Appendix

Variable Operationalization and Data Sources

Dependent Variable (Roll Calls). The votes analyzed represent a subset of the gag-related votes cast between 1836 and 1845. I have identified the votes that provide the cleanest measure of MC positions on the gag from each session in which the issue was debated, relying on historical accounts (e.g., Ludlum 1941 and Miller 1995) as well as roll call descriptions from Alexander (1967) and the ICPSR #9822 codebooks to separate crucial votes in the gag rule battle from votes intertwined with other matters (usually, with controversies over the adoption of the full set of rules). I have also excluded votes from an 1841 special session (27th Congress): a gag rule battle ensued at the beginning of this session (Binder 1997, 99-104), but President Tyler had called the session for narrow purposes, and the House eventually resolved to temporarily gag all subjects unrelated to the president's purpose (Ludlum 1941, 216). The raw roll call data (Rosenthal and Poole 1992) is recoded such that "1" always represents a pro-gag position, though the yea position on some votes was in favor of rescinding the gag. The following roll-calls are included in the analysis:

Vote	Congress/ Session	Date of Vote	ICPSR Vote #	"Yea" position	Roll-call	Position Changes (% of recurring votes)
1	24/1	26 May 1836	207	Gag	117-68	--
2	24/2	18 Jan 1837	365	Gag	129-69	16 (10.3%)
3	25/2	21 Dec 1837	72	Gag	122-74	17 (20.5%)
4	25/3	12 Dec 1838	363	Gag	128-78	8 (5.0%)
5	26/1	28 Jan 1840	106	Gag [a]	115-105	15 (14.6%)
6	26/2	9 Dec 1840	639	Gag	82-58	17 (13.6%)
7	27/2	6 Dec 1841	277	Anti-gag	84-87	5 (6.4%)
8	27/3	12 Dec 1842	818	Gag	106-102	12 (7.8%)
9	28/1	4 Dec 1843	13	Anti-gag	91-95	4 (7.7%)
10	28/1	27 Feb 1844	141	Gag	85-107	11 (6.7%)
11	28/2	3 Dec 1844	433	Anti-gag	108-80	5 (3.1%)
12	29/1	1 Dec 1845	13	Gag	85-121	6 (5.9%)

Party. Coding for Whigs and Democrats for the 25th-29th Congresses is drawn from Poole and Rosenthal's Nominate data sets (Poole 2001), which rely on Martis (1989). For members of the 24th, I have translated the "Jackson" and "Anti-Jackson" designations into Democratic and Whig codings since Martis does not assign these labels until the 25th. The basic framework of Democratic-Whig competition was present in the 24th (Holt 1999), particularly by the late date of the two votes included here; moreover, among MCs who served in both the 24th and 25th Congresses, the Democratic/Jackson and Whig/Anti-Jackson labels correspond almost perfectly.

Slave Percentage. For southern districts, I have coded census-derived slave percentage data from Parsons, Beach, and Hermann (1978) and Parsons, Beach, and Dubin (1986).

Antislavery Vote. For northern districts, a dummy variable reflects support in the MC's district for a candidate from an antislavery party (or parties), based on election results I obtained from Dubin (1998). The coding for this variable is split to account for redistricting in the elections for the 28th: districts with a measured antislavery vote before the 28th are coded as "1" for cases through the 27th ("0" otherwise), and districts with an antislavery vote after the 27th are coded "1" for cases in the 28th or 29th. Most of the districts with antislavery votes featured Liberty party candidates, although a handful of "Anti-Slavery" or "Abolitionist" candidacies were also coded.

Electoral margin. The electoral margin variable is the percentage of the district vote won by the MC in the preceding election (from Dubin 1998). Measuring marginality in the antebellum House poses a challenge since multimember districts (MMD) and at-large states were relatively common, especially prior to 1842. I address this problem by creating a pseudo-SMD for each winning candidate from a MMD. This is the method described by Niemi, Jackman, and Winsky (1991) in the context of state legislative MMDs and applied to the antebellum House by Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson (1996). Simply stated, the Niemi et al. approach creates a SMD with

simulated two-party competition by pairing the top vote-getting winning candidate with the opposite-party losing candidate with the lowest vote support; the winning candidate with the second-highest vote total is paired with the opposite-party losing candidate with the second-lowest total, and so forth.

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