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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

*The Few and the Proud:
Veterans in Congress on Defense Issues*

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR:

MAJOR ANGELINA M. MAGUINNESS, USAF

AY 12-13

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Rebecca Johnson
Approved: [Signature]
Date: 15 April 2013
Oral Defense Committee Member: Benjamin Jensen PhD
Approved: [Signature]
Date: 15 April 2013

Executive Summary

Title: *The Few and the Proud: Veterans in Congress on Defense Issues*

Author: Major Angelina M. Maguinness, United States Air Force

Thesis: While party affiliation and constituency concerns consistently proved more influential in determining defense issue positions and colored political rhetoric, military experience appeared causal in the percentage of greater opposition to defense spending cuts and increased support for the war in Afghanistan among veterans in Congress.

Discussion: Since 1982, the number of veterans serving in Congress has declined rapidly, resulting in the fewest number of veterans in Congress since 1945. While there is not universal agreement on the impact of fewer veterans in Congress, there are fears among members of Congress as well as other commentators in academia and elsewhere that fewer veterans compromise Congress' ability to execute legislative responsibilities for military expenditures and policy. With the largest influx of post-9/11 veterans yet, this study explored the views of veterans in Congress on defense spending and the war in Afghanistan through the statistical examination of pre-election issue survey results and content analysis of political communications. This study demonstrated military experience matters less in general than party affiliation and constituency concerns, and confirmed the trends noted by other researchers and analysts of the increasing Republican and conservative leanings of veterans in Congress.

Conclusion: Determining whether military experience influence Congress members' views on defense-related issues is important to understand with the departure of so many veterans from Congress in the last 30 years. Commentators lament this trend, but its true impact is still not completely understood. This topic requires continued study to gauge the importance of military experience versus party affiliation on determining policy positions. This focus is especially important to understand in light of the increasing inclination of military members and by extension veterans in Congress toward more conservative political leanings, often resulting in political affiliation with the Republican Party. Identifying the possible ramifications of waning military experience and singular partisan affiliation remains important for understanding the possible effects on defense-related issues in the future.

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Preface

During the 2012 Congressional elections, there was a great deal of speculation about whether Americans would elect a large number of post-9/11 veterans to Congress, reversing the 30-year trend of declining military experience in Congress. Several media and academic pieces extolled the possibility while lamenting the decline. I was drawn to this topic because I wondered whether the conjecture from many of these sources was true – does military experience really matter in Congress? If it does matter, how does military experience shape Congress members' policy positions on defense-related issues? In short, I found that, as in most things in life, it depends. On defense spending military experience was less compelling than party affiliation. The war in Afghanistan, however, received a greater proportion of support from veteran versus nonveteran legislators. The decline of military experience, then, is not a simple equation with an easily calculated result replicated consistently across the range of defense issues.

With a project of this magnitude, requiring hundreds of research and analytical hours poring over thousands of pages of political communications, I owe many people a humble word of thanks.

First, my husband Colonel Mark Cooter, U.S. Air Force, spent numerous hours helping me research, write, analyze, and edit my thesis, resulting in a much better product than I could have produced on my own. Our relationship is the epitome of teamwork. He took on full-time parenting duties to our 3-year-old daughter Aidan, in addition to helping me, working, and completing the household chores I neglected, with few complaints. Thanks for your patience, forgiveness, and love! I love you Mark!

My daughter Aidan – Thanks for being very patient as I worked to complete this project. Thank you for trying to understand as best as a 3 year old can when I had to work and could not play. I love you little girl!

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My step-daughter Jaclyn – Thanks for keeping us sane! I love you!

My parents, Tom and Liz Maguinness, gave me the work ethic I have, for better or worse. I love you both so much.

Major Rebecca Lange, U.S. Air Force, assisted with research questions and data from the Congressional Research Service. A great friend and professional indeed!

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Dr. Rebecca Johnson, my thesis mentor, was patient with my crazy ideas, shaping them out of insanity. She believed in this project more than I some days, and her encouragement kept me from pulling the plug.

Introduction

Since 1982, the number of veterans serving in Congress has declined rapidly. During the November 2012 Congressional elections, the George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management's Center for Second Service suggested the 2012 elections might change this dynamic.¹ On the eve of the election, Seth Lynn, the Center's director, argued anywhere from 92 to 100 veterans of the 189 running had an excellent chance of winning the November election.² Especially compelling was the likelihood of greater representation from veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, enabling the addition of new veteran perspective among the remaining World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veteran members of Congress. Forty-two candidates (38 House and 4 Senate) with post-9/11 military experience vied for seats.³ This pre-election prediction, however, proved incorrect; only 12 challengers with military experience, nine with post-9/11 military service, won House seats. Instead of additional Congressional gains for veteran candidates, both Houses of Congress saw a net decrease in Senators and Representatives with military experience. In January 2013, the 113th Congress had 102 military veterans sworn in as Senators and Representatives, 17 members less than the end of the 112th Congress. These results sustained the decline of military experience among the members of Congress since 1982 and resulted in the fewest military veterans serving in Congress since 1945 (see Appendix A: Figure 1. Number of Veterans in Congress, 1945 – 2013).

While there is not universal agreement on the likely effects of fewer veterans in Congress, there are fears among members themselves that fewer veterans compromise Congress' ability to execute legislative responsibilities for military expenditures and policy. In November 2011, Representative Ralph Hall (R-TX, pre-9/11) spoke about the environment in Congress during the early 1980s when first elected. "People were voting for veterans back then. It's hard

to get anything through nowadays.”⁴ Representative Sam Johnson (R-TX, pre-9/11) seconded Representative Hall saying, “Veterans understood the consequences of the laws they made, and were able to make sure non-military members had the same understanding.”⁵ Other members chimed in claiming nonveteran members did not have the same capability to delve into defense and military issues, including defense legislation and spending.⁶

Whereas many members of veterans in Congress believe the decline of veterans in Congress matters, some elements in academia and elsewhere do not agree. Some argue the lack of military experience in Congress contributes to the civil-military gap, leading to less backing for legislation supporting defense and veterans’ issues due to ignorance on military matters.⁷ In a 1995 study on the relationship between military experience and voting patterns in Congress, Mark Eitelberg and Roger Little found that veterans tended to vote pro-defense more often than nonveterans, with younger veterans providing the greatest level of support for defense bills.⁸ Academic William Bianco, on the other hand, takes a contrary view. In 2005, Bianco published a study on the voting behaviors of legislators with prior military experience. His analysis indicated, “[a]t the margins of other factors (such as party, incumbent characteristics, and constituent demands), the impact of veteran status is generally quite small. Moreover, veterans’ personal policy preferences do not differ from those held by nonveteran colleagues.”⁹

This divergence of opinion among those in academia raises the question of whether and how military experience shapes the views of veterans in Congress on defense issues. It is not just Congress’ constitutional responsibilities funding the defense establishment and declaring war; Congress also maintains the prerogative on military force size, equipment, personnel, and doctrine, to a lesser degree.¹⁰ Since the opinions of veteran Congress members often track quite closely with those of senior military members,¹¹ “the more veterans there are in the civilian

leadership, the greater the influence of military preferences on civilian policy choices.”¹² It is important to understand whether and how the lack of military experience affects defense-related legislation as the number of veterans in Congress continues to decline with each election cycle.

This study explores how those Congress members with military experience frame their political communications on defense issues, but focuses on the veterans elected to the 113th Congress in November 2012. The 2012 elections marked a record number of post-9/11 veterans on the ballot for Congress, and for the first time the influx of the winners provided a statistically significant pool to compare their defense views with those of pre-9/11 veteran members. Given the mixed analysis within academia mainly based on voting patterns, the content analysis of speeches, interviews, hearing testimony, and press releases is key to determining whether veterans’ unique generational military experiences result in widely varied views on defense issues. It was outside the scope of this study to determine whether military experience was causal in the expressed views of veterans in Congress; however, this analysis demonstrated correlations between Congress members’ military experience and their defense policy views. Because the debates on defense spending and the war in Afghanistan were central defense issues during the 2012 election, this study focused on these two issues. **While party affiliation and constituency concerns consistently proved more influential in determining defense issue positions and colored political rhetoric, military experience appeared causal in the percentage of greater opposition to defense spending cuts and increased support for the war in Afghanistan among veterans in Congress.**

In order to demonstrate this thesis, the next section will discuss existing literature, focusing research on the civil-military gap as evidenced with the decreasing military experience

in Congress. This section will introduce the pool of Congress members examined and the sources of the data used in the analysis. Additionally, this section will discuss research and analytical methodologies. After completing the background overview, the subsequent sections will discuss how pre- and post-9/11 veterans view defense spending and the war in Afghanistan based on a content and discourse analysis of Congressional members' public communications. The final section will provide insights on how military experience shapes the way veterans discuss defense-related issues due to their experiential knowledge and veteran perspective as well as a perceived moral authority because of military experience and veteran status.

Background

This paper explores the nexus of many different literatures, including civil-military relations and political speech. The “Research and Analytical Methodologies” portion in subsequent pages will touch on relevant political speech literature. Beginning with civil-military relations, several analysts have examined the decrease in military experience in Congress and it is one aspect of the continuing debate on the civil-military gap. Largely these analysts fall into two groups: those who think waning military experience matters¹³ and those who do not.¹⁴ There are also studies indicating the military has become more conservative, leaning and identifying with the Republican Party.¹⁵

Joining Eitelberg and Little in the first camp, Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi conducted a systematic study producing several articles and a substantive book on civilian and military opinion on the use of force and their willingness to accept the costs of war. Feaver and Gelpi found “that civilian and military opinions on the use of force do differ in predictable ways, and that veteran opinions track more or less with military opinions.”¹⁶ They examined whether

the waning numbers of veterans in the executive and legislative branches affects decisions on the use of force. Of note, the research indicated civilian nonveteran elites were more willing to use force for interventionist actions, including humanitarian and foreign civil wars, encapsulated in the realm of “less-than-vital-interests.”¹⁷ In contrast, military officers tend to espouse realpolitik views, indicating the use of force is for those events clearly affecting national interest.¹⁸ Another key finding was that “[c]ivilian elites who are nonveterans are more willing to use force gradually or incrementally, while elite military officers show greater support for the ‘decisive force’ option...”¹⁹ Based on an examination of the historical use of force since 1816, Feaver and Gelpi concluded “there is a strong correlation between the opinion gap and the empirical record of the initiation of the use of force.”²⁰ They also determined as the number of veterans increased within the executive and legislative branches, the higher the escalation of force within a conflict. The inverse was also true; the fewer the veterans, the lower the level of force used.²¹ From these findings, it seems clear military experience does matter when Congress considers military or defense issues, especially when related to the use and level of force.

Leading the second camp, Bianco teamed up with Jamie Markham to identify the source of the decline in military experience in Congress. Bianco and Markham explored the historical make-up of military experience within Congress, from the beginning of the first Congress until 1999. Their analysis examined the number of veterans in the American population writ large in comparison to the actual number of legislators with military experience. Their findings indicated the number of veterans in Congress was greater than the number expected based on the number of veterans in the general population until the 1990s. After the mid-1990s, veterans were under-represented, posited as likely a cause of the end of conscription in 1973. Finally, Bianco and Markham analyzed a sample of congressional votes on issues regarding military issues, including

the use of force, to determine whether this demographic change in Congress had a significant effect on voting patterns. Similar to Bianco's 2005 study on Congressional voting behaviors, Bianco and Markham found that veteran status had small impacts on how a legislator voted as well as on the overall support for military issues.²²

While seeming to discount its importance, Bianco does in fact make the case for veteran status as a more significant determinant for policy preferences when examined in light of other research on the shift of military members and veterans to more conservative leanings. Similarly, in 1997, Thomas Ricks published an article in *Atlantic Monthly* indicating military members were becoming more Republican in their political affiliation.²³ Bolstering this belief, Ole Holsti examined survey data gathered from military and civilian senior leaders from 1976 through 1996. According to his study, 33% of surveyed military officers identified themselves as Republicans in 1976; by 1996, that percentage had grown to 67%.²⁴ Agreeing with Holsti's findings, academics Andrew Bacevich and Richard Kohn asserted military members continue to increase their conservative leanings and alignment with the Republican Party as the party most likely to support defense imperatives.²⁵

Data Set

With the understanding of the relevant literature on the subject of the effect of military experience in Congress, this study focused on the 88 veterans elected to the 113th Congress during the 2012 elections, including 85 Representatives and 3 Senators. Of note, this study did not consider data for the other 14 Senators with military experience who were not up for re-election in 2012; however, the following numbers and percentages will take the demographics of those Senators into account where appropriate. Representatives with military experience make

up 20% (85) of the House, while Senators with military experience number 17% (17) of the Senate. In 2012, 76% (65) of those with military experience elected to the House were Republicans and 24% (20) were Democrats. With the three incumbent Senators re-elected, 65% (11) of the Senators with military experience were Republican, while 35% (six) were Democrats. Incumbents with military experience were 86% (76) of Representatives elected, while 12 freshmen veterans won seats (14% of the membership). Of the freshmen, 75% (9) are Republicans. Additionally, two women with military experience won election as freshmen Representatives (2%). Of those elected with military experience, 58 members (68%) had pre-9/11 military experience while 30 (32%) members had post-9/11 experience. There are 41 (71%) Republicans and 17 (29%) Democrats in the pre-9/11 veterans group. For the post-9/11 veterans, 25 are Republicans (83%) and five are Democrats (17%). Of note, 22 post-9/11 veterans had both post- and pre-9/11 military service time. For the purposes of this study, the post-9/11 cohort includes these individuals. Overall, Congress has 102 legislators with military experience making up 19% of Congressional membership. It is overwhelmingly Republican and male, and pre-9/11 military service still predominantly characterizes military experience. See Figure 1, “Veterans Elected to Congress in 2012.”

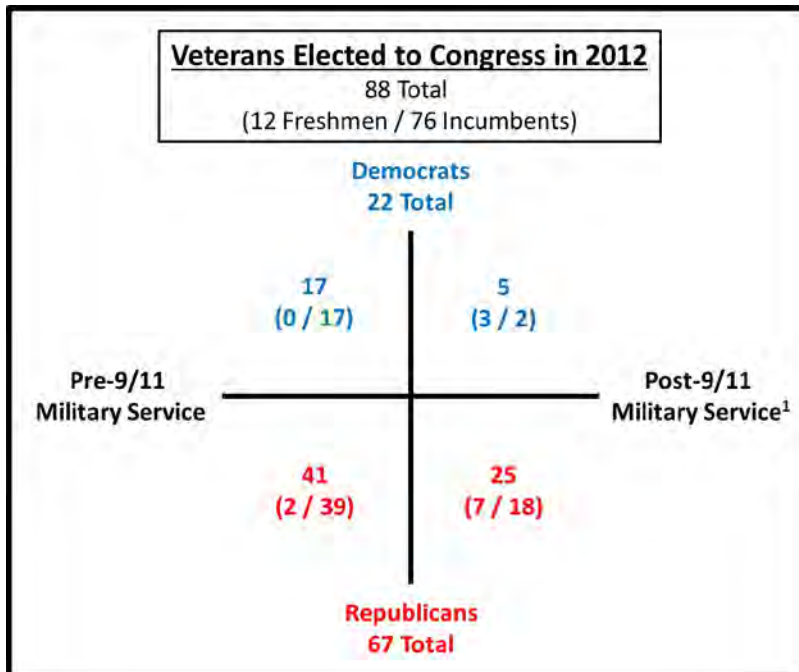


Figure 1: Veterans Elected to Congress in 2012

This study does not comprehensively account for all aspects of demography or military experience. For example, while the data above noted gender, this study did not explore other demographics, such as race, religion, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientation. Additionally, concerning gender, the subsequent analysis does not make any meaningful conclusions about the small number of female veterans represented within Congress other than to acknowledge that fact. Further, this study did not distinguish a specific definition of “veteran,” either by defining a minimum amount of military service, combat experience, active versus reserve status, or eligibility for veterans’ benefits. This study uses veteran and military experience interchangeably to refer to anyone with any military experience in general, without regard for specific service or component. Several distinctions, such as combat versus non-combat experience, service within a ground component versus the air or sea components, active versus

¹ For the purposes of this study, the post-9/11 cohort includes individuals with any post-9/11 military service.

reserve service, or specific time in service, may have bearing on personal views. These items, as well as other demographic considerations, were outside the scope of this study.

Of note, in addition to content analysis of the political communications of those elected to the 113th Congress, this work also compares the views of Congress members without military experience elected to the 113th Congress to those elected with military experience, where appropriate. This comparison does not result from a comprehensive analysis of nonveteran political communications, as an undertaking of that magnitude was clearly outside the scope of this project which focused specifically on the political communications of veterans in Congress. Instead, the analysis used policy positions determined by candidate responses to survey questions administered during the election season. This comparison is purely a quantitative one based on descriptive statistics, but provides a sense of the positions of the other 380 members of Congress who won election in 2012 in relation to those members with military experience.

Research and Analytical Methodologies

The materials analyzed encompassed defense spending and Afghanistan political communications occurring after 9/11, including speeches, public statements, news releases, and hearing testimony, from each veteran elected to Congress in 2012. Each member's data derived from four main internet sources: (1) Ballotpedia.org; (2) VoteSmart.org; (3) the Member's campaign website; and (4) the Member's House or Senate website, as applicable. The Project Vote Smart "Political Courage Test" established quantitative descriptive statistical data to determine each individual's stance on defense spending and the war in Afghanistan.²⁶ While some members did not respond to the survey, Project Vote Smart collected relevant political communications to establish each member's political position on these two issues. For those

members that Project Vote Smart could not determine a position, Project Vote Smart listed the members' position as "unknown." Additionally, results from data mining efforts within these websites among the issues areas of defense spending and Afghanistan netted a single, consolidated document for each member, typically averaging 200 pages. While further research could have provided additional sources, these websites provided a standardized sample of member views within the issue areas of interest. See Appendix B: List of Congress Members Elected in 2012.

In order to analyze the members' public communications from these sources, literature on political narrative, political discourse analysis, and political language were critical to understanding political speech. Suggesting strategies on assessing political speech, Shaul Shenhav produced a study on political narratives exploring how to evaluate whether those narratives represented political realities.²⁷ Shenhav offered two main approaches for evaluating speech. The first concerned understanding reality and narrative are chronologically structured, and thus, the analyst can understand the speech as a representation of reality. The second approach furthers the idea that human beings use political speech to bring coherence to reality.²⁸ His work further identified three main elements of narrative: (1) "events, characters, and background;" (2) "events in sequence;" and (3) "causality."²⁹ Similarly, Lene Hansen's *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* established the structural methods for analyzing political discourse through linking and differentiating. Through this process, "one has to pay particular attention to how signs are linked and juxtaposed, how they construct Self and Others, and how they legitimize particular policies."³⁰ Finally, Alessandro Duranti used a yearlong study of a Congressional campaign to analyze political narratives to demonstrate how different discursive strategies allow candidates "to construct and defend the coherence of their

actions.”³¹ These strategies, along with the knowledge of particular language wordplay, create positive or negative feelings toward particular policy outcomes.³²

With these analytical methods in mind, the following study used an inductive approach to ensure major themes and their corresponding minor themes emerged from the data itself instead of through preconceived notions.³³ The four major themes that emerged from the data included: (1) Opposes Defense Spending Cuts; (2) Supports Defense Spending Cuts; (3) Supports Military Operations in Afghanistan; and (4) Opposes Military Operations in Afghanistan. Throughout coding, the emerging minor themes informed the content analysis on the views of the Representatives and Senators as individuals as well as members of the pre- or post-9/11 membership. NVivo 10 software enabled thematic collation and automated the coding process. One individual coded all of the data, ensuring consistent and reliable coding across the data set. Once coded, both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data provided meaningful conclusions on the impact of military experience on Congress members’ views on defense-related issues. The following section will present the analysis from the opposing viewpoints of the defense spending data set.

Defense Spending

In today’s fiscally constrained environment, the Department of Defense’s budget is under incredible scrutiny for significant cuts to reduce government spending and the U.S. deficit in the coming years. Some Congress members, including Representative Don Young (R-AK, pre-9/11), believe existing defense spending reductions would be disastrous for national security. Representative Young said, “As the President’s own Secretary of Defense said, the mandatory defense cuts would cripple our military...[W]e risk having the smallest military since before

World War II, something that would have drastic implications as we try to deal with serious threats from North Korea and Iran.”³⁴ Contrarians argue that defense-spending cuts would not threaten national security and would actually help to improve it; the more important national security concern is getting America’s fiscal house in order. Additionally, those who support defense cuts argue antiquated threat assessments form the basis of America’s defense strategy, and that strategy does not address a realistic current or future threat environment.³⁵ These arguments mirror the opinions of other members of Congress with military experience. This section will demonstrate that the ideological divide seems to be along party lines among veterans within Congress, regardless of military service era, with arguments from both sides using the intrinsic moral authority of previous military experience to give weight to their particular views while focusing on tying defense imperatives to their constituents and districts.³⁶

While there are minor nuances within the arguments regarding defense expenditures, the debate separated into two camps – those who oppose cuts vis-à-vis those who advocate for cuts. In order to determine Congressional members within each group, the Project Vote Smart “Political Courage Test” provided a useful tool. The survey asked candidates, “In order to balance the budget, do you support reducing defense spending?”³⁷ The answers provided by the candidates or extrapolated from their communications became the basis for placing each candidate within an ideological camp. Of note, however, not every candidate returned answers to the test. Additionally, some candidates did not have communications on their views regarding defense spending available to extrapolate their positions or the communications available left their stance in question. In this case, seven members with military experience did not have a defined position and therefore, the following statistics do not account for them.

In the “Do Not Cut” camp, there were 16 post- and 32 pre-9/11 legislators, 55% of Congressional membership with military experience. Within the post-9/11 group, Republicans far outnumbered Democrats at 15 to 1. Similarly, there were 27 Republicans and 5 Democrats in the pre-9/11 group. Overall, 63% of Republican and 27% of Democratic veterans believed there should not be a reduction in defense spending. In contrast, in the “Cut” camp, there were 11 post- and 22 pre-9/11 legislators, 38% of the Congressional membership with military experience. Post-9/11 Republicans numbered eight, while Democrats numbered three. In the only Democratic plurality, there were 12 pre-9/11 Democrats and 10 pre-9/11 Republicans. Demonstrating nearly the same percentages as the “Do Not Cut” cohort in reverse, 68% of Democratic and 27% of Republican veterans believed there should be reductions in defense spending. Quantitatively, the issue of defense spending largely rests along partisan boundaries. By significantly higher percentages, a majority of Republicans eschewed defense cuts and a majority of Democrats supported defense reductions. Party affiliation seemed to have a greater influence on views than pre- or post-9/11 service. See Figure 2, “Defense Spending Views among Congress Members with Military Experience.”

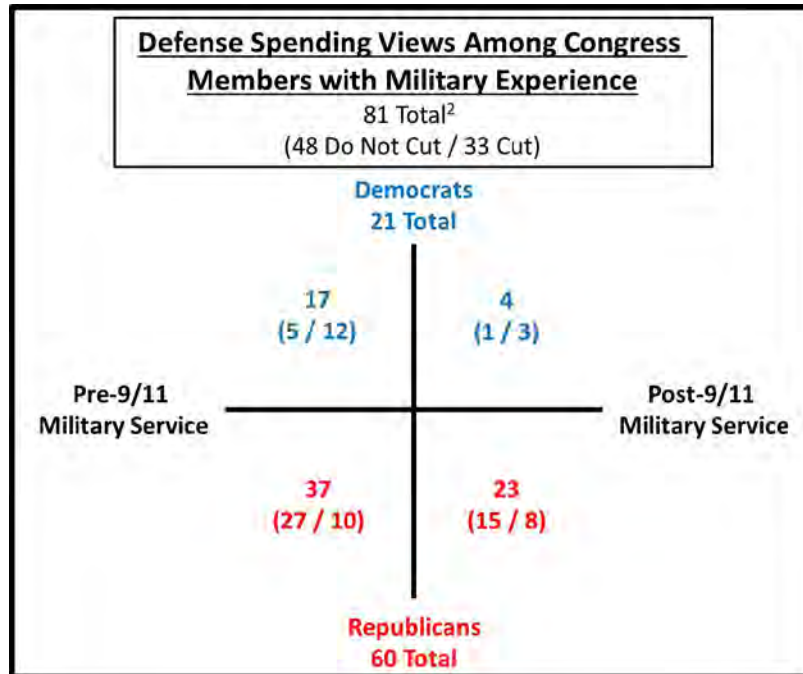


Figure 2: Defense Spending Views among Congress Members with Military Experience

When quantitatively comparing the positions of those with military experience to those without, nonveteran members of Congress are more willing to cut defense spending than their colleagues with military experience. Only 25% of the 380 nonveteran members as compared to 55% of veteran members opposed defense spending cuts, which is a significant difference between the two groups. Among nonveteran Republicans, 51% opposed reductions, which is 12 percentage points below veteran Republicans. For Democrats, the difference was far more striking as only 2% of nonveterans versus 27% of veterans opposed cuts. On the opposite side of the argument, those nonveteran members advocating defense spending reductions were more in line with the veterans. Overall, 43% of nonveterans versus 38% of veterans advocated cuts. Similarly, the percentages based on party affiliation largely tracked closely among those with

² Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of seven Congress members with military experience in its survey and evaluation of political communications on defense spending. These members were all House members and included one post-9/11 Democrat, two post-9/11 Republicans, and four pre-9/11 Republicans.

and without military experience. Sixty-eight percent of nonveteran Democrats compared to 63% of veterans advocated cuts. Similarly, 20% of nonveteran Republicans versus 27% of veteran Republicans advocated defense spending reductions. When coupled with the specific narratives used by members with military experience discussed in the following paragraphs, the differences among those with and without military experience indicate military experience matters in boosting the numbers of legislators who oppose defense spending cuts. See Figure 3, “Policy Position Comparison: Defense Spending Cuts.”

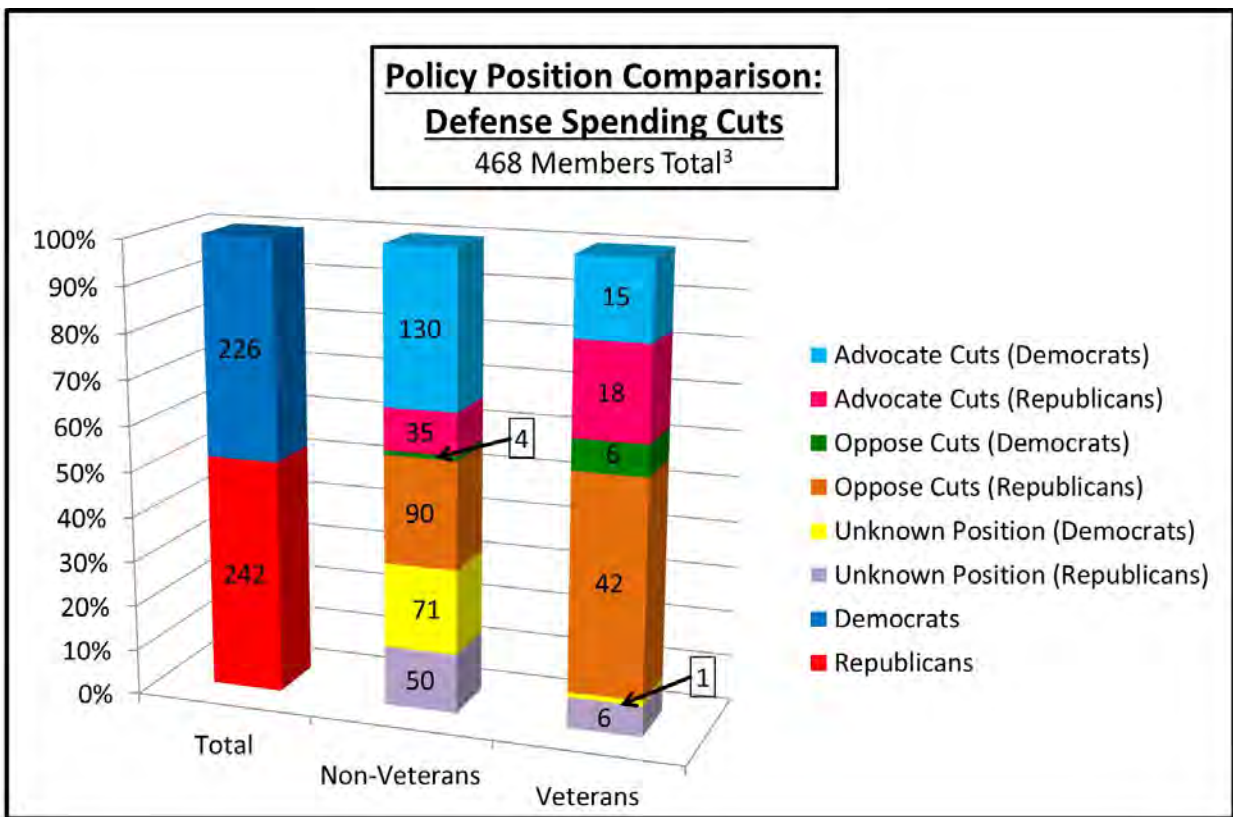


Figure 3: Policy Position Comparison: Defense Spending Cuts

³ This chart includes only those members elected in November 2012 for the 113th Congress.

Two specific and complementary narratives, “Cuts Threaten National Security and Freedom” and “Peace through Strength,” emerged among the communications from those veterans who opposed reductions to defense spending. Overwhelmingly, those against reductions spoke of cuts compromising national security. For example, Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA, post-9/11) stated, “It’s important that we understand what’s at stake with **such major defense cuts** and think long and hard before making any decision that **puts our security at risk.**”³⁸ Using this dramatic language indicates “a sense of heightened priority and drama, arguing that if the ‘security problem’ is not addressed it will have fatal consequences.”³⁹ In this case, the fatal consequences are the potential loss of freedoms and livelihood. Representative Andy Harris (R-MD, post-9/11) captured this sentiment in the following statement, “The **first responsibility** of the **federal government** is to **protect and defend** the American people. **Without a secure society**, America would **no longer be a free society**...**Peace** is kept **through strength.**”⁴⁰ These arguments, espoused by more than these cited examples, link national security to those rights and freedoms Americans believe endowed to them. To maintain these rights and freedoms, as the argument goes, the U.S. must maintain high defense spending to ensure “the effectiveness of the world’s greatest Armed Forces which provide **peace through strength.**”⁴¹ These arguments articulate the responsibility of the federal government for the security of the American people, outweighing any other government imperative.

Defense spending, however, does not just ensure “Peace through Strength” in regard to national security; it also creates jobs within the defense industry and improves the economy nationally and within Congressional districts. Among those who advocated sustained or increased defense expenditures, many politicians also touted the importance of defense spending for their constituents. With his Congressional District comprising the San Diego metropolitan

area, where significant military bases and defense contractors reside, Representative Hunter focused attention on the inter-dependency of static or growing defense spending and his constituents' employment opportunities. "Next to impairing national security, the **greatest impact will be on jobs**. America's defense and aerospace **companies are already bracing** for sequestration and unless resolution is reached before January 1, **sizeable job loss is predicted**. As evidence, Lockheed Martin **eliminated 32 positions in San Diego alone** and 740 jobs nationwide, due to the first tranche of \$450 billion in cuts."⁴² Other Congressmen, like Representatives Joe Heck (R-NV, post-9/11), Joe Wilson (R-SC, post-9/11), Bobby Scott (D-VA, pre-9/11), and Scott Rigell (R-VA, pre-9/11), had similar sentiments based on the dependence of their districts and states to the defense industries and military infrastructure. The loss of "**defense contractors** in Nevada...would **cripple an already weak economy**"⁴³ while "[t]en cents of every defense dollar is spent in Virginia, and 20 percent of all jobs in Virginia are **dependent on military spending...cuts** to the military...would **devastate the local Hampton Roads economy**."⁴⁴ Politicians use these types of statements to tie a national issue back to local relevance, attempting to establish public support for the position among constituents based on shared concerns. See Figure 4,"Democrats Opposing Defense Spending Cuts" and Figure 5, "Republicans Opposing Defense Spending Cuts."

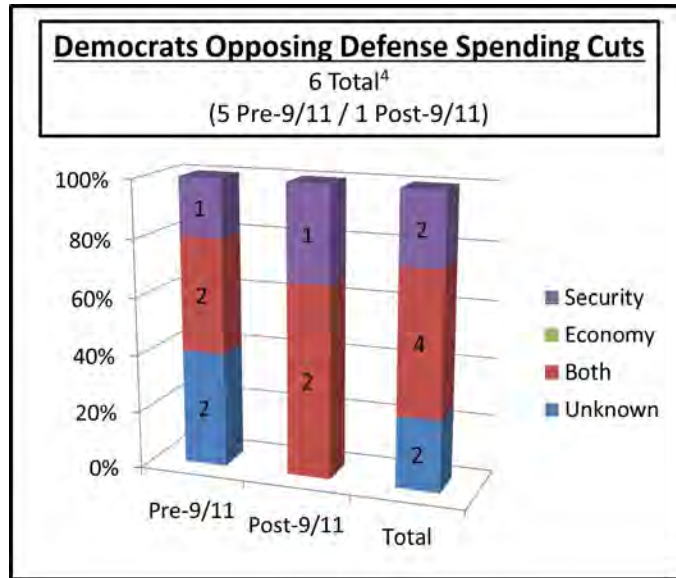


Figure 4: Democrats Opposing Defense Spending Cuts

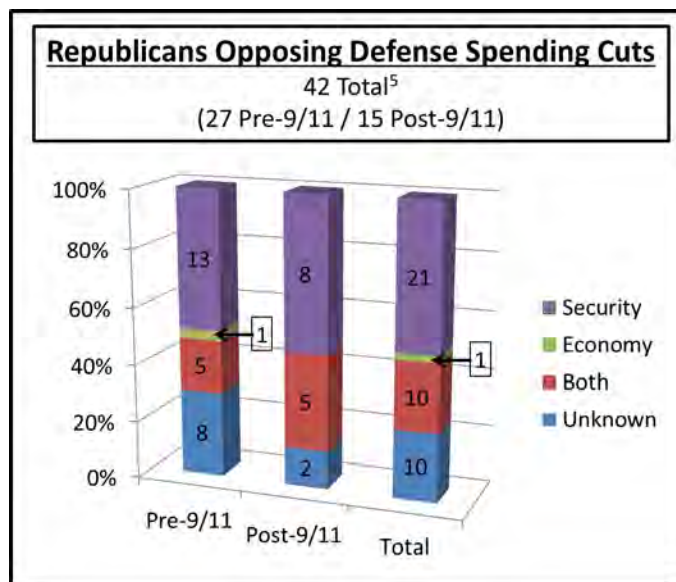


Figure 5: Republicans Opposing Defense Spending Cuts

⁴ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the defense spending cuts. There was one post-9/11 Democrat from the House in this group. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

⁵ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of seven members on the defense spending cuts. All Republicans were House members and included two post-9/11 and four pre-9/11 Republicans. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

In contrast to those in opposition, the legislators who support cuts in defense spending frame their argument in a similar manner by addressing national security concerns, but insist the defense cuts are manageable or do not impinge upon national security. Believing there are unnecessary expenditures that can be reduced, freshman Representative Jim Bridenstine (R-OK, post-9/11) promoted the idea of “...**support** [for] **smart reductions** in defense spending that **don't jeopardize national security.**”⁴⁵ A primary mechanism for advancing this argument is the substitution of the economy instead of the military as the determinant of national security, creating the narrative “It’s the Economy, Stupid.” According to Representative Tim Griffin (R-AR, post-9/11) and echoed by many of his colleagues, “...**national debt is a grave threat** to our **economic and national security...**”⁴⁶ The key for Representative Griffin and others in this camp is that “we **don't weaken our military** while we spend scarce and precious taxpayer dollars more wisely.”⁴⁷ This narrative focuses on reducing defense spending to the minimum level essential for maintaining the U.S. military as “the **strongest and best** equipped in the world.”⁴⁸

As such, advocates of defense spending cuts believe all government programs and expenditures are subject to scrutiny for reductions in budgeting, especially through the elimination of waste and redundancy, leading to the “Everything on the Table” narrative. Nearly unanimously among those supporting defense spending cuts, Congress members professed, “We need to look at some serious cuts in the budget and **everything** should be **on the table including defense spending.**”⁴⁹ Members of this camp believe there is a great deal of waste within the Defense Department, allowing cuts to have a minimal effect on personnel, training, readiness, and equipment. Discussing the imperative to cut \$100 million in outlays for the development of a new military flight suit, Representative Adam Kinzinger (R-IL, post-9/11) stated “we must make **tough decisions** with regard **to military needs and military wants.**”⁵⁰ Similarly,

Representative Griffin argued against continued funding for an alternate engine for the F-35 fighter program, saying “it is militarily **unnecessary and a wasteful** use of extremely limited and precious taxpayer dollars.”⁵¹ As a means for eliminating sources of waste, many members suggested “**auditing the Pentagon** and requiring that it produce financial documents like any private sector business” because “[w]aste, fraud and abuse are endemic at the Pentagon.”⁵² With the budget deficit and national debt at historic levels, these Congress members believe, paraphrasing President Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The United States should spend as much as necessary on national defense, but not one penny more.”⁵³

Like their ideological opponents, members supporting defense cuts tie their views back to the needs of their constituents and districts, albeit at a lower rate.⁶ As a means for avoiding tax increases, Representative Griffin used partisan language to bring the imperative for cuts back to his home state of Arkansas. “Unlike the President, who favors **raising taxes on hardworking Arkansans**, my colleagues and I reject those indiscriminate cuts in favor of **sensible and targeted savings** through the elimination of slush funds and bailouts, and by **controlling spending and reducing wasteful, duplicative programs**.”⁵⁴ In a different take on her responsibility to her constituents and district, freshman Representative Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI, post-9/11) tied defense cuts in spending on the war in Afghanistan to improving American infrastructure and services at home, especially her home state of Hawaii. “We should...**take the \$191 billion that will be spent in Afghanistan** in Fiscal Years 2012-2013 and use it specifically **to invest in rebuilding our own nation** through long-term infrastructure projects, such as roads, airports, and harbors, which are **critically important to our tourism industry and for**

⁶ For those veteran members responding to the Project Vote Smart survey who advocated defense spending cuts, five Democrats (three pre-9/11 and two post-9/11) and six Republicans (two pre-9/11 and four post-9/11) tied their arguments for defense spending cuts back to the needs of their constituents and districts. In contrast, four Democrats (two pre-9/11 and two post-9/11) and 11 Republicans (six pre-9/11 and five post-9/11) used constituent and district concerns in their arguments opposing defense spending cuts.

supplying our basic necessities.”⁵⁵ While members who believe in defense spending cuts do connect their arguments back to their constituents and districts, this narrative occurred less frequently than in the arguments of those who believe defense spending sacrosanct. See Figure 6, “Democrats Advocating Defense Spending Cuts” and Figure 7, “Republicans Advocating Defense Spending Cuts.”

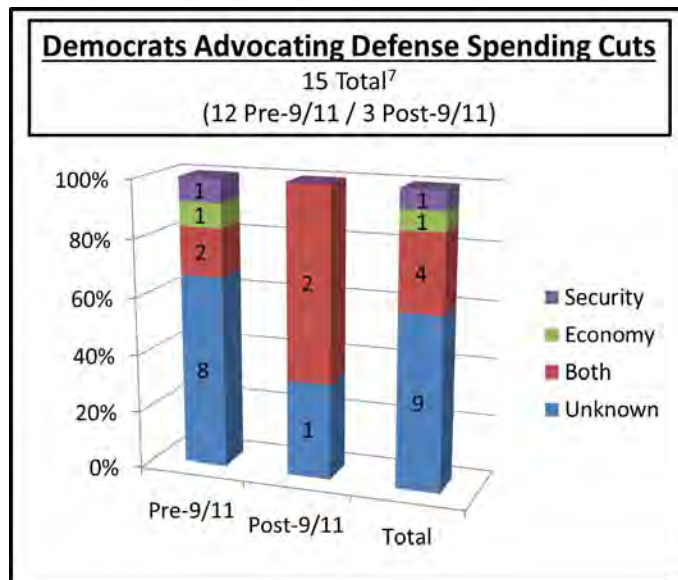


Figure 6: Democrats Advocating Defense Spending Cuts

⁷ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the defense spending cuts. There was one post-9/11 Democrat from the House in this group. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

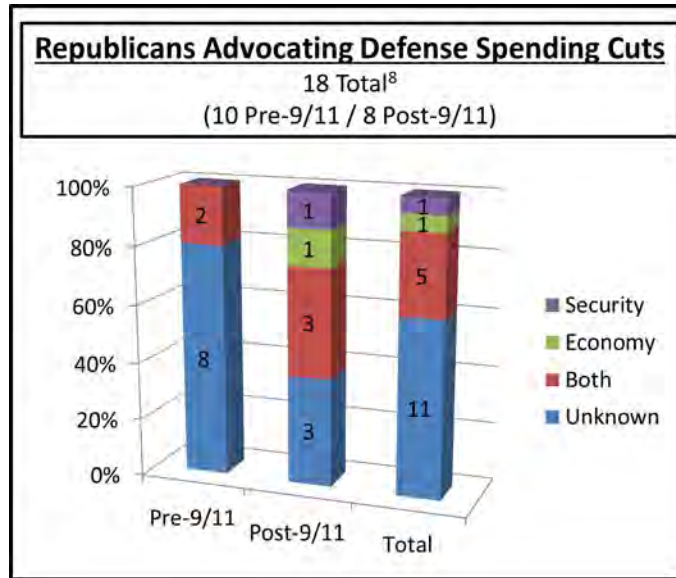


Figure 7: Republicans Advocating Defense Spending Cuts

In the same way, using their military experience within their policy communications, members attempted to build credibility in defense-related issues by using the narrative that their experience provided a knowledge and expertise that only one who has served could possibly have.⁵⁶ Duranti called this discursive strategy the “narrative of personal experiences.”⁵⁷ Each member used their military experience to support their stance on defense spending based on the experience or mindset that distinguishes those who have from those who have not served. “They problematize their actions, comparing past, present, and future decisions or experiences in search of an overarching logic, a principle or series of principles that justifies their choice...to take a particular stand on an issue...coherence is represented as CONTINUITY of actions, thoughts, and feelings (emphasis in original).”⁵⁸ In their particular stance, they subtly communicated that

⁸ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of seven members on the defense spending cuts. All Republicans were House members and included two post-9/11 and four pre-9/11 Republicans. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

the opinions of those without military experience are less valid or persuasive because they do not have the credibility intrinsic in prior military service.

While these two philosophical arguments on defense spending are at odds, both proponents and opponents of cuts in military spending use similar language to convey their ideas, referencing and depending upon their military experience to provide the moral authority and credibility to make their arguments. For example, Representative Paul Broun (R-GA, pre-9/11) supported his stance against defense cuts by saying, “As a **Marine and former Naval medical officer, I understand** that the **federal government’s first obligation** is to the safety and **security of our nation.**”⁵⁹ Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS, post-9/11) used, not only his own military service and experience, but also the experience of a family member to demonstrate his moral authority on defense spending. “As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I am working closely with my colleagues to ensure our **military is the best equipped and most prepared** in the world. As a **retired Air Force Reservist and the father of an Air Force intelligence officer...**” Members in opposition made similar arguments about the relevance of their military experience toward making meaningful and thoughtful cuts to defense spending. Freshman Representative Tammy Duckworth (D-IL, post-9/11) stated on her campaign website, “**I can speak with a unique voice** on issues such as **cutting defense spending and fighting waste and inefficiency** at the Department of Defense.”⁶⁰

Political partisanship, instead of the timeframe of military experience, defined the views of those on each side of the defense spending debate, but both sides used their prior military experience to support and legitimize their views while also ensuring they made their arguments relevant to those within their districts. Republicans overwhelmingly opposed (63%) defense spending cuts, while Democrats overwhelmingly supported cuts (68%). When comparing with

members of Congress lacking military experience, the partisan split on the issue position is quite similar. Among those who oppose defense spending cuts, however, veterans increase the total number of those in opposition by 5%. It is possible that members with military experience could provide the tiebreaker in close defense spending debates. Nonetheless, the structure of both sides of the argument relied on prior military experience to give authority to their policy pronouncements. Additionally, understanding their future re-electability depended upon support from voters within their districts, members attempted to connect their position to the needs or concerns of their constituents. Many of these techniques proved valuable in communicating their views on the war in Afghanistan as well, as demonstrated in the following section.

Afghanistan

Tied to defense spending due to its high costs in treasure as well as blood, the war in Afghanistan is a point of contention, even among those members of Congress with military experience. As the war continues into its eleventh year, public support for the military's efforts in Afghanistan has steadily declined, from a high of 88% in 2001⁶¹ to a low of 25% in 2012.⁶² Veterans in Congress also disagreed on continued support for the war in Afghanistan through the planned withdrawal of combat forces by 2014. Those supporting the war point to the continued threat of violent extremism and use of Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists if Americans do not eradicate that threat. Proponents believe it is better to "take the fight to them overseas and abroad instead of having them come to our backyard, to our schools and our playgrounds."⁶³ Opponents of the war in Afghanistan believe the high costs in both lives and treasure raise questions about the efficacy of continuing the fight until 2014.⁶⁴ Additionally, they argue American and Coalition military efforts eliminated the Al Qaeda threat, making continued

operations immensely wasteful when the American people and the economy are suffering.⁶⁵ The ideological divide again is along party lines; however, policy differences on the question of continued support to operations in Afghanistan exist among post- and pre-9/11 veterans while the members' military experience figures less prominently than in the defense spending debate.

In the debate on Afghanistan, the members of the "Support" and "Do Not Support" camps do not enjoy solidarity within their particular policy stance. There are wide ranging differences in each camp for what supporting or not supporting the Afghan war means. Again, the VoteSmart.org "Political Courage Test" was useful and asked candidates, "Do you support United States' combat operations in Afghanistan?"⁶⁶ The answers provided by the candidates or extrapolated from their communications became the basis for placing each candidate within an ideological camp. Of note, however, some candidates did not return answers to the test. Additionally, some did not have clear communications on their Afghanistan policy positions to extrapolate their views. In this case, 19 members with military experience did not define their position and thus, the following statistics did not account for them.

In the "Support" camp, there were 18 post- and 31 pre-9/11 legislators, 56% of veterans in Congress. Within the post-9/11 group, Republicans far outnumbered Democrats 17 to 1. Similarly, there were 27 Republicans and 4 Democrats in the pre-9/11 group. Overall, 67% of Republican and 22% of Democratic veterans supported continued operations in Afghanistan. Among those in opposition, there were four post- and 16 pre-9/11 legislators, 23% of the Congressional membership with military experience. Post-9/11 Republicans numbered one, while Democrats numbered three. Similar to the debate on defense spending, Democrats enjoyed a plurality with 10 pre-9/11 Democrats to six pre-9/11 Republicans. Overall, 59% of Democratic and 11% of Republican veterans did not support continued combat operations in

Afghanistan. The two sides of this issue are quantitatively partisan. Considerably more Republicans than Democrats supported continued combat operations in Afghanistan. Whereas post-9/11 veteran candidates split between those who wish to cut versus maintain defense spending, the vast majority, approximately 62%, of post-9/11 candidates with military experience support the Afghan war. See Figure 8, “Positions on the War in Afghanistan among Congress Members with Military Experience.”

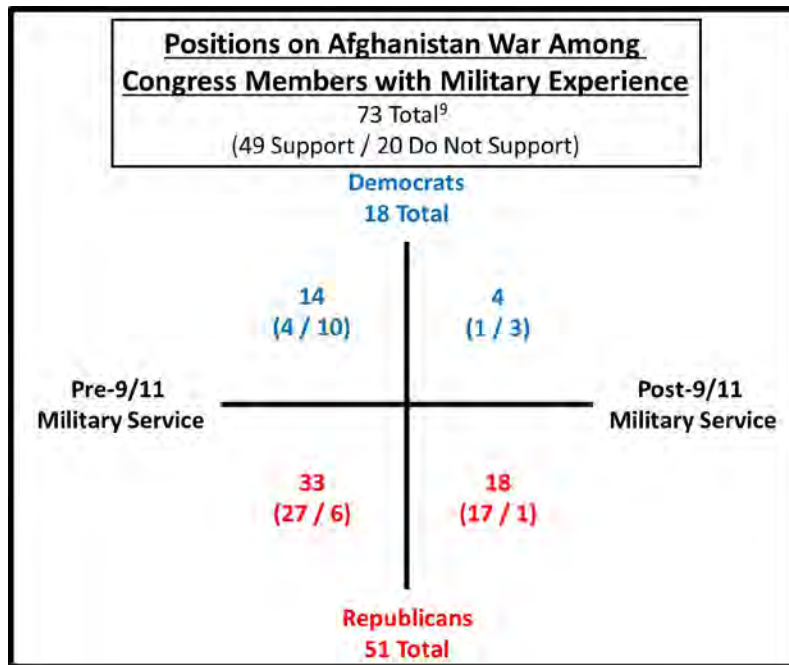


Figure 8: Positions on Afghanistan War among Congress Members with Military Experience

When quantitatively comparing the positions of those with military experience to those without, nonveteran members of Congress support the war in Afghanistan at a lower rate than their colleagues with military experience. Only 40% of the 380 nonveteran members as compared to 56% of veteran members supported the war in Afghanistan, which is a significant

⁹ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 Congress members in its survey and evaluation of political communications on the war in Afghanistan. These members were all House members and included one post-9/11 Democrat, seven post-9/11 Republicans, three pre-9/11 Democrats, and eight pre-9/11 Republicans.

difference between the two groups. Among nonveteran Republicans, 68% supported the war, which is directly in line with 67% of veteran Republicans who support the war. For Democrats, the difference was 16% of nonveterans versus 22% of veterans supported the war. On the opposite side of the argument, those nonveteran members opposing the war in Afghanistan were more in line with the veterans. Overall, 38% of nonveterans versus 44% of veterans opposed the war. Similarly, the percentages based on party affiliation largely tracked closely among those with and without military experience. In opposition, nonveteran Democrats amounted to 62% in comparison to 59% of veterans. Similarly, 9% of nonveteran Republicans versus 11% of veteran Republicans opposed continued military operations in Afghanistan. When coupled with the specific narratives used by members with military experience discussed in the following paragraphs, the differences among veterans and nonveterans indicate military experience matters in bolstering the numbers of legislators who support the Afghanistan war, especially among post-9/11 veterans. See Figure 9, “Policy Position Comparison: Afghanistan War.”

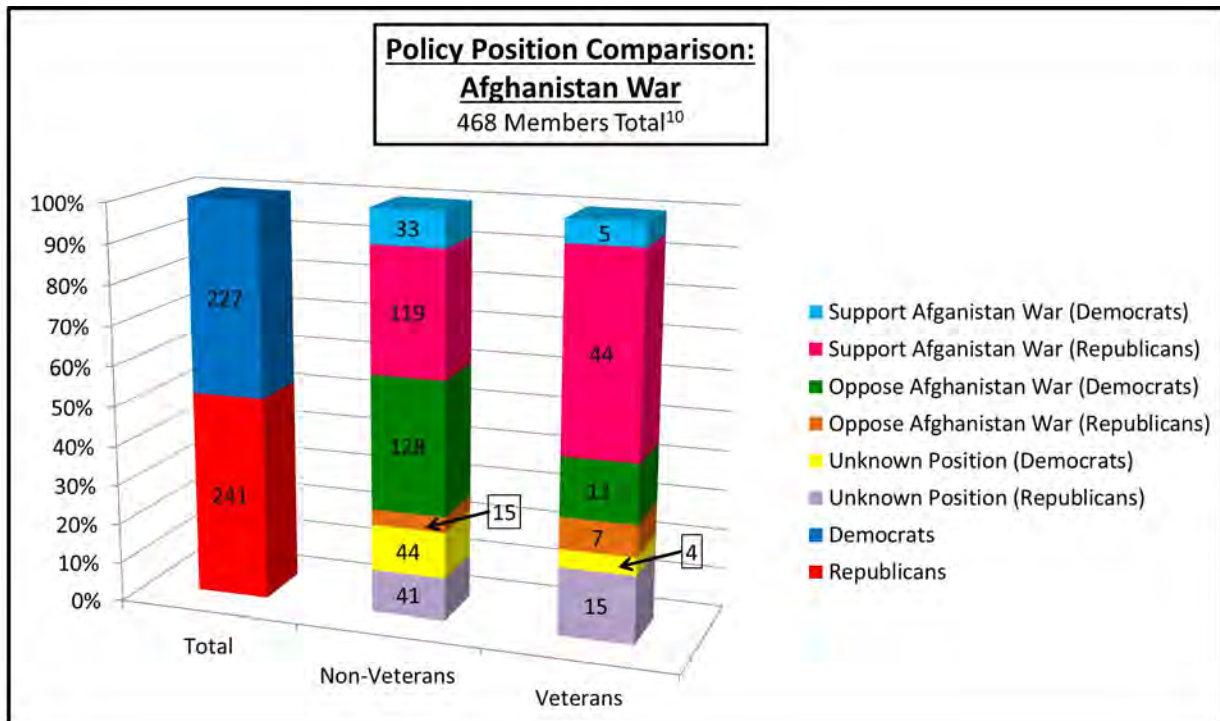


Figure 9: Policy Position Comparison: Afghanistan War

For those who support the war in Afghanistan, they focus on three specific narratives to support their position, including “Afghanistan is a National Security Concern,” “Troops Must Have the Resources to Win,” and “Commanders on the Ground Determine Timetables.” First, proponents of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan believe Afghanistan continues to pose a national security concern. According to Representative Kinzinger, “Stability in **Afghanistan** remains a top priority in the interest of our national security...Our mission must be about the long-term safety of our nation, not the next election – this is something we cannot lose sight of.”⁶⁷ Afghanistan, as this argument goes, could return to its historical roots as a safe haven for extremist groups and terrorist organizations as well as a base for these groups to conduct attacks against Americans and their interests. Representative Brad Westrup (R-OH, post-9/11) captured this sentiment by saying, “Whether it’s Iran, Iraq, **Afghanistan**, Pakistan, or other

¹⁰ This chart includes only those members elected in November 2012 for the 113th Congress.

places around the world – there are still far **too many havens for terrorists who want to kill Americans.**⁶⁸ Beyond killing Americans, others fear that “[s]hould the **Afghan government collapse** and the **country fall back** into the hands of the **Taliban or other extremists**, terrorists would **not only have a safe haven** to operate from, they would also have **control of a country with dangerous proximity to an unstable and nuclear-armed Pakistan.**”⁶⁹ Using this narrative, legislators make the war in Afghanistan a matter of “political urgency”⁷⁰ because of the threat to national security and vital interests “demand...action and responsibility.”⁷¹

The second narrative, “Troops Must Have Resources to Win,” frames the argument in terms of those who support the troops against those who do not. Representative Mike Coffman (R-CO, post-9/11) makes the moral argument: “By **not putting in the necessary resources to win** in Afghanistan, we are continuing the same old policies of **dragging out a war** that has already gone on for **too long** and has **cost too many lives.**”⁷² Senator Wicker also makes the moral distinction of between winning and losing by saying, “The only way we could **fail** in Afghanistan is if we have a **government unwilling to support our troops** on the ground. I will work with my colleagues to **ensure** General Petraeus and our brave men and women have **the resources they need to succeed.**”⁷³ Because of the large partisan difference between those who support versus those who do not support the war in Afghanistan, Republicans cast themselves as the morally good actors through their support for the troops fighting in Afghanistan. “**Republicans** are committed to doing everything possible to support our troops and give them all **the resources they need to succeed** in their mission in Afghanistan.”⁷⁴ Republicans, however, are not the only advocates for providing the necessary resources to military forces in Afghanistan. Representative Sanford Bishop, Jr. (D-GA, pre-9/11) declared, “I will continue working to **ensure** that our **soldiers have the best weapons, body armor, equipment,**

materials, and family support to successfully accomplish their mission.⁷⁵ By using this framework, Afghanistan war supporters from both parties make the choice of supporting the engaged military forces the only “morally good” conclusion since ensuring the troops have the resources they need reduces loss of life, shortens the war, and allows Americans to win.⁷⁶

Finally, the last prominent narrative among supporters of the war in Afghanistan, places strategy, resource, and timeline decisions in the hands of those in theater managing the war effort and leading the troops. Expressing this view, Representative Wilson asserted, “Our **Generals** in the field are **best equipped to decide** what our **troops need and what the mission demands.**”⁷⁷ “Commanders on the Ground Determine Timetables” suggests a historical precedent of poor decisions made in Washington D.C. by politicians about the conduct of the Vietnam War.⁷⁸ Representative Sam Johnson reflected this sentiment when he said, “As a former prisoner of war in **Vietnam**, I learned a lot about **how not to fight** a war. Specifically, you **cannot run a war from the White House and win.**”⁷⁹ In the case of Afghanistan, proponents supporting the war believe “[m]ilitary **commanders on the ground** in the war zones **should make operational decisions, not bureaucrats in Washington.**”⁸⁰ Senator Tom Carper (D-DE, pre-9/11) supported the drawdown in the war in Afghanistan but only “at a rate that is **dependent on the conditions on the ground** and does not undermine the significant yet reversible progress made over the past year.”⁸¹ These members of Congress believe broadcasting military drawdown timetables compromises the efficacy of military operations “and allows [enemies] to simply **wait us out.**”⁸² Further, Representative Darrell Issa (R-CA, pre-9/11) had concerns that “[**President Obama’s**] **insistence on a timetable** for leaving Afghanistan before his plan has even begun casts **serious doubt about his commitment to a successful mission.**”⁸³ Every member of Congress supporting the war in Afghanistan made statements indicating their belief in the

primacy of the commander on the ground for determining the course of the war, requirements, and timetable for withdrawal. See Figure 10, “Democrats Supporting Afghanistan War” and Figure 11, “Republicans Supporting Afghanistan War.”

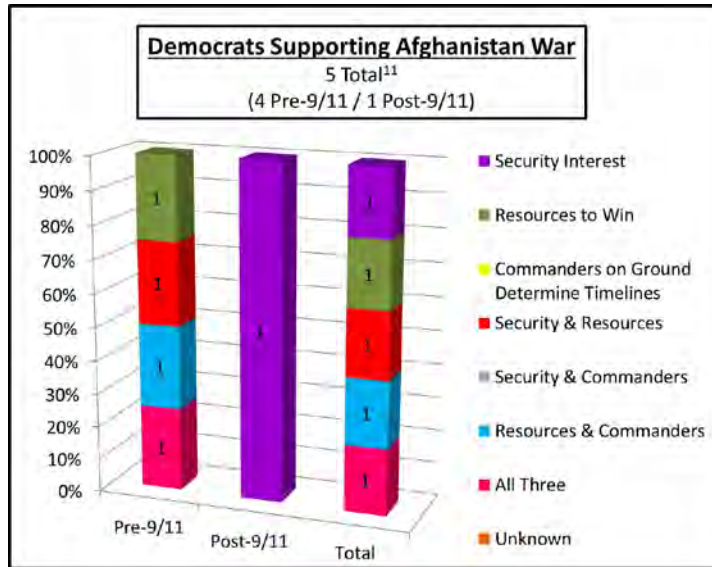


Figure 10: Democrats Supporting Afghanistan War

¹¹ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the war in Afghanistan. All Democrats were House members and included one post- and three pre-9/11 Democrats. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

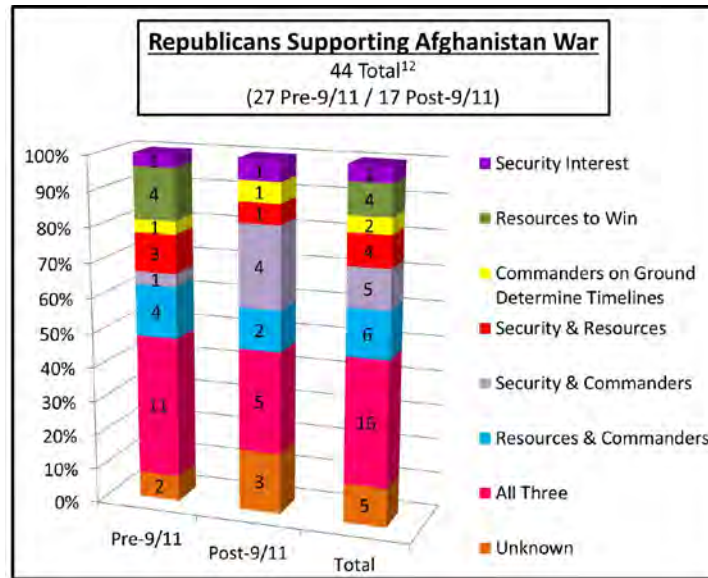


Figure 11: Republicans Supporting Afghanistan War

Opponents of the war in Afghanistan, in contrast, focus on the narratives: “Afghanistan is Not a National Security Concern” and “Waste of Lives and Money.” The theme of “Afghanistan is Not a National Security Concern” has as its basis the belief that the war in Afghanistan solely intended to bring Usama Bin Laden to justice and eradicate the threat of al Qaeda. According to this view, other nation-building missions in Afghanistan amount to mission creep.

Representative Gary Peters (D-MI, post-9/11) communicates this belief by saying, “President Obama took bold and decisive action to **kill Usama bin Laden** and thanks to America's Navy SEALS, he **no longer poses a threat to America**. After more than a decade of war in Afghanistan, I believe that we must make it a **priority to move up the timeline** to end our combat mission **by the end of 2013**, a year earlier than previously announced.”⁸⁴ Since the threat America went to war against is gone, many in this camp believe it is time to focus on the

¹² Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the war in Afghanistan. All Republicans were House members and included seven post- and eight pre-9/11 Republicans. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

problems within the United States. Freshman Representative Gabbard believes, “We have **decimated Al Qaeda in Afghanistan**, we have **killed Usama bin Laden**, and we have provided the Afghan people and government with the tools they need to succeed... We must **take the \$2.5 billion** a week we are pouring into Afghanistan to prop up a corrupt government and invest those resources in **rebuilding our own economy** here at home.”⁸⁵ Similarly, Representative Charlie Rangel (D-NY, pre-9/11) held, “With **al Qaeda forces largely eradicated** our nation needs to **refocus** on our current **domestic issues**.”⁸⁶ With Usama Bin Laden dead and al Qaeda destroyed, the imperative for continued operations in Afghanistan has passed and, therefore, the military should withdraw immediately so focus can return to assisting the American people.

For others in this camp, the Afghanistan war is a “Waste of Lives and Money” and must stop now. Representative John Duncan, Jr. (R-TN, pre-9/11) “declared the war ‘**a tremendous waste of blood and treasure**’ nearly two years ago and has called repeatedly for President Barack Obama to bring American troops home,”⁸⁷ especially since Usama Bin Laden’s death. Likewise, Representative Jose Serrano (D-NY, pre-9/11) condemned the fact that “[t]hese ongoing wars have now **cost trillions of dollars, thousands of American lives** and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi, Afghan, and Libyan lives. Not only are these extraordinary direct **costs in terms of money and lives**, but the continually **escalating investment in defense** has led to **underinvestment at home**.”⁸⁸ They do not see any rational benefits from continuing the war in Afghanistan, especially with the thousands of military members maimed or killed, and the poor state of the American economy after more than a decade of war. See Figure 12, “Democrats Opposing Afghanistan War” and Figure 13, “Republicans Opposing Afghanistan War.”

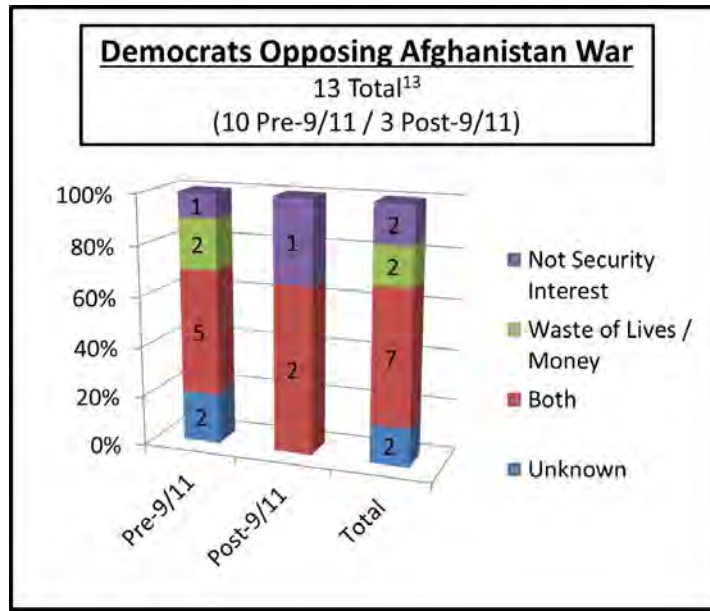


Figure 12: Democrats Opposing Afghanistan War

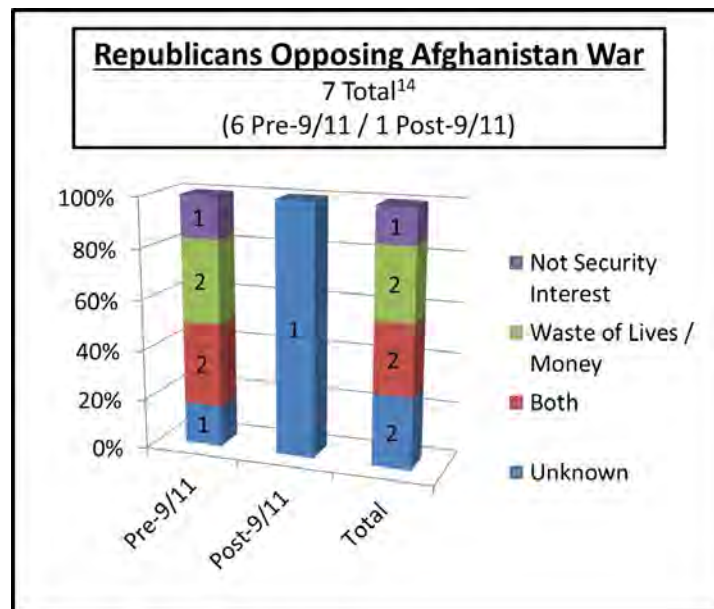


Figure 13: Republicans Opposing Afghanistan War

¹³ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the war in Afghanistan. All Democrats were House members and included one post- and three pre-9/11 Democrats. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

¹⁴ Project Vote Smart did not establish the position of 19 members on the war in Afghanistan. All Republicans were House members and included seven post- and eight pre-9/11 Republicans. Those failing answer the survey were not included in the “Unknown” category in the chart. The “Unknown” category refers to those who answered the survey question but whose political communications did not indicate a particular narrative supporting their position.

Like the arguments for and against defense spending, members on both sides of the debate on the Afghanistan war rely on national security arguments. Both sides use their military experience to demonstrate their expertise and credibility in their policy views. For example, Representative Phil Roe (R-TN, pre-9/11) sustained his stance supporting the war and decisions made by commanders on the ground, **“I served in the Army in Korea, and saw what happened in Vietnam when Washington politicians micromanaged a war and prevented commanders from having the resources available** which they thought would win. I will never support a plan in which I think we are tying the hands of our brave service-members.”⁸⁹ Freshman Representative Gabbard, on the other hand, credibly indicated she understood the current conflict because she was a post-9/11 veteran versus a veteran from an earlier conflict. **“As an Iraq war veteran...**I am extremely heartened by President Obama’s decision to bring our troops home from Iraq, and I am urging him to also **immediately withdraw our troops from Afghanistan** in a safe and orderly fashion. After expending so many years of blood and money in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it’s now time for America to focus on rebuilding our own nation.”⁹⁰ Here again is the “narrative of personal experiences”⁹¹ to support a stance on the war in Afghanistan based on the experience or mindset that distinguishes those who have from those who have not served. Used to different effect, members bolstered their arguments with references to their military experience, providing the impression of added perspective, expertise, and knowledge only gained through having “been there, done that.”

While political partisanship featured prominently as a determinant for policy views, post- or pre-9/11 veteran status defined those on each side of the Afghan war debate and both sides used their prior military experience to support and legitimize their views. Although less prominent, members on both sides of the debate relied on prior military experience to give moral

authority to their views. Consistent narratives from both sides of the argument united each viewpoint against their opposition, although variations existed. Sixty-seven percent of Republicans overwhelmingly support the war in Afghanistan, while 59% of Democrats overwhelmingly do not support the war in Afghanistan. When compared with nonveteran legislators, the partisan split on the war is similar; however, the significant difference is within the number of those supporting the war in Afghanistan. Only 40% of the 380 nonveteran members as compared to 56% of veteran members supported the war in Afghanistan, which is a significant difference between the two groups. When coupled with the veterans' political narratives, the differences between veterans and nonveterans indicate military experience matters for increasing the numbers of legislators who support the war. It is possible, like with potential defense spending debates, that veterans in Congress could provide the support necessary to enact legislation supporting the war in Afghanistan.

Conclusions

Military experience does indeed provide knowledge, perspective, and a perceived moral authority on defense issues, and military experience appeared to drive greater opposition to defense spending cuts and increased support for the war in Afghanistan among veterans in Congress. More importantly, however, party affiliation and district concerns consistently proved more influential in determining defense issue positions and political rhetoric. This points to some other areas of concern with the waning military experience in Congress and further areas for future research and study.

Despite the polar opposite views of Feaver and Gelpi compared to Bianco and Markham, the answer to the question of the relevance military experience for members of Congress is

somewhere in the middle. Feaver and Gelpi found military experience does matter when Congress considers military or defense issues, especially when related to the use and level of force.⁹² Conversely, the analysis by Bianco and Markham determined that veteran status had small impacts on how a legislator voted as well as on the overall support for military issues.⁹³ These two previous studies focused on voting patterns versus content analysis of political communications as this one did. As such, this paper demonstrates the importance of military experience for framing the narrative with regard to defense-related issue as only one with military experience can. Party affiliation and constituent concerns still played a large role in members' behaviors and views, but discounting military experience entirely disregards the socialization that occurred in prior military service. According to Feaver and Gelpi, the military "shapes individuals' attitudes"⁹⁴ and "teaches lessons about the role of military force in American foreign policy and lessons about how military force ought to be used."⁹⁵ This military socialization shapes individuals' identities as well as world outlooks and "[t]hese lessons do not appear to be forgotten when individuals leave the military and enter civilian life."⁹⁶ Further, studies on Congressional voting behaviors indicate "nonveterans are somewhat less likely than veterans to be 'pro-defense.'"⁹⁷

This socialization seems at work when examining the difference between veteran and nonveteran Democrats elected in 2012. As noted in the discussion on defense spending, Democrats with military experience and those without were not in universal agreement on the question of reductions to defense spending. Among the small pool of 22 Democrats with military experience, six (27%) opposed defense spending cuts in contrast to only four (2%) nonveteran Democrats of those elected in 2012 holding the same position. It seems military experience in this case may have uniquely informed this policy position of veteran Democrats

toward a “pro-defense” posture.⁹⁸ While military experience and socialization may be at work, Democrats, regardless of military experience, overwhelmingly supported defense spending cuts in opposition to the vast majority of Republicans with and without military experience.

Since military socialization remains a part of individual identity and world outlook beyond the end of military service, the trend of military identification with the Republican Party is a specifically troubling result. As demonstrated in the statistics of the members of Congress with military experience elected in 2012, 75% (66) were Republicans. In contrast, nonveteran Republicans in the same elections amounted to only 46% (175) of nonveterans elected. Further, the content analysis of the political communications of those Congress members with prior military experience demonstrated that issue positions often consolidated along party lines, with 63% of the Republicans in opposition to defense spending cuts and 67% of Republicans supporting the Afghan war effort. These positions demonstrated the tendency for Republicans as a party to both oppose defense spending cuts and support the war in Afghanistan. This tendency tracks with nonveteran Republicans elected in 2012 opposing defense spending cuts at 51% and supporting the war in Afghanistan at 68%. The 12% difference between veteran and nonveteran Republicans in opposition to defense spending cuts indicate a propensity to support defense spending among veterans that might make the difference in a tight Congressional vote and reflected the “pro-defense” predisposition identified above.⁹⁹

Continuing these trends point toward a Congress with, not only fewer veterans, but also a single party affiliation. As military members and veterans become more Republican and conservative, the number of Democratic members of Congress with military experience is likely to decline further if this trend continues. In a simple comparison between the pre-and post-9/11 cohorts, only 17 (29%) of 58 pre-9/11 and five (23%) of 22 post-9/11 Congress members with

military experience were Democrats. This generational comparison indicates a gradual decline in veteran Democrats, just as the proportion of Republicans in the pre- and post-9/11 groups increased from 71% to 77%, respectively. While this is a simplistic representation and limited data comparison of the continued Republicanization of veterans in Congress, this drift toward isolation within one particular political party creates the potential for valuable perspective and military expertise to get lost in partisan noise. Feaver and Kohn observed that “[d]eveloping a partisan identity harms the U.S. military and national defense. Viewed as ‘just another interest group,’ the armed forces would lose public and financial support. Uniformed advice would be less trusted by civilian leadership, and, eventually, military professionalism would deteriorate.”¹⁰⁰ If military members, veterans, and, by extension, veteran Congress members are overwhelmingly Republican and conservative,¹⁰¹ it is possible they can become more of a conservative interest group, losing the support of Democrats or liberals in the process.¹⁰²

In order to examine this trend more closely and determine whether it is a justified and legitimate concern, future studies could include further analysis on the general decline of veterans in Congress while also evaluating the views of veterans in Congress on other defense and foreign affairs as well as domestic issues. First, studies should further explore how military experience shapes the views of members of Congress by using interviews and further research to determine whether and how military experience affects defense issue positions. Future work should examine veterans in Congress by service, age, length of service, component, officer versus enlisted status, and gender to gain a better understanding of the influence of military experience on elected officials. Incorporating interviews would add to a more in-depth analysis. Secondly, future studies should look at the Republicanization of military experience in Congress to determine the possible causes. It is likely this development began in the post-Vietnam era

with the move to an all-volunteer military force because the “self-selection process almost guarantees that those who choose a career in the military will espouse values and opinions that are more conservative than those of civilian society.”¹⁰³ Additionally, studies should continue to focus on political communications, but also incorporate analysis on the associated voting patterns to determine whether speech translates into specific actions within Congress. Analysis would likely show the positions presented within political rhetoric would largely track with the voting patterns of members with military experience, as Congress members try to ensure their political communications mirror their voting to provide a coherent message back to their constituents on whom they depend for re-election.

Further, these studies could include veterans in appointed positions within the Executive Branch to determine whether there are differences among veterans in Congress and veterans elsewhere in government. The number of veterans in politically appointed positions would likely depend upon which political party holds the Executive Branch, with Democratic Administrations likely appointing fewer individuals with military experience especially outside of the Department of Defense. Finally, as a means of comparison, these future studies should also consider the views of nonveteran members of Congress and the Executive Branch to compare to the views of those with military experience. While this study compared views between veterans and nonveterans to a limited degree to provide some context, future studies would likely demonstrate that the differences among veterans and nonveterans on “foreign affairs and defense policy issues are better described as focused and limited”¹⁰⁴ and are not as pervasive within the realm of domestic policy issues.

This paper examined the “Congressional Class of 2012” to examine whether and how military experience influences the views of members of Congress, especially in light of the

influx of post-9/11 veterans at the most significant levels yet. Determining whether veterans' different generational military experiences varied their views on defense-related issues, like defense spending and the war in Afghanistan, is important to understand with the departure of so many pre-9/11 veterans from Congress in the last 30 years. Party affiliation and constituent concerns seemed to drive views more than the timeframe of military service concerning defense spending. The timeframe of military service, however, did seem to affect the views of Congress members on the war in Afghanistan, as post-9/11 veterans overwhelmingly supported the war in Afghanistan regardless of party affiliation. Nonetheless, this study also demonstrated some differences in policy positions among veteran and nonveterans within each party that might be significant in legislating policy. This topic requires continued study, especially concerning the inclination of military members and by extension veterans in Congress toward more conservative political leanings, often resulting in political affiliation with the Republican Party. Determining the possible ramifications of this trend remains important for understanding the possible effects on defense-related issues in the future.

APPENDIX A: Number of Veterans in Congress, 1945 – 2013

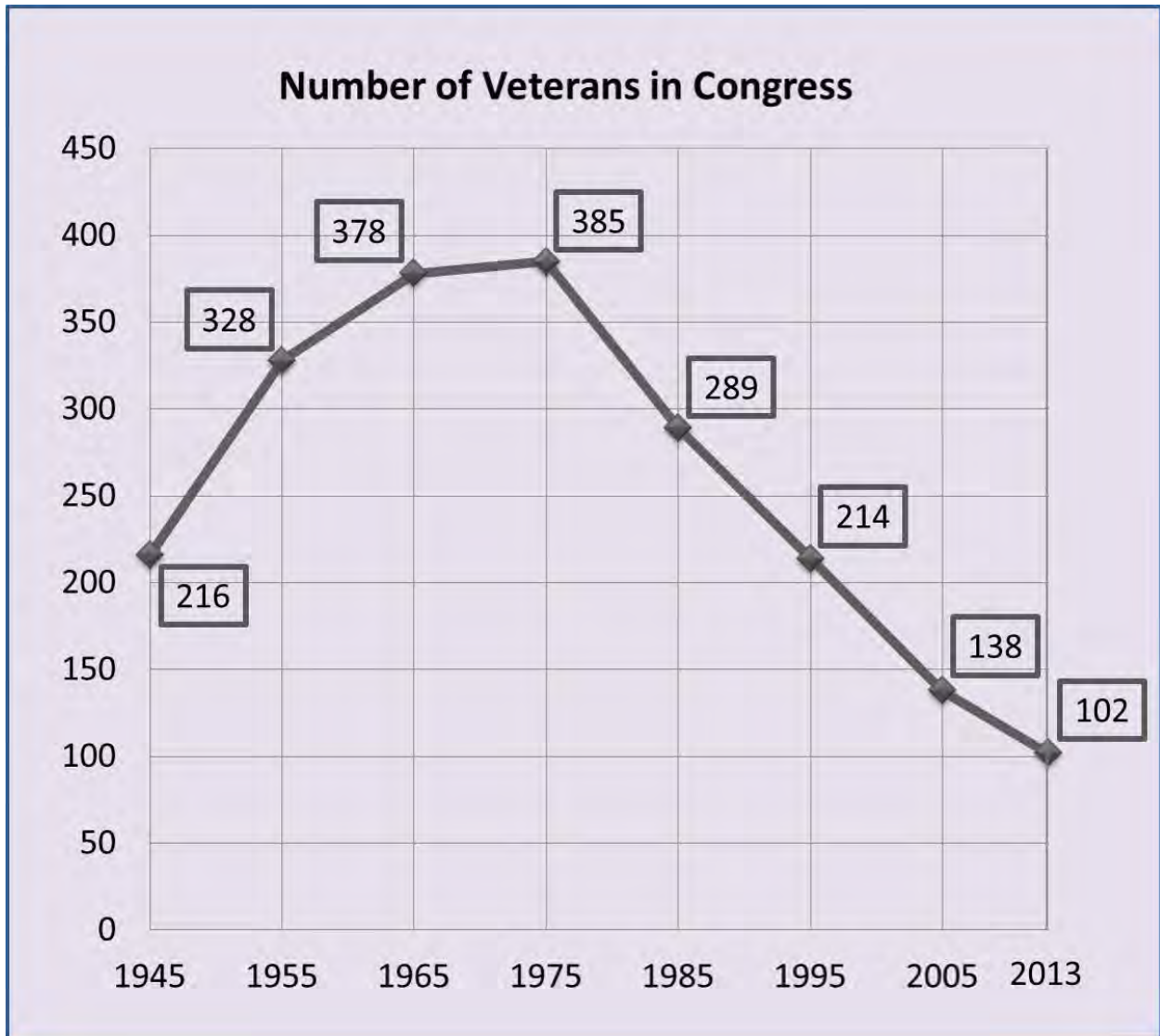


Figure 1. Number of Veterans in Congress, 1945 – 2013¹⁵

Source: Susan Davis, “Number of Veterans in Congress Continues to Decline,”

(USAToday.com, November 20, 2012),

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/11/20/fewer-congress-vets/1716697/>.

¹⁵ President Barack Obama appointed Senator John Kerry (D-MA, pre-9/11) as Secretary of State in January 2013. Secretary Kerry’s replacement is interim-Senator William Cowan (D-MA), a non-veteran. The data in the above figure for 2013 reflected this change post-election. Additionally, the figures for 2013 do not include non-voting members of the House.

APPENDIX B: List of Congress Members Elected in 2012

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Duckworth	Tammy	Democrat	Illinois	House	8th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Enyart	William	Democrat	Illinois	House	12th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Gabbard	Tulsi	Democrat	Hawaii	House	2nd District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Peters	Gary	Democrat	Michigan	House	14th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Walz	Tim	Democrat	Minnesota	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Bentivolio	Kerry	Republican	Michigan	House	11th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Bridenstine	Jim	Republican	Oklahoma	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Broun	Paul	Republican	Georgia	House	10th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Coffman	Michael	Republican	Colorado	House	6th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Collins	Doug	Republican	Georgia	House	9th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Cotton	Tom	Republican	Arkansas	House	4th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
DeSantis	Ron	Republican	Florida	House	6th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Gibson	Chris	Republican	New York	House	19th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Griffin	Tim	Republican	Arkansas	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Guthrie	Brett	Republican	Kentucky	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Harris	Andy	Republican	Maryland	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Heck	Joe	Republican	Nevada	House	3rd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Hunter	Duncan	Republican	California	House	50th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Kinzinger	Adam	Republican	Illinois	House	16th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Murphy	Tim	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	18th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Olson	Pete	Republican	Texas	House	22nd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Palazzo	Steven	Republican	Mississippi	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Perry	Scott	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	4th District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Rooney	Tom	Republican	Florida	House	17th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Shimkus	John	Republican	Illinois	House	15th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Stivers	Steve	Republican	Ohio	House	15th District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Wenstrup	Brad	Republican	Ohio	House	2nd District	No	Yes	Post-9/11
Wicker	Roger	Republican	Mississippi	Senate		Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Wilson	Joe	Republican	South Carolina	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Womack	Steve	Republican	Arkansas	House	3rd District	Yes	Yes	Post-9/11
Bishop, Jr.	Sanford	Democrat	Georgia	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Butterfield	G. K.	Democrat	North Carolina	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Carper	Tom	Democrat	Delaware	Senate		Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Conyers, Jr.	John	Democrat	Michigan	House	13th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
DeFazio	Peter	Democrat	Oregon	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Dingell, Jr.	John	Democrat	Michigan	House	12th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Markey	Ed	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	5th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
McDermott	Jim	Democrat	Washington	House	7th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Nelson	Bill	Democrat	Florida	Senate		Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Owens	Bill	Democrat	New York	House	21st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Pascrell, Jr.	Bill	Democrat	New Jersey	House	9th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Peterson	Collin	Democrat	Minnesota	House	7th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Rangel	Charlie	Democrat	New York	House	13th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Rush	Bobby	Democrat	Illinois	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Scott	Bobby	Democrat	Virginia	House	3rd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Serrano	Jose	Democrat	New York	House	15th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Thompson	Mike	Democrat	California	House	5th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Alexander	Rodney	Republican	Louisiana	House	5th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Amodei	Mark	Republican	Nevada	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Bachus III	Spencer	Republican	Alabama	House	6th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Boehner	John	Republican	Ohio	House	8th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Buchanan	Vern	Republican	Florida	House	16th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Bucshon	Larry	Republican	Indiana	House	8th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Coble	Howard	Republican	North Carolina	House	6th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Conaway	Mike	Republican	Texas	House	11th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Cook	Paul	Republican	California	House	8th District	No	Yes	Pre-9/11
Crawford	Rick	Republican	Arkansas	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Denham	Jeff	Republican	California	House	19th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Duncan	John	Republican	Tennessee	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Fleming	John	Republican	Louisiana	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Frelinghuysen	Rodney	Republican	New Jersey	House	11th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Gohmert	Louie	Republican	Texas	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Grimm	Michael	Republican	New York	House	11th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Hall	Ralph	Republican	Texas	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Hastings	Doc	Republican	Washington	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Issa	Darrell	Republican	California	House	49th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Johnson	Bill	Republican	Ohio	House	6th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Johnson	Sam	Republican	Texas	House	3rd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Jones	Walter	Republican	North Carolina	House	3rd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
King	Peter	Republican	New York	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Kline	John	Republican	Minnesota	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Miller	Gary	Republican	California	House	31st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Nugent	Rich	Republican	Florida	House	11th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Pearce	Steve	Republican	New Mexico	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Pitts	Joseph	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	16th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Poe	Ted	Republican	Texas	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Pompeo	Mike	Republican	Kansas	House	4th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Reichert	Dave	Republican	Washington	House	8th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Rigell	Scott	Republican	Virginia	House	2nd District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Roe	Phil	Republican	Tennessee	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Rogers	Harold	Republican	Kentucky	House	5th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Rogers	Mike	Republican	Michigan	House	8th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Stewart	Chris	Republican	Utah	House	2nd District	No	Yes	Pre-9/11
Whitfield	Edward	Republican	Kentucky	House	1st District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Wolf	Frank	Republican	Virginia	House	10th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Young	C. W. Bill	Republican	Florida	House	13th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Young	Don	Republican	Alaska	House	At-Large District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Young	Todd	Republican	Indiana	House	9th District	Yes	Yes	Pre-9/11
Andrews	Rob	Democrat	New Jersey	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Baldwin	Tammy	Democrat	Wisconsin	Senate		No	No	
Barber	Ron	Democrat	Arizona	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Barrow	John	Democrat	Georgia	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Bass	Karen	Democrat	California	House	37th District	Yes	No	
Beatty	Joyce	Democrat	Ohio	House	3rd District	No	No	
Becerra	Xavier	Democrat	California	House	34th District	Yes	No	
Bera	Ami	Democrat	California	House	7th District	No	No	
Bishop	Tim	Democrat	New York	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Blumenauer	Earl	Democrat	Oregon	House	3rd District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Bonamici	Suzanne	Democrat	Oregon	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Brady	Bob	Democrat	Pennsylvania	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Braley	Bruce	Democrat	Iowa	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Brown	Corine	Democrat	Florida	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Brownley	Julia	Democrat	California	House	26th District	No	No	
Bustos	Cheri	Democrat	Illinois	House	17th District	No	No	
Cantwell	Maria	Democrat	Washington	Senate		Yes	No	
Capps	Lois	Democrat	California	House	24th District	Yes	No	
Capuano	Mike	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Cardenas	Tony	Democrat	California	House	29th District	No	No	
Cardin	Ben	Democrat	Maryland	Senate		Yes	No	
Carney, Jr.	John	Democrat	Delaware	House	At Large	Yes	No	
Carson	Andre	Democrat	Indiana	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Cartwright	Matthew	Democrat	Pennsylvania	House	17th District	No	No	
Casey, Jr.	Bob	Democrat	Pennsylvania	Senate		Yes	No	
Castor	Kathy	Democrat	Florida	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Castro	Joaquin	Democrat	Texas	House	20th District	No	No	
Chu	Judy	Democrat	California	House	27th District	Yes	No	
Cicilline	David	Democrat	Rhode Island	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Clarke	Yvette	Democrat	New York	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Clay, Jr.	William	Democrat	Missouri	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Cleaver	Emmanuel	Democrat	Missouri	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Clyburn	Jim	Democrat	South Carolina	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Cohen	Steve	Democrat	Tennessee	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Connolly	Gerry	Democrat	Virginia	House	11th District	Yes	No	
Cooper	Jim	Democrat	Tennessee	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Costa	Jim	Democrat	California	House	16th District	Yes	No	
Courtney	Joe	Democrat	Connecticut	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Cowan	Mo	Democrat	Massachusetts	Senate		No	No	
Crowley	Joe	Democrat	New York	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Cuellar	Henry	Democrat	Texas	House	28th District	Yes	No	
Cummings	Elijah	Democrat	Maryland	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Davis	Danny	Democrat	Illinois	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Davis	Susan	Democrat	California	House	53rd District	Yes	No	
DeGette	Diana	Democrat	Colorado	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Delaney	John	Democrat	Maryland	House	6th District	No	No	
DeLauro	Rosa	Democrat	Connecticut	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
DelBene	Suzanne	Democrat	Washington	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Deutch	Ted	Democrat	Florida	House	21st District	Yes	No	
Doggett	Lloyd	Democrat	Texas	House	35th District	Yes	No	
Donnelly, Jr.	Joe	Democrat	Indiana	Senate		No	No	
Doyle, Jr.	Mike	Democrat	Pennsylvania	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Edwards	Donna	Democrat	Maryland	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Ellison	Keith	Democrat	Minnesota	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Engel	Eliot	Democrat	New York	House	16th District	Yes	No	
Eshoo	Anna	Democrat	California	House	18th District	Yes	No	
Esty	Elizabeth	Democrat	Connecticut	House	5th District	No	No	
Farr	Sam	Democrat	California	House	20th District	Yes	No	
Fattah	Chaka	Democrat	Pennsylvania	House	2nd District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Feinstein	Diane	Democrat	California	Senate		Yes	No	
Foster	Bill	Democrat	Illinois	House	11th District	No	No	
Frankel	Lois	Democrat	Florida	House	22nd District	No	No	
Fudge	Marda	Democrat	Ohio	House	11th District	Yes	No	
Gallego	Pete	Democrat	Texas	House	23rd District	No	No	
Garamendi	John	Democrat	California	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Garcia	Joe	Democrat	Florida	House	26th District	No	No	
Gillibrand	Kirsten	Democrat	New York	Senate		Yes	No	
Grayson	Alan	Democrat	Florida	House	9th District	No	No	
Green	Al	Democrat	Texas	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Green	Gene	Democrat	Texas	House	29th District	Yes	No	
Grijalva	Raul	Democrat	Arizona	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Grisham	Michelle	Democrat	New Mexico	House	1st District	No	No	
Gutierrez	Luis	Democrat	Illinois	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Hahn	Janice	Democrat	California	House	44th District	Yes	No	
Hanabusa	Colleen	Democrat	Hawaii	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Hasting	Alcee	Democrat	Florida	House	20th District	Yes	No	
Heck	Danny	Democrat	Washington	House	10th District	No	No	
Heinrich	Martin	Democrat	New Mexico	Senate		No	No	
Heitkamp	Heidi	Democrat	North Dakota	Senate		No	No	
Higgins	Brian	Democrat	New York	House	26th District	Yes	No	
Himes	Jim	Democrat	Connecticut	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Hinojosa, Jr.	Ruben	Democrat	Texas	House	15th District	Yes	No	
Hirono	Mazie	Democrat	Hawaii	Senate		No	No	
Holt, Jr.	Rush	Democrat	New Jersey	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Honda	Mike	Democrat	California	House	17th District	Yes	No	
Horsford	Steve	Democrat	Nevada	House	4th District	No	No	
Hoyer	Steny	Democrat	Maryland	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Huffman	Jared	Democrat	California	House	2nd District	No	No	
Israel	Steve	Democrat	New York	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Jeffries	Hakeem	Democrat	New York	House	8th District	No	No	
Johnson	Eddie	Democrat	Texas	House	30th District	Yes	No	
Johnson, Jr.	hank	Democrat	Georgia	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Kaine	Tim	Democrat	Virginia	Senate		No	No	
Kaptur	Marcy	Democrat	Ohio	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Keating	Bill	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Kennedy	Joseph	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	4th District	No	No	
Kildee	Daniel	Democrat	Michigan	House	5th District	No	No	
Kilmer	Derek	Democrat	Washington	House	6th District	No	No	
Kind	Ron	Democrat	Wisconsin	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Kirkpatrick	Ann	Democrat	Arizona	House	1st District	No	No	
Klobuchar	Amy	Democrat	Minnesota	Senate		Yes	No	
Kuster	Ann	Democrat	New Hampshire	House	2nd District	No	No	
Langevin	Jim	Democrat	Rhode Island	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Larsen	Rick	Democrat	Washington	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Larson	John	Democrat	Connecticut	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Lee	Barbara	Democrat	California	House	13th District	Yes	No	
Lee	Shiela	Democrat	Texas	House	18th District	Yes	No	
Levin	Sandy	Democrat	Michigan	House	9th District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Lewis	John	Democrat	Georgia	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Lipinski	Daniel	Democrat	Illinois	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Loebsack	Dave	Democrat	Iowa	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Lofgren	Zoe	Democrat	California	House	19th District	Yes	No	
Lowenthal	Alan	Democrat	California	House	47th District	No	No	
Lowey	Nita	Democrat	New York	House	17th District	Yes	No	
Lujan, Jr.	Ben	Democrat	New Mexico	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Lynch	Stephen	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Maffei	Dan	Democrat	New York	House	24th District	No	No	
Maloney	Carolyn	Democrat	New York	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Maloney	Sean	Democrat	New York	House	18th District	No	No	
Manchin	Joe	Democrat	West Virginia	Senate		Yes	No	
Matheson	Jim	Democrat	Utah	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Matsui	Horis	Democrat	California	House	6th District	Yes	No	
McCarthy	Carolyn	Democrat	New York	House	4th District	Yes	No	
McCaskill	Claire	Democrat	Missouri	Senate		Yes	No	
McCollum	Betty	Democrat	Minnesota	House	4th District	Yes	No	
McGovern	Jim	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
McIntyre	Mike	Democrat	North Carolina	House	7th District	Yes	No	
McLeod	Gloria	Democrat	California	House	35th District	No	No	
McNerney	Jerry	Democrat	California	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Meeks	Gregory	Democrat	New York	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Menendez	Bob	Democrat	New Jersey	Senate		Yes	No	
Meng	Grace	Democrat	New York	House	6th District	No	No	
Michaud	Mike	Democrat	Maine	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Miller	George	Democrat	California	House	11th District	Yes	No	
Moore	Gwen	Democrat	Wisconsin	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Moran, Jr.	Jim	Democrat	Virginia	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Murphy	Chris	Democrat	Connecticut	Senate		Yes	No	
Murphy	Patrick	Democrat	Florida	House	18th District	No	No	
Nadler	Jerry	Democrat	New York	House	10th District	Yes	No	
Napolitano	Grace	Democrat	California	House	32nd District	Yes	No	
Neal	Richard	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Nelson	Bill	Democrat	Florida	Senate		Yes	No	
Nolan	Rick	Democrat	Minnesota	House	8th District	No	No	
O'Rourke	Beto	Democrat	Texas	House	16th District	No	No	
Pallone, Jr.	Frank	Democrat	New Jersey	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Pastor	Ed	Democrat	Arizona	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Payne, Jr.	Donald	Democrat	New Jersey	House	10th District	No	No	
Pelosi	Nancy	Democrat	California	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Perlmutter	Ed	Democrat	Colorado	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Peters	Scott	Democrat	California	House	52nd District	No	No	
Pingree	Chellie	Democrat	Maine	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Pocan	Mark	Democrat	Wisconsin	House	2nd District	No	No	
Polis	Jared	Democrat	Colorado	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Price	David	Democrat	North Carolina	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Quigley	Mike	Democrat	Illinois	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Rahall	Nick	Democrat	West Virginia	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Richmond	Cedric	Democrat	Louisiana	House	2nd District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Roybal-Allard	Lucille	Democrat	California	House	40th District	Yes	No	
Ruiz	Raul	Democrat	California	House	36th District	No	No	
Ruppersberger	Dutch	Democrat	Maryland	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Ryan	Tim	Democrat	Ohio	House	13th District	Yes	No	
Sanchez	Linda	Democrat	California	House	38th District	Yes	No	
Sanchez	Loretta	Democrat	California	House	46th District	Yes	No	
Sarbanes	John	Democrat	Maryland	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Schakowsky	Jan	Democrat	Illinois	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Schatz	Brian	Democrat	Hawaii	Senate		No	No	
Schiff	Adam	Democrat	California	House	28th District	Yes	No	
Schneider	Brad	Democrat	Illinois	House	10th District	No	No	
Schrader	Kurt	Democrat	Oregon	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Schultz	Debbie	Democrat	Florida	House	23rd District	Yes	No	
Schwartz	Allyson	Democrat	Pennsylvania	House	13th District	Yes	No	
Scott	David	Democrat	Georgia	House	13th District	Yes	No	
Sewell	Terris	Democrat	Alabama	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Shea-Porter	Carol	Democrat	New Hampshire	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Sherman	Brad	Democrat	California	House	30th District	Yes	No	
Sinema	Kyrsten	Democrat	Arizona	House	9th District	No	No	
Sires	Albio	Democrat	New Jersey	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Slaughter	Louise	Democrat	New York	House	25th District	Yes	No	
Smith	Adam	Democrat	Washington	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Speier	Jackie	Democrat	California	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Stabenow	Debbie	Democrat	Michigan	Senate		Yes	No	
Swalwell	Eric	Democrat	California	House	15th District	No	No	
Takano	Mark	Democrat	California	House	41st District	No	No	
Tester	Jon	Democrat	Montana	Senate		Yes	No	
Thompson	Bennie	Democrat	Mississippi	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Tierney	John	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Titus	Dina	Democrat	Nevada	House	1st District	No	No	
Tonko	Paul	Democrat	New York	House	20th District	Yes	No	
Tsongas	Niki	Democrat	Massachusetts	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Van Hollen, Jr.	Chris	Democrat	Maryland	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Vargas	Juan	Democrat	California	House	51st District	No	No	
Veasey	Marc	Democrat	Texas	House	33rd District	No	No	
Velaquez	Filemon	Democrat	Texas	House	34th District	No	No	
Velaquez	Nydia	Democrat	New York	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Visclosky	Pete	Democrat	Indiana	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Warren	Elizabeth	Democrat	Massachusetts	Senate		No	No	
Waters	Maxine	Democrat	California	House	43rd District	Yes	No	
Watt	Mel	Democrat	North Carolina	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Waxman	Henry	Democrat	California	House	33rd District	Yes	No	
Welch	Peter	Democrat	Vermont	House	At Large	Yes	No	
Whitehouse	Sheldon	Democrat	Rhode Island	Senate		Yes	No	
Wilson	Frederica	Democrat	Florida	House	24th District	Yes	No	
Yarmuth	John	Democrat	Kentucky	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
King	Angus	Independent	Maine	Senate		No	No	
Sanders	Bernie	Independent	Vermont	Senate		Yes	No	
Aderholt	Robert	Republican	Alabama	House	4th District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Amash	Justin	Republican	Michigan	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Bachmann	Michele	Republican	Minnesota	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Barletta	Lou	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	11th District	Yes	No	
Barr	Andy	Republican	Kentucky	House	6th District	No	No	
Barrasso	John	Republican	Wyoming	Senate		Yes	No	
Barton	Joe	Republican	Texas	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Benishkek	Dan	Republican	Michigan	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Beutler	Jamie	Republican	Washington	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Bilirakis	Gus	Republican	Florida	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Bishop	Rob	Republican	Utah	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Black	Diane	Republican	Tennessee	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Blackburn	Marsha	Republican	Tennessee	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Bonner, Jr.	Bo	Republican	Alabama	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Boustany	Charles	Republican	Louisiana	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Brady	Kevin	Republican	Texas	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Brooks	Mo	Republican	Alabama	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Brooks	Susan	Republican	Indiana	House	5th District	No	No	
Burgess	Michael	Republican	Texas	House	26th District	Yes	No	
Calvert	Kenny	Republican	California	House	42nd District	Yes	No	
Camp	Dave	Republican	Michigan	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Campbell	John	Republican	California	House	45th District	Yes	No	
Cantor	Eric	Republican	Virginia	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Capito	Shelley	Republican	West Virginia	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Carter	John	Republican	Texas	House	31st District	Yes	No	
Cassidy	Bill	Republican	Louisiana	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Chabot	Steve	Republican	Ohio	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Chaffetz	Jason	Republican	Utah	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Cole	Tom	Republican	Oklahoma	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Collins	Chris	Republican	New York	House	27th District	No	No	
Corker	Bob	Republican	Tennessee	Senate		Yes	No	
Cramer	Kevin	Republican	North Dakota	House	At Large	No	No	
Crenshaw	Ander	Republican	Florida	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Cruz	Ted	Republican	Texas	Senate		No	No	
Culberson	John	Republican	Texas	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Daines	Kevin	Republican	Montana	House	At Large	No	No	
Davis	Rodney	Republican	Illinois	House	13th District	No	No	
Dent	Charlie	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	15th District	Yes	No	
Desjarais	Scott	Republican	Tennessee	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Diaz-Balart	Mario	Republican	Florida	House	25th District	Yes	No	
Duffy	Sean	Republican	Wisconsin	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Duncan	Jeff	Republican	South Carolina	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Ellmers	Renee	Republican	Florida	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Farenthold	Blake	Republican	Texas	House	27th District	Yes	No	
Fincher	Stephen	Republican	Tennessee	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Fischer	Deb	Republican	Nebraska	Senate		No	No	
Fitzpatrick	Mike	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Flake	Jeff	Republican	Arizona	Senate		No	No	
Fleischmann	Chuck	Republican	Tennessee	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Flores	Bill	Republican	Texas	House	17th District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Forbes	Randy	Republican	Virginia	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Fortenberry	Jeff	Republican	Nebraska	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Foxx	Virginia	Republican	North Carolina	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Franks	Trent	Republican	Arizona	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Gardner	Cory	Republican	Colorado	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Garrett	Scott	Republican	New Jersey	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Gerlach	Jim	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Gibbs	Bob	Republican	Ohio	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Gingrey	Phil	Republican	Georgia	House	11th District	Yes	No	
Goodlatte	Bob	Republican	Virginia	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Gosar	Paul	Republican	Arizona	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Gowdy	Trey	Republican	South Carolina	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Granger	Kay	Republican	Texas	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Graves	Sam	Republican	Missouri	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Graves	Tom	Republican	Georgia	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Griffith	Morgan	Republican	Virginia	House	9th District	Yes	No	
Hanna	Richard	Republican	New York	House	22nd District	Yes	No	
Harper	Gregg	Republican	Mississippi	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Hartzler	Vicky	Republican	Missouri	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Hatch	Orin	Republican	Utah	Senate		Yes	No	
Heller	Dean	Republican	Nevada	Senate		Yes	No	
Hensarling	Jeb	Republican	Texas	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Holding	George	Republican	North Carolina	House	13th District	No	No	
Hudson	Richard	Republican	North Carolina	House	8th District	No	No	
Huelskamp	Tim	Republican	Kansas	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Huizenga	Bill	Republican	Michigan	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Hultgren	Randy	Republican	Illinois	House	14th District	Yes	No	
Hurt	Robert	Republican	Virginia	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Jenkins	Lynn	Republican	Kansas	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Jordan	Jim	Republican	Ohio	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Joyce	David	Republican	Ohio	House	14th District	No	No	
Kelly	Mike	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
King	Steve	Republican	Iowa	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Kingston	Jack	Republican	Georgia	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Labrador	Raul	Republican	Idaho	House	1st District	Yes	No	
LaMalfa	Doug	Republican	California	House	1st District	No	No	
Lamborn	Doug	Republican	Colorado	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Lance	Leonard	Republican	New Jersey	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Lankford	James	Republican	Oklahoma	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Latham	Tom	Republican	Iowa	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Latta	Bob	Republican	Ohio	House	5th District	Yes	No	
LoBiondo	Frank	Republican	New Jersey	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Long	Billy	Republican	Missouri	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Lucas	Frank	Republican	Oklahoma	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Luetkemeyer	Blaine	Republican	Missouri	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Lummis	Cynthia	Republican	Wyoming	House	At Large	Yes	No	
Marchant	Kenny	Republican	Texas	House	24th District	Yes	No	
Marino	Tom	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	10th District	Yes	No	
Massie	Tom	Republican	Kentucky	House	4th District	No	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
McCarthy	Kevin	Republican	California	House	23rd District	Yes	No	
McCaul	Michael	Republican	Texas	House	10th District	Yes	No	
McClintock	Tom	Republican	California	House	4th District	Yes	No	
McHenry	Patrick	Republican	North Carolina	House	10th District	Yes	No	
McKeon	Buck	Republican	California	House	25th District	Yes	No	
McKinley	David	Republican	West Virginia	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Meadows	Mark	Republican	North Carolina	House	11th District	No	No	
Meehan	Patrick	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Messer	Luke	Republican	Indiana	House	6th District	No	No	
Mica	John	Republican	Florida	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Miller	Candice	Republican	Michigan	House	10th District	Yes	No	
Miller	Jeff	Republican	Florida	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Mullin	Markwayne	Republican	Oklahoma	House	2nd District	No	No	
Mulvaney	Michael	Republican	South Carolina	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Neugebauer	Randy	Republican	Texas	House	19th District	Yes	No	
Noem	Kristi	Republican	South Dakota	House	At Large	Yes	No	
Nunes	David	Republican	California	House	22nd District	Yes	No	
Nunnelee	Patrick	Republican	Mississippi	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Paulsen	Erik	Republican	Minnesota	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Petri	Tom	Republican	Wisconsin	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Pittenger	Robert	Republican	North Carolina	House	9th District	No	No	
Posey	Bill	Republican	Florida	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Price	Tom	Republican	Georgia	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Radel	Trey	Republican	Florida	House	19th District	No	No	
Reed	Tom	Republican	New York	House	23rd District	Yes	No	
Renacci	Jim	Republican	Ohio	House	16th District	Yes	No	
Ribble	Reid	Republican	Wisconsin	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Rice	Tom	Republican	South Carolina	House	7th District	No	No	
Roby	Martha	Republican	Alabama	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Rodgers	Cathy	Republican	Washington	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Rogers	Mike	Republican	Alabama	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Rohrabacher	Dana	Republican	California	House	48th District	Yes	No	
Rokita	Todd	Republican	Indiana	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Roskam	Peter	Republican	Illinois	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Ros-Lehtinen	Ileana	Republican	Florida	House	27th District	Yes	No	
Ross	Dennis	Republican	Florida	House	15th District	Yes	No	
Rothfus	Keith	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	12th District	No	No	
Royce	Ed	Republican	California	House	39th District	Yes	No	
Runyan	Jon	Republican	New Jersey	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Ryan	Paul	Republican	Wisconsin	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Salmon	Matt	Republican	Arizona	House	5th District	No	No	
Scalfse	Steve	Republican	Louisiana	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Schock	Aaron	Republican	Illinois	House	18th District	Yes	No	
Schweikert	David	Republican	Arizona	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Scott	Austin	Republican	Georgia	House	8th District	Yes	No	
Scott	Tim	Republican	South Carolina	Senate		No	No	
Sensenbrenner, Jr.	Jim	Republican	Wisconsin	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Sessions	Pete	Republican	Texas	House	32nd District	Yes	No	
Shuster	Bill	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	9th District	Yes	No	

Last Name	First Name	Party	State	Congress	District (as applic)	Incumbent	Military Experience	Remarks
Simpson	Mike	Republican	Idaho	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Smith	Adrian	Republican	Nebraska	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Smith	Chris	Republican	New Jersey	House	4th District	Yes	No	
Smith	Lamar	Republican	Texas	House	21st District	Yes	No	
Southerland	Steve	Republican	Florida	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Stockman	Steve	Republican	Texas	House	36th District	No	No	
Stutzman	Marlin	Republican	Indiana	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Terry	Lee	Republican	Nebraska	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Thompson, Jr.	G.T	Republican	Pennsylvania	House	5th District	Yes	No	
Thornberry	Mac	Republican	Texas	House	13th District	Yes	No	
Tiberi	Pat	Republican	Ohio	House	12th District	Yes	No	
Tipton	Scott	Republican	Colorado	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Turner	Mike	Republican	Ohio	House	10th District	Yes	No	
Upton	Fred	Republican	Michigan	House	6th District	Yes	No	
Valadao	David	Republican	California	House	21st District	No	No	
Wagner	Ann	Republican	Missouri	House	2nd District	No	No	
Walberg	Tim	Republican	Michigan	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Walden	Greg	Republican	Oregon	House	2nd District	Yes	No	
Walorski	Jackie	Republican	Indiana	House	2nd District	No	No	
Weber	Randy	Republican	Texas	House	14th District	No	No	
Webster	Daniel	Republican	Florida	House	10th District	Yes	No	
Westmoreland	Lynn	Republican	Georgia	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Williams	Roger	Republican	Texas	House	25th District	No	No	
Wittman	Rob	Republican	Virginia	House	1st District	Yes	No	
Woodall	Rob	Republican	Georgia	House	7th District	Yes	No	
Yoder	Kevin	Republican	Kansas	House	3rd District	Yes	No	
Yoho	Ted	Republican	Florida	House	3rd District	No	No	

END NOTES:

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- ³ Tsai, “Veterans of Recent Wars Running for Office in Record Numbers.”
- ⁴ Emma Dumain, “Veterans in Congress; Congressional Veterans Share a Common Bond,” *Roll Call*, November 10, 2011, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/902895855?accountid=14746>.
- ⁵ Dumain, “Veterans in Congress.”
- ⁶ Dumain, “Veterans in Congress.”
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- ⁸ Eitelberg and Little, “Influential Elites and the American Military after the Cold War.”
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- ¹⁴ Bianco, 85-87; William T. Bianco and Jamie Markham, “Vanishing Veterans: The Decline of Military Experience in the U.S. Congress,” *Soldiers and Civilians*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 283-287.
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- ¹⁶ Feaver and Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*, 18.
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- ²² Bianco and Markham, 276.
- ²³ Ricks, 66.
- ²⁴ Holsti, "A Widening Gap between the U.S. Military and Civilian Society?: Some Evidence, 1976-96," 11.
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