

Polarized We Govern?

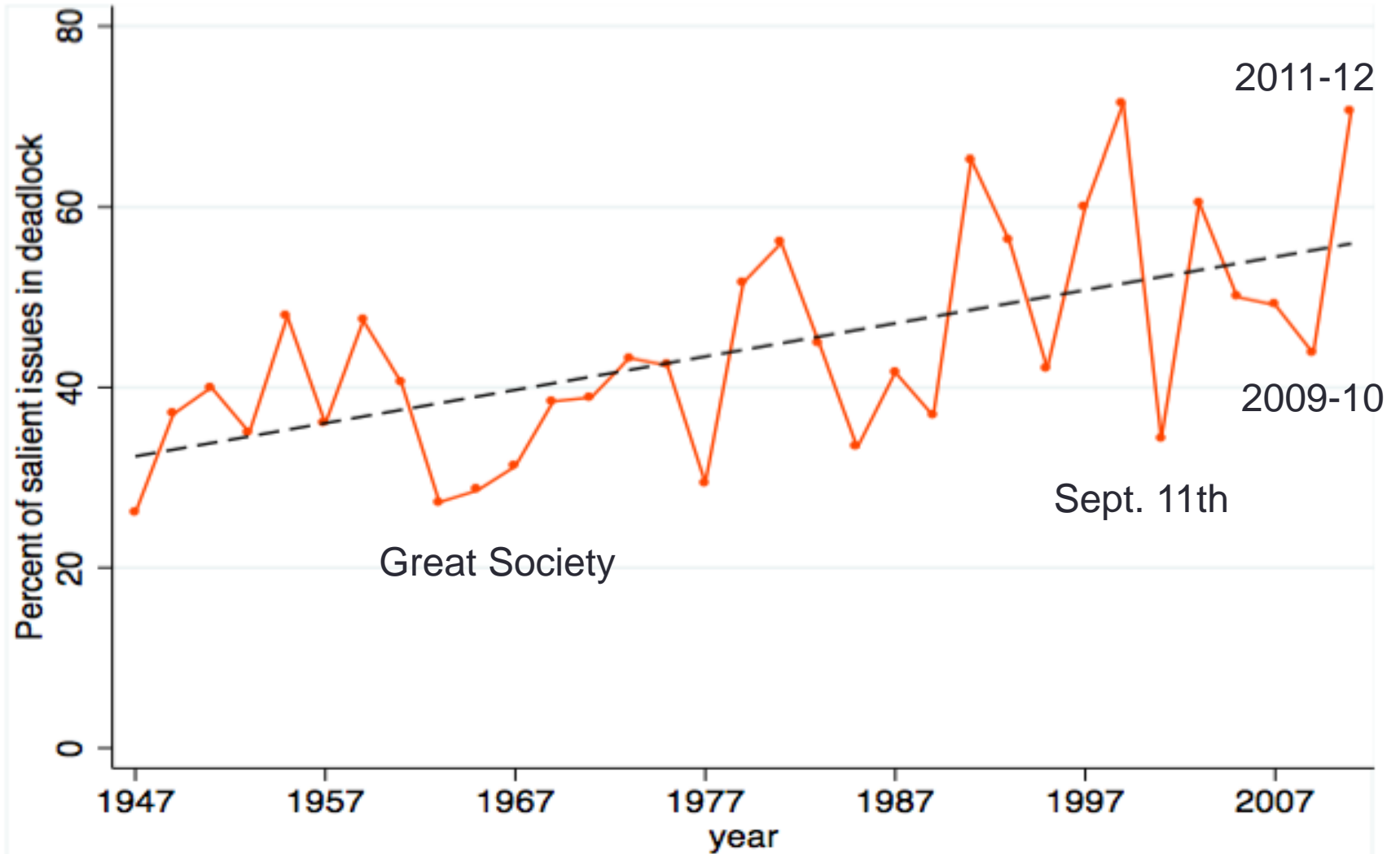
Sarah Binder

GWU and Brookings

Negotiating with Republicans is like ...

- Chasing a greasy pig
- It is kind of a painless ordeal for the pig
- For those who don't know what a greased pig contest is, here's what it is: The organizers get a little pig, piglet, and they cover this little animal with tons of grease. It's a greasy little pig...The reason I mention this: Oftentimes working with my Senate Republican colleagues reminds me of chasing one of these little pigs in a greased pig contest. Regardless of all of our efforts, any time we get close to making progress, it seems as though we watch it slip out of our hands.”

Legislative deadlock (1947-2012)



Political premises that shape negotiations

- Lawmakers must defend deals to supporters
- Lawmakers are accountable for the positions they take, not the policies that result
- Party leaders play the blame game

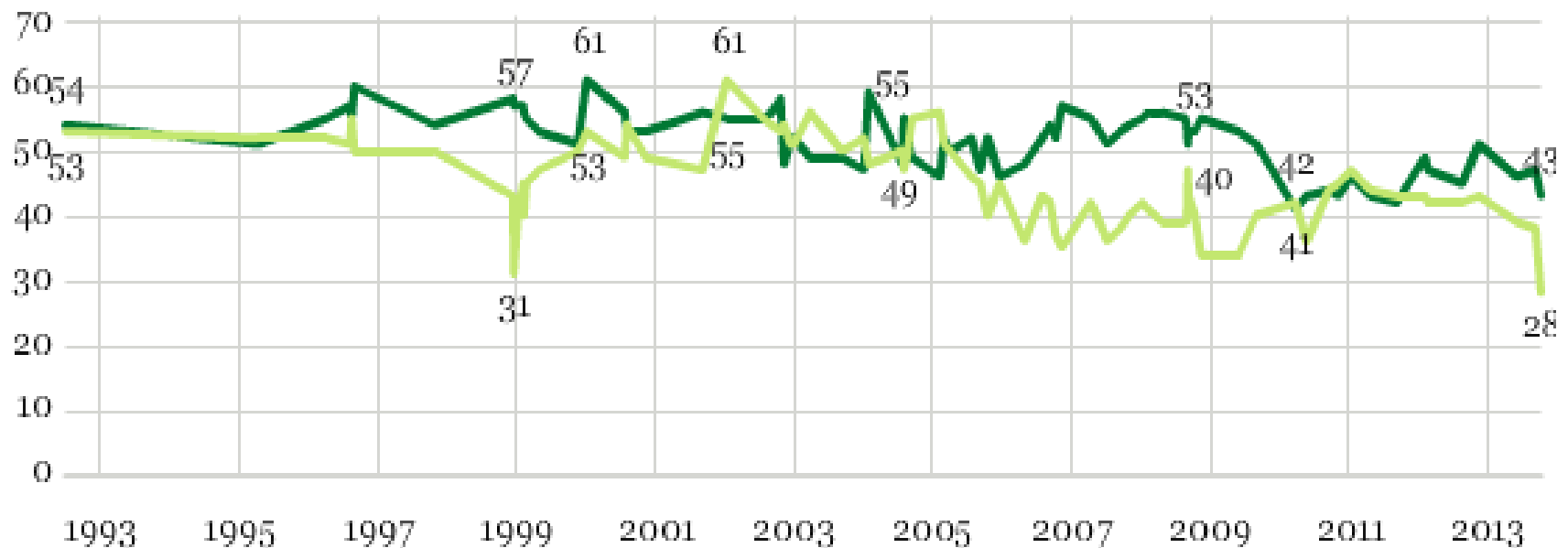
Costs of saying “no”

Republican and Democratic Party Favorables, 1992-2013

Next, we'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. ... Please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of _____.

■ The Democratic Party -- % Favorable

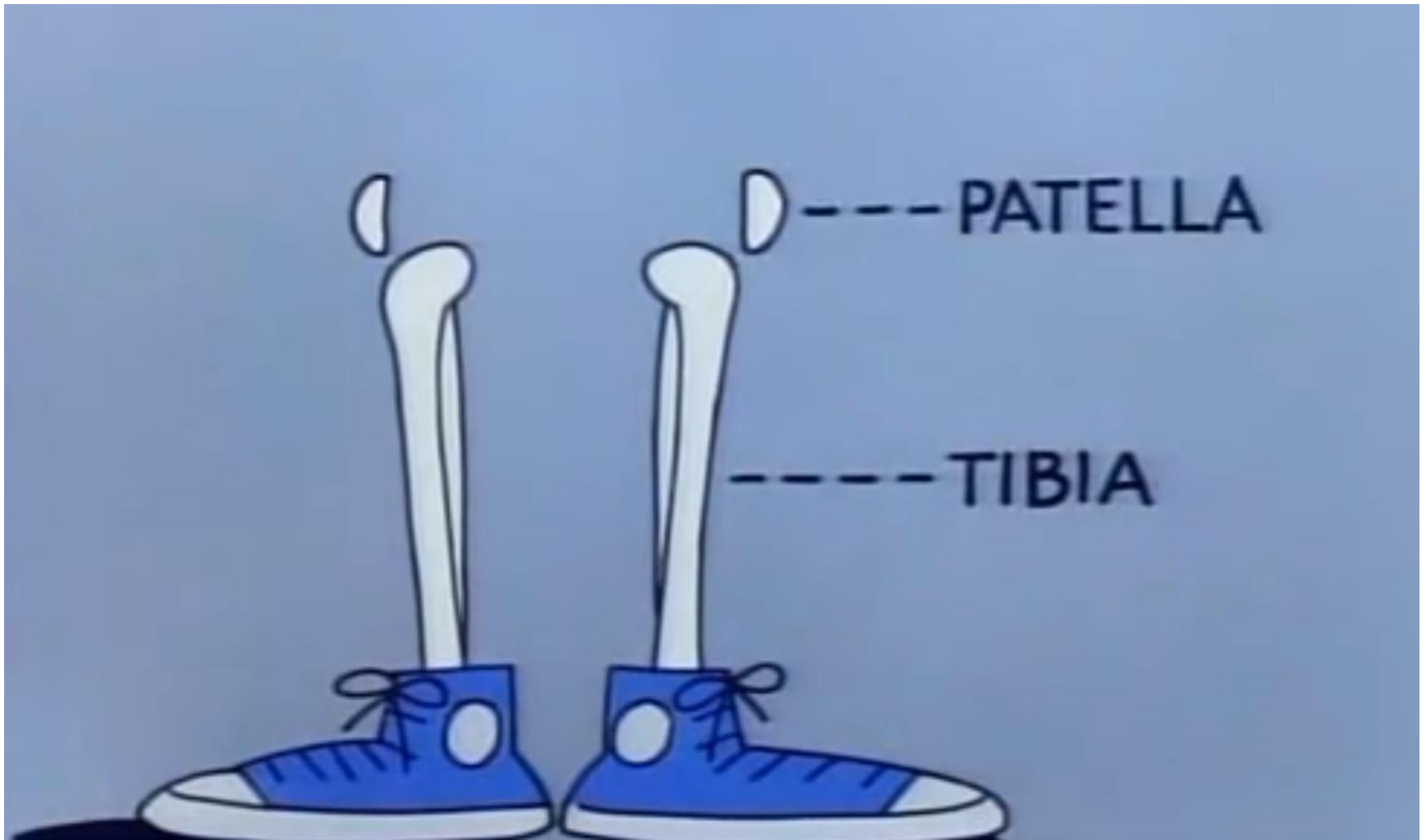
■ The Republican Party -- % Favorable



Political premises that shape negotiations

- Lawmakers must defend deals to supporters
- Lawmakers are accountable for the positions they take, not the policies that result
- Party leaders play the blame game
- Congressional jurisdiction is boundless

“Ankle bone is connected to the shoulder bone”



Implications for governing

- “Back to regular order” could be valuable
- Closing doors might be helpful
- “Must-pass” bills are favored
- “Kick the can” will remain popular

BIPARTISAN AGREEMENTS

Murdering cute kittens,
in most cases, is bad.



In general, ice is
very, very cold.



We can safely say
that the average number
of heads per person is one.

