If it were not for the increasing partisanship, US Congress would be even more ineffective!

Legislative Effectiveness Hangs in the Balance

Research Question: Why is Congress so ineffective at passing legislation?

Political Party Hypothesis: It is easier to pass bills when the majority party holds a larger majority.

Political Coalition Hypothesis: Parties do not matter, but coalitions do. When Congress is polarized into coalitions, it is easier to pass bills when the largest coalition is ideologically unified (i.e. partisan).

Findings:

- Over time, the proportion of introduced bills that pass into law (passage rate) has declined.
- The size of the majority party’s majority does not help explain why (no support for H1). But, the partisanship of the largest coalition does (supporting H2).
- Over time, the largest coalition has become more partisan, which makes it easier to pass bills.