

Table 17-2 Variables Associated with Topical Legislation Passed: *Congressional Digest* Articles as the Unit of Analysis, 1921–2010

Model: Logit Regression

DV – Scored “1” if *Congressional Digest* topic is addressed by a new law

<i>Variables</i> (expected sign)	Model a	Model b
	Coefficient (robust s.e.)	Coefficient (robust s.e.)
Moderate polarization (+)	.291 ^a (.095)**	.302 (.096)***
Divided government (-)	.278 (.207) ^t	.207 (.209)
Honeymoon (+)	.505 (.194)**	.366 (.205)*
Severe recession (+)	.293 (.265)	-.165 (.364)
Time out of majority (+)	-.016 (.019)	-.009 (.019)
President's rating (+)	.033 (.010)***	.026 (.010)**
Topic-specific controls		
Time left (months) (+)	.043 (.012)***	.043 (.012)***
Passed House (+)	.630 (.214)**	.598 (.216)**
Passed Senate (+)	.499 (.245)*	.519 (.245)*
Control for outliers		
F. D. R. first Congress (73rd) (+)		1.228 (.717)*
Obama first Congress (111th) (+)		1.071 (.626)*
Constant	-3.07 (.40)***	-2.83 (.41)***
Chi ²	50.48***	54.91***
Pseudo R ²	.06	.06
N	817	817

Source: Compiled by authors.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; ^t $p < .10$ (one-tailed test)

^a Logit coefficients must be converted back to predicted probabilities in order to gain easily understood, substantive meaning. When the coefficient for Moderate Polarization is converted we learn that as we move from the most immoderate to the most moderate Congress the probability that a *Digest* topic will be addressed by a new law goes from about 9 percent to about 23 percent on the condition that the legislation had not passed either chamber, there is no divided government, no honeymoon, no major recession, there is an average time out of majority, a president with an average rating, and there is a little more than twelve months left in the Congress. If some version of the legislation had passed either the House of Representatives or the Senate, but had not become law, when the *Digest* discussed the topic the probability of a new law passing the most immoderate Congress is about 25 percent and this grows to about 48 percent for the most moderate Congress.