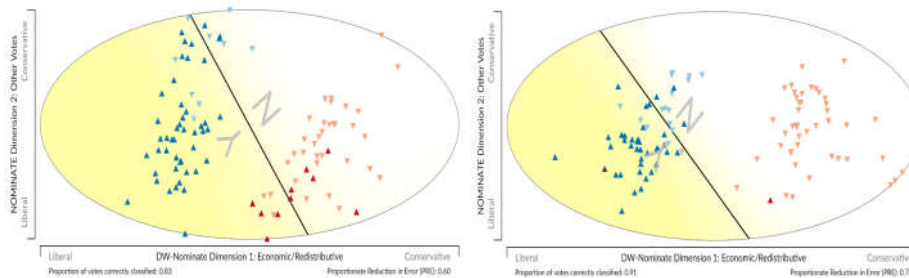## "Using Resources: Voteview"
Prof. Anthony Madonna
POLS 4620E
Lecture #16
University of Georgia


Roll Call Votes: Voteview

Roll call votes are not a panacea (this is discussed below). But they often tell us interesting things about an issue or a point in time.

Many issues we might consider conservative or liberal today were not ideological or at least differed years ago. Roll call votes can help us characterize the ideology of an issue or vote. Comparing two votes on the same or a similar issue can tell us how attitudes have shifted.

For example, the figure on the left is a Senate vote on the assault weapons ban in 1993. It passed 57-43. The red triangles pointed up represent the 10 Republican votes in support. The blue triangles pointed down are the nine Democrats who voted no.

The figure on the right is a Senate vote on the assault weapons ban twenty years later. It failed 41-60. Only one Senate Republican voted yes. 15 Democrats voted no. These figures suggest that the Senate has gotten more conservative on this issue.
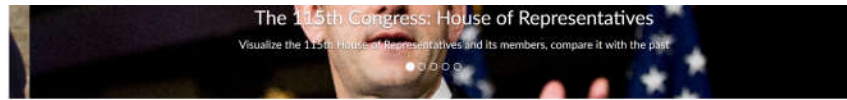
2

Roll Call Votes: Voteview

How do you find votes using Voteview? First, don't hesitate to use links if I provided them. Second, go to www.Voteview.com

In the Vote and Member Search bar, try and search the bill number. Let's say we want to find the initial House vote passing the Civil Rights Act of 1957. We search the bill number, 6127.

3

Roll Call Votes: Voteview

It returns 19 votes.

If it returned more, click on advanced search to select the Congress or chamber to narrow things down.

19 is few enough though, we can just scroll down and find the vote. We know it occurred in the House and was on June 18th, 1957.

This looks like the right vote here.

4

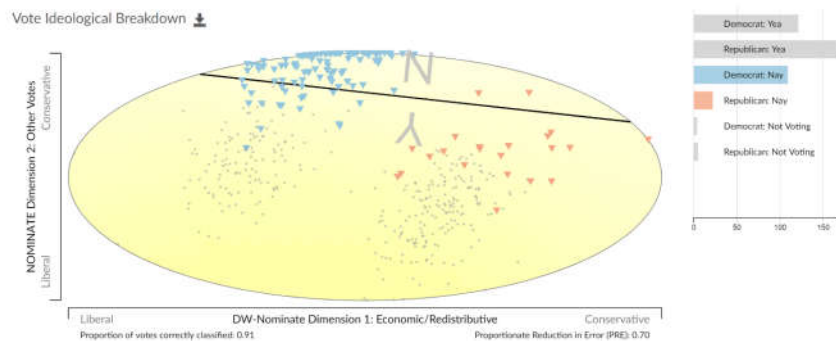# Roll Call Votes: Voteview
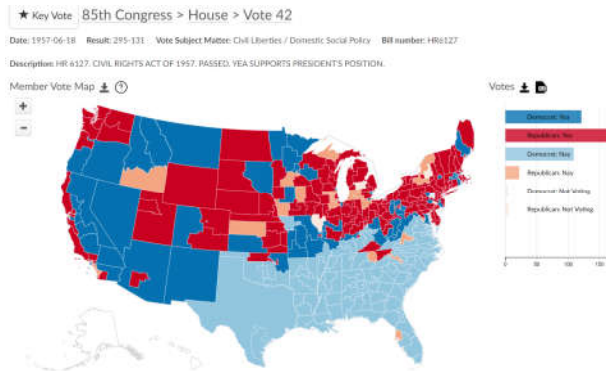
Clicking on the vote, we immediately see the vote description, party breakdown and a graph of the regional breakdown. As we might expect, this looks like the bill fell largely down geographic, not party lines.

The most northern Democratic no vote came from a member representing Missouri.

5

Roll Call Votes: Voteview

Scrolling down, we find that opposition to this measure was primarily restricted to members located on the conservative end of the second dimension. While the first dimension picked up economic liberalism/conservative, the substance of the second dimension varies throughout congressional history.

In this period, it likely is picking up civil rights issues. 91% of the "no" votes could be predicted using the model.

6

Roll Call Votes: Voteview
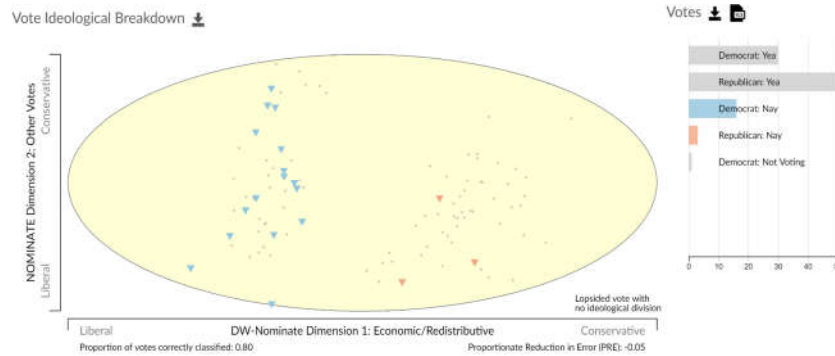
Not all votes tell a clean ideological story. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 passed the Senate 80-19 initially. Those 19 no votes were distributed across the ideological spectrum and do not appear to fit a spatial model.

Questions, Concerns, Angry Rants?

Specifically, are there other resources you want me to walk you through again? If so, please e-mail me.