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## Issue Politics in Congress

Do representatives and senators respond to the critiques raised by their challengers? This study, one of the first to explore how legislators' experiences as candidates shape their subsequent behavior as policy makers, demonstrates that they do. Winning legislators regularly take up their challengers' priority issues from the last campaign and act on them in office, a phenomenon called "issue uptake." This attentiveness to their challengers' issues reflects a widespread and systematic yet largely unrecognized mode of responsiveness in the U.S. Congress, but it is one with important benefits for the legislators who undertake it and for the health and legitimacy of the representative process. Because challengers focus their campaigns on their opponents' weaknesses, legislators' subsequent uptake of these issues helps to inoculate them against future attacks and brings new and salient issues to the congressional agenda. This book provides fresh insight into questions regarding the electoral connection in legislative behavior, the role of campaigns and elections, and the nature and quality of congressional representation.

Tracy Sulkin is an assistant professor in the departments of political science and speech communication at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 2002. Her work has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Political Analysis*, *American Politics Research*, and *Political Psychology*. This book is based on her dissertation, which won APSA's Schattschneider Award in 2003.

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*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*



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