

Do Chinese Imports Influence U.S. Elections?*

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of U.S. imports from China on U.S. Congressional elections. We find that counties with greater increases in imports from China during the 2000s exhibit increases in the share of votes cast for Democrats as well as the likelihood that a Democrat takes a seat from a Republican. These relationships are not present in the 1990s, before the surge in U.S. imports from China occurred, and they are consistent with our finding that Democrats in office were more likely than Republicans to support legislation limiting import competition or offering economic assistance. (JEL Codes: F13; F16; D72) (Keywords: China; Voting; Elections; Import Competition; Normal Trade Relations; World Trade Organization)

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