figure 3: Ideological Differences between Candidates with and without Party Support over Time
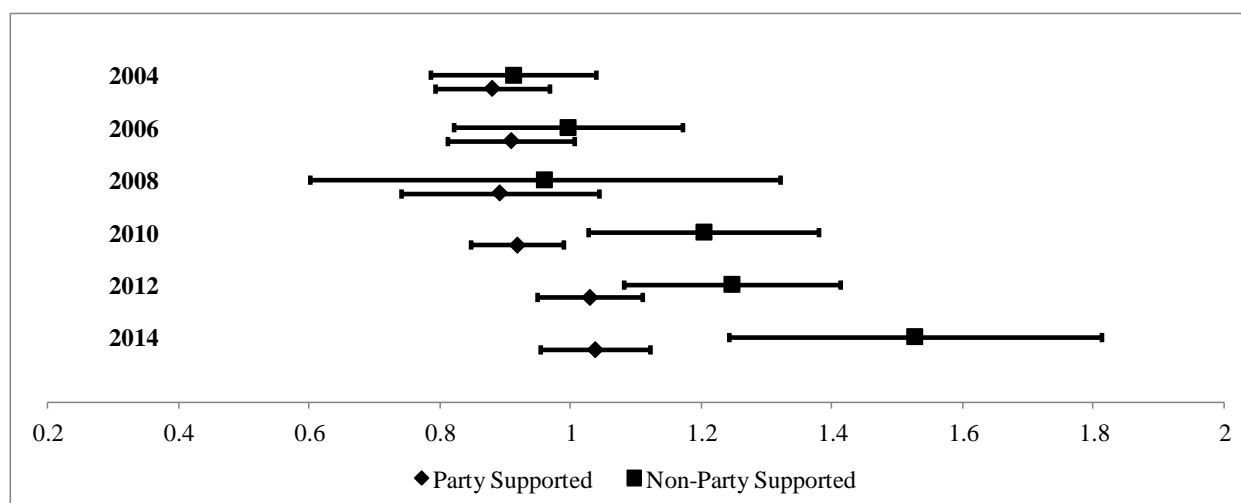
Note: Ideal point estimates are taken from the Database on Ideology and Money in Elections (DIME). 95% confidence intervals included. There are 99 candidate-level observations in 2004, 86 in 2006, 90 in 2008, 146 in 2010, 117 in 2012, and 135.

While part of the lack of differences seen in most years may be the result of small sample sizes, only in the last three election cycles are the ideological differences significant. The effect is magnified beginning in 2010, a year noted by the rise of the Tea Party, a movement that supported and encouraged the emergence of more conservative candidates in Republican primaries in opposition to a more moderate party leadership (Karpowitz et al. 2011; Skocpol and Williamson 2012). While at times the Republican Party seemed to embrace the Tea Party as a

welcome movement that buoyed its own electoral fortunes, at other times there was outright

hostility between the two.

It is also important to note that even though there are differences in the ideological

positioning of party supported and non-party supported candidates, there is also an observable

ideological shift of party-supported candidates over the time span. The ideological extremism of

party supported Senate candidates has increased from 0.88 in 2004 to 1.04 in 2014 (a difference

significant at p<.01, two-tailed test). Party supported candidates in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010

are significantly more moderate than are their 2014 counterparts. The party network may reduce

the extremism of its candidates, but it has not eliminated the rightward movement of the party as

a whole. Because the median American has not moved significantly over this time period this

suggests that the party is not basing its support for candidates on a desire to win elections, but

rather on the ideological preferences of those well-connected to the party. Although this evidence

is not conclusive by itself, the party's influence in candidate emergence suggests that parties

should largely be able to recruit an ideologically satisfactory candidate (Fox and Lawless 2014;

Goldmacher 2013; Moncrief 1999; Seligman et al. 1974).[24]

Moreover, the shift in the ideology of party preferred candidates is most drastic between

2010 and 2012. It was 2010 that saw the election of a significant number of Tea Party

Republicans who changed the ideological makeup of the Republican Party elite. As ideological

extremists have become more integrated into the party structure over time, their social and

ideological preferences have also been incorporated into the party's search for candidates. Parties

may be able to reduce the speed of polarization by limiting the success of more ideological

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[24] Additional research on candidate recruitment also suggests that party recruiters are not focused on ideology, but are rather focused on valence attributes of candidates (including gender) (Butler and Preece 2016; Fox and Lawless 2014; Preece and Stoddard 2015).

candidates, but even parties are susceptible to ideological shifts if those with more extreme

policy preference enter positions of influence in the party.

Discussion and Conclusion

What does all of this tell us about the influence of party organizations on political

polarization? First, party elites are ideologically distinct from the party base. In interviews, party

elites generally express an interest in more moderate candidates and at times explained it as a

fundamental ideological difference, while at others expressing a pragmatic ideology. While these

individuals indicate that their goal is to recruit and support candidates that they believe have the

ability to win public office in the general election, they also indicate that they search for

candidates to support among their political network which is likely to contain like-minded

individuals with similar ideologies.

In addition, there is strong evidence that parties support more moderate candidates.

Measures of candidate ideology show that party-supported candidates are significantly more

moderate than their opponents. This is especially true when you include incumbent politicians

facing a primary because the party organization is designed to support the defense of incumbent

held seats. Incumbents facing a primary challenge are routinely more moderate than their

challengers and the result is that much of the effect of party moderation on candidate ideology is

built into its system of defending incumbents against challengers from within the party as well as

from the opposite party.

This preference for moderate candidates, however, appears to be the result of the

increasing salience of ideological rifts within parties rather than strategic decisions of party

leaders to support moderate candidates. Party preferences for more moderate candidates appear

to depend on who occupies positions in and around the formal party structure rather than an incentive of the party to moderate its preferences to win competitive elections.

If parties had an incentive to moderate their preferences in primary elections in order to win seats in competitive general election races we should see a clear difference in the ideological positioning of party supported and non-party supported candidates in primaries that lead to general elections that are considered competitive. This is not the case. While there is a significant difference between the ideological positioning of party supported and non-party supported candidates in primaries that lead to a non-competitive general election, there is no ideological difference between party supported and non-party supported candidates in primaries that lead to a competitive general election.

When the general election is considered to be competitive, however, party organizations do not systematically prefer more moderate candidates. Party supported candidates are not ideologically different than non-party supported candidates in primary elections that lead to competitive general elections. This evidence suggests that party support of moderate candidates not the result of supporting moderate candidates strategically in competitive districts in an attempt to win more general elections. Moreover, the shift in the ideology of party supported candidates suggests that as individuals with more extreme views come into the party, party support of candidates in primary elections should also shift. Just as state and local parties have become vehicles for ideologues to advance their agendas (Gilbert 1995), so too the national party networks could shift to favor more extreme ideological candidates. Because of the advantage that party supported candidates have, the result is that while parties may now provide an advantage to moderate candidates, we cannot assume that this preference would continue.

Instead of moderating their preferences to better their chances of winning the general election, the variation on the ideology of party supported candidates and non-party supported candidates seems to be the ideological preferences of those closely connected to the party. While those closely affiliated with the party organization are more willing to support and encourage more moderate candidates, more extreme candidates are less likely to get the support of those affiliated with the party organization because those affiliated with the party are not currently as extreme as those on the outside.

Thus, in the current environment, strengthening the hand of the party could reduce polarization by giving the upper hand to moderate politicians, but that result would depend on the ability of those individuals to retain control of the party organization. As the year by year analysis shows, preferences of party elites for ideological candidates are not stable. Over time, the average ideological position of the party's preferred candidates has also drifted more extreme. Parties may be a good means to moderate the political ideologies of candidates, but only when those in control of the party hold similar moderate ideological views.

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Online Appendix
[Not intended for publication in print version]

Details on the Interview Methodology

Interviews were conducted in 2013 and 2015 with party leaders, staffers, donors and former candidates who had been active in party politics in California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. States were chosen to provide a diverse group of states and also to maximize personal connections and the connections of acquaintances in both parties. Potential interviewees, present and former party leaders and staff, past candidates, well connected donors and fundraisers, and national party operatives in each location were identified and an initial request for an anonymous conversation was made via email. At the end of each interview respondents were asked if they knew any additional individuals who might be willing to talk about the relationship between parties and candidates following standard snowball-sampling techniques (Lynch 2013).

This process resulted in a sample of 18 Republicans and 8 Democrats from these states. These interviews did reveal some differences in unity and network structure between Democrats and Republicans, but the characteristics described in this paper were well detailed in both parties. The sample of respondents comes disproportionately from the upper Midwest (Minnesota and Iowa). While there are differences across (and even within) states regarding the structure and organization of party elites (Bawn et al. 2014; Masket 2009) no information from these interviews is included that was not confirmed from multiple sources. In addition, many of the individuals interviewed had worked in more than just one state and mentioned specific experiences in other states when answering the questions posed.

Consistent with previous work on the party networks of campaigns (Masket et al. 2012; Skinner, Masket, and Dulio 2013), many of these individuals had held a number of different

roles in the party and on different campaigns. Fourteen respondents had worked for a party

organization as a paid party staff member (not including elected party leadership) during an

election cycle. All individuals interviewed played significant roles in the campaign process as

indicated by Table A.1. Many held multiple positions; nine individuals held two roles and one

had been involved in three different capacities. In each of these categories listed below there

were at least two members from each party. All but four individuals were still fully active in

politics through the 2014 election cycle. Three of those individuals were active in politics up

until the mid to late 2000s (one of these individuals continues to participate but in a more limited

capacity). The last individual was active in party politics up until the late 1990s (and continues to

participate on a limited basis but in a lesser role).

Table A.1: Positions Held by Interviewees

Candidates or Campaign Managers	6
Campaign Staff (not including Campaign Managers)	6
Party Staff	14
Party Leadership	5
Major Donors/Fundraisers	6
Total Individuals Interviewed	**26**

Note: The numbers do not add up because many individuals held more than one role

Sixteen of the interviews were in person interviews, with the rest being done by phone.

Immediately prior to beginning the interview, respondents were given an informed consent form

which detailed the process for recording and storing interview material. Because talking openly

could involve some risk, respondents were notified in the initial request for an interview and

reminded again in the informed consent form that the identity of the interviewees would be

anonymous except in the occasions where the individual involved was a public personality and

the interviewees involvement with the individual named was publicly known. Consistent with IRB procedures respondents were also told that they could stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any of the questions. I also indicated to respondents that if they requested I would send a copy of the transcribed interview for them to provide any clarification. Only one individual took me up on that offer and provided no clarification to the interview transcript that I provided.

Prior to beginning the interview, I also asked to be able to record the interview all but three individuals agreed. Those interviews that were not recorded were transcribed as best as possible from memory immediately following the interview. On two instances during recorded interviews respondents provided additional information after the recorder had been turned off. On both occasions, I requested and was granted permission to include those remarks that had not been recorded, which I transcribed immediately after the interview.

Respondents were asked about their role and involvement in campaigns and party politics and how they began to be involved. Depending on their background respondents were asked questions about how they and other party members decide to support a particular candidate, asking them to specifically comment on their own experiences or about the role that the party had played in specific primary campaigns.

Elimination of Non-Viable Candidates

As mentioned in the text, the Database on Ideology, Money, and Elections (DIME) data on candidate ideology eliminates candidates who are most likely non-viable candidates because they received fewer than 30 donations from contributors. Despite eliminating these long-shot candidates, there is still a potential that the results showing that parties are more likely to support moderate candidates are bolstered by the presence of a number of extreme candidates who are

not realistic options for most voters. To account for that possibility Table A.2 below shows the

ideology of party supported candidates and candidates without party support excluding

candidates who did not receive either the most or the second most votes in the primary as well as

excluding candidates who lost the primary election by more than 20 percentage points.

Eliminating these non-viable candidates, however, does not change the results presented in the

text.

Table A.2: Ideology from CFscores of Party Supported Candidates and their Opponents Excluding Non-Viable Candidates

	Party Supported	N	Non-Party Supported	N	Statistical Significance
All Primaries	0.95	162	1.08	96	**
Non-Incumbent Primaries	0.97	112	1.06	85	*
2004 Election Cycle	0.88	23	1.01	49	
2006 Election Cycle	0.91	51	1.02	25	
2008 Election Cycle	0.88	56	0.95	25	
2010 Election Cycle	0.93	65	1.22	43	**
2012 Election Cycle	1.01	55	1.21	34	*
2014 Election Cycle	1.01	34	1.07	22	
Competitive General Election Primaries	1.01	65	1.06	38	
Non-Competitive General Election Primaries	0.91	47	1.06	47	†

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<.1, one-tailed test

Table A.3 shows the same result when we look at the multi-variate models

Table A.3: Party Support and Candidate Ideology Excluding Non-Viable Candidates

	(1) Ideological Extremity	(2) Ideological Extremity	(3) Relative Ideological Extremity	(4) Relative Ideological Extremity
Party Supported Candidate	0.035	0.146		
	(0.057)	(0.123)		
Percent of Party Donors			-0.066	-0.152
			(0.086)	(0.163)
Uncompetitive State	0.311**		0.371**	
	(0.105)		(0.122)	
Uncompetitive State * Party Supported Candidate	-0.451**	-0.475**		
	(0.126)	(0.151)		
Uncompetitive State * Pct. Of Party Donors			-0.587**	-0.659**
			(0.161)	(0.186)
Democrat	0.106		-0.102	
	(0.103)		(0.118)	
Democrat * Party Supported Candidate	0.138	0.091		
	(0.123)	(0.158)		
Democrat * Percent of Party Donors			0.241	0.185
			(0.160)	(0.191)
State Party Extremity	1.405**		0.084	
	(0.246)		(0.233)	
Incumbent	-0.154**	-0.415*	-0.067	-0.375*
	(0.055)	(0.167)	(0.056	(0.169)
Candidate Quality	-0.311**	-0.355**	-0.221**	-0.332**
	(0.060)	(0.108)	(0.064)	(0.108)
2006 Cycle	0.015		-0.026	
	(0.083)		(0.078)	
2008 Cycle	-0.107		-0.081	
	(0.077)		(0.076)	
2010 Cycle	0.136		0.110	
	(0.085)		(0.085)	
2012 Cycle	0.169*		0.087	
	(0.072)		(0.079)	
2014 Cycle	0.294**		0.210*	
	(0.097)		(0.101)	
Constant	-0.306**	1.395**	0.284	0.625**
	(0.247)	(0.065)	(0.231)	(0.066)
Observations	382	382	382	382
Primary Race Level Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
R-Squared	0.261	0.081	.184	0.073

Regression Coefficients. Standard errors (clustered by primary race in model 1 and model 3) in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Increasing Party Supported Cut-off

In that same vein, one might be concerned that having 50%+1 of the total party donors does not accurately represent party support. Table A.4 shows the result of classifying only candidates as either party-supported or non-party supported if they ran in a race where one candidate received more than 65% of the total party donors who gave in the primary race. Candidates who ran in races where no candidate received more than 65% of the party donations are not classified and are excluded from this analysis.

Table A.4: Ideology from CFscores of Party Supported Candidates and their Opponents Setting Party Supported Candidates as Candidates who receive more than 65% of the Total Party Donors in the Primary Race

	Party Supported	N	Non-Party Supported	N	Statistical Significance
All Primaries	0.95	147	1.18	347	**
Non-Incumbent Primaries	0.96	101	1.10	284	
2004 Election Cycle	0.88	45	0.91	54	
2006 Election Cycle	0.92	46	0.98	40	
2008 Election Cycle	0.89	56	0.87	26	
2010 Election Cycle	0.92	54	1.16	92	**
2012 Election Cycle	1.02	53	1.24	64	*
2014 Election Cycle	1.03	56	1.51	79	**
Competitive General Election Primaries	1.04	58	1.04	169	
Non-Competitive General Election Primaries	0.86	43	1.18	115	**

** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<.1$, one-tailed test

Although the small sample size limits our ability to detect some effects, the trends are

identical. Changing the support necessary to be classified as a party-supported candidate to 65%

of all party donors who gave in a primary race does not change the effects detailed in the text.

In Table A.5 we see a similar result for the full multi-variate models as well.

Table A.5: Party Support and Candidate Ideology Setting Party Supported Candidates as Candidates who receive more than 65% of the Total Party Donors in the Primary Race

	(1) Ideological Extremity	(1) Ideological Extremity
Party Supported Candidate	0.048	0.179
	(0.055)	(0.178)
Uncompetitive State	0.243**	
	(0.081)	
Uncompetitive State * Party Supported Candidate	-0.424**	-0.478**
	(0.104)	(0.149)
Democrat	0.052	
	(0.079)	
Democrat * Party Supported Candidate	0.211*	0.140
	(0.101)	(0.141)
State Party Extremity	1.465**	
	(0.211)	
Incumbent	-0.166**	-0.444**
	(0.056)	(0.156)
Candidate Quality	-0.309**	-0.320**
	(0.055)	(0.079)
2006 Cycle	0.089	
	(0.097)	
2008 Cycle	0.002	
	(0.082)	
2010 Cycle	0.217**	
	(0.081)	
2012 Cycle	0.287**	
	(0.076)	
2014 Cycle	0.394**	
	(0.106)	
Constant	-0.438	1.333**

	(0.224)	(0.047)
Observations	494	494
Primary Race Level Fixed Effects	No	Yes
R-Squared	0.237	0.062

Regression Coefficients. Standard errors (clustered by primary race in model 1) in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<.1

Alternative Models

The measure of party support that is used in the paper hides some of the variation in relative party support. However, as Table A.6 shows, using the overall percentage of party support the candidate received in the race does not change the overall affects. Again, on its own, party support has no relationship to the likelihood that a candidate will be ideologically moderate. However, again consistent with the results presented in the main text, increased party support is a predictor of ideological moderation in primaries that lead to uncompetitive general elections.

Table A.6: Predicting Candidate Ideological Extremity using Percent of Party Donors who Donate in a Primary Race that a Candidate Receives

	(1) Ideological Extremity	(1) Ideological Extremity
Percent of Party Donors	0.007	0.137
	(0.078)	(0.140)
Uncompetitive District	0.310**	
	(0.097)	
Uncompetitive District * Percent of Party Donors	-0.535**	-0.616**
	(0.136)	(0.164)
Democrat	0.010	
	(0.096)	
Democrat * Percent of Party Donors	0.285*	0.251
	(0.131)	(0.168)
State Party Extremity	1.444**	
	(0.210)	
Incumbent	-0.137*	-0.411**
	(0.059)	(0.155)
Candidate Quality	-0.297**	-0.317**
	(0.054)	(0.079)
2006 Cycle	0.083	
	(0.100)	
2008 Cycle	-0.010	
	(0.083)	
2010 Cycle	0.215**	
	(0.082)	
2012 Cycle	0.285**	
	(0.076)	
2014 Cycle	0.381**	
	(0.103)	
Constant	-0.411†	1.334**
	(0.225)	(0.048)
Observations	494	494
Primary Race Level Fixed Effects	No	Yes
R-Squared	0.249	0.056

Regression Coefficients. Standard errors (clustered by primary race in model 1) in parentheses.
** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<.1$

Alternative Measures of Ideology

As mentioned in the text, the CFscores available in the DIME data are calculated to

predict ideology under the assumption that donors' decisions to donate to one candidate or

another reflect the ideological preferences of donors for candidates that hold similar ideological

positions. While CFscores do provide good estimates of candidate ideological placement that

correlate to political behavior once in office (Bonica 2014), others have shown that within party

behavior is not as strongly correlated (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2017). Although party donors

make up only 7 percent of party supported candidate contributors (and 2 percent of contributors

to candidates without party support), it could be that party elites have an incentive to donate to

candidates in competitive districts to boost the fortunes of their party where the candidates

running just happen to be more moderate candidates. This behavior would create the perception

that party donors are more moderate than they are.

While it would be nice to have another comprehensive source of data of Senate primary

candidate ideology, such a source does not exist. In their article, Tausanovitch and Warshaw

(2017) list a number of alternative measures of ideology that have been used to calculate the

ideology of non-incumbent candidates. Yet, while this is a step forward, all of these estimates of

candidate ideology only include the ideology of candidates that were their party's nominee.[25]

There were no comprehensive data sources that included estimates of the ideology of Senate

primary candidates who did not win the nomination. To work around this problem, I focus on

candidates who had previously served in a state in a state legislature and candidates who served

or would serve as a member of Congress. Focusing on these candidates and the races they were

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[25] The estimates of non-incumbent ideology available for primary candidates who did not win the
nomination are limited to a smattering of *House* primary candidates in the late 1990s and early
2000s (Montagnes and Rogowski 2015).

in allows me to use measures of ideology derived from roll-call votes in Congress (McCarty et al. 2006) and in state legislatures (Shor and McCarty 2011) to compute candidate ideology. Although this approach severely restricts the sample size, it allows us to check the results. Despite the fact that the sample size reduces the ability find statistical significance, consistent with the results in the text, Table A.5 shows that using these alternative measures, candidates without party support are generally more extreme than candidates with party support.

Table A.5: Ideology from DW-Nominate and

	Party Supported	N	Non-Party Supported	N	Statistical Significance (one-tailed)
State Leg. Common Space Scores (All)	0.85	20	0.88	39	p<0.38
State Leg.(Only 2+ State Leg. in Primary)	0.78	10	0.89	19	p<0.26
DW-Nominate (All Candidates)	0.38	49	0.43	29	p<0.12
DW-Nominate (Only 2+ MCs in Primary)	0.39	15	0.48	20	p<0.11

Jon Rogowski was also kind enough to share ideological scores for House candidates from1996 to 2006 calculated from responses to the National Political Awareness Test administered by Project Vote Smart (Montagnes and Rogowski 2015). Those data also show that party supported candidates (ideological point estimate of 0.82) are more moderate than candidates without party support (ideological point estimate of 0.94) as is shown here (p<0.15, n=61), but there are no primaries with more than one candidate with an ideological score which limits inferences.

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