

Home Field Advantage

Roots, Reelection, and Representation in the Modern Congress

A volume in the Legislative Politics and Policy Making series

Although partisan polarization gets much of the attention in political science scholarship about Congress, members of Congress represent diverse communities around the country. *Home Field Advantage* demonstrates the importance of this understudied element of American congressional elections and representation in the modern era: the local, place-based roots that members of Congress have in their home districts. Charles Hunt argues that legislators' local roots in their district have a significant and independent impact on their campaigns, election outcomes, and more broadly on the relationship between members of the U.S. House of Representatives and their constituents. Drawing on original data, his research reveals that there is considerable variation in election outcomes, performance relative to presidential candidates, campaign spending, and constituent communication styles that are not fully explained by partisanship, incumbency, or other well-established theories of American political representation. Rather, many of these differences are the result of the depth of a legislator's local roots in their district that predate their time in Congress. Hunt lays out a detailed "Theory of Local Roots" and their influence in congressional representation, demonstrating this influence empirically using multiple original measures of local roots over a full cross-section of legislators and a significant period of time.

Charles Hunt is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Boise State University.

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Charles Hunt



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