

to engage politically). Overall, the account of the US military is well measured and empirically sound.

The book's focus on the RGV showcases how in this unique transborder region, serious poverty and pockets of wealth can coexist and how Latinos have been subject to exploitation, but also how they can have agency and moments of resistance. While other readers might see this regional focus as a shortcoming, it is an important strength through which the authors skillfully capture the attitudes and experiences of multiple actors in the military recruitment process in this region. Similarly, the book's singular focus on the Latino community allows the authors to do a deep dive into the many intricacies involved in this process. This approach is also necessary to consider the heterogeneity *within* the Latino community, which is an important contribution of the book. What stands out the most from this book is the richness of the empirics and the evidence put forth to demonstrate how Latinos are recruited and what their experiences are with the military. All this makes this book a much-needed contribution in the study of American politics, race, and ethnic politics and education.

While the book provides strong and compelling answers to how Latinos come to serve in the military, it leaves us wondering how exactly Latino military service has created political agency among its veterans. Secondly, it leaves us curious about how Latino patriotism and military service is viewed among native-born non-Latinos. As the authors mention, the book sets the ground for further examination of these questions and so much more.

In conclusion, *Proving Patriotismo* is an engaging, thoughtful, and powerful book that provides a systematic investigation of Latino involvement in the military. It would be a fantastic addition to undergraduate and graduate courses. Although the book is primarily geared toward an academic audience, the implications are far reaching. Practitioners and educators will find its conclusions incredibly impactful and may rely on them to push toward a more transparent and equitable military recruitment process.

Old Tip vs. the Sly Fox: The 1840 Election and the Making of a Partisan Nation. Richard J. Ellis. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020. 482p. \$45.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722001876

— Mark D. Brewer , *University of Maine*
mark.brewer@maine.edu

Parties scholars, campaign aficionados, and election junkies tend to be familiar with the 1840 US presidential election, and most think they know the story quite well. The 1840 presidential race was a contest dominated by shrewd and ubiquitous marketing, emotional dog-whistle appeals, and the unconditional triumph of style over

substance. The final outcome of this less than admirable affair saw past-his-prime war hero and political novice William Henry Harrison defeating incumbent president and former New York Governor Martin Van Buren, with Harrison voted into office by an American public duped by propaganda and half (or no)-truths and overly influenced by campaign earworms and slogans so catchy that it's impossible to believe they had not been created in a focus group. Indeed, ask anyone in the three groups noted already about the 1840 presidential campaign and the odds are good that the first thing out of their mouth will be "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" or "Van, Van, is a used-up man." In short, we think we know all we need to know about the presidential election of 1840.

Richard Ellis is here to tell us we're all wrong. While there is some small amount of truth in the standard story of the 1840 presidential election, *Old Tip vs. the Sly Fox: The 1840 Election and the Making of a Partisan Nation*, clearly demonstrates that there was far more going on in this contest than the traditional accounts allow for. Indeed, while the 1896 election contest is often deemed to be the first modern American presidential campaign, Ellis in this outstanding piece of scholarship makes a strong case that this title could just as easily and deservedly be bestowed on the 1840 campaign.

Ellis clearly documents how several elements central to modern US presidential campaigns have their origins in the 1840 contest. Many of these have to do with the nature of the campaign. High levels of voter turnout are often thought to be a hallmark of postbellum nineteenth-century elections, and while turnout levels declined throughout the twentieth century before rebounding somewhat in the twenty-first century, the strong emphasis on voter mobilization and activation has remained constant throughout. Ellis's careful work demonstrates how energetic mobilization efforts fueling high voter turnout are first found in the state and congressional elections of 1837–39 and came fully into play in the presidential contest of 1840, resulting in a dramatic expansion of American participatory democracy. In a related development, it is the 1840 campaign that established the presidential contest as the central focus of American electoral politics, and in many ways American political life. Ellis relates that prior to 1840 voters tended to pay more attention to and turn out at higher levels for their state and congressional elections. This changed in 1840, as the presidential contest dominated national attention. Today we take it for granted that a presidential election will have meaningful impact far down ballots and across the nation. But when it happened in 1840, it represented a substantial and important change.

What drove these high turnout levels and caused the presidential contest to assume center stage? Here too Ellis deftly makes the case for the critical importance of the 1840 presidential campaign. First, the 1840 race was an

overwhelmingly partisan affair. In terms of both campaign efforts and voting patterns, partisanship was key. This comes through most clearly in the unified Whig effort to elect Harrison but is clear in the Democrats' efforts for Van Buren as well. Second, far from sitting by silently and allowing surrogates to make their cases to the voters both Harrison and Van Buren proactively took their arguments to the people and did so quite substantively. While they did so in very different ways—Harrison through large public speeches and Van Buren using public letters—both candidates actively and personally courted voters and did so in a manner that was heavy on public policy. Third, and according to Ellis the most important factor in the outcome of the 1840 presidential contest, this election demonstrated for the first time the power of the economy in shaping presidential election results. Van Buren simply could not overcome the poor economy in place during his reelection campaign. Future incumbents have learned this lesson as well. These critical developments both refute many of the common conceptions of the 1840 campaign and once again demonstrate the critical linkage of the 1840 contest to the presidential campaigns of the modern era.

These are just the primary threads that run through this excellent book. Readers will find far more of interest as well, such as the place of slavery in the party politics of the 1830s and 1840s, the significance of using open party conventions to nominate candidates, the implications of the lack of a national election day in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the importance of Henry Clay in many different areas. This book is superbly researched and very well written. It is also highly accessible and will be a valuable read for all audiences from the educated layperson to the scholar with decades of experience in the area. My one complaint is that the text focuses far more on the Whigs and Harrison than it does on Van Buren and the Democrats. Readers are informed that this will be the case in both the Editor's Foreword and by Ellis, but I still would have liked a bit more on the man who is often credited with the creation of modern American political parties. But this is a minor quibble with an excellent piece of work.

Throughout the book Ellis often notes how similar American politics of the 1830s is to the politics of our own time. Party leaders and politicians on both sides of the aisle fervently believe that the very future of the republic rests on the outcome of the next election. As such, these same leaders are not above using propaganda in support of their cause. We even have the losing presidential candidate in 1840 chalking his loss up to widespread voter fraud, as Van Buren couldn't come up with any other plausible explanation for his defeat. But these similarities can also cause a reader to ponder what is different about our political moment. For me, one key difference is the ubiquitous presence of social media in our time. Nineteenth-century American politics had no equivalent. If other

readers' thoughts go in a similar direction, I'll leave it to them to render judgment on whether this is a good thing.

Congress Overwhelmed: The Decline in Congressional Capacity and Prospects for Reform. Edited by

Timothy M. LaPira, Lee Drutman, and Kevin R. Kosar. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. 352p. \$105.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722001888

— Kevin M. Esterling , University of California, Riverside
kevin.esterling@ucr.edu

Understanding the scope, causes, and consequences of the state's *capacity* to solve public problems is central to the study of American institutions. This literature is largely centered on the bureaucracy. For example, in Daniel Carpenter's (2001) *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, executive agencies develop administrative capacity by cultivating a reputation for expertise among career officials who possess a complex set of ties to varied external stakeholders. In Martha Derthick's (1979) *Policymaking for Social Security*, civil servants develop autonomy to advance programmatic goals by exploiting arcane, research-based knowledge of how a program functions.

Congress Overwhelmed, edited by Timothy LaPira, Lee Drutman, and Kevin Kosar, is a collection of essays that together represent a major undertaking to situate the study of capacity within the Congress literature. The volume documents Congress's capacity and how it changes over time, and offers recommendations for reform. The essays share a common motivation that congressional disfunction is not only due to partisan divisiveness but also to the decline in collective knowledge and competence in the institution.

While there are notable works in the field of American political development that consider the capacity of Congress, notably Eric Schickler's (2001) *Disjointed Pluralism* and Bruce Bimber's (1996) *The Politics of Expertise in Congress*, the study of this kind of state capacity has nowhere near the central role in the study of Congress as it has in the study of the bureaucracy. This is likely for at least two reasons. First, agencies have Weberian-like functional specialization and expertise, while legislatures are by necessity generalist. And second, notions of representation in democratic theory center on the representatives, and generally do not envision a democratic role for the staff who serve them. Nonetheless, Congress simply could not function without the expertise and creativity provided by civil servants in its own organization. The House and Senate have dozens of standing committees, hundreds of member offices, three support agencies, a dozen administrative offices, and tens of thousands of employees that do the day-to-day work to enable lawmaking, oversight, and constituent service activities that are core legislative functions.

In their introductory chapter to the volume, the editors define *congressional capacity* as "the organizational