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Another omission is the discussion of the ease with which the Federal Reserve operates to increase the U.S. debt. When presidents and Congress know that cheap money is available, they are more likely to spend freely than they would have been had they been forced to seek loans in the regular marketplace. Our financial situation is somewhat skewed by this marriage with the Federal Reserve (which is not part of the government).

One other empty space in this book is the actions of the public. Obviously, one book cannot meet every need, but politicians propose programs in response to public demand. In tracing our deficit spending, more information on the public mood and demand would round out this encyclopedic work. Whatever one's persuasion, Ippolito's work is worth a read.

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Fighting for the Speakership: The House and the Rise of Party Government by Jeffrey A. Jenkins and Charles Stewart III. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012. 498 pp. Paper, $35.00.

When the House of Representatives elects its Speaker—one of the most-powerful positions in government—each party nominates a candidate. Most representatives vote for their Pparty's nominee, and the majority Party candidate always wins. Similarly, the majority controls committee chairs and other positions. It was not always so—early Speakers had limited power, and there was no such "organizational cartel" to guarantee majority control of key positions. Jeffrey Jenkins and Charles Stewart tell the story of the cartel's emergence.

The story begins with House members figuring out early on that committee appointments and procedural decisions made the speakership influential; this led to loosely organized efforts by groups of legislators to shape speakership elections. Along the way, members realized that two other House-elected officers, the Clerk and the Printer, also controlled valuable resources and (in the Clerk's case) procedural influence.

In the 1820s, Martin Van Buren spearheaded an ambitious plan to build and institutionalize a national political party (the Jacksonian/Democratic Party). His plan entailed establishing Party control over Speaker, Clerk, and Printer elections to harness the positions' powers and resources for partisan purposes. Previous efforts to control these elections had often foundered on the inability of groups to successfully concentrate their votes on a single candidate. Van Buren's idea was that Party members would meet in caucus beforehand, agree

on a single nominee for each position, then vote unanimously for the caucus's nominees.

One problem that intermittently undermined this plan, however, was that secret balloting allowed caucus members to defect from the caucus plan without detection. This led to adoption of non-secret voting in 1839, which was meant to facilitate Party discipline. However, unintended consequences of this change sometimes weakened Party organizational discipline. In the 1840s and 1850s, as sectional tensions over slavery increased, House members faced increasing public pressure to put regional interests over partisan interests (by this time, the Whig Party had emerged in response to the Jacksonians). Once House officer votes became public, each Party's regional factions found it increasingly difficult to support candidates from the other region, or even a moderate compromise candidate. Regional strains were such that during the first half of the 1850s, the Whig Party imploded and the Democrats were wobbly; by the decade's end, two monumentally contentious officer election battles had ensued, and the Republicans emerged as a major party (ironically, current Speaker John Boehner's fractious Republican caucus can be seen as a distant echo of these antebellum conflicts).

Republicans were less internally divided than were Democrats or Whigs; they had no Southern or pro-slavery factions, and the severity of the Civil War helped unify them. They also vastly outnumbered House Democrats following secession. These factors helped drive Republicans' successful establishment of a Van Buren-esque, caucus-based organizational cartel in 1865, which Democrats soon emulated. The story ends with this system surviving subsequent intra-party conflict and the organizational cartel becoming a routine feature of Congress.

The book is much more than just a story, though. It is a work of thorough, meticulous historical research—paired with extensive quantitative analysis—deftly guided by contemporary congressional organization literature. The book masterfully interweaves these diverse elements, and will probably be of interest to various audiences. It is written so as to be accessible to a non-academic audience, making it a worthwhile read for those interested in the origins of the modern Congress. The primary audience will be congressional scholars—especially those interested in Parties and legislative organization, and their historic development—who will find a wealth of fascinating ideas and information. The authors rightly note that their work suggests many interesting avenues for future research.

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