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Will She Stay or Will She Go? Career Ceilings and Women's Retirement from the U.S. Congress

This article offers the first broad-based, systematic, times-series assessment of the gender dynamics underlying congressional retirement. We extend the body of work on gender and representation by using the congressional retirement literature to develop an argument that accounts for the gender gap in the average length of congressional service. Our results indicate that women are less willing than men to remain in Congress when their ability to influence the legislative agenda stalls. Because of women's relatively early departures from the House of Representatives, our analysis suggests that prospects for women's representation are less promising than the conventional wisdom suggests.

The 1992 elections brought more new women to Congress than any other elections in congressional history. One of the new faces of the 103d Congress was Elizabeth Furse, a Democrat from Oregon. On the same day that Oregon voters catapulted Furse to the House of Representatives, they passed a congressional term-limits initiative that forced members out of their seats after three terms. Furse refused to endorse the initiative, despite the fact that she was running in a tough race (and her opponent was using the issue against her). Five years later, Furse surprised her colleagues and her constituents when she announced that she planned to retire at the conclusion of the 105th Congress. A tireless advocate for Native Americans and the environment, her prospects for rising to a committee leadership position were not promising. Leaving Congress, Furse advised her colleagues to "focus on one or two things and try and get satisfaction out of [them]". She traded in her busy congressional schedule to spend more time at her Oregon winery and new summer home in France's Lot Valley.

Dale Kildee, a Democrat from Michigan, also surprised his congressional colleagues, although for the opposite reason as Furse. In 2003, Kildee announced that he *would* seek reelection in 2004. Upon his election in 1976, Kildee quickly climbed the Education and Labor Committee ladder. Within 10 years, he was a subcommittee chair, where he remained until the Republicans came to power in 1995. Since then, Kildee has been the ranking member on the Education and the Workforce subcommittee. Perhaps in expectation of his retirement, or perhaps in an attempt to propel it, the Republican state legislature carved up Kildee's district when Michigan lost a seat in the 2000 round of reapportionment. But Kildee, who is well into his 70s, is simply not yet ready to abandon his stalled congressional career. While Furse sips the finest wines in Oregon and France, all evidence indicates that Kildee will continue to serve until he meets death or defeat.

A more-systematic assessment of voluntary retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives suggests that a gender dynamic may underlie these anecdotes. From the 98th Congress (1983–84) until the 107th Congress (2001–02), the average tenure for men who retired was approximately 40% longer than the average for women (slightly more than 17 years, compared to about 12 years; difference significant at p < .01). As a result, only 2 of the 20 oldest members of the House to retire were women (Virginia Smith at 79 and Carrie Meek at 75); only 3 of the 75 oldest members seeking reelection were women; and of the 35 members who died in office, only 2 were women (Sala Burton and Patsy Mink).

Despite the fact that women serve as members of Congress for shorter spells than do men, the studies that examine and predict congressional retirement do not include gender as an explanatory variable (see, for example, Hall and Van Houweling 1995; Hibbing 1982; Moore and Hibbing 1998; and Theriault 1998). In large part, this omission is an artifact of women's numeric underrepresentation. Until Furse and 24 other new women went to the House in 1992, there were too few female members to allow for meaningful comparisons of men's and women's legislative behavior, let alone retention and retirement. With an increasing number of female representatives occupying House seats over the course of the last two decades [Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) 2004], it becomes possible—and important to examine the role that gender plays in a legislator's decision to leave Congress. Not only does women's presence in high-level elective office decrease the possibility that gender-salient issues will be overlooked, but it also brings a different voice to the legislative process.³

The degree to which a legislative body retains its female members bears directly on issues of representation, in large part because power-

ful positions in the House are contingent on seniority (Polsby 1968; Price 1977; Weingast and Marshall 1988).⁴ Although there are various sources of power in the House, committee leadership positions remain the most traveled path for affecting policy (Shepsle 1989; Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Sinclair 2000). If women are more likely than men to retire prematurely, then their early retirements preclude them from attaining powerful committee positions and influencing the legislative agenda. Further, their early retirements prevent them from cosponsoring and supporting legislation that bears directly on women's substantive interests, even when such policies do not, necessarily, originate in the committees of which these women are members (see Swers 2002). Women candidates may face no bias in terms of fund-raising and vote totals, often considered the two most important indicators of electoral success (Burrell 1996; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997; Smith and Fox 2001), but before we conclude that we are en route to congressional gender parity and women's substantive representation, we must empirically assess the assumption that women and men are equally likely to seek reelection.

This article offers the first systematic assessment of the gender dynamics underlying congressional retirement. We extend the body of work on gender and representation by using the congressional retirement literature to offer an argument that accounts for the gender gap in the average length of congressional service. Our results indicate that members who have relatively long congressional careers but not powerful positions are much more likely to retire than are their less-experienced and more-powerful colleagues. The impact of these "career ceilings" (Theriault 1998) is particularly pronounced for female members. Women are more than 40% more likely than men to retire when their ability to influence the legislative process stalls. Coupled with recent studies that conclude that women are less likely than men to seek public office (Fox and Lawless 2004), our results indicate that prospects for women's representation and gender parity are less promising than the conventional wisdom suggests.

Understanding Congressional Retirement: Research Hypotheses

With the rise of the incumbency advantage in the 1960s, voluntary retirement emerged as the most likely avenue of exit from the House of Representatives. Since the 98th Congress, more than one-third (35.6%) of all departures have resulted from voluntary retirement. In contrast, electoral defeat—in either a primary or a general election—

accounts for only 30.5% of the departures.⁵

The congressional retirement literature highlights four pervasive findings to explain members' voluntary departures from the House. Perhaps most obviously, *Personal Concerns*, such as health problems that often directly correlate with a member's age, tend to preclude continued congressional service (see Brace 1984, Cooper and West 1981, Copeland 1989, and Hibbing 1982).6 Electoral Concerns also influence members' likelihood of departing from the House (see Bullock 1972, Hall and Van Houweling 1995, and Moore and Hibbing 1998). Members who barely survived their last election, or who face a radically different constituency because of redistricting, are more likely to retire. Idiosyncratic Factors, which can be Congress-specific or member-specific, also affect retirement. Finally, *Institutional Concerns* influence the propensity to retire. Minority party members, because of their reduced power and general frustration, are more likely to opt for retirement (Hibbing 1982; Kiewiet and Zeng 1993; Theriault 2005). We would also expect members who took congressional term-limits pledges to be more likely to retire, although this hypothesis has never been empirically tested. 8 In a similar vein, the Republicans adopted a six-year term limit for committee chairs that took effect in the 106th Congress; since then, 16 committee chairs, if reelected, would have been required to give up their gavels. Retirement might appear a preferable option over a mandated loss of institutional power and influence. We may know relatively little about the manner in which gender affects the decision to retire from Congress, but these four explanations of retirement might account for most of the gender gap in congressional tenure. Further, there is no reason to believe that these factors will exert differential impacts on women and men.

But one final institutional factor that relates to members' policy influence in the House might explain gender differences in the length of congressional service because it affects women and men differently. Theriault (1998) found that members who reach "career ceilings" are more likely to retire than both long-serving powerful members and newly elected members (see also Fisher and Herrick 2002). We utilize operationalization of Theriault's career ceilings, which multiplies the number of years the member has served in the House by the value of the member's position. The position scores are the inverse of Hibbing's (1991, 64–65) power dimension. Members who reach career ceilings have served in the House for a long time but have not yet accrued powerful positions. We would expect years in the House and position weakness to spur congressional retirement. (See the Appendix for a complete list of independent variables that gauge congressional

retirement, as well as their predicted effects, ranges, means, standard deviations, and derivations.)

The effect of reaching a career ceiling may be more dramatic for women than men because of gender differences motivating the decision to run for Congress. Male congressional candidates are more likely to be motivated to run by the raw desire to hold office, whereas women often choose to run because of a specific policy issue (Bledsoe and Herring 1990; Costantini 1990; Fox 1997, 20). Men seem to be satisfied—at least in part—by mere service in the House, but women might need policy influence to satisfy their career goals since policy influence, and not status, led them to seek office initially. Accordingly, when women reach a career ceiling, they may be more likely than men to depart from the House of Representatives.¹¹

The Model and the Results

We employed logistic regression analysis with a fixed-effects specification to analyze the decision to retire for every member of the House of Representatives from the 98th to the 107th Congress (1983–2002). We analyze a total of 4,199 individual member decisions to retire. The number of retirements per Congress varied from a low of 9 in the 98th Congress (1983–84) to a high of 52 in the 102d Congress (1991–92). On average, slightly more than 5% of members opted for retirement over the 10 Congresses we analyze. Although only 22 women in our dataset retired from Congress, our results provide a solid preliminary empirical assessment of gender differences in retirement at the congressional level.

The overall model, presented in column A of Table 1, performs well. The probability that all of the variables are jointly insignificant is miniscule and the pseudo-R² is 0.187.¹⁶ The regression coefficients verify the substantive impact of personal and electoral concerns.¹⁷ Self-imposed term limits are also statistically significant predictors of congressional retirement (the probability of retirement increases from 0.064 to 0.928). Perhaps more surprising than this large substantive effect is the fact that the variable does not perfectly predict retirement. We can estimate it only because four members broke their pledges and sought reelection. Committee-chair term limits drastically affect a member's probability of retiring as well. When a powerful member faces a committee-chair term limit, his (they have all been men) retirement probability increases from 0.065 to 0.281.

The most-striking results to emerge from our multivariate analysis, however, pertain to career ceilings. Our data from the last ten Congresses

TABLE 1 Models for Estimating Voluntary Retirements from the U.S. House, 1983–2002

	A	В	C
	Binary Logit	Multin	omial Logit
Variable		Retire	Run for Higher Office
Personal Concerns			
Age	-0.099 (0.07)	-0.099 (0.07)	0.160 (0.11)
Age^2	0.001** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	$-0.002* \\ (0.001)$
Female	-0.788 (0.62)	-0.788 (0.62)	-0.162 (0.62)
Electoral Concerns			
Electoral Margin	-1.969** (0.57)	-1.996** (0.57)	-1.220* (0.66)
Redistricting	0.692** (0.27)	0.733** (0.28)	-0.931* (0.46)
Institutional Concerns			
Committee-Chair Term Li	mits 1.751** (0.68)	_	_
Term-Limits Pledge	5.219** (0.71)	4.974** (0.69)	2.712** (0.92)
Career Ceilings	0.0022** (0.001)	0.0021** (0.001)	0.005** (0.001)
Female × Career Ceilings	0.0013* (0.001)	0.0013* (0.001)	$0.0004 \\ (0.001)$
Years in the House	-0.085** (0.03)	-0.081** (0.03)	-0.323** (0.08)
Position Weakness	-0.030** (0.01)	-0.030** (0.01)	-0.063** (0.01)
Majority Party	-0.229 (0.16)	-0.186 (0.15)	-0.254 (0.17)
Parameters			
Constant	0.304 (2.37)	0.256 (2.36)	-0.358 (3.16)
Idiosyncratic Factors (Congress Fixed Effects)	Yes		Yes
Log Likelihood	-694.98	-1,2	284.73
Pseudo-R ²	0.187	0	.134

^{**}Statistically significant at 0.01; *Statistically significant at 0.05; N = 4,200. *Notes:* Committee-chair term limits cannot be estimated because no chair facing the term limit has opted to run for higher office. The dependent variable in binary logit is coded 1 for "retire" (5.2%) and 0 for "not retire" (94.8%); all 210 members who sought higher office, died in office, or resigned are excluded. In the multinomial logit, "remaining in the House" is the excluded/baseline category.

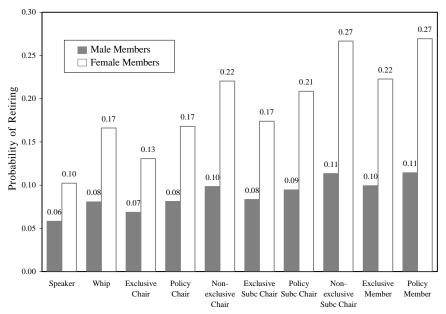
confirm Theriault's (1998) finding from the 102d Congress: career ceilings and their principal components are substantively and statistically significant. And, as we hypothesized, the relationship between career ceilings and retirement is especially strong for female representatives. In fact, because the parameter estimate for gender is statistically insignificant, the interaction between career ceilings and gender serves as the causal mechanism underlying women's quicker path to retirement. These results are quite robust, withstanding various model specifications. If we divide the data into a 1980s group and a 1990s group, the results are much stronger for the later decade. As the proportion of female representatives rises, the results are clearer. In addition, if we test the relationship within each Congress, then the substantive results in four of the five Congresses of the 1990s mirror the results of the overall model. 19

Because career ceilings represent an interaction between length of service and position, we can vary either of these components to demonstrate the gender differences in the impact of reaching a stalled congressional career on the decision to leave Congress. Thus, we present two figures to shed light on the substantive effect that career ceilings exert on men's and women's likelihoods of retiring from the House. In Figure 1, position varies while all of the other variables remain at their means, except Years in the House, which we hold constant at one standard deviation above its average (18 years). If a male legislator moves from being a chair of a policy committee (for example, the Agriculture Committee) to simply being a member on that committee, then his probability of retirement increases nearly 40%. The same position change yields a 60% increase in a female member's likelihood of leaving the House. The graph makes clear that the interaction term swamps the negative effect of the statistically significant coefficients on congressional experience and position weakness.

In Figure 2, we vary the number of years the member served while position and all other variables remain constant. Doubling the 25-year career of a male representative almost triples his retirement probability. But again, the effect for women is much larger. The same female representative is four and a half times more likely to retire if we double her years of service from 15 to 30. Regardless of the manner in which we present the data, career ceilings significantly increase the probability of congressional retirement, especially for female representatives.²⁰

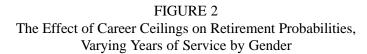
By specifying the decision as a "retire or not" proposition, we simplify the actual choice set that members face. They can, of course, opt to run for higher office, a path that 143 (3.3%) members opted to

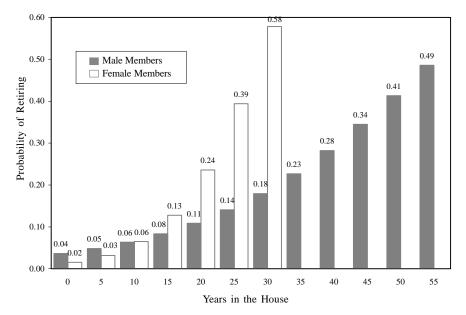
FIGURE 1
The Effect of Career Ceilings on Retirement Probabilities,
Varying Position of Service by Gender



Position in the House

pursue over the 10 Congresses we analyzed. ²¹ When we perform a multinomial logistic regression (Table 1, columns B and C) so as to include this third option, we find that most of the significant predictors of whether a member opts to retire, as opposed to remaining in the House, also predict whether the member will run for higher office, as opposed to remaining in the House. ²² The one noteworthy difference speaks directly to women's numeric representation. Whereas women are more likely than men to retire from Congress when faced with a seemingly stalled career, women are no more likely than men to seek higher office when they reach the same career ceiling. In other words, there is no compensatory effect by which the differential impact of House career ceilings results in women's greater likelihood to run for senator or governor. All members of the House, regardless of sex, are more likely to leave the House when their position is stunted, but women are more likely than men to respond by leaving politics altogether.





Conclusion

Despite the fact that when the 108th Congress convened, 86% of its members were male (CAWP 2004), and although the United States ranks sixtieth worldwide in terms of the number of women serving in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2005), gender politics scholars tell us that, with time, the percentage of women in Congress will increase and the prospects for women's representation will improve. The political system is "gender neutral," at least in terms of vote shares and fund-raising returns, so as more women enter the pool of qualified candidates, women will increasingly be presented with good opportunities for political success and electoral victory.

This prognosis is predicated on two basic assumptions. Foremost, it assumes that potential women candidates will respond to political opportunities in the same ways that men traditionally have. As women's presence in the fields of law and business becomes more comparable to men's, so, too, will their economic status and their likelihood of seeking elected positions (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). In addition, the

prognosis assumes that, once women enter politics, women and men will be equally likely to stay in politics.

Two recent studies call these assumptions into question. First, potential women candidates remain less likely than similarly situated men to receive encouragement to run for office and to deem themselves qualified to hold elected positions, both of which decrease their likelihood of throwing their hats into the electoral arena (Fox and Lawless 2004). Second, this article argues that even when women make it to the House, they serve significantly shorter terms than men do, in large part because women are more likely to retire as a consequence of facing a career ceiling.²³ While it is certainly true that weak careers can be jump-started when more-senior committee members retire, our analysis indicates that women are less likely than men to wait out that process. They opt to retire when they feel they are no longer actively contributing to the policymaking process. If seats held by women in Congress turn over more rapidly, then a higher proportion of women will have to run and win just to keep pace with the status quo percentage of women in Congress. Together, these studies suggest that achieving gender parity, or even significant increases in women's numeric representation in Congress, is unlikely, despite the policy importance of increasing women's presence in our political institutions.

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NOTES

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- 1. Whittington, Laren W., "In Retirement, A Travel Upgrade; Furse Trades in Hectic Congressional Schedule for Oregon Winery, Home in France," *Roll Call*, 24 May 2001.
- 2. This result is driven neither by women's relatively recent entry into the House, nor by the fact that women tend to enter the chamber at an older average age than do men. If we focus only on members who entered the chamber after the 97th Congress and voluntarily retired, then we find that women's tenure is 18% shorter than men's. If we restrict our analysis to members who entered Congress after the age of 45, then we find that women's careers are 32% shorter than men's.
- 3. From a policy perspective, women are more likely than men to promote legislation geared to ameliorate women's economic and social status, especially concerning issues of health care, poverty, education, and gender equity (Burrell 1996;

Dodson 1998; Paolino 1995; Swers 2002; Thomas 1994). Some studies also suggest that female legislators are more likely than male legislators to conduct business in a manner that is egalitarian, cooperative, communicative, and contextual (Kathlene 1995; Rosenthal 1998; Thomas 1994). From a more-normative perspective, many scholars question a political system that produces governing bodies dominated by men, when, in fact, women constitute the majority of the population. This dynamic offends our sense of "simple justice" (Tolleson-Rinehart 1994; see also Thomas 1998).

- 4. Some scholars also note that congressional retention speaks to the democratic legitimacy of our political institutions (e.g., Moore and Hibbing 1998; Schlesinger 1966).
- 5. Of the 613 departures from the 98th to 107th Congresses, 218 members retired (22 were women), 187 lost their elections (19 were women), 151 accepted or sought other political positions (12 were women), 35 died (2 were women), and 22 resigned midterm (none were women).
- 6. Members who leave the House also often reference the fact that the "family-unfriendly" schedule of Congress makes it difficult to balance career and familial responsibilities (Theriault 1998, 421). Neither marital nor parental status predicts retirement in the models we develop, however, and in neither case is the interaction with the sex of the member of Congress significant. We do not include these variables in our models because the fact that a member is married, a parent, or both serves as a relatively poor proxy for the degree to which the member is responsible for household and child-care tasks. Data limitations preclude us from gauging the potentially gendered effect that family roles exert on retirement.
- 7. Members elected prior to 1980 who did not retire by the 103d Congress, for instance, could not, upon their retirement, convert campaign contributions into personal cash; accordingly, many opted to retire and convert their cash funds (see Groseclose and Krehbiel 1994). Members also often choose retirement over facing the fire of personal or political scandals (Alford et al. 1994; Clarke et al. 1999; Moore and Hibbing 1998).
- 8. In 1994, the Supreme Court declared state-imposed congressional term limits unconstitutional, but term-limit interest groups enticed a multitude of members to take self-imposed term-limits pledges. If members had fulfilled their pledges, then 10 members in 2000 and 4 members in 2002 would have stepped aside. Of the 14, 4 members broke their pledges and ran for a fourth term (all of them succeeded).
- 9. Of the 16 chairs, 1 member resigned, 11 traded in their leadership gavels on one committee for leadership positions on others, and 4 retired.
- 10. Hibbing asked 80 political scientists and political observers to award points (on a 100-point scale) for the various party and committee positions in the House. He used these assessments to develop a power dimension. We used the inverse of the power dimension to capture position weakness, which we then interacted with the total number of years the member served. The codes for position weakness, for example, are 1 for the Speaker, 20 for the chair or ranking member of an exclusive committee (Ways and Means, Appropriations, Rules), 60 for the subcommittee chair or ranking member of a policy committee (e.g., Armed Services and Judiciary), and 100 for a member of a less-desirable committee (e.g., Post Office and Civil Service).
- 11. Our argument about women's retirement in the face of career ceilings does not hinge on women's inability to affect policy pertaining to *women's issues*, which may, in fact, be addressed through means other than committee membership (Swers

- 2002). Our argument is broader than that; we suggest that women leave Congress because they do not have the power (through their committee assignments) to exert sufficient influence over the policy areas for which they are responsible (i.e., policy domains within the jurisdiction of their committee assignments).
- 12. Our analysis begins with the 98th Congress because this period represents the first time in congressional history that more than 20 women served in the House. Starting earlier would have yielded too few female retirees for meaningful data analysis. Our analysis ends with the 107th Congress so that we can analyze two full decades of congressional careers with two complete sets of redistricted districts (from 1983 to 1992, we have the 1980s' districts and from 1993 to 2002, we have the 1990s' districts).
- 13. To be consistent with the congressional retirement literature, we exclude all the cases in which members died in office, resigned, or ran for a different office. These scenarios account for 4.8% of the members.
- 14. Our model includes Congress fixed effects to account for idiosyncratic factors unique to each Congress, as well as variation in the Congress-to-Congress retirement rates. Without these fixed effects, the observations from a particular Congress would not be independent. Initially, we also included random effects for members to control for the dependence among the observations from the same member. Our data analysis indicated homoskedasticity across legislators. Hence, because the power of the model is unaffected by the random-effects specification, we choose to present and discuss the simpler model.
- 15. Tomz, King, and Zeng (1999) recommend employing "RELOGIT," which estimates the same logit model but with an estimator that gives a lower mean square error in the presence of rare-events data for coefficients, probabilities, and other quantities of interest. When we estimated our model using RELOGIT, our results are virtually identical to what we find when performing an ordinary logistic regression. We also operationalized our hypotheses using duration analysis, which yielded almost identical results. The results from RELOGIT and the duration analysis are available from the authors upon request.
- 16. We should acknowledge that our model treats as equals members who are new to the legislature (entering after the 98th Congress) and those who served prior to the convening of the 98th Congress. Most of the representatives who served prior to the 98th Congress are men, all of whom have already chosen not to retire on at least one occasion. The potential consequence of this left-censoring problem is that the model could overestimate the effect of career ceilings for women. If short-serving members move ahead or move out early in their congressional careers, then the men who were already in Congress when the women began to enter have already overcome this hurdle. Because of this potential problem, when we turn to our analysis of career ceilings, we discuss the results not only for the entire sample, but also for the subsample of "shortserving" members (those who entered no earlier than the 98th Congress). Considering that our findings are at least as robust in the latter specification, we think pooling the data is appropriate and the left-censoring issue does not overestimate the effects we discuss. Additionally, when we interact each of the career-ceiling components with an indicator variable for whether or not the member's career started after 1980, the substantive and statistical significance of *Female* × *Career Ceilings* (and all other variables) is unaffected.
- 17. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women have a harder time than men do raising money, although they ultimately raise similar amounts (Fox 1997), which would

imply that women face higher "costs" of running for office than do men because women must work harder to obtain the same resources. We uncover no support for this claim in our data. When we interact electoral concerns with the sex of the member, the interaction term does not achieve statistical significance. Thus, women might face higher costs in running for office, or seeking reelection, but these costs do not appear to encourage them to retire from Congress once they already have a seat.

- 18. Our results indicate that *Years in the House* and *Position Weakness* are inversely related to retirement. When these variables are evaluated collectively, however, the positive effect of the career-ceiling interaction swamps the principal components' negative coefficients.
- 19. Only the 105th Congress does not reflect the overall model results; this exception is probably a result of the fact that only one female member retired at the end of that Congress. Because of the smaller number of observations, however, the Congress-by-Congress results fail to achieve conventional levels of statistical significance.
- 20. Granted, this finding is driven, at least in part, by the larger spread of service among the men (which explains why we restrict the female bars from exceeding 30 years; no woman in our dataset has served that long). A careful examination of the data from female members, however, does not reveal any extreme outliers. Two of the ten lowest career-ceiling members who retired were women: Enid Waldholtz retired at the end of her first Congress because of the financial improprieties of her then-husband; and Cathy Long, widow of long-serving Gillis Long, retired after one year. On the other end of the career-ceiling variable, the top 10% of career-ceiling values for members who retired all belonged to men. Pat Schroeder held the highest career-ceiling value for a female member who retired; she served for 24 years and retired as a ranking member on a subcommittee in the Judiciary Committee.
- 21. Nonetheless, with the exception of Kiewiet and Zeng 1993 and Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997, all of the retirement literature assumes that members face only the dichotomous choice.
- 22. Multinomial logistic regression assumes the independence of irrelevant alternatives. The ratio of probabilities of any two alternatives in a choice set is unaffected by the other alternative. Thus, implicit in our model is the assumption that the probability of a member retiring versus the probability of that member seeking reelection is unaltered by the presence of the possibility of the member running for higher office.
- 23. Women and men in the House are equally likely to face career ceilings. That is, when we control for seniority, women and men are equally likely to be appointed to exclusive committees.

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APPENDIX: Variable Description

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Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Predicted Effect on Standard Deviation Congressional Retirement	Coding
Dependent Variable					
Retire	0, 1	.05	.22	N/A	Indicates whether the member retired from the House of Representatives (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables – Personal Concerns	Personal C	oncerns			
Age	28-89 53.23	53.23	10.08	Positive	Indicates member's age.
Age^2	784-7921 2934	2934	11110	Positive	Indicates member's age squared.
Female	0, 1	60.	.29	Positive	Indicates whether member is female (1) or male (0) .
Independent Variables - Electoral Concerns	Electoral C	oncerns			
Electoral Margin	.50-1	.70	.15	Negative	Indicates member's vote share in the previous election.
Redistricting	0, 1	.07	.26	Positive	Indicates if member comes from a state that lost a House seat during reapportionment.
Independent Variables - Institutional Concerns	Institutiona	l Concer	su		
Career Ceilings	0 - 3498	595.84	368.14	Positive	Years in the House × Position Weakness.
Years in the House	0-53	10.36	8.02	Positive	Indicates the number of years member has served in the House.
Position Weakness	1-84	66.81	16.44	Positive	Indicates level of power associated with member's committee assignment/position.
Majority Party	0, 1	.57	.50	Negative	Indicates whether member belongs to the majority party in the House (1) or not (0).
Committee-Chair Term Limits	0, 1	00.	90.	Positive	Indicates whether member is faced with committee chair term limits (1) or not (0).
Term-Limits Pledge	0, 1	00.	.05	Positive	Indicates whether member pledged to limit his/her congressional service (1) or not (0).