

How Do Citizens React When Politicians Support Policies They Oppose? Field Experiments with Elite Communication^{*}

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Abstract

Politicians have been depicted as, alternatively, strongly constrained by public opinion, able to shape public opinion if they persuasively appeal to citizens' values, or relatively unconstrained by public opinion and able to shape it merely by announcing their positions. We conduct unique field experiments in cooperation with legislators to explore how citizens react when their legislators take positions they oppose. For the experiments, state legislators sent their constituents official communications with randomly assigned content. In some letters, the representatives took positions on salient issues these constituents opposed, sometimes supported by extensive arguments but sometimes minimally justified. Results from an ostensibly unrelated telephone survey show that citizens often adopted their representatives' issue positions even when representatives offered little justification. Moreover, citizens did not evaluate their representatives more negatively when representatives took positions citizens opposed. These findings suggest politicians can enjoy broad latitude to shape public opinion.

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A classic view conceptualizes democracy as “the aggregation of [citizens’] independently formed preferences” (Miller 1992, p. 55). According to this view, politicians translate public opinion into policy by taking positions congruent with public opinion lest citizens vote them out of office (Downs 1957; Brody and Page 1972; Page and Shapiro 1983). Citizens and their favored political leaders thus tend to share views on salient policy issues because citizens constrain elected officials’ policy positions to match citizens’ preferences.

Research on opinion leadership, however, has long questioned whether citizens’ policy preferences should be considered “independently formed.” This research offers an additional explanation for why citizens and their political leaders tend to agree on salient policy issues: politicians shape public opinion to resemble their positions, as citizens sometimes adopt political elites’ policy positions as their own (e.g., Abramowitz 1978; Kahan 2012; Lenz 2012; Matsubayashi 2013).

The evidence that political elites can influence public opinion is strong. But how and to what extent elites lead opinion is increasingly contested. Classic theoretical accounts of opinion leadership argue that politicians shape public opinion by highlighting how their policy proposals are consistent with citizens’ values (e.g., Chong and Druckman 2007a, 2007b; Fenno 1978; Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Zaller 1992). In turn, politicians are only expected to take positions they know they can justify to citizens on this basis, implying public opinion still places relatively strong, if imperfect, constraints on policy (e.g., Tesler 2014b).

An alternative theoretical perspective implies that public opinion provides an even weaker constraint on policy. In this view, citizens often judge policies based on the political figures associated with them rather than based on how consistent it is with their values. In particular, this research suggests that citizens often support policies simply because trusted

political leaders do so (e.g., Bartels 2005; Berinsky 2009; Cohen 2003; Lee 2009; Zaller 2013; although see Bullock 2011). Moreover, this research argues that citizens rarely change their evaluations of politicians upon learning that politicians support policies they oppose, more commonly “following” trusted politicians by adopting their policy positions than reevaluating their support for these politicians.

This last perspective implies that public opinion provides an even weaker constraint on politicians. If citizens do not exact electoral sanctions on politicians when they contravene their preferences, and even sometimes simply adopt their positions without being given good reasons to do so, politicians may be significantly less bound by citizens’ preferences than the naïve association between public opinion and policy implies (e.g., Lenz 2012). It is because citizens follow, this view suggests, that public opinion tends to coincide with elite’s positions.

How well do these perspectives stand up empirically? Even the most convincing evidence that elites can lead opinion is ambiguous on the nature and extent of opinion leadership. For example, panel studies that follow citizens over time as public debates inform them of politicians’ positions or as politicians change their positions (e.g., Abramowitz 1978; Lenz 2009, 2012; Zaller 1992) offer some of the strongest evidence that elites influence public opinion. But these studies tell us little about why. Political debates tend to contain a mix of source cues and persuasive appeals to citizens’ values, leaving it unclear to what extent each is responsible for influencing citizens. Democratic voters might adopt the positions that Democratic elected officials take because Democratic elected officials tend to defend their positions with appeals to liberal values Democratic citizens share. Politicians may also feature issues in their campaigns to which citizens’ values are broadly sympathetic, meaning public opinion may be less pliable in general than it appears on the basis of these studies.

Experiments in lab and survey settings have attempted to probe the generalizability of panel studies and disentangle the role of source and message elements (e.g., Bullock 2011; Cohen 2003; Grose et al. 2013). But these studies in turn raise questions about external validity, as their treatments are often artificial and citizens aware they are being studied may feel compelled to misrepresent their attitudes (Bullock et al. 2013; Orne 1962).

Existing evidence thus leaves open important questions about the nature, extent, and consequences of politicians' ability to affect public opinion. Can politicians shape public opinion on salient and controversial policies simply by announcing their positions, without appealing to citizens' values, and without having citizens who disagree with them react negatively? In this paper we provide unique tests of these ideas. Our evidence comes from field experiments conducted in collaboration with state legislators in which we randomly assigned aspects of their official position-taking activities on salient and controversial issues being debated in their legislature, such as decriminalizing marijuana, allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, and raising the minimum wage.

In our first study, we assessed the ability of politicians to lead opinion and avoid electoral costs for disagreeing with citizens with one politician's position-taking on four issues. The constituents in a randomized treatment group who were sent a letter containing his position on an issue on which they previously disagreed were significantly more likely to agree with the legislator's position subsequently and did not have a less favorable impression of him.

In a second, significantly larger study, we cooperated with seven legislators to explore the reach and nature of opinion leadership. In this study, we compared the impacts of three kinds of letters (with constituents again randomly assigned to conditions): letters with no issue content, letters where the legislator provided a detailed argument for a policy position; and letters where

the legislator only provided minimal justifications for a policy position. Results of the second study replicated the findings of our first study: constituents who were sent a letter with their legislator's position were significantly more likely to adopt the legislator's positions.

Constituents' approval of their legislator also did not change when their legislator staked out positions they had previously said they opposed.

Our second study also found that these patterns did not depend on whether the legislator provided a detailed argument for their position. Moreover, there was no evidence that these patterns differed across issues. Legislators moved their constituents' opinions towards their own positions on salient policy issues without paying any detectable electoral cost by simply announcing their positions on those issues.

These field experiments provide unique evidence supporting the notion that politicians sometimes enjoy broad latitude to shape public opinion rather than being constrained to follow it. What appears to be evidence that politicians are constrained by public opinion, our studies demonstrate powerfully, may represent significant reverse causation. To be sure, our evidence does not suggest politicians can always convince their constituents of anything, nor that they could reliably escape electoral punishment for everything. However, these findings present some of the strongest evidence to date that politicians can convince citizens to adopt their positions on salient issues without significant electoral costs, even when they fail to connect their positions with citizens' underlying values.

Theoretical Perspectives on Elite Leadership of Public Opinion and Electoral Accountability

Traditional conceptions of democracy suggest citizens are issue voters who shape

government policy by incentivizing politicians to cater to their preferences and selecting politicians who share them. In this formulation, voters are thought to primarily choose candidates based on firm preferences they hold on a broad range of policy issues (e.g., Brody and Page 1972; Nie et al. 1976). Citizen issue voting in turn provides incentives for politicians to remain faithful to public opinion when making policy decisions: when politicians take positions their constituents oppose, they are expected to lose favor with their constituents and be voted out of office (see review in Nyhan et al. 2012). Consistent with this view, changes in public opinion tends to coincide with changes in government policy (Carmines and Stimson 1980; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993).

Of course, much research sits at odds with this traditional view of democracy and offers an additional reason why public opinion tends to correspond with government policy: opinion leadership. This research suggests that the association between public policy and public opinion partially reflects elites shaping public opinion to support their positions (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Lenz 2012).

The evidence that elites can affect public opinion is strong, but the extent, nature, and consequences of elite influence on public opinion are less clear. On the one hand, most research on elite opinion leadership portrays the process of elite influence on public opinion as arising from elite appeals to citizens' underlying values. Zaller (1992), for instance, expects elites to be successful in affecting public opinion to the extent they make arguments in favor of their policy proposals that citizens will accept on the basis of their existing predispositions (see also Cobb and Kuklinski 1997).¹ In turn, it is these arguments and ideas Zaller sees citizens calling to mind

¹ The RAS model described in Zaller (1992) could be applied to how citizens process source cues. However, as Zaller wrote subsequently (Zaller 2013), *Nature and Origins* largely conceives public opinion as the product of framing and arguments citizens recall at the time of survey response, not source cues (see for example Zaller 1992 ch. 2, especially pages 22-24).

as they report their views on issues. Along similar lines, research on framing has argued that elites can shape mass preferences by highlighting the values consistent with their side of policy disputes (e.g., Chong and Druckman 2007a, 2007b; Kinder and Sanders 1990; Ladd 2007; Jacoby 2000). Although departing from standard conceptions of citizens as issue voters with firm preferences, this perspective still suggests politicians must closely attend to whether they can craft justifications for their policy proposals that will resonate with citizens, lest they face electoral sanction (Grose et al. 2014; Kingdon 1989; Tesler 2014b).

Values-based persuasion is not the only way scholars have argued elites can affect public opinion. A different perspective suggests elites can influence opinion merely by staking out their positions and generally evade electoral sanctions for taking positions citizens disagree with. The central thread connecting scholars who advance this view is that citizens often do not evaluate politicians on the basis of their policy positions. Rather, citizens' evaluation of politicians are causally prior to many of their policy attitudes: citizens tend to agree with their favored political leaders because citizens simply adopt politicians' positions as their own (Achen and Bartels 2006; Bartels 2005; Cohen 2003; Jacoby 1988; Leeper 2013; Mackie and Cooper 1984; Tesler 2014a; although see Bullock 2011). What at first appears to be evidence that citizens select politicians on the basis of issues and that citizens form opinion on issues based on their values and predispositions may instead reflect simple *position adoption*, citizens reflexively adopting favored politicians' or parties' positions (Abramowitz 1978; Jacoby 1988; Ladd and Lenz 2009; Lenz 2009, 2012).

In this paper, we focus on a fundamental question raised by all these perspectives: how do citizens react when politicians support policies they oppose? To appreciate the differing answers to this question provided by existing research, consider Table 1.

**Table 1. How Do Citizens React When Politicians Support Policies They Oppose?
Empirical Predictions of Competing Perspectives on Opinion Leadership**

Empirical Question	Do leaders offer persuasive arguments appealing to citizens' values?	<i>Issue Voting</i> Predictions	<i>Elite Persuasion</i> Predictions	<i>Position Adoption</i> Predictions
Do leaders lose favorability by taking counter-attitudinal positions?	Yes	Yes	No	No
	No	Yes	Yes	No
Do leaders persuade by taking a position?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	No	No	No	Yes

The traditional view of democracy, which views citizens as *issue voters*, would suggest that politicians lose favor whenever they take policy positions their constituents oppose and cannot meaningfully influence citizens' policy preferences. If citizens learn a politician supports a policy they oppose, citizens are expected to have less favorable views of the politician as a result and their opinion on the issue is expected not to change. Indeed, in this view, just about the least politically advantageous thing a politician could do is announce to a constituent that they disagree on an issue. The *elite persuasion* perspective would offer the same predictions as the *issue voting* perspective if politicians do not offer persuasive arguments appealing to citizens' values; but, if politicians can argue that their positions are consistent with citizens' values and predispositions or frame them as such, they might successfully shape public opinion and avoid paying electoral costs for taking positions citizens once opposed. Finally, the *position adoption* perspective would suggest that citizens often do not react negatively when political leaders take positions they oppose, but that citizens often do adopt their positions, regardless of whether elites connect these positions to citizens' values.

No one of these perspectives is likely to describe the politics of all issues. But the

possibility that *position adoption* can describe the politics of salient issues is itself controversial. Specifically, can politicians simply announce their positions to constituents who disagree with them, without providing persuasive justifications appealing to citizens' values, and both avoid paying electoral costs *and* change many citizens' policy views?

This possibility sits at odds with traditional conceptions of democracy and classic theories of opinion leadership, but it too has deep intellectual roots. In the aftermath of the World Wars, leading scholars sought to understand why mass publics enthusiastically supported political leaders who perpetrated unspeakable atrocities during the World Wars (e.g., Arendt 1945). Many of these scholars converged on the idea that mass publics typically apply little scrutiny to the pronouncements of authority figures (Milgram 1974, Epilogue).

Despite this question's deep intellectual roots, existing research leaves open important ambiguities. One common empirical approach examines how citizens respond to elite position-taking and rhetoric in the real political world, but does not alter aspects of the elite communication citizens are exposed to (e.g., Abramowitz 1978; Lenz 2009, 2012; Zaller 1992).² While these studies find that citizens often adopt the views of their favored politicians, they leave the nature of this opinion change unclear because elite communication tends to contain a mix of source cues and persuasive messages. For example, consider Abramowitz (1978)'s classic study of the Carter-Ford debates, which found that voters who viewed the debates tended to adopt their favored candidates' position on unemployment insurance and did not alter their evaluation of their favored candidate based on their prior view on the issue. When Democrats adopted Carter's position on unemployment insurance after the debate, were they swayed by Carter's arguments, which presumably appealed to the liberal values to which Democrats tend to subscribe? Or, did

² See also Achen and Bartels (2006); Arceneaux (2006); Bartels (2006); Berinsky (2009); Gabel and Scheve (2007); Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002); Jacoby (1988); Layman and Carsey (2002); Lee (2009); Mondak (1993); Minozzi et al. (2014).

Democrats change their opinions simply because they learned of Carter's positions and trusted him?³ These processes imply quite different conclusions about the nature of public opinion, but they are observationally equivalent in most panel data. The din of political disagreements tend to contain a mix of source cues and persuasive messages, leaving little direct evidence about how elites lead public opinion when they do (Hovland et al. 1953).⁴

Studies that exploit naturally occurring changes in the communication environment also raise questions about generalizability. In particular, politicians may focus their election campaigns on issues that appeal to a broad spectrum of citizens' values and avoid prominently staking out positions or changing their positions on issues where citizens have firmer preferences. Studies exploiting shifts in politicians' positions or citizens' exposure to political rhetoric may thus be drawing focus to atypical issues, providing a misrepresentative view of the dynamics of opinion leadership and electoral accountability (Tesler 2014b).

In response to these weaknesses, studies taking a second empirical approach have traded the naturalism of the first approach for greater control over the contents of elite position-taking. In particular, experiments in lab and survey settings have attempted to assess the processes that condition opinion leadership and electoral accountability and have examined a broader set of issues (e.g., Bullock 2011; Cohen 2003).⁵ However, such studies raise questions about external validity, as their treatments are often hypothetical or artificial (Findley et al. 2013; Grose 2014). Moreover, citizens aware they are being studied may feel compelled to misrepresent their true opinions on issues and evaluations of politicians (Bullock et al. 2013; Orne 1962). Citizens may

³ For similar reasons, that campaign advertisements which contain issue content can persuade (e.g., Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009; Rogers and Nickerson 2013) does not indicate whether the issue content they include is responsible for their effects (e.g., Martin 2014).

⁴ Indeed, Gelman and King (1993) interpret similar data as suggesting that campaigns help citizens bring their views better in line with their predispositions.

⁵ See also Arceneaux (2008); Cobb and Kuklinski (1997); Chong and Druckman (2007a, 2007b); Druckman (2001); Druckman et al. (2013); Gilens (2001); Iyenger and Valentino (2000); Kelly and Van Houweling (2010); Nicholson (2011).

wish to defend their favored political parties and politicians to survey researchers or enjoy voicing support for them, but citizens may react differently to real-world political stimuli or without a researcher present.

We provide a unique perspective on the nature of opinion leadership by examining the conditions under which political elites can shape and are held accountable to public opinion in the real world. Following from Table 1, our field experiments test the proposition that politicians can lead public opinion simply by announcing their positions, even without providing convincing appeals to citizens' values and without facing significant electoral costs for doing so. In our experiments, described in the next section, we worked with elected officials to alter the content of their actual communications to constituents and appraised the effects of these communications in ostensibly unrelated follow-up surveys. These field experiments offer the ability to control theoretically relevant aspects of communication that experiments offer while retaining the naturalism of studies that consider how citizens process elite in the real world.

Political Context and Design Overview for Studies 1 and 2

We conducted our experiments in collaboration with eight Democratic state legislators from a Midwestern state. We conducted the first experiment in the summer of 2013 with one legislator and the second experiment in collaboration with seven legislators in the spring of 2014.

The collaborating legislators all came from the same state, but represented diverse districts (see Table 2). Some of the legislators represented swing districts where Obama won the 2012 election by only a few percentage points, while others represented Democratic strongholds. The legislators were also relatively evenly split between urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Legislators and their Districts

Legislator	Terms of Service	2012 Obama Vote Share	District Description
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<u>Study 1</u>			
A	3	55%	Rural
<u>Study 2</u>			
B	1	90%	Urban
C	1	65%	Urban/Suburban
D	4	75%	Urban/Suburban
E	2	80%	College Town
F	1	50%	Rural
G	1	65%	Urban/Suburban
H	2	50%	Rural

Both experiments followed the same basic protocol (although there were important differences in their manipulations we describe in later sections):

1. Each legislator identified 5-10 substantively important policy issues s/he was actively supporting and working on in the legislature. We then conducted small statewide pilot surveys using Google Consumer Surveys (McDonald et al. 2012) to identify which of the legislators' positions had the *least* public support. This allowed us to identify four issues where legislators had an opportunity to take positions many of their constituents would not agree with at baseline, increasing our study's statistical power.
2. We surveyed registered voters in legislators' districts about their positions on their legislator's issues and their approval of their legislator. TargetSmart Communications provided the voter lists and Winning Connections conducted the surveys.⁶ (Specific question wording and coding is given in the Supporting Information.)
3. We identified the constituents in the sample who did not agree with the legislator on at least one of these four issues, over 95% of respondents. These voters represent the experiment's sampling frame.
4. These voters were then assigned to one of the treatments. The key feature of both

⁶ Winning Connections surveyed only one person per household. In households with multiple voters, we randomly chose one person who the interviewers asked for on their initial call. If the person was unavailable, we instructed interviewers to conduct the survey with another person on the voter list if they were available.

experiments is that legislators sent some, randomly-chosen constituents letters that contained the legislators' issue positions while others did not receive letters with the legislator's issue positions. The first study's control group received no letter from the legislator, while the second study's control group received a letter from the legislator with no issue content. The second experiment also randomly assigned the presence of extensive arguments.

5. Legislators sent the assigned letters from their legislative offices, using their official letterhead, in envelopes clearly marked as coming from the state capitol.
6. The week after the letters arrived, a follow-up survey appraised the effect of the letter on constituents' issue positions and favorability toward the legislator.

This design presents several advantages over existing research. First, because we worked with political elites to alter their real communications to voters, we are able to shed light on the theoretical mechanisms that generate opinion leadership. Second, in contrast to experimental research that alters elite communication in the context of survey or lab environments, our field experimental design allows us to examine how citizens react to elites' position-taking in the real world and when they are not aware they are being studied (e.g., Findley et al. 2013; Grose 2014). Another appealing aspect of this approach is that it is similar to the conditions in which citizens have traditionally been thought to encounter issue information, by encountering arguments and information about incumbents' policy records through targeted appeals like persuasive mailers in the context of election campaigns (e.g., Gelman and King 1993). By contrast to many campaign appeals, however, the letters also provided a uniquely strong and credible signal about their legislators' positions. These experiments thus provide a unique opportunity to examine how constituents react to legislators' position-taking.

Experiment 1 – One Legislator: Issue Letter versus No Letter Control

Procedure

We designed experiment 1 in collaboration with Legislator A (see Table 2) to explore how positions legislators take in mailings to constituents affect constituents' attitudes. We assigned the constituents in the study to either (1) a treatment group that received a letter in which Legislator A took a position the constituent did not agree with in the pre-survey, or (2) a control group that received no letter at all. Recall that classic conceptions of democracy would suggest that taking positions constituents disagree with is just about the least politically advantageous thing a politician can do; but, theories of opinion leadership suggest taking such positions much not harm the legislators' favorability much, and might even convince constituents of the value of his position.

The issues Legislator A discussed in his letters related to policies he was working on in the legislature and that he believed were important to his district. For example, Legislator A represents a rural district where mining for a particular mineral is an important industry. One of the issues dealt with whether local or state authorities should regulate mining of that mineral in the area. The other three issues were also of relevance to the state at large: (a) should state monies be spent to expand school vouchers?, (b) should the state income tax be cut?, and (c) should school districts be allowed to raise property taxes?

We surveyed 1,210 voters in Legislator A's district in May 2013 and asked them about their positions on these issues in order to determine who would be included in the experiment's sampling frame. Of these 1,210 voters, 64 (5%) already agreed with the legislator on all four issues and were removed from the sampling frame. The remaining 1,146 voters were randomly

assigned with equal probability to either receive a letter or to not receive any letter, for a total of 573 voters in each group.

Legislator A then sent letters that contained his policy positions to the constituents in the treatment group. Each letter was personalized so that it presented the legislator's position on up to two issues where constituents did not agree with his position in the pre-survey. All letters began with a paragraph of biographical information about Legislator A, then up to two paragraphs with Legislator A's position on the policy issues, followed by a closing paragraph. Supplementary Appendix B presents anonymized versions of these letters.

We also randomized which of the issues the letters discussed, allowing us to use within-subject variation for the opinion leadership analysis. For constituents who were persuadable (that is, did not already say they agreed with the legislator's position) on only one or two issues received a letter discussing those issues. However, for constituents who were persuadable on three or four of the issues, we randomized which two of those issues the letter discussed. This feature of our design allows us to exploit both the between-subjects comparison of constituents assigned to the treatment and control groups *and* the within-subjects comparison for the voters who were assigned to the treatment group but received letters that discussed a random subsample of two issues among the three or four issues eligible to be included. This necessitates two steps to assure unbiased inference (Gerber and Green 2012): we cluster standard errors at the respondent level and we condition on strata indicators for the number of issues on which each voter was persuadable.

Finally, a week after the letters were sent, we conducted follow up surveys and successfully reinterviewed 395 voters on their view of the legislator and their views on the issues where they were persuadable in the pre-survey. Table A2 in Supplementary Appendix A2 shows

that our treatment groups are balance on pre-treatment attitudes among survey takers, allaying concerns the results reflect differential attrition.

We also increase our statistical precision by including the lagged dependent variable (respondent's answers in the pre-survey) in regression analyses.

Manipulation Check

First, a manipulation check shows that constituents received and read the letters. The last question on the post survey asked voters, “*Do you happen to recall if you’ve received anything in the mail from Representative [Legislator A] this year?*” Over 50 percent of the voters assigned to the letter condition answered in the affirmative versus only 20 percent in the no letter control ($p < 0.001$).⁷ Table A1 in Supplementary Appendix A shows these results.

Results: Opinion Leadership

We next use an ordered probit regression to estimate the effect of the treatment letter on voters' issue positions because these positions were measured on a three-point scale: agree, disagree, or undecided/don't know. (Supplementary Appendix D presents the question wording for all of the questions.) We coded the voters' responses for the issue position questions on the follow up survey to take the following values: 1 = the constituent agrees with the legislator, 0 = the constituent is undecided/doesn't know; -1 = the constituent disagrees with the legislator. The regression includes dummy variables for the letter treatment and for whether the voter disagreed with the legislator on the issue in the pre-intervention survey (voters who already agree were removed so the baseline category is voters who were undecided).

Table 3, which presents the ordered probit results, shows that Legislator A's letters significantly moved his constituents' policy opinions to be more line with his positions. Voters

⁷ It is typical to observe some respondents in experiments falsely recall receiving communication they have not, either because they misremember or they misreport.

who were assigned to receive a letter were moved 0.2 standard deviations towards agreeing with the legislator on the issue their letter contained. The issue letters caused the voters who disagreed with the legislator to become about 6.5 percentage points more likely to agree with the legislator (and 6 percentage points less likely to disagree with him) relative to those who did not receive the letter. (Table A3 of Supplementary Appendix A presents OLS results.)

Table 3. Study 1 - Effect of Letter On Issue Opinion

DV = Agreement with Legislator's Position	Ordered Probit
Sent Policy Letter On This Issue	0.211** (0.083)
Lagged Opinion: Disagreed with Legislator (vs. No Opinion)	-0.757** (0.296)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes
Cutpoint 1	-0.450*** (0.120)
Cutpoint 2	0.611*** (0.121)
Observations (Issue-Respondents)	865
Clusters (Respondents)	386

*Dependent variable is a three-point scale of issue positions, with 1 coded as the legislators' position. Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed. Estimated via an ordered probit regression.*

Results: Legislator Approval

We next turn to the effect of the letters on citizens' approval of the legislator. We find that Legislator A did not appear to face significant backlash for sending letters to his constituents taking these positions. Analyzing legislator support as a 5-point scale,⁸ voters in the treatment group had, on average, an evaluation of Legislator A that was about 0.14 points more *positive*, though not statistically significant (See Table A4 in the Supplementary Appendix A). For greater transparency, Table 4 presents a multinomial regression that estimates the effect of the letter on

⁸ 5: Strongly favorable impression, 4: Not so strongly favorable impression, 3: Don't know / Haven't heard of time, 2: Not so strongly unfavorable, 1: Strongly unfavorable.

the constituents' favorability toward the legislator. The baseline category represents those who had not heard of Legislator A or did not have an opinion on him. The positive point estimates suggest that being assigned to receive a letter caused voters to form an opinion of Legislator A. It seems some may have formed unfavorable views, but letter had its the biggest effect on the share of recipients with a strongly favorable view of Legislator A ($p < 0.001$). 23 percent of constituents in the control group had a strongly favorable view of Legislator A, but this share increased to nearly 40 percent in the treatment group. Overall, these results suggest Legislator A faced little backlash for taking positions with which constituents did not agree.

Table 4. Study 1 - Effect of Letter Treatment on Approval of Legislator

Dependent Variable Outcomes: (Baseline=No opinion)	Strongly Negative	Multinomial Probit		Strongly Positive
		Not too Strongly Negative	Not too Strongly Positive	
Sent Policy Letter	0.361 (0.311)	0.551* (0.321)	-0.063 (0.243)	0.632*** (0.212)
Prior Approval of Legislator	-0.482*** (0.158)	-0.345* (0.177)	0.473*** (0.119)	1.014*** (0.107)
Constant	-1.948*** (0.232)	-2.074*** (0.250)	-1.293*** (0.165)	-1.331*** (0.169)
Observations (Individuals)	395	395	395	395

*Dependent variable is presence in the categories shown at top. Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Estimated via a multinomial probit regression.*

This first study demonstrates that official communications from legislators can affect constituent opinion, illustrating how incumbents can build support for their policy positions and their re-election with powers of their office (Mann and Wolfinger 1978). However, with regard to the nature of elite opinion leadership, Study 1 left open the same questions as much existing research, questions that we turn to in Study 2:

First, why did communication from Legislator A about his positions cause constituents to adopt them? Legislator A's letter offered (short) arguments for his positions, and it could be that

these arguments persuaded his constituents as they understood how his position was consistent with their predispositions and values (e.g., Fenno 1978; Zaller 1992). On the other hand, the observed effect could also illustrate voters simply adopting their elected representatives' stances and not have much to do with the reasons he set forth for supporting these policies at all (e.g., Lenz 2012). Our second study therefore manipulated the extent to which legislators included attempts at persuasion to better distinguish between the elite persuasion and position adoption explanations for opinion leadership.

Second, did Legislator A lose support with some constituents for taking positions they disagreed with? Receiving a personal letter itself could have a large positive effect on the legislator's favorability, which could be partially offset by a smaller but still substantively important negative effect of the positions it contained. Our second study therefore included a control letter without any positions in order to hold constant the presence of a letter and vary only the presence of counter-attitudinal issue positions.

Study 2 – Varying the Presence of Positions and Arguments With Seven Legislators

Our second study followed the same basic protocol as Study 1, but with a few key changes. First, we recruited seven legislators to participate (see Table 1 for an overview of these legislators and their districts). With the larger number of legislators, we were able to recruit a much larger sample and increase the precision of the experiment. Assessing the average effect of seven legislators and seventeen policy issues also grants the experiment a stronger claim to generalizability.

More importantly, the control and treatment conditions were both altered. As before, legislators in the second experiment sent letters to all their constituents who did not already agree

with their position on at least one issue.⁹ However, constituents were randomly assigned to receive one of three letters:

- (i) a “control” letter where the legislator introduced themselves, described the services their office could conduct for constituents, and described a few locally oriented achievements (e.g., designating a building downtown a historic place), serving as a baseline,
- (ii) a “direct” policy letter that added language in which the legislators took a position the recipient had not agreed with previously and made only the briefest justification for their position, and
- (iii) an “arguments” policy letter that added extensive arguments for this position designed to appeal to citizens’ values.

Comparing the “direct” and “arguments” treatments allows us to test how providing extensive arguments affect a legislator’s ability to persuade constituents. In both cases, the legislator stated their position on the issue with one line, always the same. In the “direct” policy letter, they then provided only restatements of their positions and brief, vague assertions that their position was desirable such as “This would have a positive impact on the lives of many [STATE] residents and their families.” For example, one of the legislators wrote the following about a proposed state pension plan in the “direct” condition:

I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers. I believe that [STATE] workers should have access to a system that supports them during retirement. This new system would have a positive impact on the lives of many [STATE] residents and their families.

By contrast, legislators provided more detail about the reasons behind their positions in the “arguments” condition, attempting to appeal to citizens’ values and predispositions (e.g.,

⁹ A pure control group would have been desirable, although the finite size of the state legislative districts we studied presented limitations on our sample size.

Zaller 1992). For example, the same state legislator instead included the following paragraphs in the “arguments” condition for the pension plan:

I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers.

[STATE] boasts one of the best pension systems in the nation for government workers. For decades, [STATE] state employees have relied on the [STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM] pension for their livelihood after retiring. The fund is solvent and often modeled by other states with failing systems. Because this fund for public workers has been so successful, I support the creation of a similar state-administered retirement plan for private workers.

I also support the creation of a [STATE] system because everyone who works hard should be able to look forward to a stable retirement, regardless of if they are a public or private worker. Right now, less than one-half of Americans have any retirement assets at all, and financial insecurity in retirement is all too common for our seniors. Establishing a [STATE SYSTEM] for private sector workers would make sure that everyone who works hard can look forward to a stable retirement.

To the extent elite opinion leadership is contingent on elites appealing to citizens’ principles and values, we should expect only the “argument” condition to produce opinion change, if at all, and, potentially, for the “direct” condition to generate backlash. However, to the extent elites can lead public opinion simply by announcing their positions, we should expect the content of the “direct” condition to have a similarly strong effect on citizens’ opinions as the “argument” condition.

As with the first experiment, the letters all shared the same basic structure: a paragraph of introductory text providing biographical information about the legislator, issue positions in the “direct” and “arguments” conditions, and a closing paragraph. Anonymized versions of these letters are provided in Supplementary Appendix C.

Table 5 lists the issues used in the letters and the percent of issue-respondent observations in our analysis for each. With seven different legislators choosing four different issues, the policy

letters covered a broad range of topics. These issues included raising the minimum wage, allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers' licenses, putting pregnant women suspected of using drugs in police custody, school vouchers, taxes, redistricting commissions, economic development in their region, and much more.

Table 5. Issues from Study 2

Issue	Percent of sample
Budget deficit	5.0%
Pregnant women suspected of drug use can be put in jail	2.0%
Criminals have records expunged from minor crimes	3.5%
Gas tax increase	3.5%
Driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants	6.0%
Marijuana decriminalization	3.5%
Medical marijuana legalization	6.6%
Minimum wage increase to \$10.10	19.5%
State-sponsored pension plan	9.1%
Workplace protections for pregnant women	3.9%
Local property tax increase	2.0%
New state commuter rail system	4.0%
Non-partisan redistricting	8.3%
Trying seventeen-year-olds as juveniles, not adults	3.4%
Undocumented immigrants eligible for in-state tuition at state colleges and universities	3.5%
Voter identification requirements	4.0%
Private school vouchers	12.2%

As in Study 1, we exploit both within- and between-subject variation when we estimate the effects of the letters on issue opinions. As some individuals in the treatment group were eligible to receive the legislators' positions on multiple issues but the letter contained only one position, we use the issue-respondent as the unit of observation when estimating the effects of the letters on issue opinion and base our analysis on a sample of 2,528 voter-issue observations from 1,047 individual voters. As in Study 1, we cluster our standard errors at the respondent level and include dummies for the number of issues the respondent was eligible for receiving a position on to account for the fact that the probability of receiving each issue treatment depended on the number of issues where the voter was eligible for treatment. Tables A7 and A8 in

Supplementary Appendix A show that balance on pretreatment attitudes was preserved among survey takers.

Manipulation Checks: Did constituents remember the letters and learn legislators' positions?

First, we checked that respondents received and read the letters. At the end of the follow up survey, we asked voters whether they remembered receiving a letter from the legislator in the past year. Over 60 percent of subjects responded in the affirmative. Although we have no control group to measure what share of voters would have falsely remembered receiving a letter from the legislator recently, we are encouraged that we observed a similar share of voters recalling receiving a letter in Study 2 as in the treatment group for Study 1.¹⁰

On average, the voters who were sent one of the policy letters were also much more likely to correctly identify their legislators' position on the issue the letter contained. In the post-survey we asked voters to indicate their legislators' position on one of the issues they were eligible for treatment. Table 6 shows the results from a probit regression that tests whether respondents were more likely to correctly identify their legislator's position on a given issue if they were sent a policy letter on that issue. The outcome was coded as 1 if the recipient correctly identified the legislators' position and 0 if the recipient did not correctly identify the legislators' position. Column 1 presents the results comparing those who received assigned to one of the policy letter treatments for that issue versus not and column 2 includes a dummy for "argument" treatment. Subjects were significantly more likely to correctly recall their legislators' position on the issue their letter was randomly assigned to contain.

Table 6. Manipulation Check for Study 2 – Did Constituents Learn Legislators' Positions?

DV=Correctly Identify Legislator's Position	Probit	Probit
Legislator Took Position	0.375***	0.332***

¹⁰ We were also concerned that at least one of the legislative offices might have had difficulty getting their letters mailed and delivered before surveying began, but the share of constituents who recalled receiving a letter did not meaningfully differ across the districts.

On This Issue In Letter Letter Included Extensive Argument	(0.095) -	(0.113) 0.095 (0.132)
Lagged Opinion: Disagree with Legislator	0.250*** (0.088)	0.247*** (0.088)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes
<u>Observations</u>	<u>1,077</u>	<u>1,077</u>

Dependent variable is correct knowledge of legislators' positions. Each individual asked about only one of their legislator's issue positions. Model is estimated via a probit regression model.

*Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed.*

Results: Opinion Leadership

The positions legislators took in the letters had a significant influence on voters' own issue opinions. In the post-survey we asked constituents where they stood on the issues where they did not already agree with the legislator. We recoded voters' responses to these questions to create an ordinal variable on a three-point scale: the voter disagrees with the legislator's position, the voter is unsure on the issue, or the voter agrees with the legislator's positions, coded as -1, 0, and 1 respectively. (Question wordings did not mention the legislators' positions; we simply recoded the variable this way for ease of interpretation.)

Table 7 presents an ordered probit regression estimating the effect of the experimental treatments on voters' issue opinions. Column 1 presents the results comparing those who were randomly assigned to receive a legislators' position on each issue versus those who were eligible for assignment to that issue but were not sent legislators' positions. The constituents who were sent letters with the legislators' positions were about 5 percentage points less likely to disagree with the legislator and about 5 percentage points more likely to agree with the legislator. This difference is statistically significant.

Column 2 adds a dummy variable for the "argument" treatment, whether legislators also gave an extensive argument for their position than only a short statement of it. If successfully

appealing to citizens' values is necessary for legislators to affect public opinion, we should see these arguments representing the bulk of the effect. If, however, citizens were reacting to the mere fact that their legislator had taken a position, the letter should affect opinion just as profoundly when these arguments are omitted altogether. We find little evidence that legislators' arguments were responsible for their persuasive impact. Legislators appeared able to move constituents' opinions by stating their own positions with minimal justification; adding additional arguments did not make them more persuasive. These results are consistent with the *position adoption* view.

(Table A5 in Supplementary Appendix A shows these results are similar when using OLS regression and binary dependent variables. Constituents were both less likely to disagree with legislators' positions and more likely to agree with legislators' positions when legislators took a position on an issue.)

Table 7. Study 2 - Effect of Letter Treatments on Respondents' Issue Opinions		
	Ordered Probit	Ordered Probit
Legislator Took Position On This Issue	0.135** (0.053)	0.159** (0.067)
Position Justified With Extensive Argument	-	-0.053 (0.087)
Lagged Opinion: Disagreed with Legislator (vs. No Opinion)	-0.700*** (0.048)	-0.700*** (0.048)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes
Cutpoint 1	-0.594*** (0.080)	-0.594*** (0.080)
Cutpoint 2	0.143* (0.079)	0.144* (0.079)
Observations (Issue-Respondents)	2,528	2,528
Clusters (Respondents)	1,140	1,140

*Dependent variable is a three-point scale of respondents' issue opinions, with 1 coded as the legislators' position, 0 as don't know, and -1 as the opposite of the legislators' position. Models are estimated via ordered probit regressions. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed.*

Results: Approval of Legislator

Arguably the most controversial claim of the *position adoption* perspective is that citizens tend not to hold their elected officials in less esteem when they learn that they disagree with them on issues, generally failing to behave as issue voters. Our setting represents a difficult test of this point of view because citizens tend to have little prior knowledge about state legislators. Just about one of the only things many citizens in the treatment group likely knew about their legislator is that they disagreed with them on an issue. Study 1 presented evidence consistent with the view that citizens were nevertheless indifferent to this information. However, Study 1 left open the possibility that a negative effect of this information was “cancelled out” by the positive effect of receiving a letter. Therefore, in Study 2, we compare a control group of citizens who disagreed with their legislator on an issue but received a “control letter” with no issue content to the treatment group citizens who disagreed with their legislator on an issue and received a letter containing that information. This removes 275 subjects from the analysis entirely who did not disagree with the legislator’s position on any issue (and merely reported being undecided).

We find no evidence that legislators suffered electoral costs by taking positions constituents disagreed with; citizens who received letters from their legislators taking positions they had disagreed with previously evaluated their legislators no less favorably. Table 8 presents the results of the policy letter on voters’ approval of their legislators, coded on a 7-point scale.¹¹

¹¹ The legislator favorability question was branching, similar to the standard party identification question on the ANES. Subjects coded at -3 reported an unfavorable impression of the legislator, then reported it was strong; subjects at -2 recorded an unfavorable impression of the legislator, then reported it was weak; subjects at -1 recorded being indifferent, then reported leaning towards an unfavorable impression; subjects at 0 reported being unfamiliar with the legislator, or, reported being indifferent, and that they did not lean either way; subjects at 1 reported being indifferent toward the legislator, then reported leaning towards a favorable impression; subjects at 2 recorded a favorable impression of the legislator, then reported it was weak; subjects at 3 recorded a favorable impression of the legislator, then reported it was strong.

Column 1 estimates the average effect of the letter including a policy position the constituent had opposed in the pre-survey, pooling the “argument” and “direct” conditions. We see little evidence that constituents reacted negatively; in fact, the point estimate is positive and the 95% confidence interval on this estimate is [-0.08, 0.23], meaning we can rule out negative effects larger than around 0.08 standard deviations. The maximum plausible effect of legislators taking a position recipients disagreed appeared miniscule.

What about the possibility that legislators’ arguments were necessary to dull the negative effect of these positions, as the elite persuasion hypothesis would predict (e.g., Fenno 1978; Grose et al. 2013)? Column 2 shows that these null effect estimates are consistent regardless of the extent to which the letters contained explanations and arguments; there is no evidence that the presence of appeals to citizens’ values change how citizens evaluate legislators in response. We can rule out negative effects of the “direct” position statements respondents had disagreed with larger about 0.13 standard deviations. (Table A6 in Supplementary Appendix A shows these results are identical when using OLS regression to analyze the results, both when legislator approval is dichotomized and when it is analyzed as a continuous variable.)

Table 8. Study 2 – Effect of Legislators Taking Positions Constituents Disagree With On Evaluation of Legislator

	Ordered Probit DV = Evaluation of Legislator	Ordered Probit DV = Evaluation of Legislator
Legislator Took Position Citizen Disagreed With Position Justified With Extensive Argument	0.080 (0.079) - (0.103)	0.082 (0.092) -0.003 (0.103)
No Impression of Legislator in Pre-Survey	0.699*** (0.110)	0.699*** (0.110)
Positive Impression of Legislator in Pre-Survey	1.848*** (0.130)	1.849*** (0.130)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes

Cutpoint 1	-0.110 (0.168)	-0.110 (0.168)
Cutpoint 2	0.533*** (0.171)	0.533*** (0.171)
Cutpoint 3	0.628*** (0.172)	0.628*** (0.172)
Cutpoint 4	1.863*** (0.177)	1.863*** (0.177)
Cutpoint 5	2.046*** (0.177)	2.046*** (0.177)
Cutpoint 6	2.552*** (0.180)	2.552*** (0.180)
Observations	865	865

*Dependent variable is approval of the legislator on a 7-point scale, with higher values corresponding to a more positive opinion. Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed.*

Are Some Issues “Different”?

What about the potential that some issues are “different”? Perhaps our effects reflect large opinion leadership on some issues but a general pattern of null effects; or, perhaps legislators faced electoral costs on many issues but these effects were obscured by null effects on others. Figures A1 and A2 in the Supplementary Appendix A shed light on this possibility by depicting the effects separately for each issue. Many issues do not have many observations associated with them and so the effects are noisily estimated. Nevertheless, these plots fail to indicate there is worrisome heterogeneity, and formal meta-analytic tests for the existence of treatment heterogeneity do not suggest it is present. This is not to say politicians are likely to have an easier time leading opinion on some issues than others, but simply that our results do not seem driven by a small set of atypical issues.¹²

The results of Study 2 thus provide unique evidence supporting the view that elites can shape public opinion merely by announcing their positions, without paying electoral costs for

¹² The point estimates in Figures A1 and A2 differ very slightly from those presented in Tables 6 and 7 because the variables are residualized by the covariates in a slightly different fashion when they are estimated together than one-by-one. Reassuringly, the estimates and confidence intervals nevertheless match relatively closely.

doing so among those who disagree with them and even without making appeals to citizens' values. Indeed, when politicians omitted the justifications for their positions and simply announced them, citizens reported opinions more in line with their legislators' just as frequently.

Discussion

Students of democratic politics have long debated the role mass opinion plays in constraining democratic leaders' policy decisions. The consistent pattern that citizens tend to share the views of their favored political leaders on the issues of the day has inspired three distinct theoretical perspectives on the role of mass opinion in democracies: an *issue voting* perspective that conceptualizes citizens' policy preferences as the chief determinants of their vote choices; an *elite persuasion* perspective that agrees issue opinions chiefly determine voters' candidate choices but that elites are capable of persuading the citizens to change their issue opinions by appealing to their values; and, a *position adoption* perspective that citizens often adopt trusted elite's preferred positions rather than judging politicians on the basis of their issue positions.

No one believes any of these perspectives explains politics all the time. But the notions that citizens sometimes simply adopt the positions politicians take on salient issues or fail to hold them accountable when they disagree with them have been especially controversial. When political elites simply announce their positions without making persuasive appeals to citizens' values, can they shape public opinion and avoid electoral costs? In this paper we probed these questions with a series of unique field experiments conducted in cooperation with politicians themselves. In our studies, political elites randomly assigned aspects of their communications to voters about their policy positions, the first such studies we are aware of (see Cover and

Brumberg [1982] and Minozzi et al. [2014] for studies that do not manipulate the content of elite messages). The policies in question were neither insignificant nor uncontroversial, and included the decriminalization of marijuana, raising of the minimum wage, and policies toward undocumented immigrants, and others.

Our investigation first uncovered strong evidence that legislators can shape constituents' views on issues by merely staking out their positions. The constituents who received letters containing legislators' positions were significantly more likely to subsequently share their legislators' view. In our second study, we also found that constituents who received lengthy arguments from legislators justifying their positions were just as likely to change their opinions as constituents to whom legislators provided little justification.

We next examined whether citizens evaluated their legislators any differently when their legislators directly stated a position citizens had opposed, examining a core mechanism central to theories of democratic accountability. The classic understanding of democracy would suggest that just about the least politically advantageous thing a politician could do is inform their constituents they disagree with them on an issue – or, if they must do so, they are typically expected to have to provide persuasive reasons justifying their positions. Our experiment put these notions to a stark test, as the politicians we cooperated with randomly varied whether they did just this. Significantly, we found no evidence that constituents held their legislators in less esteem when legislators announced support for policies they had previously opposed – regardless of the extent to which legislators provided justifications for their positions. There was little evidence that these patterns meaningfully differed across issues.

The context that produced these findings – a single letter from relatively unknown state legislators – makes them all the more surprising for at least two reasons. First, that most subjects

had limited or no knowledge about their state legislator before they received the letter makes it surprising that information that their legislator disagreed with them had no detectable impact on their affect towards the legislator. About the only thing many in the treatment group appeared to know about their legislator is that their legislator had an issue position they disagreed with.

Nevertheless, citizens did not tend to evaluate their legislator any more negatively when they had this knowledge. It seems unlikely that when voters already have a great deal of prior information about a legislator, a piece of additional information would have a larger impact on approval than what we found.

Second, the context we considered also represented a hard test of the notion that politicians can lead public opinion. Voters exposed to the news media can receive dozens of reminders about where well-known and potentially well-liked political leaders stand on issues. In this experiment, voters received only one letter from a relatively unknown figure, whose partisanship was not clearly signaled. It seems unlikely that this context would produce stronger effects than would a President whose positions are repeatedly emphasized in the mass media (e.g., Berinsky 2009).

There is a great deal our evidence does not tell us. We know little about the issue-, elite- or citizen-level factors that might condition these effects. We readily allow that the patterns we found on these issues may certainly differ across others, such as moral issues that clearly implicate citizens' core values (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1980; Ryan 2014; Tesler 2014b) or that citizens find particularly personally important (e.g., Krosnick 1990). Likewise, the presence of competing communication may well diminish the magnitude of the opinion leadership we observed (Chong and Druckman 2007b). It would also be premature to conclude that the opinion leadership we observed is "blind" per se (e.g., Lenz 2012). Citizens may have simply deferred to

their elected officials, but they may also have inferred that their elected officials are more familiar with the details of the issues at stake or trusted their judgment.

Turning to the implications of our results for democratic accountability, our results also leave open the possibility that politicians think the constraints public opinion places on them are stronger than they are (e.g., Berinsky and Lenz 2014). Indeed, the legislators we cooperated with on these studies expressed surprise at their success in affecting opinion at little electoral cost. As legislators tend to interact with the constituents who have firm positions on issues and who are politically engaged, they may form inaccurate understandings of the degree to which rank-and-file constituents care about which positions they take (Miller and Stokes 1963). Such questions are beyond the scope of our study to address and will be fruitful avenues for further research.

The pattern that citizens tend to agree with favored politicians on issues is one of the most widely studied patterns in public opinion. One interpretation of this pattern paints a familiar portrait of democracy: citizens agree with their favored politicians on issues because they have selected which politicians they like on this basis. The present findings lend unique support to a growing literature questioning whether these associations reflect significant reverse causation and thus a significantly different portrait of democracy. Citizens do not reliably react negatively to the knowledge that their elected officials support issue positions different than citizens' own across a broad spectrum of issues. Moreover, citizens even often adopt elected officials' positions as their own, generating an association between their evaluations of legislators and their agreement with them on issues that could be easily be mistaken for issue voting were they not within an experiment.

Echoing traditional theoretical conceptions of democracy, Miller (1992) describes it as “the aggregation of [citizens'] independently formed preferences” into issue positions taken by

politicians (p. 55). Our studies provide a rare window into democracy functioning in precisely the opposite manner: distributing issue positions taken by politicians to citizens.

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Supplementary Appendix A. Additional Tables

Table A1: Study 1 - Recall Receiving Letter OLS Results

DV = Recall Receiving Letter	OLS
Sent Policy Letter	0.326*** (0.047)
Constant	0.208*** (0.032)
Observations	371
R-squared	0.115

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A2: Study 1 – Balance Checks

	OLS DV = Assigned to Policy Letter	OLS DV = Completed Post-Survey	OLS DV = Assigned to Policy Letter (if Completed)
Pre-Attitude: Weakly Negative	0.072 (0.088)		-0.050 (0.177)
Pre-Attitude: Neutral	0.088 (0.061)		0.057 (0.099)
Pre-Attitude: Weakly Positive	0.066 (0.077)		0.031 (0.125)
Pre-Attitude: Strongly Positive	0.092 (0.066)		0.127 (0.106)
Sent Policy Letter		-0.028 (0.027)	
Constant	0.419*** (0.058)	0.344*** (0.019)	0.414*** (0.093)
Observations	1,210	1,210	399
R-squared	0.002	0.001	0.007

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A3: Study 1 – Effect of Letter on Issue Opinion OLS Results

DV	OLS DV = Disagree- Binary	OLS DV = Agree- Binary	OLS DV = Scale
Sent Policy Letter On This Issue	-0.060*	0.065**	0.126**

	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.051)
Lagged Opinion: Disagreed with Legislator (vs. No Opinion)	0.393** (0.181)	-0.325** (0.142)	-0.719*** (0.261)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations (Issue-Respondents)	865	865	865
Clusters (Respondents)	386	386	386
R-squared	0.220	0.074	0.167

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A4: Study 1 – Attitudes Towards Legislator A OLS Results

DV	OLS DV = Binary Indicator for Disapproves of Legislator	OLS DV = Binary Indicator for Approves of Legislator
Sent Policy Letter	0.036 (0.027)	0.141 (0.089)
Lagged DV	0.400*** (0.044)	0.605*** (0.040)
Constant	0.036* (0.019)	0.244*** (0.063)
Observations	395	395
R-squared	0.172	0.375

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A5: Study 2 – Effect on Opinion OLS Results

VARIABLES	(1) DV = Binary Indicator for <i>Disagrees</i> with Legislator	(2)	(3) DV = Binary Indicator for <i>Agrees</i> with Legislator	(4)	(5) DV = Issue Opinion on Continuous Scale, Coded -1, 0, and 1	(6)
Legislator Took Position On Issue Position Justified With Argument	-0.054** (0.021)	-0.068** (0.027)	0.039** (0.020)	0.043* (0.026)	0.093** (0.036)	0.111** (0.046)
		0.031 (0.034)		-0.008 (0.033)		-0.039 (0.060)
Lagged Opinion: Disagreed	0.383*** (0.020)	0.383*** (0.020)	-0.096*** (0.019)	-0.096*** (0.019)	-0.480*** (0.033)	-0.480*** (0.033)

Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,528	2,528	2,528	2,528	2,528	2,528
Clusters	1140	1140	1140	1140	1140	1140
R-squared	0.149	0.149	0.021	0.021	0.093	0.093

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A6: Study 2 – Attitudes Towards Legislator

DV	OLS		OLS	
	DV=Approval-Binary		DV=Approval-Continuous	
Legislator Took Position	0.022	0.013	0.135	0.129
On This Issue In Letter	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.114)	(0.133)
Letter Included Extensive		0.019		0.013
Argument		(0.040)		(0.149)
No Impression of Legislator in Pre-Survey	0.034	0.034	1.068***	1.068***
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.158)	(0.158)
Positive Impression of Legislator in Pre-Survey	0.542***	0.542***	2.735***	2.734***
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.178)	(0.178)
Dummy Variables for Strata	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	865	865	865	865
R-squared	0.284	0.284	0.337	0.337

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A7: Study 2 – Balance on Pre-Treatment Legislator Approval Among Respondents to Post-Survey (OLS)

DV	(1)	(2)
	Approve-Continuous	Approve-Continuous
Legislator Took Position	0.011	-0.002
On This Issue In Letter	(0.045)	(0.052)
Letter Included Extensive		0.029
Argument		(0.059)
Strata Dummies?	Yes	Yes
Constant	-0.003	-0.003
	(0.154)	(0.154)
Observations	865	865
R-squared	0.133	0.133

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A8: Study 2 – Balance on Pre-Treatment Issue Opinion Among Respondents to Post-Survey (OLS)

DV	(1) Opinion-Continuous	(2) Opinion-Continuous
Legislator Took Position On This Issue In Letter Letter Included Extensive Argument	0.004 (0.021)	-0.005 (0.028) 0.020 (0.036)
Strata Dummies?	Yes	Yes
Constant	0.595*** (0.031)	0.596*** (0.031)
Observations	2,528	2,528
R-squared	0.001	0.001
N_clust	1140	1140

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure A1. Effects of Legislators' Position-taking on Citizens' Opinion Disaggregated by Issue

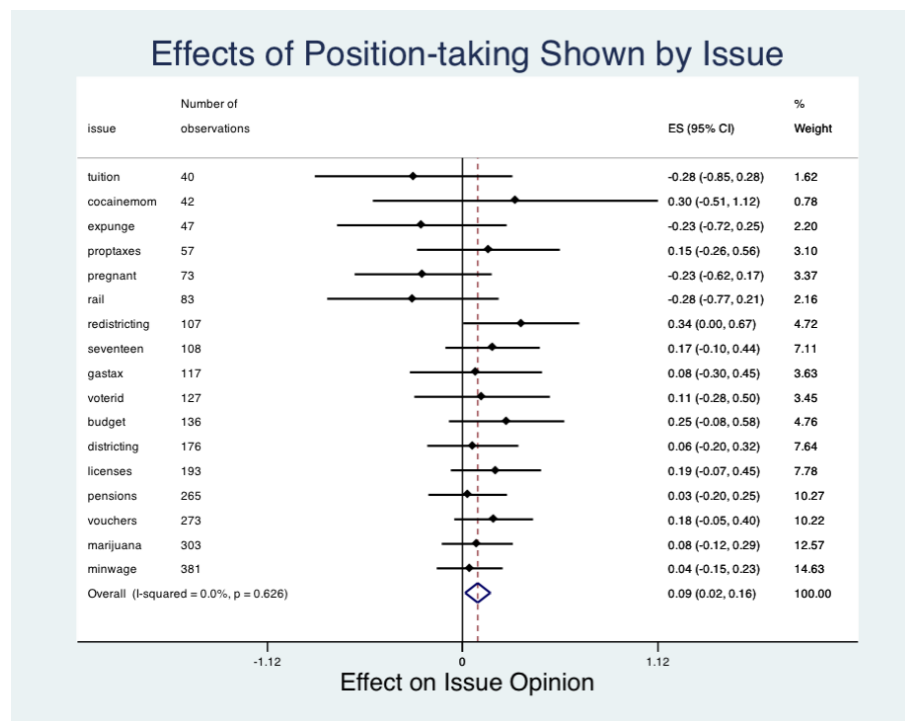
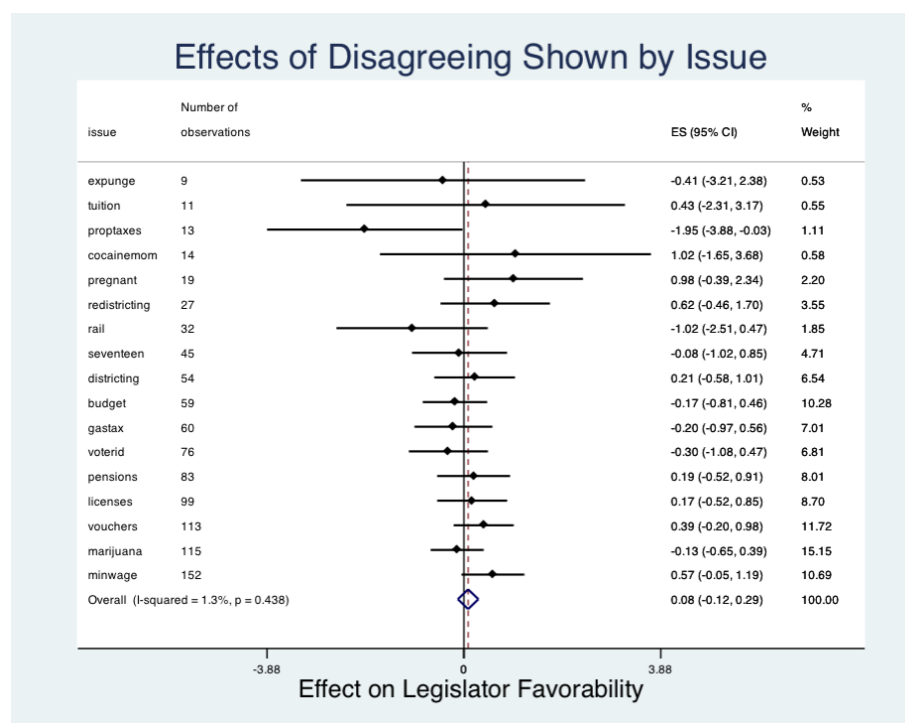


Figure A2. Effects of Legislators Taking Positions Citizens Disagreed with on Approval of Legislators



Supplementary Appendix B – Letters from Legislator A (Study 1)

All letters were printed on official state letterhead with the representative's name and arrived in official state envelopes.

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

[PICTURE OF LEGISLATOR]

Dear [FIRST NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR NAME] and I am your State Representative. It is a privilege serving the people of the [DISTRICT] and I want you to know that I'm fighting for you in [STATE CAPITAL]. My top priorities continue to be education, local control, public safety and supporting agriculture and industry in Western [STATE].

[IF BUDGET ISSUE]: I am taking a stand for fiscal responsibility and foresight. The governor's proposed budget includes an income tax cut of a million dollars that would take money away from many of the things that we rely on, such as schools, roads and health care.

Do the benefits of this tax cut outweigh the costs? Earners in the lowest tax bracket would go from paying [NUMBER BETWEEN 3 AND 8] percent to paying [NUMBER 0.1 HIGHER] percent. For a family making between \$50,000 and \$60,000, this tax cut would **only give them an additional \$2 per week.**

In this case, the costs far outweigh the benefits. For an additional \$2 per week we would have to cut or not properly address some of the things we rely on most. **This income tax cut proposal is simply a talking point that will only hurt [STATE] in the long run.]**

[IF PROPERTY TAX ISSUE]: As a strong supporter of education, I also think **it is time to unfreeze property tax levies.** The current freeze was put into place to help during the worst of the economic recession. While times are still hard, it is important that we give local communities the right to make their own decisions about the proper tax levels for themselves.

This gives local communities the flexibility they need to choose the tax levels that will balance their own needs. While many local governments will choose not to increase taxes, lifting the across the board property tax levy will allow areas the flexibility to determine what is best for them.]

[IF MINING ISSUE]: I am also fighting to **help local residents keep control of the [MATERIAL] mining in their own area.** As you know, this is a particularly important issue for [AREA OF STATE] because of the increased demand for the [MATERIAL] we produce.

I am working to ensure that local communities retain control of this process. I don't think this is a one-size-fits-all issue. Each community should be in control of regulating this process so they can make the decisions that are best for their community.]

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHERS ISSUE]: I am showing my strong support for education by protecting the statewide funds that support the public schools in our district. Currently, money has been allocated to provide a per-pupil spending increase of \$[NUMBER BETWEEN 500 and 1,000] for K-8 students and an increase of \$[NUMBER BETWEEN 1,000 and 1,500] for high school students in the voucher program. By contrast, the governor's budget provides a per-pupil spending increase of \$[NUMBER BETWEEN 100 and 200] for children in public schools.

I oppose this voucher school plan and am working to reverse the decision that puts significant amounts of taxpayer money into private voucher schools instead of our public schools. This decision is unfair to taxpayers across the state and hurts children in our community.]

As always please feel free to contact me if I may be of service to you, or if you want to share your thoughts on an issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[LEGISLATOR NAME]
State Representative
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Supplementary Appendix C – Letters from Legislators in Study 2

All letters were printed on official state letterhead with the representative's name and arrived in official state envelopes.

Legislator B

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

[PICTURE OF LEGISLATOR]

Dear [FIRST NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR FULL NAME] and I am your representative in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. I am proud to represent the [DISTRICT NUMBER]. Since moving to [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] from [ANOTHER CITY IN STATE] in [YEAR IN 1970S], I have been proud to call our community my home. Following a career with [CAR COMPANY], I was elected to the [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] City Council in [YEAR IN 2000S]. I live in [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] with [INFORMATION ABOUT THE FAMILY]. It's a tremendous honor to serve you and I want you to know that I'm fighting for you in [CAPITAL CITY OF STATE].

[IF MINIMUM WAGE DIRECT: I am supporting a proposal to raise the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 per hour and to require it to keep pace with inflation into the future. [STATE'S] workers deserve a fair minimum wage, and I believe the time has arrived when the minimum wage should be raised. This minimum wage increase would increase wages for thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS].]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE ARGUMENT: I am supporting a proposal to raise the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 per hour and to require it to keep pace with inflation into the future. When I evaluate different proposals in the State Assembly, I always ask myself: will this help [STATE] middle class and those working hard to get there? Raising [STATE'S] minimum wage is a clear 'yes.' Increasing [STATE'S] minimum wage would improve the lives of thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS] and empower them to support their families without government assistance.

The minimum wage was never meant to be a stagnant bottom floor, but was intended to represent a fair wage for honest work. Unfortunately, while it used to be possible to live off of a minimum wage salary, that's not the case anymore. In fact, if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would already be over \$10 per hour. People making minimum wage work just as hard now as they did years ago. It's time to update our laws and make sure that hard work pays fairly again.

I also support requiring that the minimum wage keeps pace with inflation into the future. This

would protect workers and their families from the partisan politics that too often fail to take action.]

[IF MEDICAL MARIJUANA DIRECT: I am supporting the legalization of medical marijuana in [STATE]. Laws on medical marijuana vary widely across states. Although many states ban marijuana altogether, sixteen states make exceptions for medical marijuana. Two states, Colorado and Washington, even allow recreational use of marijuana. Here in [STATE], any use of marijuana is currently prohibited. I support changing our laws to allow doctors - and only doctors - to prescribe marijuana to patients to alleviate suffering.]

[IF MEDICAL MARIJUANA ARGUMENT: I am supporting the legalization of medical marijuana in [STATE]. I support medical marijuana because no person should be forced to suffer excruciating pain when there are options available to help them. Narcotic pain relievers currently on the market often cause serious side-effects for many people, including absolute dependence, organ failure, and poor quality of life. Carefully regulated medicinal marijuana should be on the table for doctors (and only doctors) to give their most desperate patients.

The [STATE] legislation on medical marijuana is known as the [NAME OF BILL]. The proposal has this name [HISTORY OF NAMING FOR BILL, CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL WHO WENT THROUGH GREAT SUFFERING AND WHO MARIJUANA COULD HAVE HELEPD]. Allowing medical marijuana use for people in serious suffering like [NAMED INDIVIDUALS] does not make drugs available to everyone and anyone - but it does put an option on the table for seriously ill patients who together with their doctors determine that medical marijuana is their best hope.]

[IF NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING DIRECT: I am working to make the legislative redistricting process nonpartisan, and put a neutral agency in charge of drawing boundaries for legislative districts instead of political parties. Specifically, I am supporting legislation that would put the responsibility of redrawing Congressional and legislative district maps in the hands of a non-partisan advisory council and the [LEGISLATIVE BUREAUCRATIC] with final approval voted on by the legislature. We must work together to restore the public trust in good government.]

[IF NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING ARGUMENT: I am supporting legislation that would put the responsibility of redrawing Congressional and legislative district maps in the hands of a non-partisan advisory council and the [LEGISLATIVE BUREAUCRATIC OFFICE] with final approval voted on by the legislature. [STATE] needs nonpartisan redistricting reform because the 2011 redistricting process marked a serious break in good government, with legislators manipulating district boundaries to secure their re-election and insulate themselves from voters. Meanwhile, this self-serving process cost \$[NUMBER BETWEEN 1 AND 5] million, most of which went to a private law firm that was hired to draw the maps and then destroyed data to cover their tracks.

To restore public trust in the redistricting process, the legislation I am supporting legislation would move [STATE] to a redistricting process similar to that in Iowa, which spends approximately \$1,000 every ten years on redistricting.

Newspaper boards and local leaders statewide have strongly endorsed non-partisan redistricting and I hope that this important responsibility is in the hands of an independent, non-partisan group before the next redistricting cycle. All [STATE RESIDENT'S] votes should be counted equally.]

[IF PENSIONS DIRECT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers. I believe that [STATE] workers should have access to a system that supports them during retirement. This new system would have a positive impact on the lives of many [STATE] residents and their families.]

[IF PENSIONS ARGUMENT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers.

[STATE] boasts one of the best pension systems in the nation for government workers. For decades, [STATE] state employees have relied on the [STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM] pension for their livelihood after retiring. The fund is solvent and often modeled by other states with failing systems. Because this fund for public workers has been so successful, I support the creation of a similar state-administered retirement plan for private workers.

I also support the creation of a [STATE] system because everyone who works hard should be able to look forward to a stable retirement, regardless of if they are a public or private worker. Right now, less than one-half of Americans have any retirement assets at all, and financial insecurity in retirement is all too common for our seniors. Establishing a [STATE SYSTEM] for private sector workers would make sure that everyone who works hard can look forward to a stable retirement.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: As your representative, I will keep fighting for policies that benefit [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] middle-class families. I will continue to advocate for legislation that benefits our public schools and children, create quality jobs, and protect our state's natural resources.

I always enjoy receiving input from my constituents on issues that are important to them, as well as for assistance with access to government services. Constituents reach out to me on a variety of topics, including bills before the legislature, issues with state agencies, and requests for state highway maps. I work hard to make sure I am available to you as a resource to navigate state government.]

As your state representative, I have always done my best to fight for policies that help [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT]. This fall I worked with [OTHER PARTY] colleagues to get a tax credit bill passed which will help revitalize downtown [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] by creating economic opportunities to rehabilitate historic buildings.

If I can ever be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact me. You can reach me [LEGISLATOR'S PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL].

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator C

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

DATE

Dear [FIRST NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR'S FULL NAME], and I am honored to represent you in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. [ONE SENTENCE DESCRIBING WHERE THE LEGISLATOR WENT TO SCHOOL AND WORKED]. I have lived in [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] with my family for more than two decades.

I'm writing to tell you about what I have been working on in [CAPITAL CITY OF STATE].

[IF PENSIONS DIRECT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers. I believe that [STATE] workers should have access to a system that supports them during retirement. This new system would have a positive impact on the lives of many [STATE] residents and their families.]

[IF PENSIONS ARGUMENT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers.

[STATE] boasts one of the best pension systems in the nation for government workers. For decades, [STATE] state employees have relied on the [STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM] pension for their livelihood after retiring. The fund is solvent and often modeled by other states with failing systems. Because this fund for public workers has been so successful, I support the creation of a similar state-administered retirement plan for private workers.

I also support the creation of a [STATE] system because everyone who works hard should be able to look forward to a stable retirement, regardless of if they are a public or private worker. Right now, less than one-half of Americans have any retirement assets at all, and financial insecurity in retirement is all too common for our seniors. Establishing a [STATE SYSTEM] for private sector workers would make sure that everyone who works hard can look forward to a stable retirement.]

[IF DRUG BILL DIRECT: I do not believe pregnant women should be automatically placed in state custody without access to a lawyer if they are suspected of using drugs.

I am proud to be the lead author on the [WOMEN'S RIGHTS BILL]. A key aspect of this

package would ensure that pregnant women alleged to have used drugs have a right to counsel before being detained by the state. I believe this legislation is necessary to protect the rights of pregnant women.]

[IF DRUG BILL ARGUMENT: I do not believe pregnant women should be automatically placed in state custody without access to a lawyer if they are suspected of using drugs.

If the state suspects that an individual in [STATE] is using drugs, they have the right to consult a lawyer before they are detained, just like for any other crime. But if pregnant women are suspected of using drugs, they can be automatically placed in state custody. Pregnant women deserve the same legal protections as everyone else. Our current laws discriminate against pregnant women. That is why I am a lead author of the [WOMEN'S RIGHTS BILL].

Not only is current law unfair, it hurts pregnant women and their children. I authored this bill after I learned about a pregnant woman who was not provided counsel and was ordered to a rehabilitation facility for [NUMBER BETWEEN 50 AND 100] days without adequate health or prenatal care. Keeping pregnant women in state custody without access to an attorney and without adequate health care hurts them and their babies.]

[IF PROPERTY TAXES DIRECT: I think local governments should be allowed to raise property taxes. Under current state law many local governments are not allowed to raise property tax rates any further. Quality public schools and police and fire protection are the epitome of good government. I support allowing local governments and school boards to raise taxes to fund such services.]

[IF PROPERTY TAXES ARGUMENT: I think local governments should be allowed to raise property taxes. Under current state law many local governments are not allowed to raise property tax rates any further.

Quality public schools and police and fire protection are the epitome of good government. Local governments provide these important services, but right now many local governments are facing budgetary difficulties. If communities decide that it is right for them to raise taxes to make sure these services are funded, they should be allowed to do so. Unfortunately, right now the state forces all communities into a one-size-fits-all system.

The current freeze was put into place to help during the worst of the economic recession. While times are still hard, it is important that we give local communities the flexibility to make their own decisions about proper tax levels for themselves. Allowing local governments to raise property taxes will give local communities the flexibility they need to balance their priorities. While many local governments will choose not to increase taxes, lifting the across the board property tax levy will allow communities the flexibility to determine what is best for them and fund important services.]

[IF LICENSES DIRECT: I support [BILL NUMBER], which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license, which is currently prohibited. This bill fully complies with federal anti-terror provisions, as it would be an identification card only, and would

not allow recipients to use the card to board an airplane or access a federal facility.]

[IF LICENSES ARGUMENT: I support [BILL NUMBER], which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license, which is currently prohibited. Making sure that everyone who drives knows the rules of the road and holds auto insurance is socially and fiscally responsible.

First, this issue is important for [STATE] residents because drivers who are licensed are more likely to have auto insurance, which gives protection to all drivers in case of an accident. If undocumented immigrants are not allowed to obtain a driver's license, they are less likely to get auto insurance, making driving more dangerous for everyone.

Additionally, giving undocumented immigrants the ability to obtain a driver's license will increase state revenue. There is no reason why a person who is contributing to our society and is a qualified driver should not be able to utilize our roads.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: During the past [NUMBER] years in the legislature, I have worked diligently to support policies important to our community. Ours is the most active constituency in the state, and I am proud of the amount of contact I have had with my [NAME OF CITY] community. This session, I held 18 'office hours' at local coffee shops, visited five local neighborhood associations, was a guest speaker for 19 local organizations, and responded to over 5,000 contacts from over 2,000 constituents.

While I introduced more than four dozen bills into the legislature this year, my crowning achievement has been and will always be standing up for your interests and advocating for, and hopefully creating, a government that is fair, open and truly embraces democratic principles.]

During the past three years in the Legislature, I have worked diligently to support policies important to our community. While I have introduced more than three dozen bills into the legislature this year, my crowning achievement has been and will always be standing up for your interests and advocating for, and hopefully creating, a government that is fair, open and truly embraces democratic principles.

If you have any questions or comments about your state government, or if I can ever be of assistance to you on a state-related matter, please feel free to call or email me.

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator D

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]

[PICTURE OF LEGISLATOR]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR'S NAME] and I am your representative in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. I was elected in [YEAR] to serve you and the other constituents of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]. Before being elected to the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER], I worked for the [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] School District as a teacher. I was born and raised in [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] and currently live on the east side with my [DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY].

I want you to know how I have been working for you in [CAPITOL CITY] and [AREA IN STATE].

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHERS DIRECT]: I am opposing the further expansion of private school vouchers in [STATE]. Vouchers are the wrong choice for our students and communities. Vouchers have hurt educational opportunities for the majority of [STATE] students and do not deliver a better education. Our responsibility is to provide high quality public education for every child, not to take resources away from neighborhood schools.]

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHERS ARGUMENT]: I am opposing the further expansion of private school vouchers in [STATE]. The school voucher program in [A MAJOR CITY] has experimented with [STATE'S] children's futures for the past [LARGE NUMBER] years, sending tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer funds to unaccountable voucher schools while failing to improve overall academic achievement. [ONE VOUCHER SCHOOL IN LARGE CITY], which closed in the dead of night late last year, is just one recent example of a problematic voucher school. [STATE] taxpayers lost [SINGLE DIGIT NUMBER] million tax dollars to enroll [SMALL NUMBER] children in [ONE VOUCHER SCHOOL], where only one child scored proficient in math or reading.

Meanwhile, our local public schools are changing and innovating to meet the needs of 21st century students, but the state has failed to support them as taxpayer funds have been redirected to voucher schools. In the 2014-15 budget, we spent [LARGE AMOUNT] on voucher schools, while our public schools are now operating at a [EVEN LARGER AMOUNT] billion deficit compared to 2010. Taking resources away our public schools and the [LARGE NUMBER] children educated there abandons [STATE'S] constitutional responsibility to ensure that all children have access to high quality educational opportunities.]

[IF NONPARTIAN REDISTRICTING DIRECT]: I am working to make the legislative redistricting process nonpartisan and put a neutral agency in charge of drawing boundaries for legislative districts instead of political parties. Specifically, I have proposed legislation that would put the responsibility of redrawing Congressional and legislative district maps in the hands of a non-partisan advisory council and the [LEGISLATIVE BUREAUCRATIC OFFICE] with final approval voted on by the legislature. We must restore the public trust in good government.]

[IF NONPARTIAN REDISTRICTING ARGUMENT]: I am working to make the legislative redistricting process nonpartisan and put a neutral agency in charge of drawing boundaries for legislative districts instead of political parties. [STATE] needs nonpartisan redistricting reform because the 2011 redistricting process marked a serious break in good government, with legislators manipulating district boundaries to secure their re-election and insulate themselves from voters. Meanwhile, this self-serving process cost taxpayers [SINGLE DIGIT NUMBER] million, most of which went to a private law firm to draw the maps that destroyed data to cover their tracks.

The legislation I have proposed would move [STATE] to a redistricting process similar to that in Iowa, which spends approximately \$1,000 every ten years on redistricting. This bill would put the responsibility of redrawing Congressional and legislative district maps in the hands of a non-partisan advisory council and the [LEGISLATIVE BUREAUCRATIC OFFICE] with final approval voted on by the legislature.

Newspaper boards and local leaders statewide have strongly endorsed non-partisan redistricting and I hope that this important responsibility is in the hands of an accountable, non-partisan group before the next redistricting cycle. All [STATE RESIDENTS'] votes should be counted equally.]

[IF BUDGET SURPLUS DIRECT]: [STATE] has recently projected a surplus for 2014 of almost [LARGE NUMBER] million. **I believe should use the surplus to pay down our debt and make investments in important areas: education, healthcare, local government, and infrastructure. I oppose spending the entire surplus on income tax cuts.** We should be funding important services before cutting taxes for the wealthy.]

[IF BUDGET SURPLUS ARGUMENT]: [STATE] has recently projected a surplus for 2014 of almost [LARGE NUMBER] million. **I believe should use the surplus to pay down our debt and make investments in important areas: education, healthcare, local government, and infrastructure. I oppose spending the entire surplus on income tax cuts.**

Unfortunately, the [STATE LEGISLATURE] plans to spend these surplus funds on tax cuts that will put us back in debt and add to the deficit. Moreover, this plan will unfairly benefit the wealthy while failing to help average [STATE RESIDENTS] make ends meet. According to an analysis by the [STATE] Budget Project, the [PERCENTAGE] of [STATE RESIDENTS] who make [SMALLISH AMOUNT] or less get less than a \$[SMALL TWO-DIGIT NUMBER] yearly cut, or less than a dollar per week. However, the richest [SMALL PERCENTAGE]% of [STATE RESIDENTS], would receive [NEARLY 50]% of the benefits.

My preferred plan would use the surplus to invest in worker training, maintain the Alternative Minimum Tax that prevents the affluent from paying no tax, and double our infusion into the state's rainy day fund. This is fiscally responsible: it significantly reduces our deficit while making investments in areas that are proven to strengthen our economy in the long-term. [STATE RESIDENTS] work hard and are careful with our resources. We should invest our surplus in long term priorities that will make [STATE] stronger in the long term, not just give our tax dollars away to the wealthy.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE DIRECT: I support increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and requiring it to continue increasing with the cost of living. The time has arrived for a minimum wage increase. This raise will increase wages for thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS]. I also believe we should require that [STATE'S] minimum wage continues to keep pace with inflation into the future.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE ARGUMENT: I support increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and requiring it to continue increasing with the cost of living. The minimum wage was never meant to be a stagnant bottom floor, but was intended to represent a fair wage for honest work. However, if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would already be over \$10 per hour.

It is estimated that there are more than [LARGE NUMBER] [STATE] workers who would see their wages increase to \$10.10 per hour if this law were passed. Research indicates that gradually increasing the minimum wage will decrease poverty, increase consumer demand in our economy, and reduce reliance on public assistance. As a tried and true anti-poverty tool, a fair minimum wage would improve the lives of thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS] and empower them to support their families without government assistance. We should pass this increase.

I also believe we should require that [STATE'S] minimum wage continues to keep pace with inflation into the future. This would protect workers and their families from the partisan politics that all too often fail to take action.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: It has been [NUMBER OF YEARS] since you honored me with the opportunity to serve the people of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY]. I take this responsibility seriously and strive to exceed your expectations every day. As your representative, I am committed to creating opportunities for our middle class families. I will continue to advocate for policies that create family supporting jobs, invest in our public schools and children, and improve access to quality affordable healthcare.

It has been one year since you honored me with the opportunity to serve the people of the [DISTRICT NUMBER] District in the [STATE] [LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. I take this responsibility seriously and strive to exceed your expectations every day. As your representative, I am committed to creating opportunities for our middle class families. I will continue to advocate for policies that create family supporting jobs, invest in our public schools and children, and improve access to quality affordable healthcare.]

Additionally, I have been doing my best to advance policies that help [DISTRICT COUNTY] County. I was a co-sponsor of legislation that will help revitalize downtown [MAIN CITY IN DISTRICT] by extending the [AREA IN MAIN CITY] district. I have supported the expansion of historic tax credits to create more opportunities to rehabilitate buildings like the [THREE HISTORIC BUILDINGS]. And I authored [THE NAME OF A BILL] to make capital available to startup businesses and established small businesses looking to grow jobs in [STATE].

Please write my office if you have any concerns about state government. Since being sworn

into office, I have received over 1,000 contacts from citizens of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] regarding the issues that directly affect our community. I always enjoy receiving input from my constituents on the issues that are important to you. Together, we will move our state forward.

It's an honor to serve you and I welcome your feedback. If you have any questions or comments about your state government, or if I can ever be of assistance, please feel free to call or email me.

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator E

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR'S NAME] and I am your representative in the [STATE] State Assembly. I was elected to the [STATE] State Assembly in 2012 to represent the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER], which encompasses most of the city of [MAJOR CITY]. Immediately prior to being elected to the state legislature, I worked for the [EMPLOYER IN THE AREA]. I was born and raised in [MAIN CITY IN THE DISTRICT] and currently live on the west side with [DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY]. It's a tremendous honor to serve you and I want you to know that I'm fighting for you in [STATE CAPITOL].

[IF PENSIONS DIRECT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers. I believe that [STATE] workers should have access to a system that supports them during retirement. This new system would have a positive impact on the lives of many [STATE] residents and their families.]

[IF PENSION ARGUMENT: I am supporting the creation of a state-administered retirement plan open to all [STATE] workers. Less than half of Americans own any retirement assets at all. [STATE] workers and their families shouldn't have to worry about if they'll be financially secure when they retire. Widespread retirement insecurity could also create a serious drain on public assistance programs if left unaddressed.

The new system I am supporting would mirror the popular, successful, and fully-funded [STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM] available to elected officials and public employees. By establishing a plan managed by the same organization that administers one of the most successful pension plans in the nation, workers could plan for a more secure future and the state could have fewer seniors

reliant on public programs.]

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHERS DIRECT: I am opposing the further expansion of private school vouchers in [STATE]. I believe school vouchers are the wrong choice for our students and communities. Special interest lobbyists and their corporate backers have been vigorously supporting these voucher schools, which are not the right way to expand opportunities for our children.]

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHERS ARGUMENT: I am opposing the further expansion of private school vouchers in [STATE]. The school voucher program in [A LARGE CITY] has been a failed experiment that has sent millions of dollars of taxpayer funds to unaccountable voucher schools while failing to improve academic achievement. Taking funds from our public schools and redirecting them to these unaccountable voucher schools is wrong.

Moreover, the [AREA] Public Schools are innovating to meet the needs of 21st century students. Those efforts should be supported, not undercut with a scheme to redirect our tax dollars to unaccountable private schools.]

[IF PREGNANCY PROTECTIONS DIRECT: I am supporting legislation requiring employers to make accommodations for pregnant women who want to continue working. I believe this legislation would help mothers and babies and protect [STATE] families. Pregnant women deserve these changes to our employment laws. This legislation has broad support and I am proud to be sponsoring it.]

[IF PREGNANCY PROTECTIONS ARGUMENT: I am supporting legislation requiring employers to make accommodations for pregnant women who want to continue working. [STATE] women should not be subject to discrimination because they want to have children. It is also vitally important for the health of women and their babies that women can care for themselves and their babies while staying in the workforce if they wish. The bill accomplishes these protections without burdening their employers.

This legislation has broad support, including from the [SEVERAL DIFFERENT GROUPS INCLUDING FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS], and I am proud to be sponsoring it.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE DIRECT: I am supporting increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and indexing it to increases in the cost of living. I believe the time has arrived when the minimum wage should be raised. This minimum wage increase would increase wages for thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS]. I also believe we should require that [STATE'S] minimum wage continues to keep pace with inflation into the future.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE ARGUMENT: I am supporting increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and indexing it to increases in the cost of living. The minimum wage was never meant to be a stagnant bottom floor, but was intended to represent a fair wage for honest work. However, if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would already be over \$10 per hour.

It is estimated that there are about [LARGE NUMBER] [STATE] workers who would see their wages increase to \$10.10 per hour if this law were passed. Research indicates that gradually increasing the minimum wage will decrease poverty, spur the economy, and reduce reliance on public assistance. As a tried-and-true anti-poverty tool, a fair minimum wage would improve the lives of thousands of working [STATE RESIDENTS] and empower them to support their families without government assistance.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: As your representative, I am committed to fighting for [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] middle class families. I will continue to advocate for policies that invest in our public schools and children, create quality jobs and spur income growth, and protect our state's natural resources. I also work hard to make sure that I am available to you as a resource to navigate your state government. Since being sworn into office, I have received over 1,000 contacts from citizens of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] regarding the issues that directly affect our community.]

Additionally, I have been doing my best to advance policies that help [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT]. Last fall I supported a property tax relief plan that sent over [A LARGE NUMBER] to [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] school district taxpayers. I was a co-sponsor of legislation that will help revitalize downtown [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] by creating more opportunities to rehabilitate historic buildings like [AN EXAMPLE IN THE DISTRICT]. And I supported policies to make funding more readily accessible to new, startup businesses in [STATE].

It has been almost two years since you honored me with the opportunity to serve the people of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] in the [STATE'S LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. I take this responsibility seriously and strive to exceed your expectations every day.

If you have any questions or comments about your state government, or if I can ever be of assistance to you, please feel free to call or email me.

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator F

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

[DATE]

Dear [NAME],

My name is [FULL NAME] and I am your representative in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]. I was first elected in [ELECTION HISTORY, INCLUDING WHEN REELECTED]. I am proud to represent the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER], which encompasses most of the [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT]. I am a fifth-generation resident of [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] and a graduate of [HIGH SCHOOL IN DISTRICT]. I live in [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] with my [DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY].

I want to let you know that I'm working hard for you in the [STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER].

[IF DRIVER'S LICENSES DIRECT: I am supporting allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses in the state of [STATE]. Right now, undocumented immigrants are not allowed to obtain driver's licenses. I believe all people driving on [STATE] roads, including undocumented individuals, should have driver's licenses. That means undocumented individuals should be able to obtain driver's licenses too.]

[IF DRIVER'S LICENSES ARGUMENT: I am supporting allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses in the state of [STATE]. Having unlicensed, untrained motorists on [STATE'S] roadways makes all of us less safe. Making sure that everyone gets the proper training and licenses before they get behind the wheel makes driving safer for everyone. But if people are not allowed to apply for [STATE] driver's licenses because of their immigration status, more untrained and unlicensed motorists will populate our roads.

Motorists who have driver's licenses are also less likely to make rash decisions on the road. Under current law, undocumented immigrants fear serious penalties if they pull over after an accident or are stopped by state police, because they cannot have valid driver's licenses. We should not put the safety of [STATE] police officers and drivers in jeopardy because politicians in Washington, DC are struggling to address national immigration policy.]

[IF RAIL EXPANSION DIRECT: I am supporting the construction of a commuter rail line in [DISTRICT'S AREA]. Building a commuter rail corridor in [DISTRICT'S AREA] will connect [SEVERAL MAJOR CITIES WITHIN 150 MILES]. I strongly believe that our community will benefit tremendously from the creation of a strong transportation system.]

[IF RAIL EXPANSION ARGUMENT: I am supporting the construction of a commuter rail line in [DISTRICT'S AREA]. [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] would benefit in numerous ways from a commuter rail system connecting [SEVERAL MAJOR CITIES WITHIN 150 MILES]. The line would provide [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] residents with long sought-after connectivity to [MAJOR CITIES], making it much easier for residents to travel. One of the best things [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] can do economically is to better connect with [MAJOR CITIES].

I strongly believe that our community will benefit tremendously from the creation of a diversified, strong transportation system. Business leaders in our region believe this commuter line will be a very important tool for recruiting and retaining employees in our area. [THE RAIL LINE] will provide access to [LOTS OF JOBS IN MAJOR CITIES], helping to ensure our long-

term economic success and vitality.]

[IF VOTER ID DIRECT: I am opposing requiring voters to present photo identification as a requirement for voting. Every American's right to vote is fundamental and I staunchly oppose any restrictions on that right.]

[IF VOTER ID ARGUMENT: I am opposing requiring voters to present photo identification as a requirement for voting. Our democracy is stronger when more people vote. We should be focused on making it easier for every citizen to vote, and not try to make it more difficult for anyone to vote. Unfortunately, voter ID laws make it more difficult for thousands of citizens to vote, especially senior citizens and working people who are less likely to carry up-to-date identification.

Supporters of voter ID laws say they limit voter fraud. However, there has not been any evidence of voter fraud in [STATE]. Instead, these laws are a transparent, self-interested political tactic: voter ID laws have tended to disproportionately suppress voting among those who do not vote for authors of these laws. Legislators should not try to win elections because they have made it more difficult for their opponents to vote, but should earn the people's trust and support honestly.

Voting is a sacred right afforded to all citizens in the Constitution. Too many generations of Americans have fought for the right to vote for it to be sacrificed for political gain.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE DIRECT: I am supporting increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and indexing it to increases in the cost of living. I believe the time has arrived when the minimum wage should be raised. This minimum wage increase would increase wages for approximately [LARGE NUMBER] working [STATE RESIDENTS].]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE ARGUMENT: I am supporting increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 over the next two years and indexing it to increases in the cost of living. The minimum wage was never meant to be a stagnant bottom floor, but was intended to represent a fair wage for honest work. However, if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would already be over \$10 per hour. People making minimum wage work just as hard now as they did years ago. It's time to update our laws and make sure that hard work pays fairly again.

It is estimated that there are about [LARGE NUMBER] [STATE] workers who would see their wages increase if the minimum wage was raised to \$10.10. As a tried-and-true anti-poverty tool, a fair minimum wage would improve the lives of these working [STATE RESIDENTS] and their communities, and make workers less dependent on government assistance.

Research also indicates that increasing the minimum wage will decrease poverty, create [LARGE NUMBER] jobs, increase economic activity in our state by [LARGE NUMBER] million, and reduce reliance on public assistance.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: I always enjoy receiving input from my constituents on issues that are important to them. Constituents like you reach out to me on a variety of topics important to your life and our community. You should always feel free to contact me to express your point of view.

I also work hard to make sure I am available to you as a resource to navigate state government. If you need assistance with filing a claim for unemployment insurance, access to health care, or help accessing any state government agency, I am here to assist you. I also often have the privilege to speak at schools about public service.]

I have always done my best to fight for policies that benefit [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT]. This fall I successfully worked with Republican colleagues to get a historic tax credit bill passed which will help revitalize downtown [MAJOR CITY IN DISTRICT] by creating opportunities to rehabilitate historic downtown buildings.

If I can ever be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact me [PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL]. I frequently update my website and send out E-Newsletters as a way of keeping you informed about developments at the Capitol. If you would like to be added to my E-Newsletter list, just send me an e-mail at [EMAIL].

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator G

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [NAME],

My name is [LEGISLATOR NAME] and I have the privilege of serving you in the [STATE] State Legislature as the Representative from the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]. The [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] includes many of [CITY IN DISTRICT] north and west side neighborhoods and I am proud to own my home right in the heart of the district, in [NAME OF NEIGHBORHOOD]. This year I will finish my first term in office, a job that I love deeply and have been honored to have.

It's a tremendous honor to serve you and I want you to know that I'm fighting for you in [STATE CAPITOL]. You have a right to know where your elected representatives stand on the important issues of the day. That is why I try to send out these letters on a regular basis.

[IF STATE TUITION DIRECT: I am supporting a proposal allowing undocumented immigrants who came to [STATE] as children and have graduated from our high schools to be eligible for in-state college tuition rates. This proposal would require state universities to treat undocumented [STATE] children who are [STATE] high school graduates similarly to documented [STATE] children who are [STATE] high school graduates. Undocumented [STATE] children will go through the same application process and pay the same fees.]

[IF STATE TUITION ARGUMENT: I am supporting a proposal allowing undocumented immigrants who came to [STATE] as children and have graduated from our high schools to be eligible for in-state college tuition rates. Our whole community benefits when more young people attend college - college degrees empower students to be productive contributors to society. Our community cannot thrive if we place an achievement ceiling on young people, no matter who they are, and including if their parents brought them here as children.

Helping young people get college degrees also makes them less likely to become dependent on the state for social services. Thus, helping undocumented students have an equal shot at getting a college degree will actually save the state money in the long term. If we do not invest in helping these students attend college, we may face even higher costs later in social services and crime control.

Helping undocumented students attend college is also about fairness. Children should not be denied the chance to attend college because their parents brought them here through no fault of their own. The proposal simply states that if accepted, a student who immigrated to [STATE] as a child will pay the same for college as a student born in [STATE].

To be clear, under this proposal all students must earn their spot in the college, and would get no advantage over other applicants or extra financial aid. These are children who have grown up in our community and who call [STATE] home and they would receive the same treatment.]

[IF MARIJUANA PENALTIES DIRECT: I am supporting a proposal that reduces criminal penalties for marijuana possession. Right now, people face very high penalties for possessing even small amounts of marijuana. We should change these laws so that people don't pay such stiff penalties for simply possessing marijuana. To be clear, I do not support changes to penalties for drug dealers or more dangerous drugs. But in [STATE], our laws related to possession of marijuana should be reformed or repealed.]

[IF MARIJUANA PENALTIES ARGUMENT: I am supporting a proposal that reduces criminal penalties for marijuana possession. Under current [STATE] law, penalties for possessing marijuana are stiffer than those for drunk driving, including possible felony convictions. This felon status has several very serious consequences, including often preventing military service and keeping people from getting jobs. [STATE RESIDENTS] who are caught using marijuana just once shouldn't have to pay penalties this severe while drunk drivers do not.

Changing our marijuana possession laws will also save significant resources for [STATE] taxpayers. The costs of arresting, prosecuting, and incarcerating even one person are enormous. I support focusing our resources on arresting, prosecuting and incarcerating violent, dangerous

criminals. Too much of our justice system's focus and resources are spent on nonviolent criminals, especially marijuana possessors.

To be clear, I do not support changes to penalties for drug dealers or more dangerous drugs. But in [STATE] our laws for possession of marijuana should be reformed or repealed.]

[IF GAS TAX DIRECT: I am supporting a proposal that would raise the [STATE] gas tax to fund the expansion of our highways and public transit. New road construction should not rely on money from our state's general fund. Under this proposal, the money from a gas tax would cover those costs instead.]

[IF GAS TAX ARGUMENT: I am supporting a proposal that would raise the [STATE] gas tax to fund the expansion of our highways and public transit. No one likes paying more at the pump, but the state must take in taxes to pay for our highways and roads from somewhere. A gas tax is a good way to fund road projects while charging those who use roads the most for driving, promoting public transportation, and encouraging conservation.

Funding highways with a gas tax means that the people and corporations who use our roadways the most also pitch in the most for their upkeep and expansion. A gas tax also encourages conservation, meaning the state may be able to save money on highway expansion projects.

Our current system of highway funding is also putting a strain on other important state priorities. In the last state budget, for example, almost [A LARGE NUMBER] dollars were borrowed to pay for major highway expansion projects. Future budgets must account for this debt, and the state must pay interest on these loans into the future. If we reduce the demand for highways by using a gas tax, there will be more state funds for other important projects and for cutting other taxes.

And all [STATE RESIDENTS] would benefit if public transit had increased demand and better funding. By starving public transportation, we force more cars onto [STATE] roads, creating traffic for everyone, and stress the state highway budget even more. A gas tax can help us break this cycle.]

[IF EXPUNGEMENT DIRECT: I am supporting a proposal allowing people convicted of minor crimes to erase their criminal records. There must be consequences for breaking the law. But for people that commit minor crimes, there should be a chance to erase their conviction as they age away from having engaged in criminal behavior.]

[IF EXPUNGEMENT ARGUMENT: I am supporting a proposal allowing people convicted of minor crimes to erase their criminal records. The consequences of a criminal conviction can be severe and life-long, even when for a minor crime committed long ago. Felons lose the right to vote during supervision and felony drug convictions may bar someone from serving in the Armed Services, receiving help for housing, and receiving federal student loans for college. Finally, and most importantly, a felony conviction can often prevent a job applicant from being hired - [STATE] law allows an employer to ask about prior felony convictions and use a conviction against the applicant.

This policy hurts all of us. Without stable, adequate employment, people can be forced to draw on social assistance or revert to a life of further crime. Removing outdated, minor convictions would allow [NUMBER] in [CITY IN DISTRICT] to move more freely and get paying jobs, which would reduce state spending and may ultimately reduce the crime rate.

The ability to erase a conviction for a minor crime would have a major positive impact on much of [CITY IN DISTRICT]. Almost everyone has a family member that has been in trouble with the law and I am no exception. Often when we view the criminal conviction of a loved one, we are able to see the good in that person. I've heard many of my relatives say, 'he's really a good person' or 'he's trying to get on track and just needs a break' when talking about a relative with a criminal conviction. For our loved ones, and [LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE CITY IN DISTRICT] that are unemployed or underemployed because of minor criminal convictions they committed long ago, there should be a path to redemption.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: One of the most important duties that I have as your Representative is serving constituents. **I am happy to assist with any issues that may arise with state government.** This may be as simple as stating an opinion on pending legislation or as serious as an issue with taxes or professional licensing.

I am happy to help with any issue that you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any question you may have. I hope to be the best resource I can be and pledge to assist in every way I can to help resolve any issue you may have.]

Please know that I value your opinion and encourage you to continue to weigh in on issues at the state level. Knowing the opinions and concerns of constituents is a principle that guides my decision-making in office. Thank you for adding your voice to our state's governance.

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME] [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Legislator H

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [NAME],

As your State Representative, I have been travelling around our community knocking on doors and talking with you, my constituents. Overwhelmingly, I have heard from people who want to make sure that our voices and opinions are heard in [STATE CAPITOL]. The people of our community care very deeply about this state and I continue to be honored to give voice to your thoughts in the Assembly. You have a right to know where your elected representatives stand on

the important issues of the day. That is why I try to send out these letters on a regular basis.

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHER DIRECT]: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the expansion of the private school voucher program. **I oppose further private school vouchers in [STATE].**

School vouchers are the wrong choice for our students and communities. Special interest lobbyists have been vigorously supporting these voucher schools, which are not the right way to expand opportunities for our children.]

[IF SCHOOL VOUCHER ARGUMENT]: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the expansion of the private school voucher program. **I oppose further private school vouchers in [STATE].**

I would like to explain my position because this is such an important issue. Public schools have proven time and time again that with proper funding they are able to provide incredible educational opportunities for children in [STATE]. But by taking that funding away and putting it into private voucher schools that are sometimes not even in our community, we are crippling the next generation of students whose families count on quality public education.

In fact, the expansion of vouchers took money away from our public schools right after they had suffered a statewide cut of over [LARGE NUMBER] in the last state budget alone. Our public schools have been the basis of our prosperity for generations, and their budgets should not be severely cut just to help a few families pay for private education.

Despite this influx of funds, voucher schools have not lived up to their promise. Vouchers were promised to help low income families who wouldn't otherwise be able to send their children to private schools get access to a better education. However, we now know that most of the students who have applied for voucher (taxpayer) money were already in private schools the year prior.

There is a place for both private and public schools in our community. However, I do not believe our property taxpayers can afford to pay for both.]

[IF YOUNG OFFENDERS DIRECT]: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the treatment of 17 year olds who commit crimes. **I believe that 17 year old, first-time, non-violent offenders should be dealt with by the juvenile justice system instead of the adult system.** There must be consequences for breaking the law. Those consequences must, however, be proportionate and just for the crime committed. For 17 year old, non-violent, first-time offenders, the juvenile system is best situated to help their needs.]

[IF YOUNG OFFENDERS ARGUMENT]: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the treatment of 17 year olds who commit crimes. **I believe that 17 year old, first-time, non-violent offenders should be dealt with by the juvenile justice system instead of the adult system.**

Currently, 17-year olds are tried in the adult justice system as a way to appear 'tough on crime,'

even if they are first-time offending, non-violent teenagers. This system was designed to deal with the worst offenders in our society and was not equipped to handle this influx of children - and this system clearly is not working for these children. The rates at which these teens return to prison are staggering, especially compared to the many other states where 17 year olds are kept in the juvenile justice system. Instead of teaching these children that crime does not pay, it has just introduced them to being convicts.

We now have the opportunity to return certain 17 year olds to the juvenile justice system, which is better equipped to handle children's needs, and where they belong. Legislation in the Assembly would require that first-time, non-violent teens will be able to go back to the system that was specifically designed to meet their needs and help them learn to become productive members of society. Violent and/or repeat offenders will continue to stay in the adult criminal justice system. This bill will be up for a vote in the Assembly soon and has garnered strong bipartisan support.

With millions of dollars being spent on punishment and no end in sight for the rising numbers of inmates, it is time we make a practical and thoughtful change to the system. We should lock up juveniles who are dangerous, but we should use more effective means of dealing with juveniles who are not. It's not a question of being tough on crime. It's about being smart on crime.]

[IF MEDICAL MARIJUANA DIRECT: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the legalization of marijuana strictly for medical purposes. Laws on medical marijuana vary widely across states. Many states ban marijuana altogether, but sixteen states make exceptions for medical marijuana. Two states, Colorado and Washington, even allow recreational use. Here in [STATE], any use of marijuana is currently prohibited. **I support changing our laws to allow doctors - and only doctors - to prescribe marijuana to alleviate suffering.]**

[IF MEDICAL MARIJUANA ARGUMENT: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is the legalization of marijuana strictly for medical purposes. Because this issue has gotten a lot of attention recently, I would like to outline my position. **I support changing our laws to allow doctors - and only doctors - to prescribe marijuana to alleviate suffering.** Legislation was recently introduced to allow doctors to prescribe carefully regulated medical marijuana in [STATE]. Known as [HISTORY FOR NAME OF BILL].

After seeing a report on CNN by Doctor Sanjay Gupta, I realized that there are very strong arguments to be made in favor of legalizing medical marijuana for some seriously ill patients. Dr. Gupta had previously opposed medical marijuana, but after he spoke with people whose only form of relief from debilitating pain was cannabis, he began to understand that this a serious medical issue. With such a prominent medical professional taking a public stance in support of this issue, I thought it was a good time for us to take a second look at our policies as well.

No person should be forced to suffer tormenting pain when there is another option available. Narcotic pain relievers that are currently on the market often cause serious side-effects for many people, including absolute dependence, organ failure, and poor quality of life. Carefully regulated medicinal marijuana should be on the table for doctors to give their most desperate patients.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE DIRECT: You have a right to know where your elected representatives stand on the important issues of the day. That is why I try to send out these letters on a regular basis. One of the issues I am asked about frequently is how we can strengthen [STATE'S] economy. Even though the Great Recession has officially ended, many of our workers and their families are struggling. In an effort to help this situation, **I support raising the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 per hour and requiring it to keep pace with inflation into the future.** With our stagnant economy, it is obvious that things cannot stay the same. People who are working hard at one or more jobs are simply not making enough money. It is time we update this wage so that it reflects changing economic conditions.]

[IF MINIMUM WAGE ARGUMENT: One of the issues I am asked about frequently is how we can strengthen [STATE'S] economy. Even though the Great Recession has officially ended, many of our workers and their families are struggling. Whether it is a matter of putting a healthy meal on the table or buying their children pens and pencils, people simply do not make enough money to become active players in our state economy. Because of this, economic recovery is taking a lot longer than anyone had ever imagined and we in the Legislature are racing to consider any and all options to get people back on their feet.

In an effort to help this situation, **I support raising the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10.10 per hour and requiring it to keep pace with inflation into the future.** A wage that is too high would hurt small businesses, but without money to buy what they need, workers and their families would be forced to leave the state in search of better conditions. So we put together a compromise. We support indexing the minimum wage rate to inflation so that when the times get tough the minimum wage will go up to keep the balance.

With our stagnant economy, it is obvious that things cannot stay the same. People who are working hard at one or more jobs are simply not making enough money. It is time we update this wage so that it reflects changing economic conditions. This type of change has been a long time coming as well. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, it would have already been well over \$10 per hour. It only makes sense that we keep this rate updated. \$10.10 will make a huge difference for a lot of [STATE RESIDENTS] and will definitely put our state back on the right track.]

[IF PLACEBO LETTER: As I write this, the Legislature is just wrapping up the 2013-2014 Legislative session. After nearly four years in office, I have witnessed some of the most trying times to face our state in recent memory. While I am disappointed that so many of the issues that were important to my constituents were not addressed this session, such as the regulation of frac sand mining, protecting our groundwater, and increasing funds to our technical colleges to help with job creation, I am hopeful for the future. There is still much work to be done to help our state's economy recover and to get hardworking [STATE RESIDENTS] back on their feet. I am proud to represent the people of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIER] in [STATE CAPITOL] and to be a voice for the entire [REGION].]

My office is always open if you have any questions or concerns about any issue before the State Legislature. Every day, I answer dozens of emails and phone calls on a wide variety of

topics. I always enjoy hearing what is on the minds of my constituents. In addition to my Legislative office in [STATE CAPITOL], I also have an office in [AREA] for constituents to drop by to discuss pressing policy issues or just to say hello. Building strong relationships in our community is always a priority of mine, so please drop me a line if you have any questions. I will continue to do all that I can to represent the needs of the citizens of the [DISTRICT IDENTIFIERS].

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have further questions on any other state or legislative matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[LEGISLATOR'S SIGNATURE]

[LEGISLATOR TITLE / NAME]
[DISTRICT IDENTIFIER]

Supplementary Appendix D. Survey Questionnaires by Legislator

Study 1: Legislator A

Pre-Survey

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of researchers at [UNIVERSITY] University.

Is [name1] [name2] there?

Thanks, we're conducting an academic research study and are interested in hearing your opinion on a few matters in your community. First, I'd like to ask about your opinion of President Barack Obama. Would you say you have a positive impression of him or a negative impression of him?

- (01) Positive impression of him: OK GO TO Q1
- (02) Negative impression of him: OK GO TO Q1
- (03) Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK GO TO Q1

Q1: Thanks. We'd like to ask a couple questions about [LEGISLATOR A]. Would you say you have a positive and warm impression of [LEGISLATOR A], a negative and cold impression of [LEGISLATOR A], or have you not heard of him before?

- 1. Positive impression of him: OK GO TO Q2
- 2. Negative impression of him: OK GO TO Q3
- 3. Have not heard of him before: OK GO TO Q4
- 4. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK GO TO Q4

Q2: Would you say you have a strongly positive impression of him or not so strongly positive impression of him?

- 1. Strongly positive impression of him: OK GO TO Q4
- 2. Not so strong positive impression of him: OK GO TO Q4

Q3: Would you say you have a strongly negative impression of him or not so strongly negative impression of him?

- 1. Strongly negative impression of him: OK GO TO Q4
- 2. Not so strong negative impression of him: OK GO TO Q4

Q4: Thanks. Now I'd like to ask your opinion about a few political issues here in [STATE]. One proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] is to increase funding for private school voucher programs, where the state helps pay children's private school tuition. Do you favor an increase in funding for private school tuition vouchers, not favor it, or do you have no opinion?

- 1. Favor the plan to increase funding for private school vouchers: OK GO TO Q5
- 2. Not favor the plan to increase funding for private school vouchers: OK GO TO Q5
- 3. Undecided/Don't know: OK GO TO Q5

4. Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q5**

Q5: *Another proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] would reduce the state income tax by about 1 tenth of 1 percentage point. Would you say that you support this reduction, oppose it, or do you have no opinion?*

1. Support the plan to reduce the tax credit program: OK **GO TO Q6**
2. Disapprove the plan to reduce the tax credit program: OK **GO TO Q6**
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q6**

Q6: *Thanks. To tell you about another issue, the state currently forbids cities in [STATE] from increasing property taxes. Do you think school districts and cities in [STATE] should be allowed to raise property tax rates, not allowed, or do you have no opinion?*

1. Should be allowed: OK **GO TO Q7**
2. Not allowed: OK **GO TO Q7**
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q7**

Q7: *Thanks. This is our last question. As you may know, [MATERIAL] is being [EXTRACTED] here in [STATE]. One proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] would have the state and not local governments regulate [MINERAL EXTRACTION] in their areas. What do you think? Should local governments be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION], should only the state regulate it, or do you have no opinion?*

1. Local governments should be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION]
2. Local governments should NOT be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION]
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer

Thanks, that's all our questions.

Post-Survey

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of researchers at [UNIVERSITY] University.

Is [name1] [name2] there?

Thanks, we're conducting an academic research study and are interested in hearing your opinion on a few matters in your community. First, I'd like to ask about your opinion of President Barack Obama. Would you say you have a positive impression of him or a negative impression of him?

- (01) Positive impression of him: OK **GO TO Q1**
- (02) Negative impression of him: OK **GO TO Q1**
- (03) Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q1**

Q1: *Thanks. We'd like to ask about your State Representative, [LEGISLATOR A]. Would you say you have a positive and warm impression of [LEGISLATOR A], a negative and cold impression of [LEGISLATOR A], or have you not heard of him before?*

5. Positive impression of him: OK **GO TO Q2**
6. Negative impression of him: OK **GO TO Q3**
7. Have not heard of him before: OK **GO TO Q4**
8. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q4**

Q2: *Would you say you have a strongly positive impression of him or not so strongly positive?*

3. Strongly positive impression of him: OK **GO TO Q4**
4. Not so strong positive impression of him: OK **GO TO Q4**

Q3: *Would you say you have a strongly negative impression of him or not so strongly negative?*

3. Strongly negative impression of him: OK **GO TO Q4**
4. Not so strong negative impression of him: OK **GO TO Q4**

Q4: *Thanks. Now I'd like to ask your opinion about a few political issues here in [STATE]. One proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] is to increase funding for private school voucher programs, where the state helps pay children's private school tuition. Do you favor an increase in funding for private school tuition vouchers, not favor it, or do you have no opinion?*

5. Favor the plan to increase funding for private school vouchers: OK **GO TO Q5**
6. Not favor the plan to increase funding for private school vouchers: OK **GO TO Q5**
7. Undecided/Don't know: OK **GO TO Q5**
8. Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q5**

Q5: *Another proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] would reduce the state income tax by about 1 tenth of 1 percentage point. Would you say that you support this reduction, oppose it, or do you have no opinion?*

4. Support the plan to reduce the tax credit program: OK **GO TO Q6**
5. Disapprove the plan to reduce the tax credit program: OK **GO TO Q6**
6. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q6**

Q6: *Thanks. To tell you about another issue, the state currently forbids cities in [STATE] from increasing property taxes. Do you think school districts and cities in [STATE] should be allowed to raise property tax rates, not allowed, or do you have no opinion?*

4. Should be allowed: OK **GO TO Q7**
5. Not allowed: OK **GO TO Q7**
6. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q7**

Q7: *Thanks. This is our last question. As you may know, [MATERIAL] is being [EXTRACTED] here in [STATE]. One proposal in [STATE CAPITAL] would have the state and not local governments regulate [MINERAL EXTRACTION] in their areas. What do you think? Should local governments be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION], should only the state regulate it, or do you have no opinion?*

Local governments should be able to regulate sand mining:

1. Local governments should be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION]
2. Local governments should NOT be able to regulate [MATERIAL EXTRACTION]
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer

Q8: *Do you happen to recall if you've received anything in the mail from [LEGISLATOR A] this year?*

1. Yes: OK GO TO Q9
2. No: OK GO TO Q9
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK GO TO Q9

Q9: *Do you happen to recall if you've ever met [LEGISLATOR A] in person?*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer

Thanks, that's all our questions.

Study 2: Legislators B-H

Issue Questions

NOTE: The following list of issue questions were used on the pre- and post-surveys for Study 2. Each voter was asked four issue questions corresponding to the four issues their legislator selected.

Q: *Do you favor repealing [STATE] criminal penalties for using marijuana? Or, do you oppose repealing criminal penalties, or are you not sure?*

1. Favor repealing criminal penalties for marijuana use:
2. Oppose repealing criminal penalties for marijuana use:
3. Undecided/Don't know/ Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think illegal immigrants to the US should be allowed to pay in-state tuition at the [STATE'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM] if they have graduated from a [STATE] high school?*

1. Yes, they should pay in-state tuition:
2. No, they should pay out-of-state tuition:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Would you support an increase in [STATE'S] gas tax to cover the cost of state highway expansion?*

1. Support raising the gas tax:
2. Oppose raising the gas tax:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think people convicted of minor crimes should be allowed to wipe their records clean if they do not commit any further crimes?*

1. Allow them to wipe their records clean: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*
2. Do NOT allow them to wipe their records clean: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*

Q: *Would you support a law increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10/hour from [CURRENT RATE]?*

1. Favor increasing the minimum wage:
2. Not favor increasing the minimum wage:
3. Undecided/Don't know/ Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you support the legalization of medical marijuana in [STATE]?*

1. Yes, support medical marijuana: *OK*
2. No, oppose medical marijuana: *OK*
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: *OK*

Q: *Do you think a state agency should be given the authority to draw the boundaries for legislative districts instead of the state legislature?*

1. Yes. A state agency to draw legislative district boundaries should be created:
2. No. A state agency to draw legislative district boundaries should NOT be created
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer

Q: *Do you think [STATE] should establish a state retirement plan open to all private sector workers?*

1. Yes, establish state retirement plan for private sector workers: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*
2. No, do NOT establish state retirement plan for private sector workers: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: *Thanks, that's all our questions.*

Q: *Do you think illegal immigrants to the US should be eligible for [STATE] driver's licenses?*

1. Yes they should be eligible for [STATE] driver's licenses:
2. No they should be eligible for [STATE] driver's licenses:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you support the creation of a commuter rail corridor system connecting [VARIOUS CITIES]?*

1. Support the creation of a commuter rail corridor:
2. Oppose the creation of a commuter rail corridor:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Finally, do you think people in [STATE] should be required to present a photo identification in order to vote?*

1. Yes, there should be a voter identification requirement:
2. No, there should be a voter identification requirement:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think school districts and cities in [STATE] should be allowed to raise property tax rates, not be allowed, or are you not sure?*

1. They should be allowed to raise rates:
2. They should not be allowed to raise rates:
3. Undecided/Don't know/ Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think pregnant women should be placed in state custody if they are suspected of using drugs?*

1. Yes, they should be placed in custody:
2. No, they should **not** be placed in custody:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Would you support expanding the state private school voucher program, which uses proceeds from property taxes to help families pay for private school tuition?*

1. Support expanding the school voucher program:
2. Oppose expanding the school voucher program:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think the current state budget surplus should be used to pay the state's debt and fund programs or, do you think it should it be used to reduce income taxes?*

1. Pay down the state's debt and fund programs:
2. Income tax breaks:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer/Something else:

Q: *Would you support a law requiring employers to make accommodations for pregnant women who want to continue working?*

1. Support requiring employers to accommodate pregnant women who want to work:
2. Oppose requiring employers to accommodate pregnant women who want to work:

3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Q: *Do you think 17 year olds accused of crimes should be tried as adults in [STATE]?*

1. Yes, try them as adults:
2. No, oppose trying them as adults / Try them as juveniles/children:
3. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Other questions on all pre-surveys in Study 2

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of researchers at [UNIVERSITY] University.

Is [name1] [name2] there?

Thanks, we're conducting an academic research study and are interested in hearing your opinion on a few matters in your community. First, I'd like to ask about your opinion of President Barack Obama. Would you say you have a positive impression of him or a negative impression of him?

- (01) Positive impression of him: OK **GO TO Q1**
- (02) Negative impression of him: OK **GO TO Q1**
- (03) Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: OK **GO TO Q1**

Q1: *Thanks. We'd like to ask a couple questions about [LEGISLATOR]. Would you say you have a positive and warm impression of [LEGISLATOR], a negative and cold impression of [LEGISLATOR], or have you not heard of him before?*

1. Positive impression of him/her:
2. Negative impression of him/her:
3. Have not heard of him before:
4. Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Thanks. Now I'd like to ask your opinion about a few issues {Then each voter was asked four of the issues questions above}

Other questions on all post-surveys in Study 2

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of researchers at [UNIVERSITY] University.

Is [name1] [name2] there?

Thanks, we're conducting an academic research study and are interested in hearing your opinion on a few matters in your community. First, I'd like to ask about your opinion of

President Barack Obama. Would you say you have a positive impression of him or a negative impression of him?

- (01) Positive impression of him:
- (02) Negative impression of him:
- (03) Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer:

Thanks. Now I'd like to ask your opinion about a few issues {Then each voter was asked four of the issues questions above}

Q6: *Thanks. We'd like to ask about your State Representative, [LEGISLATOR]. Would you say you have a positive impression of [LEGISLATOR], a negative impression of [LEGISLATOR], or have you not heard of him/her before?*

- 1. Positive impression of him/her: OK GO TO **Q7**
- 2. Negative impression of him/her: OK GO TO **Q8**
- 3. Undecided/Don't know OK GO TO **Q9**
- 4. Have not heard of him/her before: OK (IF VAR5 = 01, GO TO Q10. IF VAR5 = 02, GO TO Q11. IF VAR5 = 03, GO TO Q 12. IF VAR5 = 04, go to Q13)
- 5. Refused to answer: OK (IF VAR5 = 01, GO TO Q10. IF VAR5 = 02, GO TO Q11. IF VAR5 = 03, GO TO Q 12. IF VAR5 = 04, go to Q13)

Q7: *Would you say you have a strongly positive impression of him or a mildly positive impression?*

- 1. Strongly positive impression of him/her: OK
 - 2. Mildly positive impression of him/her: OK
 - 3. Don't know/Undecided/Refused to answer: OK
- (IF VAR5 = 01, GO TO Q10. IF VAR5 = 02, GO TO Q11. IF VAR5 = 03, GO TO Q 12. IF VAR5 = 04, go to Q13)

Q8: *Would you say you have a strongly negative impression of him/her or a mildly negative impression of him/her?*

- 1. Strongly negative impression of him/her: OK
 - 2. Mildly negative impression of him/her: OK
 - 3. Don't know/Undecided/Refused to answer: OK
- (IF VAR5 = 01, GO TO Q10. IF VAR5 = 02, GO TO Q11. IF VAR5 = 03, GO TO Q 12. IF VAR5 = 04, go to Q13)

Q9: *Do you lean towards having a positive impression of him/her or a negative impression?*

- 1. Lean towards having a positive impression: OK
- 2. Lean towards having a negative impression: OK
- 3. Don't know/Undecided/Refused to answer: OK

NOTE: EACH PERSON WAS ASKED TO RECALL THEIR LEGISLATORS' POSITION ON ONLY ONE ISSUE. THEY WERE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED A QUESTION FROM ALL OF THE QUESTIONS THEY WERE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A LETTER ON AS PART OF THE RANDOMIZATION. THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT THIS LOOKED LIKE FOR THE ISSUE OF MINIMUM WAGE:

Q10: *Finally, where do you think Representative [LEGISLATOR] stands on increasing the minimum wage in [STATE] to \$10/hour from [CURRENT RATE]?*

1. He favors increasing the minimum wage: *Thanks, that's all our questions*
2. He opposes increasing the minimum wage: *Thanks, that's all our questions*
3. Undecided/Don't know/ Refused to answer: *Thanks, that's all our questions*

Q14: *Finally, do you happen to recall if you've received anything in the mail from [LEGISLATOR] this year?*

1. *Yes: Thanks, that's all our questions*
2. *No: Thanks, that's all our questions*
3. *Undecided/Don't know/Refused to answer: Thanks, that's all our questions*