

Rise and Fall of Thomas M. Reynolds as Told Through Eigenvector Centrality

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ABSTRACT

Thomas M. Reynolds represented the state of New York from the 106th to the 110th congressional sessions. Reynolds never attained a significant leadership position, but he rose to prominence amongst his Congressional colleagues, climbing to number one in connections and popularity. Despite only being a rank-and-file member, we find that Reynolds was able to achieve this through making connections outside of Capitol Hill and by cooperating with his colleagues away from cameras and publicity.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Eigenvector Centrality:** A network statistic that measures each Member's "popularity" or connectedness in the broad network of caucus memberships for each Congress.
- **Rank-and-file:** Member of Congress that doesn't hold a leadership position.
- **Edges:** a connection between nodes (in this case, the connections between members of Congress)
- **Nodes:** The connection point (in this case, members of Congress are represented by nodes)
- **In degree:** The number of edges that point towards a node
- **Out degree:** The number of edges that point outward from a node

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Dr. Victor for her guidance and Maya Tichoc for her visualizations of Reynolds's evolution in eigenvector centrality.

REFERENCES

Eilperin, Juliet. "New Yorker Goes for the Green; Relative Newcomer Reynolds May Head House GOP Campaign Group: FINAL Edition." *The Washington Post*, 2002.

The New York times. "A Force in the House, a Soft Voice Back Home; An Upstate Conservative Republican Is Gaining National Prominence." 2002.

RISE IN POPULARITY

The top graph shows the 108th congress and how he's close to the center of the network, showing that he's a central figure in the congressional network. Something interesting to point out is that he has high out-degree but a small in-degree. This means that he contributes to other members of Congress in the form of generating campaign funds but doesn't receive anything in return. The lower graph represents his node becoming larger, although still not as large as those who hold leadership positions. But we can infer that his in-degree and out-degree increased since the 108th because of his continued role as party manager and because he received partisan and bipartisan recognition.

Quotes

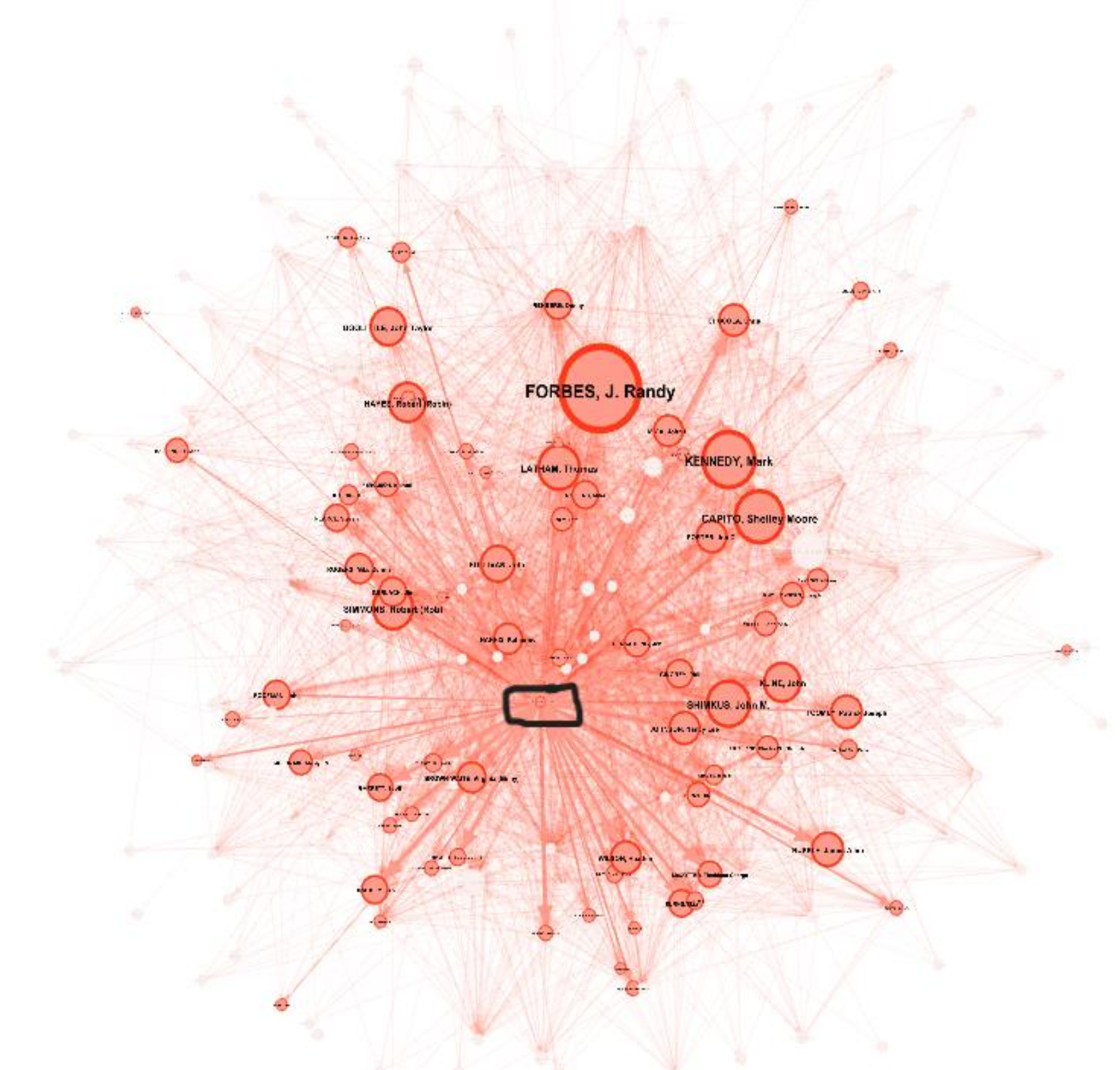
"He is the quintessential **team player**," said Rules Committee Chairman David Dreier (R-Calif.)

"Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) described Reynolds as "one of the **first people I turn to for advice** about the House"

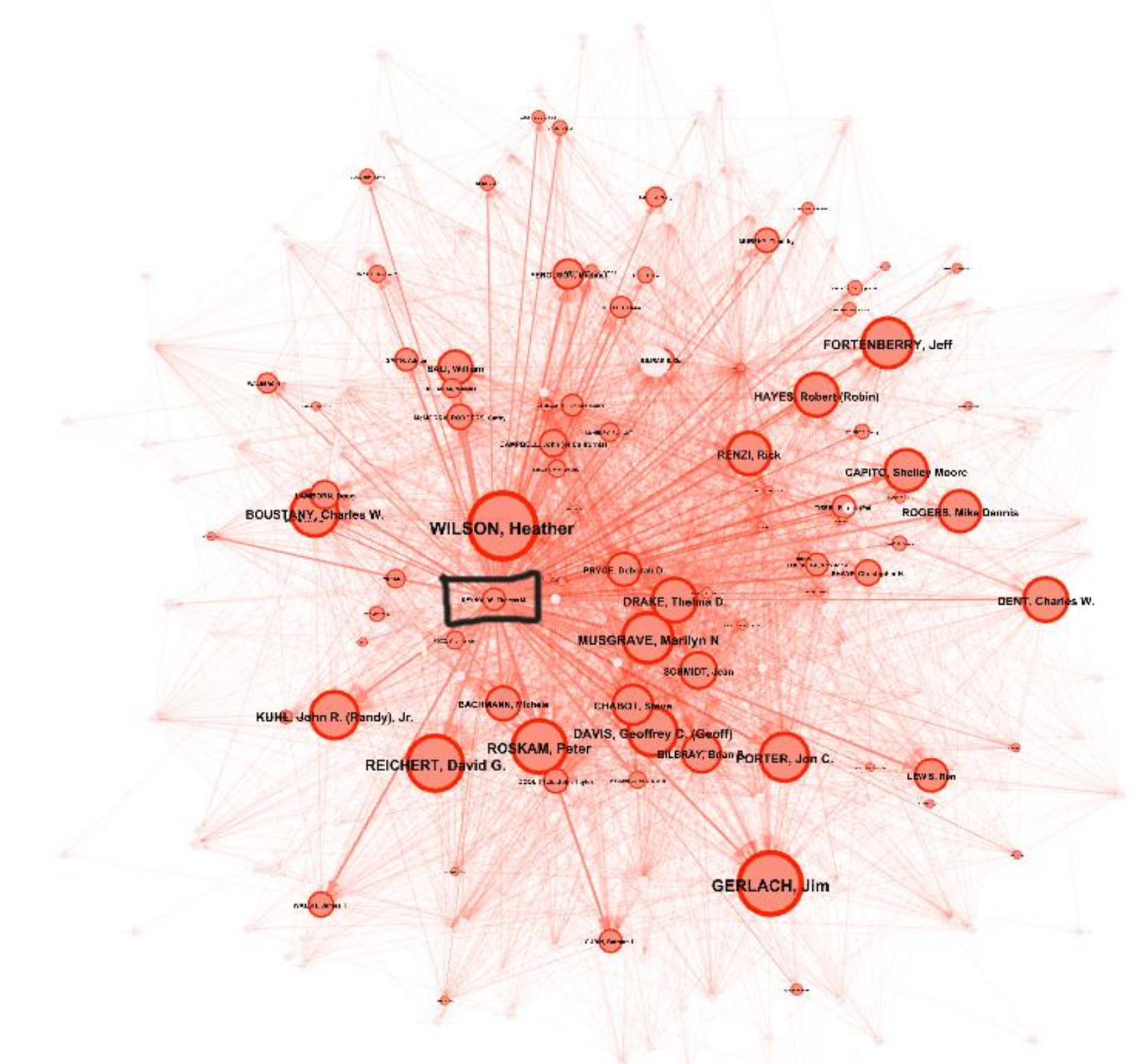
"Mr. Reynolds is an **old-style politician**, a man who prefers to conduct business in back rooms rather than before microphones and cameras."

FALL INTO OBSCURITY

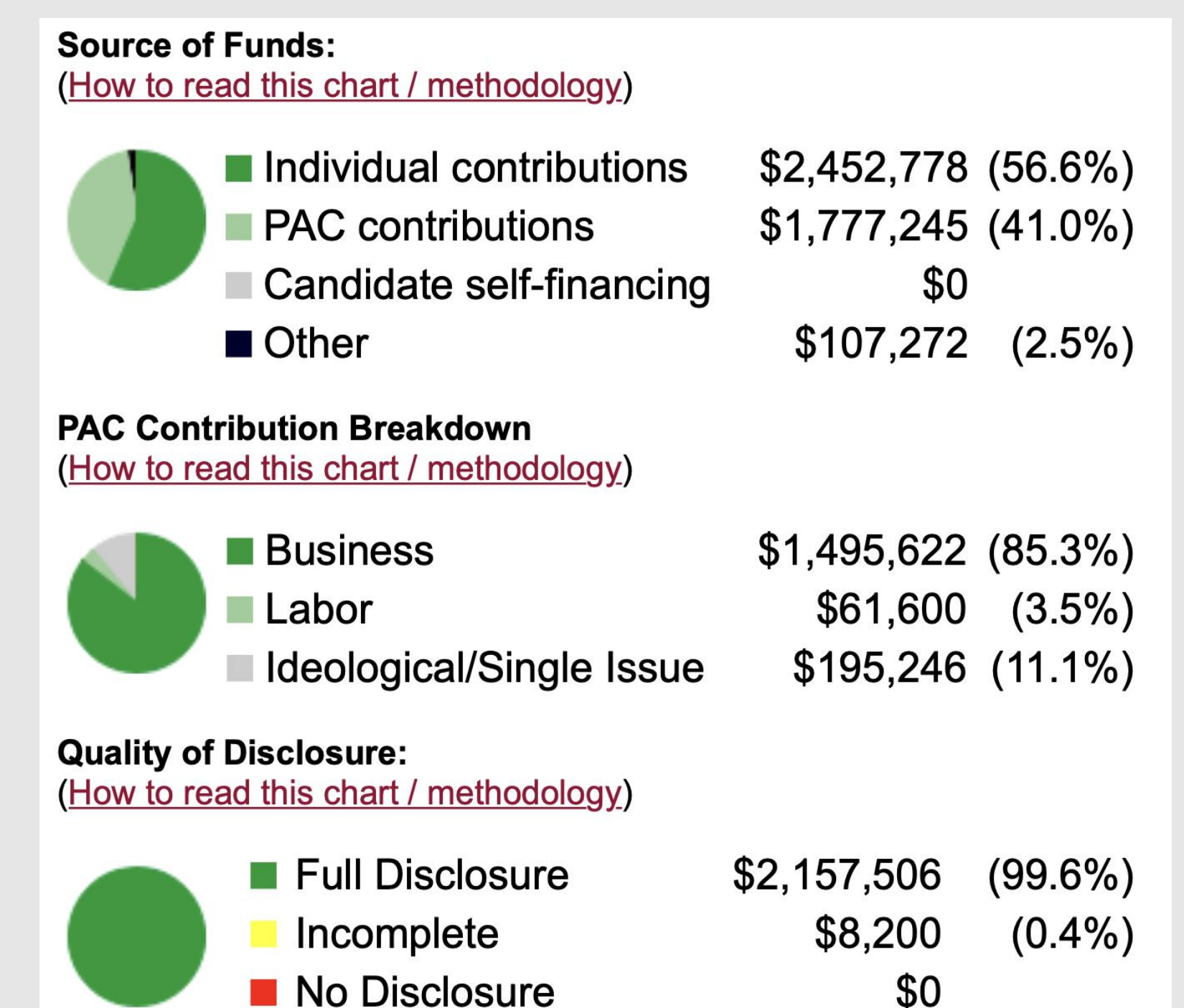
Reynolds was regarded as someone who could have risen to Speaker of the House by former colleagues. However, after the Mark Foley page scandal, Reynolds was left to take some of the heat of responsibility, diminishing his credibility despite being largely exonerated. Nonetheless, other Congress members have replicated Reynolds's success in climbing the ranks. One way this is done is through caucus memberships. Members of Congress can connect with each other in ways that aren't strictly related to their job. The connections established can later be utilized for leverage in Congress for legislation, endorsements, campaign funding, etc.



Reynolds's centrality in the 108th Congress



Reynolds's centrality in the 110th Congress



Reynolds's raising of campaign funds (2006)