

Robin Kolodny. *Pursuing Majorities: Congressional Campaign Committees in American Politics*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998) pp. 320. \$9.98 ISBN 0806130695

Robin Kolodny stretches congressional scholarship into the relatively unexplored area of Congressional Campaign Committees (CCC) in the House and Senate. Kolodny traces the historical development of the CCC over the last 150 years and concludes her analysis in the modern era. Kolodny asserts that the political parties are unable to provide remedies or strategies for overcoming political fragmentation, the CCC confirm that well-established theoretical assertion at a fundamental political party level. By choice and design congressmen desire a separate electoral strategy. If not, they will be consumed by the affiliated presidential party and consequentially, lose or never attain majority power in their own institution. The CCC become an efficient manner to apply the latest campaign techniques, tap into sources of funding, and allow the congressional party to govern with or without an affiliated president.

Kolodny answers a variety of questions: How do Congressional Campaign Committees contribute to congressional vibrancy? What do the CCC do? Who controls the CCC and for what purposes? When did the CCC become critical to the overall congressional process? How do the CCC Chairs benefit from service in the committee? And why should scholars and citizens care about the CCC?

Congressional Campaign Committees are an integral part of the congressional process because political parties strive to attain or maintain majority control over their chambers. The goal of majority control often differs from the party's other goal of winning a presidential election.

Hence, the CCC tend to serve the needs of the institution and the congressional leadership contributing to weak party structures.

Pursuing Majorities applies to those interested in institutional development, congressional seniority, congressional leadership, and modern campaigns. Kolodny traces the development of CCC and clearly makes the case that the CCC are in a fluid, obscure, and untenable situation. They maintain a cousin-like relationship with the national party committee; whereas, whenever it is mutually beneficial, and they cooperate; otherwise they operate in separate universes and at times at cross-purposes. The reader may agree with Kolodny that the party in government is hindered by party fragmentation. However, I tend to rejoice in that CCC bolster checks and balances. Kolodny remains steadfast and correct in her analysis that CCC serve the members of Congress and not the whole political system.

The weaknesses of the book are minor ones. The book is not well suited for a general audience. Scholars can benefit from Kolodny's in-depth historical research yet undergraduates will more than likely struggle with the density of the reading. The other minor observation is that the bibliography did not reference the Carl Albert Archives located at the University of Oklahoma's Carl Albert Congressional Research Center. The Carl Albert Archives is one of the nation's best collections of congressional papers and may contribute to further research in this area.

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