

Retired United States Congressmen from the State of Michigan

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Abstract

Conventional wisdom in the study of members of Congress, pioneered by Richard Fenno, argues that one of the chief goals of elected officials is their reelection. However, this theory does not account for those who willingly retire from Congress. Who are these former members and what activities do they pursue once they leave office? To answer the first question, this project analyzes data on retired members of Congress from the state of Michigan regarding the years they served, party identification, and their age of retirement. The second and perhaps more interesting question in this research, examines the post-congressional careers of former members of Congress and whether their new line of work has any connections with their time in Congress through committee assignments and issue advocacy. In addition to quantitative analysis of the attributes of former members and their post-congressional careers, a qualitative analysis is conducted through a comparative case study of retired Senator Donald Riegle and former Representative Mike Rogers. This aspect of the study more closely examines their respective career paths through congress and post-congressional vocations.

Introduction

In 1974, Democratic Congresswoman Martha Griffiths announced her retirement from the House of Representatives citing her age, 62, as a key motivation for the decision. After this, Griffiths would serve two terms as Michigan Lieutenant Governor before being dropped off the ticket, at the age of 78, due to concerns about her age, a claim she deemed “ridiculous” (“Griffiths, Martha Wright”). Griffiths, and many other former members of Congress, demonstrate that retirement occurs for complicated reasons that may not be the same as the ones they profess and that leaving Congress does not necessarily mark an end to their professional careers. I study retired congresspersons from the state of Michigan to determine important factors that lead to a member of Congress to willingly leave office and what types of activities do these former members engage in following their time in office. For the purpose of this study a “retired congressperson” will be defined as an individual who has chosen not to seek reelection to another term in either chamber of Congress or has willingly resigned from one of the two bodies. This definition excludes former members who were defeated in reelection bids, failed to secure their party’s nomination for reelection, sought and failed to win a seat in the Senate instead of seeking another term in the House, or died during their final term in office. Studying the factors that lead to a member of Congress retiring office offers valuable insight into current members and how they may behave in their final term of office. Additionally, a major focus of this research is the type of activities retired members engage in after leaving congress. The goal is to discern any connections these post-congressional careers may have with their time in congress, through committee assignments and other expressions of policy interest, or with pre-congressional professions in which they may have participated.

I begin by reviewing the relevant scholarly literature on congress and its members, and how the theoretical arguments presented pertain to congressional retirement and post-congressional careers and also establish what my research contributes to this field of study. Then, I analyze biographical information gathered from *History, Art, Archives: House of Representatives* and *States in the Senate* on every member of congress from the state of Michigan from 1819 to the present. From these sources, important data such as partisan identification, time spent in office, the age of members when they left office, and some of the activities many members engage in after leaving office. These data are utilized to begin to draw conclusions about different factors that may attribute to retirement including loss of interest, age, changes in political prospects and redistricting, and better opportunities available outside of congress. While examining this information, I evaluate how political concepts such as citizen statesmen versus career politicians, strategic politicians, the revolving door – the phenomenon in which former politicians work in the private sector as lobbyists after leaving office, and electoral pressures apply over the course of time. Next, I provide two detailed case studies on Senator Donald Riegle and Representative Mike Rogers, examining the steps of their political and post-congressional careers to determine the contributing factors to their respective retirements and how their activities since are indicative of their time in congress. Finally, I summarize my findings, from data collected and discussed in the case studies to draw conclusions on the most important factors that contribute to congressional retirement and the significance of post-congressional involvement.

Literature Review

The current research in the field of United States congressional politics is incredibly vast and diverse, covering a wide-breadth of topics analyzing the institution and its members.

Mayhew (1974) consider seeking reelection to be one of, if not the greatest, motivations of members of congress. Their work has played a key role in establishing many of the later theories regarding the study and behavior of members of congress, though this assumption of theirs ignores members of congress who willing choose to leave office. Hibbing (1982), challenges this general conception, particularly because of an increased number of retirements from the 1960s to the 1970s. The focus of Hibbing's work is the U.S. House of Representatives and addresses the personal situations that predispose certain members for retirement and how these attributes explain the rising number of retirees. Theriault (1998) focuses on quantifying what he identifies as the career ceiling variable, the concept that eventually congressional careers stagnate and representatives retire around this time. Parker and Dabros (2012) question the possibility that congresspersons are able to indulge themselves without fear of electoral backlash in their final term in office. They discredit the notion that congressmen will behave in a manner that may be contrary to their previous voting record and, by extension, the actions of members of congress are not purely motivated by reelection prospects. Edward and Frederick Schapsmeier (1992) take a different approach to congressional study, examining the 40-year career of Representative Leslie Arends from Illinois in a case study. In their study of Representative Arends, the Schapsmeiers look at his congressional history and the factors that contributed to his retirement during the Ford administration. King (1997) provides the perspective of an outsider, as a British scholar, and looks at the features of Congress that leaves representatives vulnerable to electoral pressures, especially compared to British politics, potentially leading to a less voluntary retirement. Kiewiet and Zeng (1993) study the interrelatedness of career options for congresspersons namely seeking reelection, retirement, and seeking higher office and estimate the variables that contribute to the final decision made by a member of congress.

Compared to previous research on retired or retiring congresspersons, this study examines a more geographically focused group of individuals, former members from the state of Michigan. This study also diverges from previous studies in that it also examines a broader period of time, spanning a period of nearly two centuries, 1819 to the present, as opposed to only focusing on decades in which there was a spike in retirements. Furthermore, this research examines former members from both chambers of congress unlike previous studies which focus primarily on members of the House of Representatives. Another component to this project that has not been heavily analyzed by prior research is the various forms of involvement inside and outside of politics that former members engage with after retiring. Additionally, the subjects of the case studies on political and post-congressional careers, Donald Riegle and Mike Rogers, have not been utilized in previous research in this area. In conducting this research, especially after so many prominent Michigan politicians have recently retired, including John Dingell, David Camp, Mike Rogers, and Carl Levin, a better understanding can be gained regarding the roles former members from Michigan have assumed in the legislative process and what public services they are currently providing or may provide in the future.

Thesis

I consider several different influences on congressional retirement including age, lack of interest in having a politically focused career, the desire to pursue other career options, and deteriorating political capital. Examining each of these indicators, I hypothesize that age is an unpredictable and less frequently applicable reason for retirement, members not interested in serving multiple terms of office are a dying breed in the modern era, seeking other opportunities and retiring to avoid challenging reelection fights are common and significant indicators a member of Congress will seek retirement. Additionally, I find that the activities former members

of Congress pursue once they leave office has changed over time, evolving from returning to previous pursuits to more frequently pursuing lines of work that call more directly on their experience in Congress.

Retirement and Post-Congressional Activities Data

Before delving into the findings on the different indicators for Congressional retirement, it is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that a combination of factors can attribute to a member deciding to leave congress. When considering these factors, it is important to consider the overall trends in retirements of Michigan congresspersons. I observed a total of 305 representatives and 45 senators. Of these, 117 representatives retired and 17 senators did the same with a total of 38% voluntarily leaving office. Figure 1 shows the number of voluntary retirements of Michigan members of Congress from both chambers during the years under investigation (1819 – 2016) save those years where there were no retirements.

[[Figure 1 Here]]

The large span of time from 1923 to 1951 reflects a period of tremendous turnover, in spite of what the lack of retirements may suggest. During this nearly three-decade period, several members died in office and many more were defeated in reelection which makes sense when considering this was a particularly tumultuous period which included the Great Depression and the Second World War. Figure 1 demonstrates that typically when there are voluntary retirements; it is rare for more than three members of Congress to retire at the same time. The implications of this is that the more of Congressional retirements in Michigan are generally

driven by more personal motivations as opposed to wider acknowledgement that several incumbents face a disenchanting electorate.¹

Four key factors are observed to determine their role in indicating the reasoning for why a given member may choose to retire. These factors include age, honoring the concept of civilian legislators, the desire to seek better opportunities outside of the congress, and facing a challenging reelection fight. While not necessarily mutually exclusive, these indicators encompass several significant reasons for why members of Congress willingly seek retirement.

Age

When discussing the topic of retirement in any profession, one of the first contributing factors that come to mind is age. Indeed, there are many members who do not seek reelection when their advancement in years finally catches up to them, and these members generally do not pursue professional activities afterwards. However, there are many examples of congresspersons retiring at ages far younger than what would typically be considered “retirement age.” The varying age, ranging from 35 to 89, of congressional members complicates the consideration of the role age plays in choosing to leave congress. Another consideration that must be kept in mind when considering the role of age is how life-expectancy and overall quality of life has improved over time. Congressman John Dingell was able to retire in 2015 at the age of 89 while Congressman Melbourne Ford dies during his term in 1891 at the age of 42 (“Mapping Congress”). Figure 2.1 shows the average age of retirees for each year in which a member of

¹ Another caveat to the data collected displayed here, and in most of the graphs, is that there are a small number of former members of Congress, such as Henry Waldron, who serve non-consecutive terms in office, both of which ended voluntarily, because of this these numbers do not necessarily correspond with the number of former members, rather the tenures served by former members.

the House of Representatives from Michigan retired, while Figure 2.2 shows the average age of retirees in the Senate.

[[Figure 2.1 Here]]

[[Figure 2.2 Here]]

Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 demonstrate that the average age of retirement for former members of Congress does not appear to exhibit a particular trend for increased age over time, in spite of increased life expectancy, as the age of retirees appears to be rather varied. It is also interesting to note that the data indicates that there is a correlation with senators retiring at an older age (approximately 70.4 years old) while representatives retire younger (approximately 55.2). The average age for representative retirement makes a case that age is not a major consideration for most members of that body. As noted at the outset, Representative Martha Griffith retired at the age of 62, after citing her age as the reason. Maybe Rep. Griffith was right; 62 is the age to retire. The data shows that only 42 former members of Congress from Michigan retired at the age of 62 or older, meaning only 31% of Michigan's retirees would qualify. However, when one considers her sixteen years of involvement with politics afterwards, this qualification rings hollow in her case, and may imply the appropriate threshold for predicting retirement is in fact older than 62.

There is no clear age threshold when considering Congressional retirement. What may seem like an appropriate age for one member of Congress to retire may be several terms away from when another finally decides to call it quits. Though a poor predictor for retirement, this does not mean that age is an entirely insignificant indicator; there are examples such as John Dingell (89), Dale Kildee (84), and Vernon Ehlers (77) where they more believably cite age as a

reason for retirement and proceed to avoid any vocations after leaving Congress. Nonetheless, age is not the most important reason for retirement.

Lack of Interest – Civilian Statesman Vs. Career Politician

The concept of career politicians, while synonymous with most conventional understandings of the congress today, is a phenomenon that did not always dominate the federal legislative bodies. Many of the Framers envisioned members of congress as civilian statesmen who would serve brief tenures in office before going back home to reengage with their former affairs. Though some scholars question the sincerity of founders on this subject, there have been several members who have served from the Michigan delegation that accurately reflect this description, serving very few terms in Congress before returning home. To differentiate between this type of member from the more recognized career politician, I will consider any member who has served for six or less years (the length of one Senate term) to qualify as a civilian statesmen.² This is not a perfect qualification, as it ignores their political careers outside of the U.S. Congress, and there are some members who choose to pursue office later on but it does satisfy the condition that members were not intended to serve federal office for large periods of time. Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show the average time in office by retirement year for former members of the House of Representatives and Senate respectively.

[[Figure 3.1 Here]]

[[Figure 3.2 Here]]

² Six years also corresponds with term limit proposals argued for in the mid-1990s and reflects current term limits in the Michigan State Legislature. I have kept this threshold the same for the House and the Senate in part to keep consistency, but also due to only two retiring senators served more than two terms, the typical term limit proposal for that chamber.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrate an overall trend for members of Congress from Michigan to spend more time in both bodies of Congress. For most of the 19th Century, the average member of Congress is spending six or less years within the institution. The 1950s witnessed a tremendous upswing in the number of terms retiring members had served compared to their predecessors. The precise reasons for this are unclear but I speculate that these members enjoyed favorable and long-lived political fortunes and were incentivized to remain in office for much the same reason as President Franklin D. Roosevelt who served in office throughout the majority of the period in which these members would have served. It is also worth considering that these members were inspired to remain in office for a longer period of time due to having a president who broke the precedent on president terms and they were similarly comfortable with breaking the trend set by their predecessors. Even after this period there are members serving brief periods in office before leaving voluntarily, most recently Representative Dan Benishek did not seek reelection for a fourth term in 2016 (“Benishek, Dan”). Though non-career politicians are in the minority in the modern era, their historical prevalence demonstrates a considerable shift in the overall mentality of members of Congress overtime. Leaving office out of a sense of obligation not to become a Washington career politician is far rarer today but it is also one of the easiest indicators to predict. When Dan Benishek announced his retirement, he was honoring a commitment he had made when he first ran in 2011 to only serve three terms in Congress (Sprangler and Kathleen, 2015). Essentially, if a politician intends to only serve a small number of terms in Congress, they are more willing to openly share that information in this age as a means of distinguishing themselves from the pack. Politicians rarely retire after serving six or less years, but it is important to keep in mind the historical context and that it was not until the 20th century where politicians would willingly retire only after serving for more time than that.

Additionally, personal reasons such as a desire to spend more time with one's family may motivate a member of Congress to retire. This reasoning is typically derided and dismissed in today's political climate where members who offer such a reasoning stay in D.C. and work on K Street instead of the family-oriented lifestyle they claimed to want to pursue. Similar to the non-career politician indicator, these personal reasons are a better indicator for retirement in the past than they are today.

Greener Pastures – Better Opportunities

While there are members of Congress that choose to step aside when their political prospects have deteriorated, there are those who may see a new opportunity outside of the congress as an elevation of their current standing. Some changes in position can almost universally be viewed as a promotion such as Representative Gerald R. Ford resigning to assume the role of the vice president, while others, such as working as an activist or lobbyist, may be less prestigious but have other benefits. Members can feel as though they have reached their "peak" in congress, or only sought congressional office as a stepping stone in the first place. Tracking the pursuit of better opportunities as an indicator for retirement is something that can generally only be achieved after they have left Congress unless the former member in question openly cites their desire to pursue a particular opportunity as their reason for retiring.

If a higher office is vacated, or a member of Congress strategically sees an opportunity to beat an incumbent, it can be a strong indicator for a member of Congress, with some level of notoriety, to consider pursuing that position instead of seeking reelection. Appointments to a variety of offices may also constitute a career opportunity worth abandoning the U.S. Congress. Senator Lewis Cass willingly left the U.S. Senate on two occasions, the first occasion he

resigned during his first term to run for president in 1848, and the second time when he was appointed as President James Buchanan's Secretary of State in 1857 ("Cass, Lewis"). In the case of appointments, members of Congress may have to resign during their term in office, creating a nearly seamless transition from one vocation to the next. Other former members pursue positions within the State of Michigan such as James Blanchard who was elected governor in 1982 ("Blanchard, James Johnston"). State or locally based positions are not always as prestigious or recognized; Represented Candice Miller decided not to seek reelection in 2016 and instead chose to run for public works commissioner in Macomb County (Burke, 2016). Decisions like Miller's, who many consider a potential gubernatorial candidate, demonstrate the subjectivity of what political opportunities may be deemed superior to the individual member of Congress. While far less notable, Miller's new position may afford her the benefit of working closer to home and on issues in which she may be more interested.

Ambitious members of Congress are willing to set aside their congressional careers in search of better opportunities that are generally political in nature. Through running for another office and rising to appointed positions, these members are able to potentially gain more fulfillment than they otherwise would from serving in Congress.

Change in Political Fortunes

The concept of "strategic politicians" has often been used to explain when and where an aspiring member runs but it can also be utilized to justify when a member decides to step aside. While reelection rates are high, many factors in the electorate could change from when a member of congress was first elected. There are some years, commonly referred to as wave elections, such as 2010, where members of one party are drastically favored and receive increased

representation at the expense of the opposition. Perhaps a member only narrowly won reelection the time prior, or faced scandal that could similarly impact their reelection prospects.

Furthermore, a severe redistricting can also produce a scenario in which a member would choose to neglect to run again rather than face a less favorable electorate. All of these may attribute to a member deciding that a less than guaranteed reelection may not be worth the resources and that it is best to simply seek opportunities elsewhere.

Referring back to Figure 1, recent wave election years such as 1974, 1994, and 2010, have produced at least one retiring member in the following year. While one may expect there to be more dramatic shifts in members of Congress during these election years, it is important to keep in mind that these are only those who willing decided not to seek reelection, making them more strategic than their counterparts who decided to run and lost their seat. Interestingly, the year during which the greatest number of members retired, 1992, produced an equal number of retirees from both parties. While wave elections are generally associated with one party being a clear victor, 1992 appears to be a year with a prevalent “anti-incumbent” wave. Gallup found that approval ratings for Congress were at near historic lows, with a 29% approval of the institution itself and 48% approval of the one’s own representative (Jones 2014).³ More personalized factors, such as a single member of Congress’s declining margin of victory between elections are very difficult to quantify through data due to the lack of available polling information in previous cycles. Scandals, when they threaten a member’s standing in the institution and their reelection prospects can contribute not only in choosing not to run but also in resignation. An example of this scenario would be Representative Charles Diggs Jr. who after

³ In 2014, Congress had a 22% approval rating but personal U.S. representatives had a 50% approval rating.

facing federal investigation and a movement to oust him from Congress by several members, resigned (“Diggs, Charles Coles, Jr.”).

Redistricting, which impacts the elections two years after every census, also can indicate retirement as a likely option for members affected by it. A particularly noteworthy example is former House Minority Whip Representative David Bonior who retired in 2003. Following the 2000 census, Michigan lost a Congressional seat, necessitating a new map where Bonior’s 10th district was expanded to include a much larger Republican electorate that elected his successor, Candice Miller, by a large margin (“Bonior, David Edward”). Bonior would instead pursue the office of governor but was defeated in the Democratic primary. While Bonior’s new district did not necessarily bear the misshapen trappings of a more traditionally gerrymandered district, it is likely that his position as a Democratic leader in the House of Representatives made him an attractive candidate for state Republicans to dissuade from retaining his seat.

In the age of safe seats and high incumbency rates for members of Congress, the thought of a member retiring due to a fear of losing their reelection bid seems almost outlandish. Yet, the occurrence is far more frequent than would appear based on general assumptions. Members of Congress can still make political decisions that are unpopular with members of their district, become involved in implicating scandals, and face a vastly different electorate thanks to redistricting. The last two of these factors are amongst the easiest indicators of potential retirement to track and there will be a greater expectation for retirement under such circumstances.

Post-Congressional Activities

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Figure 4 charts the various activities that former members of Congress engage in. Some more industrious former members pursue multiple vocations after they leave Congress so Figure 4 reflects all of the activities they may have pursued. Addressing the “elephant in the room” the one member who willingly decided to leave Congress (through resignation) that was imprisoned is Representative Charles Diggs Jr., who was charged with committing mail fraud and falsifying payroll forms during his time in Congress (“Diggs, Charles Coles, Jr.”). Interestingly, the most frequent post-congressional activity is for a member to return to their legal practice. While a far more common phenomenon earlier in history, many politicians continue to return to practicing law when they retire. The second most frequent vocation is the pursuit of state or local politics. In recent years, this field primarily means pursuing the office of governor, as James Blanchard successfully did in 1982, lieutenant governor, in the case of Martha Griffiths, or other state wide offices. In the past, many would actually become state legislators after retiring from the U.S. Congress or even serve as mayors, positions generally viewed as far less prestigious today. Business pursuits, including service at executive level positions at various private sector institutions, have been a consistently popular vocation for former members throughout Michigan’s history. Twenty-three former members of Congress elected to retire from all careers after leaving office and enjoy a simpler lifestyle. Appointments include a variety of executive and judicial positions held by former members and are attained by members who demonstrate a level of expertise in a particular policy issue or as an extension of their legal careers. Notably, lobbying and other forms of political activism for some type of nonprofit or profit organization, the vocation most associated with the revolving door phenomenon, has only been pursued by 8 former members who willingly retired, all of which have occurred post 1991. This finding is not

a repudiation of the revolving door hypothesis, rather it indicates how new the revolving door phenomenon is compared with the history of Congressional retirement.

Case Studies

Donald Riegle

Born in Flint, Michigan on February 4, 1938, Donald Wayne Riegle, Jr. is part of two rare clubs: those who have served in both chambers of congress, and members who have changed their party affiliation (“States in the Senate - Michigan's United States Senators”). Riegle was raised in a political environment, as his father, Donald Wayne Riegle, Sr., served as city commissioner (1950-1952) and mayor (1952-1954) as a Republican in Flint (University of Michigan-Flint). Prior to being elected to the Ninetieth Congress in 1966, Riegle would attend various academic institutions, the highest degree he received being an M.B.A. in finance and marketing from Michigan State University, though he did pursue a D.B.A. degree from the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard University in 1964 (University of Michigan-Flint). Riegle sacrificed his educational pursuits in 1966 to run for Michigan’s heavily Democratic 7th Congressional District as a Republican, and defeated the opposing incumbent, John Mackie, owing in part to campaign support from Richard Nixon (Germond and Witcover 1993). Elected at the age of 28, Congressman Riegle made his political ambitions known, telling journalists that his goal was to become president by the time he was 50 (Germond and Witcover 1993).

Though Riegle maintained his father’s partisan identification, his service in the House of Representatives hardly aligned with the Republican Party where he received the reputation of a maverick. His tenure in the House earned recognition and praise from several liberal

organizations including the UAW and the magazine *The Nation* which selected him as one of the two best congressmen in 1967 (University of Michigan-Flint). One of the political issues that earned Congressman Riegle this support was his stance against the Vietnam War. Opposition to the war put him in conflict with the man who helped Riegle get into office in the first place, President Nixon, whose reneging on his promises to end the war would drive Riegle to support Pete McCloskey's primary bid against Nixon in 1972 and to change parties the following year (Yoshinaka 2016). Further demonstrating his disassociation with Nixon, Riegle gave a floor speech announcing his intentions to formally impeach the president following the Watergate scandal.

Also during his time in the House of Representatives, Riegle would publish *O Congress*, a book intended to portray the "human side of Congress honestly and to reveal its inner workings" by recording his time in Congress from 1971 to 1972 (Riegle 1972). In publishing *O Congress*, Riegle took a career risk, potentially straining his relations with his fellow members of congress, along with exposing his own personal woes including his divorce and new found love affair. This would not be the last time details of Riegle's personal life would be exposed to the public, an earlier affair would be released by the *Detroit News* in an attempt to harm his Senate race, yet they would mire his path to the Senate where he was elected to in 1976 after being appointed following the untimely death of Philip Hart who previously announced his retirement (University of Michigan-Flint).

Senator Riegle's educational background in business would be utilized in the upper chamber as he was assigned to, and would eventually chair, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs ("States in the Senate - Michigan's United States Senators"). Economic issues would shape Riegle's focus in the Senate, especially issues that would impact

Michigan leading him to take positions in accord with the auto-industry and labor interests. Amongst his activities in Senate, Riegle fought to enact the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act (FIRREA) in 1989 which helped end the savings and loan crisis, along with combatting NAFTA, and working on health care reform (University of Michigan-Flint). Riegle's opposition to NAFTA was strong enough for him to hold a rally with failed third-party presidential candidate Ross Perot, a move that was greatly disapproved of by the White House. During Riegle's final term in office was tainted by his involvement with savings and loan executive Charles H. Keating along with five other senators known as the "Keating Five." The "Keating Five" were under investigation by the Senate Ethics Committee in 1991 for intervening with federal regulators on behalf of Charles Keating, Riegle's personal actions were found to give "the appearance of being improper" but the committee recommended no actions to be taken against him (Eaton 1993). Along with two of the other Senators involved in the scandal, Riegle would announce that he would not seek reelection in 1994. While many speculate that his involvement with the "Keating Five" contributed to this decision, Riegle's official reason for retirement was his desire to spend more time with his family and to exert more energy on important issues in Congress such as NAFTA and health care reform as opposed to devoting the time to a reelection campaign (Tolchin 1993).

The more "interesting" conclusion is that the scandal and the ensuing deterioration of political stock for Riegle was the primary motivation for his surprise retirement, however, it would be intellectually dishonest to entirely discount other contributing factors. As someone who went through two previous marriages during his time in congress and was raising two children at the time, it is understandable that Riegle would desire to take a break from politics for the sake of spending more time with his family (University of Michigan-Flint). It is also

important to consider how much Riegle's reelection bid would have been at risk. Fellow Michigan Senator Carl Levin maintained that Riegle was prepared for "another winning campaign," and another Senator caught in the Keating Five scandal, John McCain, continues to serve in the Senate as an influential member to the present (Eaton 1993). Regardless of Riegle's true reasons, he would leave office in 1995.

Shortly after leaving office Riegle would assume a part-time position working at the public relations firm, Shandwick Public Affairs, and would also become an adjunct professor at Michigan State University School of Business (University of Michigan-Flint). In 2001, Riegle would join APCO Worldwide, another public relations firm, as the chairman of Government Relations a position he continues to hold to this day ("Donald W. Riegle, Jr."). Working for public relation firms, being part of the "revolving door," fits Riegle's 28 years of experience in Congress well, and having served with both parties in this time he has a unique set of relationships with current members that can be utilized for the causes he represents. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Riegle made a surprise endorsement of Democratic Candidate Bernie Sanders, citing his support for the candidate's position on campaign finance reform (Gold 2016). While perhaps ironic that a lobbyist supported Sanders's perspective on money in politics, Riegle's endorsement of Sanders calls back to his earlier political career as the two share similar views on several key issues including free trade which both were ardent critics of.

Mike Rogers

Born in Howell, Michigan on June 2, 1963, Michael J. Rogers would serve in the House of Representatives for 14 years during a time where the country's priorities rapidly evolved. The youngest of five sons, Rogers, like Riegle, grew up in a political environment with his father

serving on the Brighton Township board and as a township supervisor while his mother served on the Brighton Chamber of Commerce (OU Libraries). Prior to his political career, Rogers was a small business owner, served the United States Army, and most notably, joined the FBI in 1989 (OU Libraries). Rogers's time in the FBI bestowed him with valuable experience and knowledge regarding crime and the intelligence community which would become major focuses of his later career.

In 1994, Rogers's would begin his political career by running as a Republican for the Michigan State Senate. During his time in the State Senate, Rogers would focus his legislative agenda on easing small business regulation and combatting internet crime and would eventually ascend to the position of Majority Floor Leader (OU Libraries). Rogers would run for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2000 on a platform of protecting social security, improving Medicare and education, and strengthening the military, he would win the election by a notoriously slim margin of 111 votes (OU Libraries). Early in his congressional career, Rogers was tapped to serve as a deputy whip by Republican leadership. Rogers priorities would quickly change during his time in Congress. After the 9/11 attacks, as the sole former FBI member in Congress, Mike Rogers became a major asset to the Bush administration, being sent to Iraq and Afghanistan on separate fact-finding missions.

Rogers's most defining role in Congress would be his service as chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence where he oversaw the \$70 billion of funding for America's 17 intelligence agencies ("Mike Rogers"). His time as chair was highly praised as a "rare island of bipartisanship" and Rogers would make frequent media appearances discussing national security alongside the committee's ranking member Dutch Ruppersberger and his Senate counterpart Diane Feinstein (Ignatius 2014). Rogers media exposure brought him into the

spotlight for several pertinent issues pertaining to the intelligence community during his time in Congress. Following the leaks by Edward Snowden in 2013, Rogers took it upon himself to dismiss the scandal and defend the NSA and the programs used to gather intelligence to combat terrorism (Rogers 2013). The Intelligence Committee would also be tasked to investigate the Benghazi attack and determine whether the Obama administration was at fault for not preventing the episode. Rogers would release the committee's report in 2014, finding that there was no evidence of conspiracy to cover up the cause of the attack though his findings would greatly disappointing members of his own party who would continue investigating the incident (Lanny 2014).

Surprisingly, Rogers would announce that he would not be seeking reelection in 2014, shortly after his Benghazi report, citing his respect for the framers' intentions for a citizen legislature and that he would begin work on a radio show on Westwood One where he would be able to continue advocating for his concerns about national and cyber security (O'Keefe 2014). Rogers's statement about being a citizen legislator rings hollow when considering his 14 years spent in Congress, and his movement to hosting a radio show is surprising considering he seemed otherwise content with serving as chairman of the Intelligence Committee and even declined running for the Senate seat that would be vacated by Carl Levin in that cycle. It is possible that Rogers felt disillusioned with the state of political affairs, especially in the Congress. While Rogers and the Intelligence Committee were praised for their bipartisan efforts, he was often critical of the partisan tension that existed in the institution at large. In addition to his radio show, Rogers has also served in two cybersecurity firms, IronNet Cybersecurity and Next Century Corporation, and has been a contributor on CNN where he hosts and produces his own show *Declassified: Untold Stories of American Spies* ("Mike Rogers"). In the political

world, Rogers avoided endorsing any candidates during the 2016 Republican primary, a move that may have been to avoid political risks of endorsing the wrong candidate, and briefly served on the Trump transition team before being forced off due to his closeness to Chris Christie who was also taken off the team (Shabad 2016).

Donald Riegle and Mike Rogers are two former members of Congress who were both raised by families engaged in the political process, had considerable political ambitions of their own, and retired relatively young at the ages of 57 and 52 respectively. Though from two very different political ideologies, Riegle's and Rogers's careers have many things in common. Both would define their politics on key foreign policy issues of their day, Riegle in opposition to the Vietnam War and NAFTA and Rogers in support of the War on Terror and associated conflicts. This also demonstrates one of their key differences, where Riegle's stances often went against his party line, or at least with his party's president in the case of NAFTA, Rogers would not find any real conflict with members of his own party until his Benghazi Investigation's findings disappointed many of them. Riegle's more brash, maverick style also carried over into other facets of his congressional and post-congressional career as demonstrated by his overt expression of personal ambitions, willingness to publish a book on the inner workings of Congress while a sitting member of Congress, and endorsing a presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, largely rejected by his party's mainstream members. Conversely, Rogers has dodged questions regarding his political aspirations, and avoided making enemies by not endorsing any presidential candidate in the 2016 Republican primary.

Retiring from two different institutions, it is also worth considering what bearing being a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives may have had on the eventual retirement of both individuals. Riegle's involvement with the Keating Five scandal may have been enough

to doom him in an election with a statewide constituency, an outcome he selected to avoid. Rogers' involvement with the NSA scandal following the Edward Snowden leaks as a major defender of the organization and its actions may have adversely impacted his electoral odds in a statewide race, but not in the heavily Republican 8th District of Michigan. The body of Congress a member retires from has little bearing on the overall attributes of members of Congress but it does open them up to different sets of electoral pressures that may influence a decision to retire.

Conclusion

I have argued that a multitude of factors have and continue to contribute to the voluntary retirement of members of Congress, the most significant of which are the desire to pursue other career opportunities and deterioration of political fortunes. The case studies of Donald Riegle and Michael J. Rogers demonstrate that many indicators, including those not readily apparent, can contribute to a member of Congress's decision not to seek reelection and that they may not be mutually exclusive factors. Similarly, former members of Congress can pursue a wide number of professions. Historically, this has largely been returning to legal practices and/or pursuing state or local offices and the concept of the revolving door is a relatively fresh phenomenon.

Reviewing members from only one state has limitations. Generalizations that can be made about Michigan's former members during various periods are not necessarily applicable to the nation as a whole, especially in states that are politically and demographically quite different from Michigan. States in the Deep South, for instance, which were known for having non-competitive races from Reconstruction to the 1960s, I suspect would have a greater percentage of members voluntarily retiring than being forced out of office. Nonetheless, the findings here

should encourage similar examinations of former congresspersons, both to see how factors within each state may play a role in shaping the data and to substantiate the conclusions found in Michigan.

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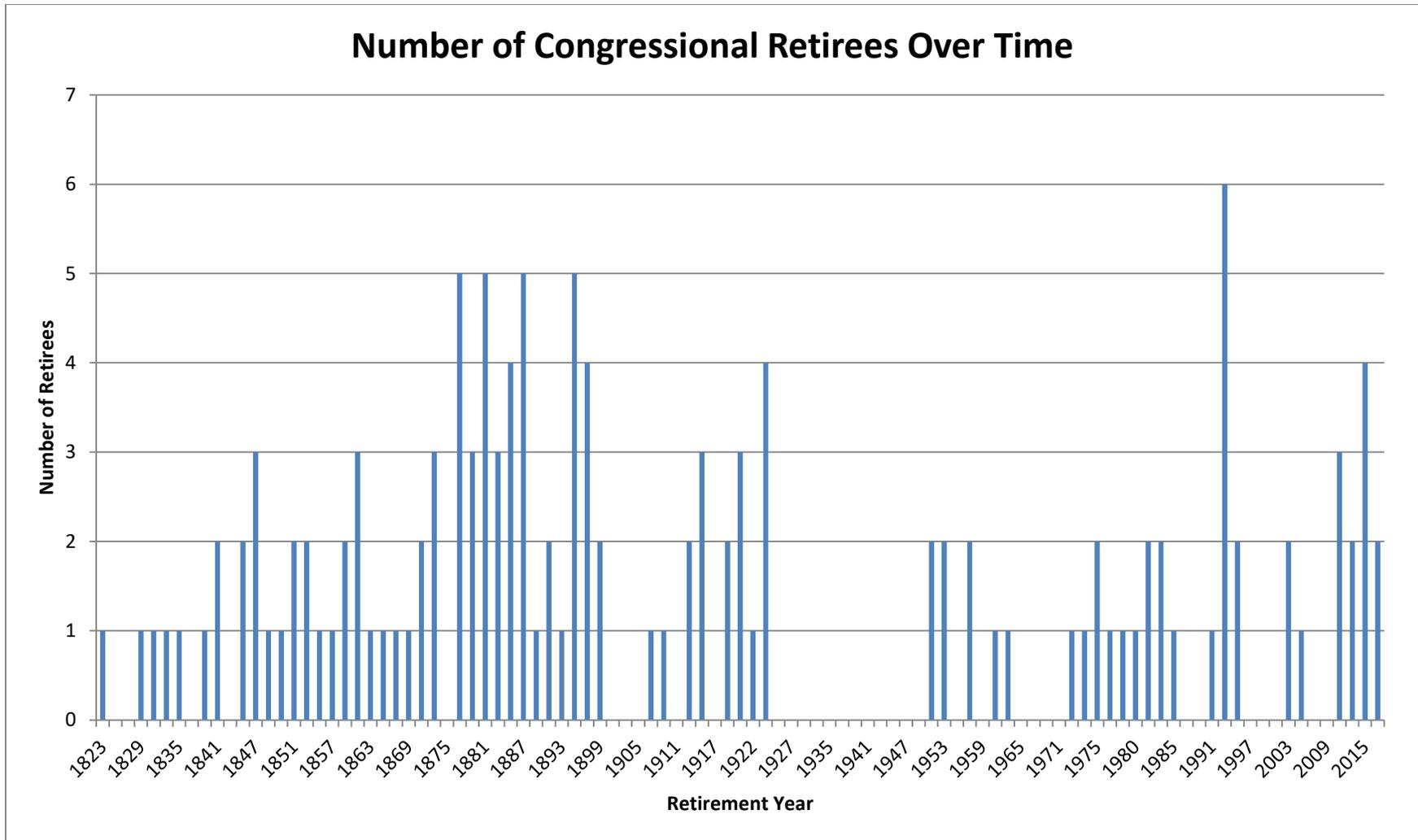


Figure 1

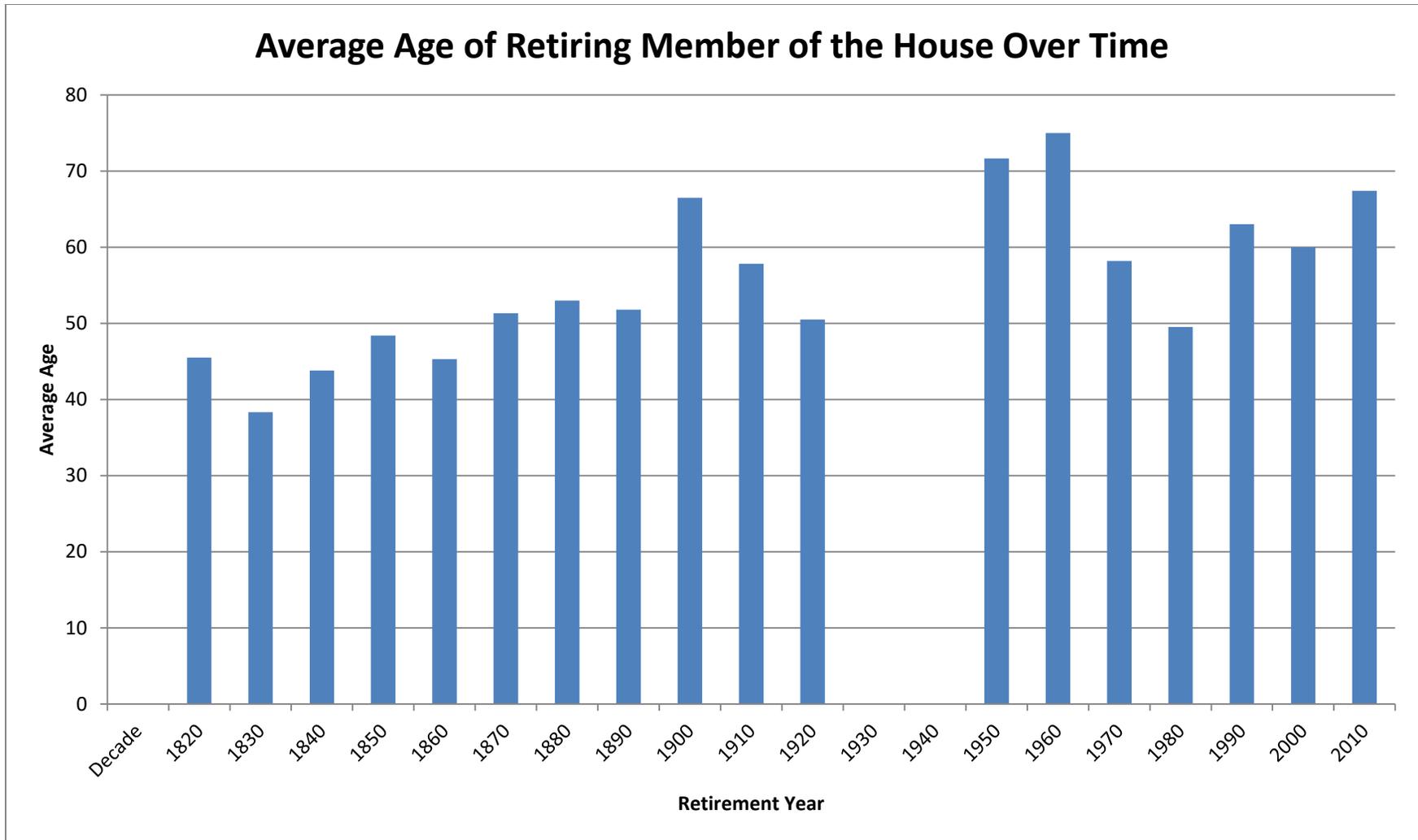


Figure 2.1

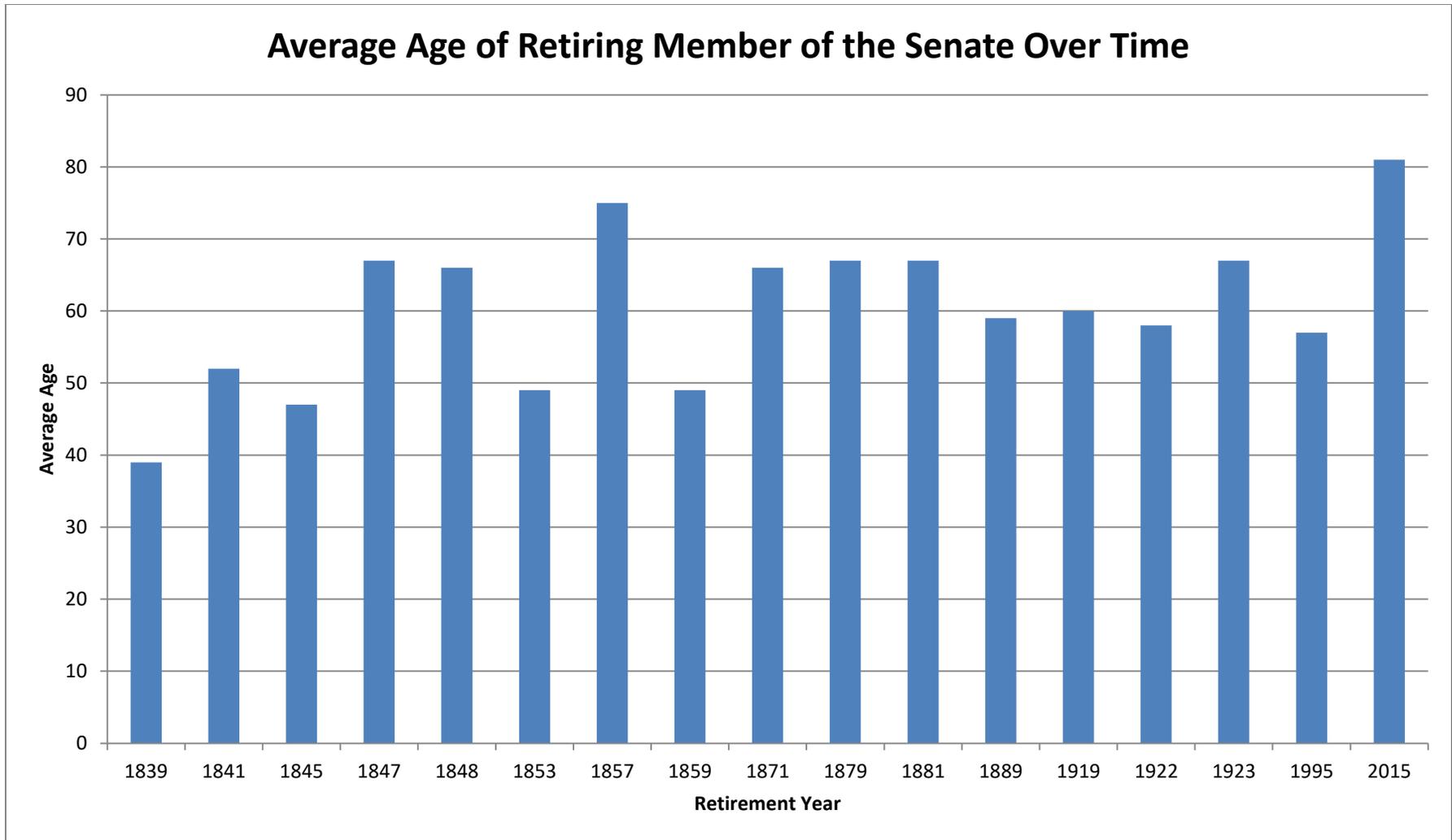


Figure 2.2

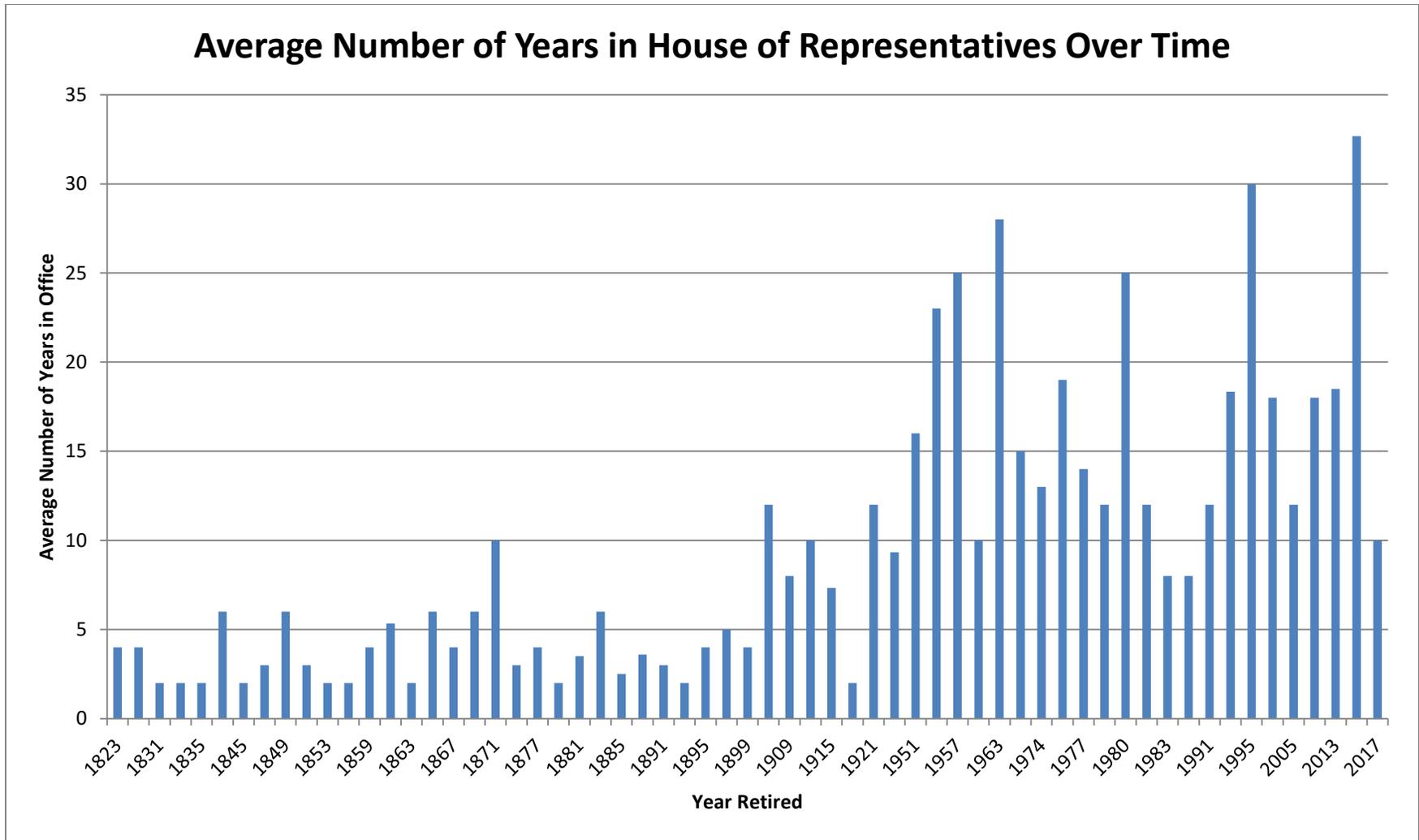


Figure 3.1

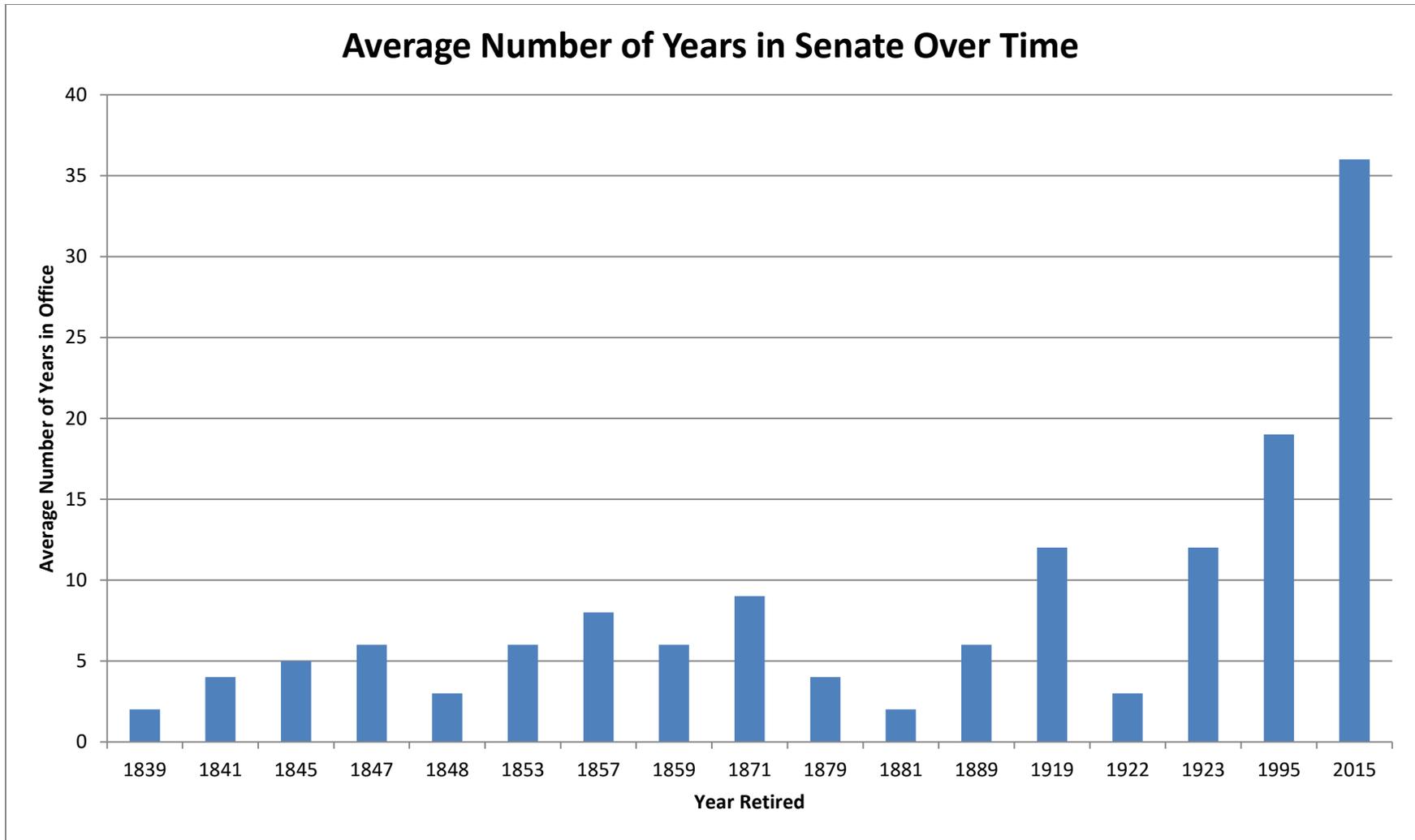


Figure 3.2

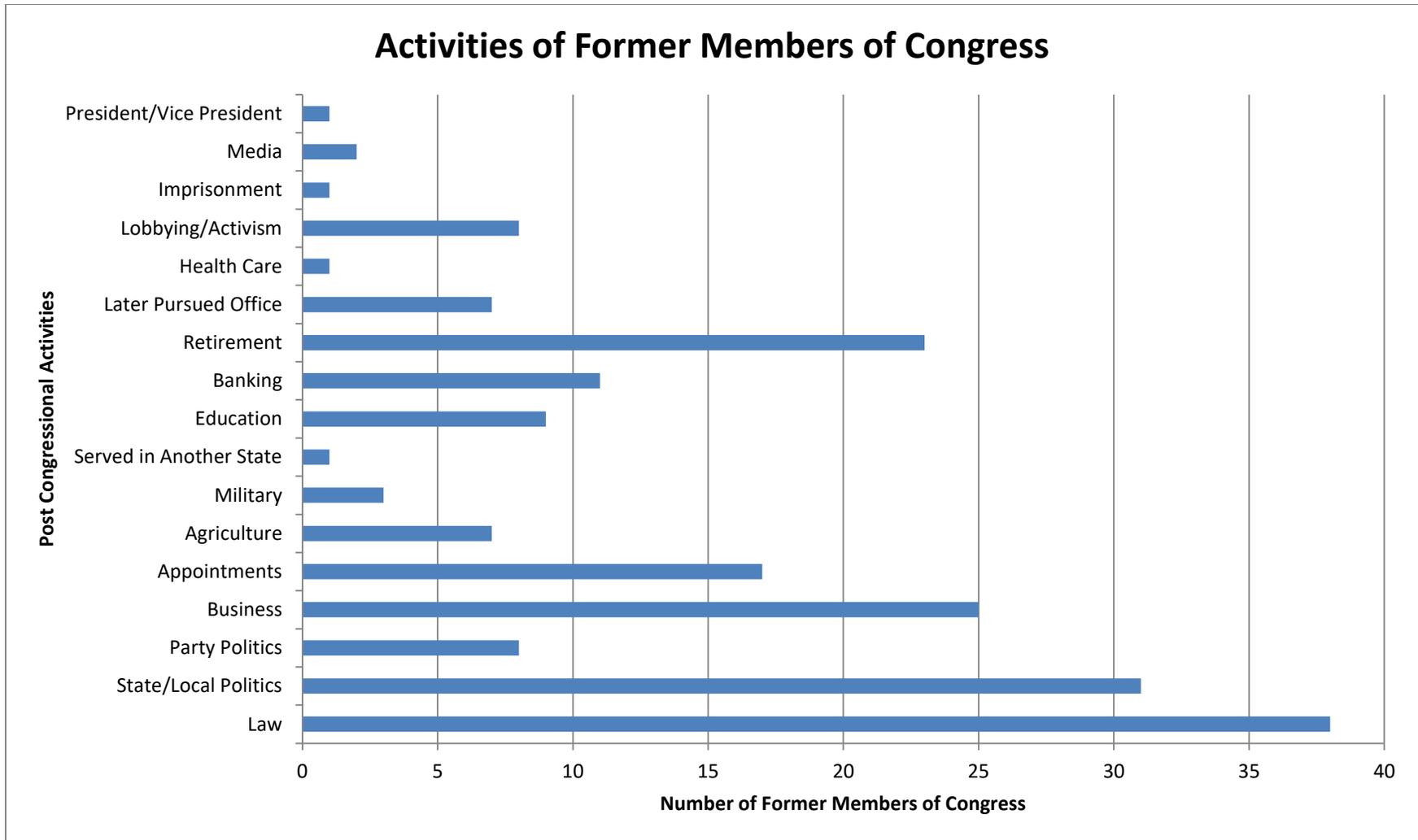


Figure 4