

“The Gingrich Senators, the Tea Party Senators, and Their Effect on the U.S. Senate”

Over the last thirty years, the increasing party polarization in the Senate can be explained almost entirely by one group: “The Gingrich Senators,” which Theriault (2008) and Theriault and Rohde (2012) define as those Republicans who entered the House after Gingrich’s election in 1978 and subsequently moved to the Senate. In 2011, the Gingrich Senators, helped elect a new breed of senator: the Tea Party Senators. In this paper, I analyze the role that the Gingrich Senators and their predecessors, the Tea Party Senators, had on the Senate. In short, on most dimensions both groups are similarly act as party polarizers and partisan warriors, which is in stark contrast to the other Republicans in the Senate.

Academic Biography:

Sean M. Theriault, an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin, researches American political institutions, primarily the U.S. Congress. His current research is on the Gingrich Senators and how they have transformed the U.S. Senate. He has received numerous teaching awards, including UT Professor the Year in 2011 and the Friar Society Teaching Fellowship (the biggest undergraduate teaching award at UT) in 2009. Professor Theriault has published two books, *The Power of the People: Congressional Competition, Public Attention, and Voter Retribution* (Ohio State University Press, 2005) and *Party Polarization in Congress* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). He has also published numerous articles on subjects ranging from presidential rhetoric to congressional careers and the Louisiana Purchase to the Pendleton Act of 1883.