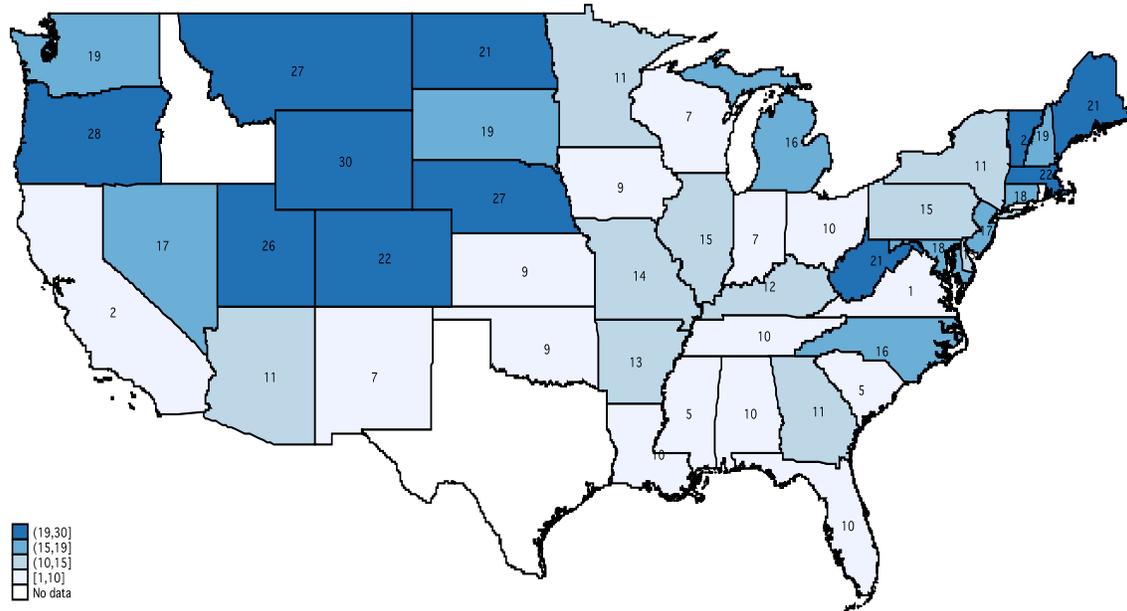


Supplementary Appendix for
“How Politicians Discount the Opinions of Constituents
with Whom They Disagree”

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Details of the State Legislator Survey used in Study 1 | 2 |
| Details of the 2012 American Municipal Official Survey used in Study 2 | 5 |
| Inferring Partisanship from the 911 Consolidation Issue (Study 2) | 11 |
| Tables Corresponding to Figures 2, 4, and 5 in the Main Paper..... | 12 |
| Interactive Effect of Race and Shared Position | 15 |
| The Effect of Shared Position by Official Partisanship | 17 |
| Robustness Checks for Study 1 (State Legislator Sample)..... | 19 |
| Robustness Checks for Study 2 (Municipal Official Sample)..... | 21 |

Figure A2. Survey Participation – Response Rates by State



Notes: Darker shades indicate a higher response rate in the state. The actual number from the state is given in the center of each state on the map.

Figure A4 shows the number of respondents who took the survey from each state while Figure A5 shows the response rate by state. Legislators from Texas and Idaho were not included in the sample because their email addresses are not publicly available.¹ The darker the color, the larger the number of respondents from that state (the number of responses is listed on the map in the center of each state). The map shows that the survey had fairly good coverage in most states outside of the southwest portion of the country. Further, the legislators come from all levels of legislative professionalism, with good coverage in highly professional legislatures (e.g., New York, Massachusetts,

¹ Instead, individuals who wish to communicate with legislators in these two states must fill out a form that requires a within-district address (similar to the United States Congress) for the message to be delivered.

Pennsylvania, and Illinois), citizen legislatures (e.g., Montana, New Hampshire, Maine, and Utah), and those in between (e.g., Oregon, Missouri, Minnesota, and Connecticut).

Table A1: Demographic Makeup of State Legislator Respondents

| | All State Legislators | All Respondents | Self-Identified Legislators |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Upper Chamber | 26% | 25% | 22% |
| Republican | 53% | 43% | 46% |
| Black | 8% | 6% | 4% |
| Latino | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Female | 23% | 29% | 32% |

Table A2 compares the demographic characteristics of the legislators in the sample (see columns 2 and 3) relative to all state legislators in the United States (column 1). Female legislators and Democratic legislators were more likely to take the survey. In the United States only 23 percent of the legislators are women, but 32 percent of the legislators who took the survey themselves were women. Similarly, 53 percent of state legislators are Republican but only 45 percent of the legislators who took the survey themselves are Republican. The other characteristics are all within four percentage points of the population average.

In terms of external validity, recent research shows that Internet surveys and traditional mail surveys of state legislators produce similar results (Fisher and Herrick, 2013). Further, the distribution of the data in Figure A4 and Table A2 suggest that the sample provides a fairly good picture of state legislators in the United States.

Details of the 2012 American Municipal Official Survey used in Study 2

The survey experiments reported in Study 2 were administered online to a subsample of participants in the 2012 American Municipal Officials Survey (AMOS). The sample of city officials for the 2012 AMOS was constructed by first obtaining a list of 26,566 municipalities from the U.S. Census Bureau.² We defined municipalities as general-purpose local governments using the following categorizations from the Census Bureau: Incorporated Places (in most states, they are called cities, towns, boroughs, and villages); Consolidated Cities (these are a “unit of government for which the functions of an Incorporated Place and its county or Minor Civil Divisions have merged”³); and Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) in CT, ME, MA, MI, MN, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, and WI (in these states, they are usually called townships or towns). We included Minor Civil Divisions from these states based on the Census Bureau’s assessment that “Most of the MCDs in [these] twelve states ... serve as general-purpose local governments that can perform the same governmental functions as incorporated places.”⁴

Student research assistants then searched for the website of each municipality on this list in random order. If the research assistants were able to identify the city website, they then collected the name and email address of the elected executive (i.e., mayor) and elected members of the governing legislative body (e.g., city councilors). The survey itself was created using the web-based program Qualtrics and was administered to

² Specifically, the 2012 AMOS relied on the Census Bureau’s “Subcounty Resident Population Estimates: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009,” which was released on September 2010.

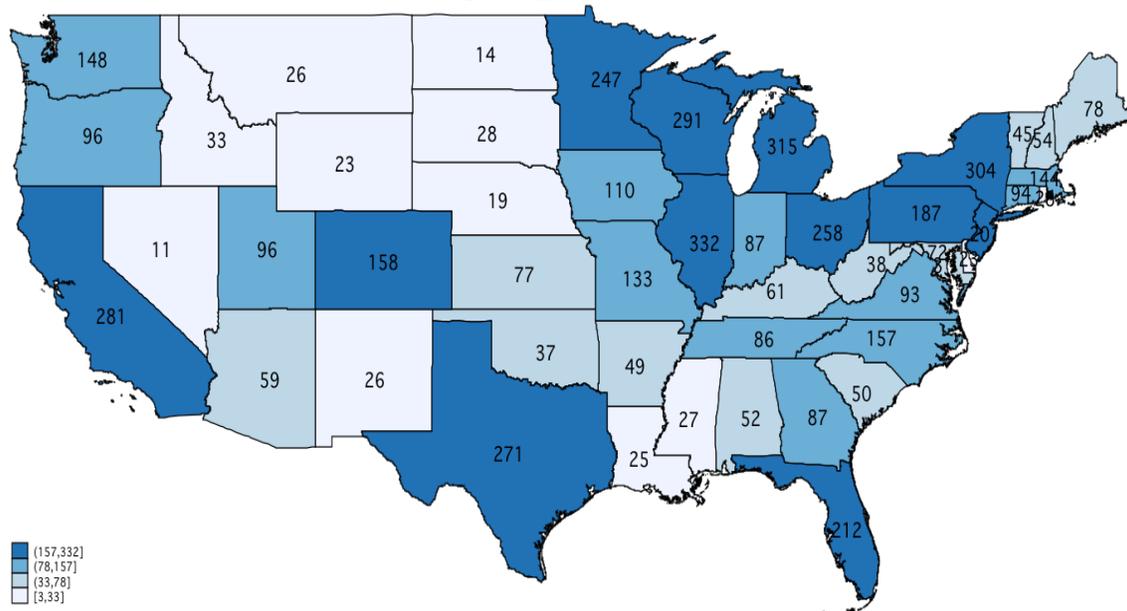
³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. “Geographic Terms and Concepts – County Subdivision” http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_cousub.html (January 9, 2014).

⁴ Ibid.

municipal officials by emailing them a link to the survey. Each official received three email invitations, sent 2 to 3 weeks apart.

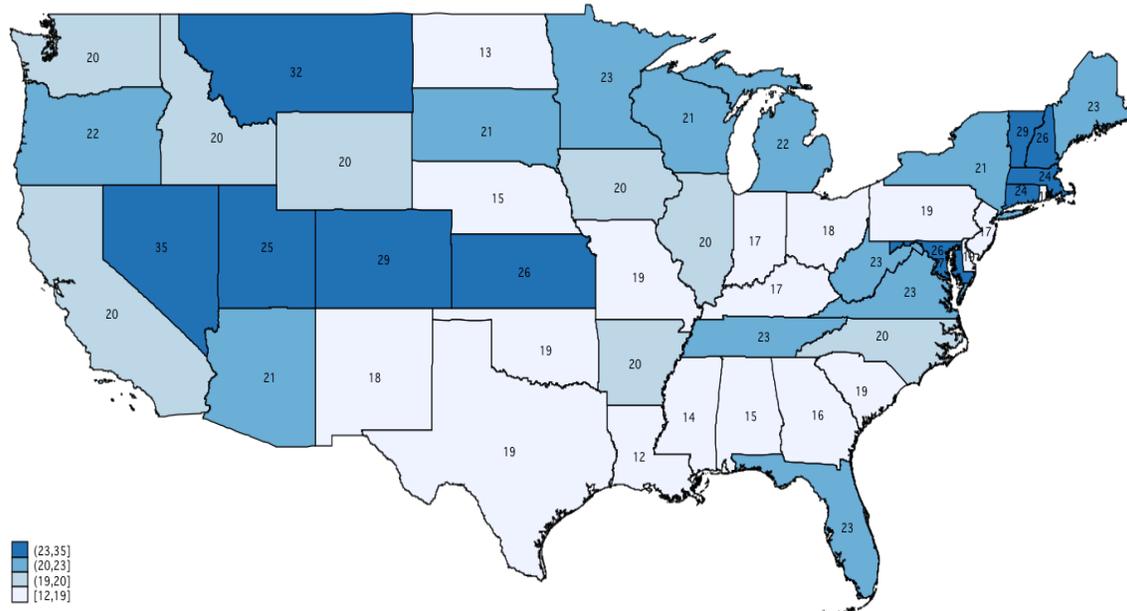
The response rate for the two survey experiments (which were administered to separate subsamples of officials) was around 23%, on par with recent expert surveys of this nature (e.g., Fisher and Herrick 2013, Harden 2013). As illustrated in Figures A3 and A4, participants in the survey experiments provide broad geographic coverage across the United States.

Figure A3: Number of Municipal Officials (from each State) Participating in 2012 AMOS



Notes: Darker colors indicate greater participation in the survey.

Figure A4: Response Rates (by State) of Municipal Officials Invited to Participate in 2012 AMOS



Notes: Darker colors indicate greater participation in the survey.

There were thus three types of municipalities: (1) municipalities that did not have a website with email addresses available,⁵ (2) municipalities that did have emails listed but where no official accepted the invitation to take the survey, and (3) municipalities where at least one of the officials took the survey.⁶ Table A2 provides descriptive statistics about these three types of municipalities and shows that the elected officials in the survey were from systematically larger cities than those who did not. The mean population of cities in this first category (3,127) is much smaller than those in the second

⁵ The decision to restrict the sample to city officials with email addresses meant that we also excluded some large cities that provided a contact forms in lieu of email addresses.

⁶ If any of the emailed officials responded, the municipality is placed in this category. Thus the response rate “by city” appears to be greater than the response rate by emailed official.

(17,635) or third (36,304), which indicates that larger cities were more likely to have websites with emails and their elected officials were more likely to respond. This relationship between population size and having emails online and/or responding to the survey is illustrated in the density plot in Figure A5. That officials from larger cities were more likely to take the survey also means that respondents are from cities that are more representative of the types of cities in which most Americans live. If all of the cities in our original list of 26,566 cities were ordered from smallest to largest, the median citizen is found in a city with a population of 57,000.

Figure A5: Density Plot of Cities' Population by Email Availability and Response

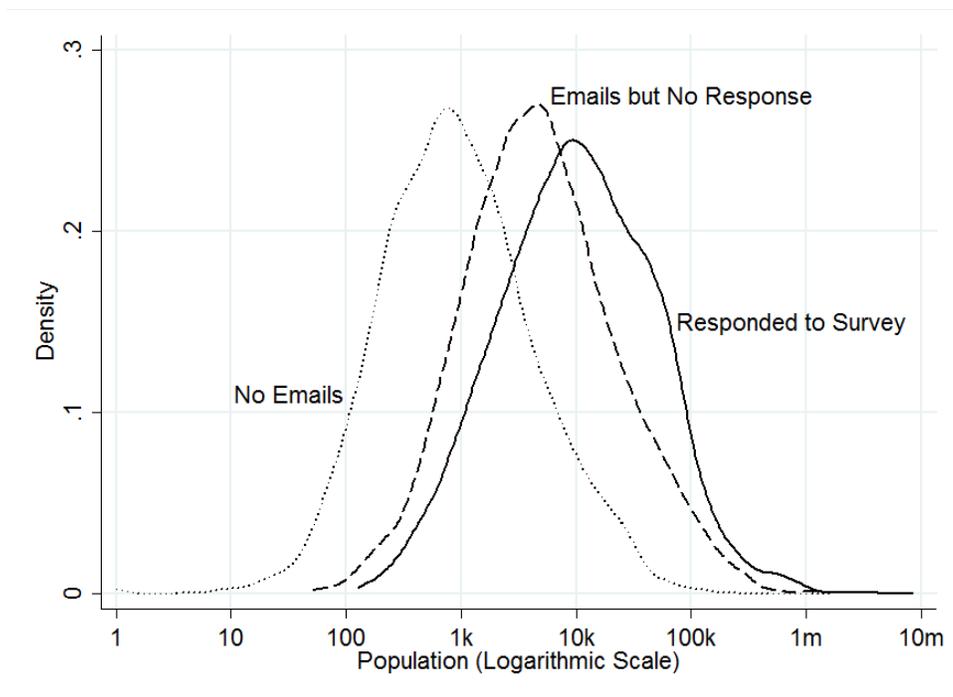


Table A2: Details on Cities in the 2012 AMOS

| | (1) Cities without emails | (2) Cities with emails but no respondent | (3) Cities with at least 1 respondent |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Number of Cities (% of total) | 21,889 (81%) | 1,992 (7%) | 3,109 (12%) |
| Population | | | |
| Total in millions (% of total) | 78.9 (35%) | 35.6 (16%) | 113 (50%) |
| Mean | 3,603 | 17,359 | 36,307 |
| Median | 862 | 4,492 | 10,068 |
| Size of City Council (Mean; Median) | | 5.6; 6 | 6.6; 7 |
| % of Officials with Emails on Website (Mean; Median) | 0%; 0% | 75%; 100% | 92%; 100% |
| Type of Municipality | | | |
| % Incorporated Place | 29% | 24% | 19% |
| % Consolidated City | <1% | 0% | <1% |
| % Minor Civil Division | 71% | 76% | 81% |
| Form of Government (% of these w/ town meetings) | | | |
| % Mayor-Council | 61% (2%) | 58% (<1%) | 52% (<1%) |
| % Manager-Council | 10% (14%) | 23% (8%) | 33% (5%) |
| % Selectmen/Supervisors | 27% (76%) | 18% (79%) | 14% (78%) |
| % Commission | 2% (11%) | 2% (12%) | 1% (18%) |
| Demographics (Mean; Median) | | | |
| % Black | 8%; 1% | 11%; 3% | 9%; 3% |
| % Latino | 6%; 2% | 11%; 4% | 11%; 5% |
| % w/ Some College | 20%; 19% | 20%; 20% | 20%; 20% |
| % Unemployed | 4%; 4% | 4%; 4% | 4%; 4% |
| % w/ Unpaid 1 st Mortgage | 16%; 16% | 17%; 17% | 18%; 18% |
| % w/ Unpaid 2 nd Mortgage | 1%; 0% | 1%; 1% | 1%; 1% |

Note: Unit of analysis is a city. Each column presents summary data for cities that fall under the following exclusive categories: (1) “Cities without emails” means cities where none of the email addresses of the city’s elected officials was found; (2) “Cities with emails but no respondent” means cities where emails were found but none of the officials took the survey; and (3) “Cities with at least 1 respondent” means cities where at least one of the officials from that city answered a question in the survey. Data for the Number of Cities, Population, and Type of Municipality come from the U.S. Census Bureau’s “Subcounty Resident Population Estimates: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009.” Data for the Form of Government come from the Census Bureau’s 1992 Census of Governments. Data for the Demographics come from the 2010 U.S. Census.

Another important characteristic is the form of government employed by the cities in our sample, as this likely influences the types of individuals selected as policymakers as well as their behavior in office. The Census Bureau⁷ tracks four forms of government: 1) Mayor-Council, in which the executive (mayor) is elected separately from the elected governing legislature (city council); 2) Manager-Council, in which the executive (city manager) is appointed by the elected city council; 3) Selectmen/Supervisors, common in the Northeast, in which the elected city council is responsible for day-to-day administration; and 4) Commission, in which each member of the elected city council is responsible for one or more departments in the city administration.

Cities with at least one respondent were somewhat less likely to be of the Mayor-Council form (52%) compared to cities without respondents (58%) or emails (61%). They were also much less likely to use the Selectmen/Supervisors model (14% compared to 18% and 27%, respectively). On the other hand, cities with respondents were more likely to use the Manager-Council form (33% compared to 23% and 10%). Such differences largely reflect the differences in city sizes across municipalities with respondents, no respondents, and no published emails. There were few differences across these three categories in terms of racial composition, educational attainment, employment, or unpaid mortgages.

⁷ The data on the form of government used by each city comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's "Census of Governments," which is a survey of municipalities conducted every five years. The most recent publicly available Census of Governments that asked municipalities to identify their form of government was conducted in 1992. This should not be problematic given the stability in the form of government employed by cities. Not all municipalities respond to the survey request; thus, we were only able to match 90% of the cities and respondents in our sample to the Census of Governments survey.

Inferring Partisanship from the 911 Consolidation Issue (Study 2)

For about 300 officials who were presented with the vignette where the writer took a stance on the issue of consolidating 911 services, we asked, “What is the writer’s partisanship? (Give us your best guess).” Table A3 presents the results based on whether the writer supported or opposed consolidation. The distribution of answers is nearly identical across treatments and the small differences that exist are statistically insignificant. The city officials were not using the writer’s position to make inferences about the writer’s partisanship. We focused on the issue of consolidating 911 services, and not school vouchers, because we wanted to test whether respondents exhibited the same biases even when the issue was not partisan, which is the case with the consolidation of 911 services.

Table A3. City Officials’ Inferences about Writer’s Partisanship Based on Position

| | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Independent</u> | <u>Democrat</u> |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Writer Supports 911 Consolidation | 33% | 46% | 22% |
| Writer Opposes 911 Consolidation | 34% | 39% | 27% |

Note: Each cell gives the row percent for legislators’ guesses about the writer’s partisanship based on whether they opposed or supported efforts to consolidate 911 services to save funds. The differences by the writer’s position are statistically insignificant (N=303).

Tables Corresponding to Figures 2, 4, and 5 in the Main Paper

The results in Table A4 present the results from Figure 2 in Table form. Similarly, Table A5 and A6 present in table form the results corresponding to Figures 4 and 5, respectively.

Table A4. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings among State Legislators

| | <u>Outcome (Percent of Respondents who Agreed with Statement)</u> | | |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> |
| Shared Position | 64.2% | 66.1% | 23.8% |
| Opposed Position | 73.4% | 59.4% | 10.0% |
| Difference | -9.2* | 6.7 | 13.8* |
| | (4.1) | (4.3) | (3.3) |
| Observations | 502 | 497 | 498 |

Notes: The results give the percent of respondents who agreed with each statement (listed at the top of the column). Standard errors are given in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The sample is limited to the self-identified state legislators.

Table A5. Partisanship, Opinion Agreement, and Letter Ratings among Municipal Officials

| (A) Issue = The Consolidation of 911 Services | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> |
| Shared Position | 55.0% | 59.0% | 31.7% | 42.5% |
| Opposed Position | 59.6% | 57.7% | 23.5% | 24.0% |
| Difference | -4.6 (3.9) | 1.3 (3.9) | 8.2* (3.6) | 18.5* (3.8) |
| Observations | 657 | 652 | 653 | 645 |
| (B) Issue = School Vouchers, No Additional Information Provided | | | | |
| | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> |
| Shared Position | 53.4% | 64.5% | 27.4% | 31.8% |
| Opposed Position | 59.2% | 63.2% | 16.4% | 14.1% |
| Difference | -5.8 (3.8) | 1.3 (3.7) | 11.0* (3.2) | 17.7* (3.3) |
| Observations | 721 | 724 | 710 | 707 |
| (C) Issue = School Vouchers, Partisanship and Turnout Information Provided | | | | |
| | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> |
| Shared Position | 51.0% | 67.3% | 34.1% | 32.9% |
| Opposed Position | 57.8% | 54.4% | 22.7% | 21.8% |
| Difference | -6.8 (6.1) | 12.9* (5.8) | 11.4* (5.7) | 11.1 (5.7) |
| Observations | 349 | 350 | 340 | 339 |

Notes: The results give the percent of respondents who agreed with each statement (listed at the top of the column). Standard errors are given in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

Table A6: The Effect of Opinion Agreement and the Writing Treatment Condition on Letter Ratings among U.S. Adults

Panel A: Statement: “The writer understands the complexities of this issue”

| | <i>Defend Tax Writing Condition</i> | <i>Defend Privacy Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. | | <i>Defend Tax TV Show Writing Condition</i> | <i>Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Shared Position</i> | 53.3% n=253 | 41.4% n=244 | | <i>Shared Position</i> | 53.3% n=253 | 42.6% n=272 | |
| <i>Opposed Position</i> | 17.0% n=300 | 21.6% n=250 | | <i>Opposed Position</i> | 17.0% n=300 | 21.4% n=290 | |
| Difference | 36.4* (3.7) | 19.8* (4.1) | 16.6* (5.5) | Difference | 36.4* (3.7) | 21.3* (3.8) | 15.1* (5.3) |

Panel B: Statement: “The writer holds this position strongly”

| | <i>Defend Tax Writing Condition</i> | <i>Defend Privacy Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. | | <i>Defend Tax TV Show Writing Condition</i> | <i>Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Shared Position</i> | 82.6% n=253 | 78.3% n=244 | | <i>Shared Position</i> | 82.6% n=253 | 80.5% n=272 | |
| <i>Opposed Position</i> | 72.3% n=300 | 76.8% n=250 | | <i>Opposed Position</i> | 72.3% n=300 | 78.3% n=290 | |
| Difference | 10.3* (3.6) | 1.5 (3.8) | 8.8 (5.1) | Difference | 10.3* (3.6) | 2.2 (3.4) | 8.0 (4.9) |

Panel C: Statement: “This was a form letter from an interest group”

| | <i>Defend Tax Writing Condition</i> | <i>Defend Privacy Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. | | <i>Defend Tax TV Show Writing Condition</i> | <i>Writing Condition</i> | Diff. in Diff. |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Shared Position</i> | 47.4% n=253 | 45.5% n=244 | | <i>Shared Position</i> | 47.4% n=253 | 48.2% n=272 | |
| <i>Opposed Position</i> | 51.3% n=300 | 48.0% n=250 | | <i>Opposed Position</i> | 51.3% n=300 | 51.7% n=290 | |
| Difference | -3.9 (4.2) | -2.5 (4.5) | -1.4 (6.2) | Difference | -3.9 (4.2) | -3.6 (4.2) | -0.3 (6.0) |

Notes: The results give the percent of respondents who agreed with each statement (listed in the title of each panel). Standard errors are given in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Interactive Effect of Race and Shared Position

Table A7 presents the effect of race and letter agreement on white state legislators' ratings of the letter. Table A8 presents similar results for all city officials in the second study.⁸ The interaction term is not significant showing that the effect of disagreement discounting does not vary by the race of the writer. All of the models are estimated using OLS regression models where the outcome is measured as a binary variable that takes the value of 1 when the rated the letter as having that characteristic and 0 when they rated the letter as not having the given characteristic.

Table A7. The Effect of Opinion Agreement and Race on Letter Ratings among White State Legislators

| VARIABLES | Form Letter | Strong Position | Understands |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Shared Position | -0.113* (0.057) | 0.071 (0.060) | 0.168* (0.046) |
| Minority Alias | 0.018 (0.060) | -0.001 (0.064) | 0.041 (0.049) |
| Shared Position*Minority | 0.078 (0.086) | -0.013 (0.090) | -0.057 (0.069) |
| Constant | 0.719* (0.041) | 0.595* (0.043) | 0.080* (0.033) |
| Observations | 472 | 468 | 468 |
| R-squared | 0.013 | 0.005 | 0.037 |

Notes: OLS regression models. Standard errors are given in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The sample is limited to the self-identified state legislators.

⁸ We only asked a portion of the respondents in the second study about their race and for that reason we cannot restrict the sample to only white officials.

Table A8. The Effect of Opinion Agreement and Race on Letter Ratings among City Officials

| VARIABLES | Form Letter | Strong Position | Understands | Facts |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <u>(A) Issue = The Consolidation of 911 Services</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.000 (0.048) | -0.014 (0.048) | 0.119* (0.044) | 0.197* (0.046) |
| Minority Alias | -0.144* (0.075) | -0.048 (0.076) | -0.039 (0.068) | -0.099 (0.074) |
| Shared Position*Minority | -0.018 (0.090) | 0.086 (0.092) | -0.059 (0.082) | 0.033 (0.088) |
| Constant | 0.625* (0.033) | 0.586* (0.034) | 0.243* (0.031) | 0.259* (0.032) |
| Observations | 657 | 652 | 653 | 645 |
| R-squared | 0.023 | 0.002 | 0.015 | 0.042 |
| <u>(B) Issue = School Vouchers, No Additional Information Provided</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.065 (0.044) | 0.016 (0.043) | 0.136* (0.038) | 0.187* (0.038) |
| Minority Alias | 0.126 (0.085) | -0.049 (0.083) | -0.074 (0.071) | -0.075 (0.074) |
| Shared Position*Minority | -0.064 (0.098) | 0.023 (0.095) | -0.017 (0.082) | 0.024 (0.084) |
| Constant | 0.574* (0.032) | 0.639* (0.031) | 0.174* (0.027) | 0.152* (0.028) |
| Observations | 721 | 724 | 710 | 707 |
| R-squared | 0.009 | 0.001 | 0.025 | 0.043 |
| <u>(C) Issue = School Vouchers, Partisanship and Turnout Information Provided</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.212* (0.102) | 0.071 (0.097) | 0.169 (0.096) | 0.169 (0.095) |
| Minority Alias | -0.206* (0.108) | -0.070 (0.104) | 0.112 (0.102) | 0.098 (0.102) |
| Shared Position*Minority | 0.229 (0.127) | 0.092 (0.122) | -0.088 (0.120) | -0.092 (0.119) |
| Constant | 0.706* (0.086) | 0.588* (0.082) | 0.156 (0.082) | 0.156 (0.081) |
| Observations | 349 | 350 | 340 | 339 |
| R-squared | 0.014 | 0.015 | 0.016 | 0.014 |

Notes: OLS regression models. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

The Effect of Shared Position by Official Partisanship

Table A9 presents the effect of letter agreement by state legislators' partisanship. Table A10 presents similar results for all city officials in the second study.⁹ The interaction term is not significant showing that the effect of disagreement discounting does not vary at statistically significant levels by the officials' partisanship. All of the models are estimated using OLS regression models where the outcome is measured as a binary variable that takes the value of 1 when they rated the letter as having that characteristic and 0 when they rated the letter as not having the given characteristic.

Table A9. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings by State Legislator Partisanship

| VARIABLES | Form Letter | Strong Position | Understands |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Shared Position | -0.077 (0.055) | 0.036 (0.057) | 0.178* (0.044) |
| Republican Legislator | -0.037 (0.059) | -0.087 (0.063) | 0.008 (0.048) |
| Shared Position*Republican | -0.030 (0.084) | 0.081 (0.089) | -0.106 (0.068) |
| Constant | 0.754* (0.039) | 0.626* (0.041) | 0.100* (0.031) |
| Observations | 490 | 485 | 486 |
| R-squared | 0.013 | 0.009 | 0.040 |

Notes: OLS regression models. Standard errors are given in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The sample is limited to the self-identified state legislators.

⁹ We only asked a portion of the respondents in the second study about their race and for that reason we cannot restrict the sample to only white officials.

Table A10. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings among City Officials

| VARIABLES | Form Letter | Strong Position | Understands | Facts |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <u>(A) Issue = The Consolidation of 911 Services</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.100* (0.058) | 0.013 (0.059) | 0.119 (0.053) | 0.180* (0.056) |
| Republican Official | -0.016 (0.061) | -0.001 (0.061) | 0.008 (0.055) | -0.021 (0.058) |
| Shared Position*Republican | 0.100 (0.079) | 0.000 (0.079) | -0.070 (0.072) | 0.009 (0.076) |
| Constant | 0.605* (0.045) | 0.578* (0.046) | 0.231* (0.042) | 0.252* (0.044) |
| Observations | 657 | 652 | 653 | 645 |
| R-squared | 0.006 | 0.000 | 0.011 | 0.037 |
| <u>(B) Issue = School Vouchers, No Additional Information Provided</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.045 (0.057) | 0.057 (0.055) | 0.157* (0.048) | 0.191* (0.050) |
| Republican Official | 0.012 (0.060) | 0.083 (0.058) | 0.012 (0.051) | -0.021 (0.052) |
| Shared Position*Republican | -0.024 (0.077) | -0.081 (0.074) | -0.086 (0.065) | -0.025 (0.066) |
| Constant | 0.585* (0.045) | 0.585* (0.043) | 0.157* (0.038) | 0.153* (0.039) |
| Observations | 721 | 724 | 710 | 707 |
| R-squared | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.021 | 0.042 |
| <u>(C) Issue = School Vouchers, Partisanship and Turnout Information Provided</u> | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.034 (0.106) | 0.153 (0.101) | 0.097 (0.100) | 0.083 (0.100) |
| Republican Official | 0.085 (0.115) | 0.037 (0.110) | -0.005 (0.108) | -0.030 (0.109) |
| Shared Position*Republican | -0.034 (0.131) | -0.034 (0.125) | 0.031 (0.123) | 0.043 (0.123) |
| Constant | 0.519* (0.096) | 0.519* (0.092) | 0.231* (0.091) | 0.240* (0.092) |
| Observations | 349 | 350 | 340 | 339 |
| R-squared | 0.007 | 0.014 | 0.012 | 0.012 |

Notes: OLS regression models. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Robustness Checks for Study 1 (State Legislator Sample)

Table A11 presents some robustness tests for the results regarding state legislators' ratings. The results are based on using the full sample of state legislators when controlling for whether the legislator's partisanship, race and ethnicity, years in office, their staff support, the time they have to travel to get to the state capitol (Silbermann Forthcoming)¹⁰, the length of the session, and the race treatments in the experiment. For each outcome, we present both the OLS and probit regression models. The results confirm the findings in Figure 2: the coefficients are in the expected direction. The *share position* treatment is still statistically significant for the *understands* outcome and barely misses the traditional level of significance for the *form letter* outcome.

¹⁰ Silbermann, Rachel. Forthcoming. "Gender Roles, Work-Life Balance, and Running for Office." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*

Table A11. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings – Legislators

| | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|
| | OLS | Probit | OLS | Probit | OLS | Probit |
| Share Position | -0.090 (0.048) | -0.260 (0.136) | 0.056 (0.050) | 0.159 (0.134) | 0.149* (0.039) | 0.612* (0.160) |
| Democrat | 0.051 (0.050) | 0.146 (0.145) | 0.058 (0.053) | 0.155 (0.142) | 0.011 (0.041) | 0.037 (0.167) |
| Independent | -0.347 (0.197) | -0.938 (0.573) | 0.274 (0.206) | 0.833 (0.636) | -0.138 (0.162) | |
| Latino | 0.087 (0.157) | 0.272 (0.476) | 0.147 (0.163) | 0.432 (0.476) | 0.055 (0.128) | 0.204 (0.497) |
| Black | -0.002 (0.145) | -0.008 (0.423) | -0.031 (0.151) | -0.091 (0.402) | 0.020 (0.118) | 0.076 (0.474) |
| Years in Office | -0.005 (0.004) | -0.014 (0.012) | 0.002 (0.005) | 0.006 (0.012) | 0.005 (0.004) | 0.021 (0.014) |
| Population (10K) | 0.000 (0.007) | 0.000 (0.019) | 0.005 (0.007) | 0.014 (0.019) | 0.015* (0.006) | 0.055* (0.022) |
| Staff per Legislator | -0.003 (0.011) | -0.010 (0.032) | -0.012 (0.012) | -0.031 (0.031) | -0.011 (0.009) | -0.048 (0.042) |
| Travel Time (Hours) | 0.008 (0.017) | 0.025 (0.050) | 0.021 (0.018) | 0.057 (0.049) | -0.008 (0.014) | -0.043 (0.060) |
| Session Length (100 days) | 0.017 (0.021) | 0.052 (0.061) | -0.024 (0.022) | -0.067 (0.059) | -0.015 (0.017) | -0.063 (0.070) |
| Treatment: Latino Writer | 0.042 (0.062) | 0.121 (0.180) | 0.026 (0.064) | 0.070 (0.174) | 0.041 (0.051) | 0.162 (0.204) |
| Treatment: Black Writer | 0.024 (0.058) | 0.064 (0.165) | -0.037 (0.061) | -0.103 (0.163) | 0.028 (0.048) | 0.132 (0.188) |
| Constant | 0.697* (0.067) | 0.521* (0.193) | 0.580* (0.070) | 0.199 (0.187) | 0.064 (0.055) | -1.404* (0.230) |
| Observations | 390 | 390 | 386 | 386 | 387 | 381 |
| R-squared | 0.028 | | 0.024 | | 0.069 | |

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The sample is limited to the self-identified state legislators.

Robustness Checks for Study 2 (Municipal Official Sample)

Tables A12 – A14 present the robustness results for the municipal official analysis (Figure 4). The municipal official sample was large enough that they were divided into randomly chosen subsamples and surveys with different questions. Although all of the respondents in the analysis were presented with the same experimental protocol (see Box 2), they were asked different control variables because they took part in different cross-sectional waves. We impute the missing values and control for whether the official is *republican*, is a *mayor* (or equivalent), is *female*, is *white*, has an *income over \$100K*, and has a *college degree*. Because respondents were assigned to survey waves randomly, whether or not any given control variable is missing is also random. In other words, the missing at random assumption that is necessary to validly impute missing values holds because of the research design employed. For each outcome, we present both the OLS and probit regression models.

Tables A12 – A14 show that the original findings from the municipal survey results are robust to including the various control variables. The tests of whether officials assume that like-minded constituents are more thoughtful on the issue continue to be statistically significant and the estimated treatment effects only change slightly.

Table A12. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings – Municipal Officials, Issue = The Consolidation of 911 Services

| VARIABLES | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| | (1) OLS | (2) Probit | (3) OLS | (4) Probit | (5) OLS | (6) Probit | (7) OLS | (8) Probit |
| <u>Treatment Variable</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Shared Position | 0.023 (0.041) | 0.062 (0.108) | 0.015 (0.042) | 0.039 (0.108) | 0.106* (0.038) | 0.320* (0.115) | 0.204* (0.040) | 0.577* (0.115) |
| <u>Control Variables</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 0.035 (0.040) | 0.092 (0.106) | -0.012 (0.041) | -0.032 (0.105) | -0.043 (0.037) | -0.126 (0.111) | -0.027 (0.040) | -0.077 (0.109) |
| Mayor | 0.039 (0.046) | 0.105 (0.122) | 0.033 (0.047) | 0.086 (0.121) | -0.018 (0.042) | -0.058 (0.127) | -0.025 (0.045) | -0.079 (0.126) |
| Female | -0.046 (0.053) | -0.119 (0.138) | -0.039 (0.063) | -0.102 (0.162) | -0.022 (0.054) | -0.065 (0.163) | -0.023 (0.051) | -0.065 (0.143) |
| White | -0.138* (0.049) | -0.357* (0.128) | -0.039 (0.053) | -0.104 (0.137) | -0.034 (0.046) | -0.110 (0.136) | -0.006 (0.049) | -0.025 (0.137) |
| Income>=\$100K | 0.018 (0.042) | 0.068 (0.110) | -0.009 (0.074) | -0.023 (0.190) | 0.007 (0.044) | 0.021 (0.132) | 0.002 (0.062) | 0.007 (0.171) |
| College Degree | 0.017 (0.068) | 0.044 (0.179) | -0.031 (0.064) | -0.080 (0.165) | -0.034 (0.070) | -0.104 (0.211) | -0.045 (0.080) | -0.127 (0.225) |
| Treatment: Latino Writer | -0.089 (0.058) | -0.230 (0.149) | 0.044 (0.061) | 0.116 (0.156) | -0.081 (0.054) | -0.242 (0.164) | -0.080 (0.057) | -0.221 (0.159) |
| Treatment: Black Writer | -0.058 (0.060) | -0.151 (0.154) | 0.010 (0.062) | 0.027 (0.159) | -0.048 (0.056) | -0.141 (0.165) | -0.082 (0.059) | -0.227 (0.163) |
| Constant | 0.611* (0.070) | 0.203 (0.166) | 0.613 (0.071) | 0.288 (0.185) | 0.317* (0.069) | -0.483* (0.205) | 0.311* (0.078) | -0.511* (0.217) |
| Observations | 657 | 657 | 652 | 652 | 653 | 653 | 645 | 645 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The survey was administered over four waves with municipal officials randomly assigned to waves. Because the control variables were only asked on some waves, we use multiple imputation to estimate the models with control variables.

Table A13. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings – Municipal Officials, Issue = School Vouchers, No Additional Information Provided

| VARIABLES | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| | (1) OLS | (2) Probit | (3) OLS | (4) Probit | (5) OLS | (6) Probit | (7) OLS | (8) Probit |
| <u>Treatment Variable</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.083* (0.040) | -0.214* (0.103) | 0.028 (0.039) | 0.079 (0.105) | 0.157* (0.034) | 0.546* (0.121) | 0.201* (0.035) | 0.694* (0.123) |
| <u>Control Variables</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | -0.027 (0.042) | -0.069 (0.109) | 0.045 (0.039) | 0.122 (0.105) | -0.034 (0.034) | -0.119 (0.118) | -0.031 (0.036) | -0.102 (0.118) |
| Mayor | 0.091* (0.045) | 0.241* (0.120) | 0.027 (0.044) | 0.071 (0.120) | -0.032 (0.039) | -0.109 (0.138) | -0.025 (0.041) | -0.081 (0.138) |
| Female | -0.035 (0.073) | 0.092 (0.188) | -0.008 (0.069) | -0.020 (0.186) | -0.029 (0.054) | -0.114 (0.187) | -0.007 (0.065) | -0.032 (0.221) |
| White | 0.065 (0.055) | 0.168 (0.140) | -0.075 (0.053) | -0.203 (0.141) | -0.167* (0.046) | -0.589* (0.167) | -0.077 (0.047) | -0.260 (0.157) |
| Income>=\$100K | 0.026 (0.046) | 0.068 (0.120) | -0.055 (0.048) | -0.150 (0.129) | -0.052 (0.035) | -0.183 (0.124) | -0.018 (0.036) | -0.069 (0.118) |
| College Degree | -0.020 (0.063) | -0.053 (0.166) | 0.086 (0.046) | 0.229 (0.122) | -0.043 (0.048) | -0.139 (0.203) | -0.013 (0.055) | -0.038 (0.189) |
| Latino Writer | -0.076 (0.067) | -0.194 (0.172) | 0.023 (0.066) | 0.059 (0.176) | 0.048 (0.057) | 0.194 (0.203) | 0.058 (0.059) | 0.184 (0.189) |
| Black Writer | 0.129* (0.065) | 0.349* (0.171) | 0.020 (0.063) | 0.054 (0.168) | 0.011 (0.054) | 0.034 (0.195) | -0.058 (0.056) | -0.199 (0.187) |
| Constant | 0.581* (0.081) | 0.207 (0.210) | 0.579* (0.059) | 0.200 (0.158) | 0.278* (0.054) | -0.616* (0.180) | 0.197* (0.067) | 0.903* (0.223) |
| Observations | 721 | 721 | 724 | 724 | 710 | 710 | 707 | 707 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The survey was administered over four waves with municipal officials randomly assigned to waves. Because the control variables were only asked on some waves, we use multiple imputation to estimate the models with control variables.

Table A14. The Effect of Opinion Agreement on Letter Ratings – Municipal Officials, Issue = School Vouchers, Partisanship and Turnout Information Provided

| VARIABLES | <i>Letter was likely a form letter</i> | | <i>Writer likely holds position strongly</i> | | <i>Writer likely understands complexities of issue</i> | | <i>Writer likely based his opinions on facts</i> | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| | (1) OLS | (2) Probit | (3) OLS | (4) Probit | (5) OLS | (6) Probit | (7) OLS | (8) Probit |
| <u>Treatment Variable</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Shared Position | -0.050 (0.064) | -0.130 (0.166) | 0.137* (0.061) | 0.366* (0.165) | 0.117 (0.060) | 0.352* (0.177) | 0.116 (0.060) | 0.362* (0.181) |
| <u>Control Variables</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 0.059 (0.062) | 0.158 (0.159) | 0.020 (0.062) | 0.052 (0.169) | 0.027 (0.058) | 0.080 (0.164) | 0.008 (0.059) | 0.021 (0.172) |
| Mayor | 0.174* (0.067) | 0.457* (0.175) | -0.122 (0.064) | -0.328 (0.172) | -0.067 (0.063) | -0.202 (0.184) | -0.041 (0.064) | -0.128 (0.191) |
| Female | 0.053 (0.089) | 0.136 (0.232) | -0.039 (0.096) | -0.109 (0.266) | -0.003 (0.074) | -0.005 (0.211) | -0.019 (0.076) | -0.060 (0.221) |
| White | -0.017 (0.095) | -0.049 (0.244) | -0.049 (0.093) | -0.134 (0.258) | -0.059 (0.095) | -0.171 (0.262) | -0.070 (0.093) | -0.203 (0.260) |
| Income>=\$100K | 0.025 (0.063) | 0.066 (0.161) | 0.037 (0.058) | 0.100 (0.157) | 0.011 (0.059) | 0.028 (0.168) | -0.036 (0.059) | -0.110 (0.169) |
| College Degree | -0.020 (0.071) | -0.052 (0.182) | 0.009 (0.112) | 0.021 (0.305) | -0.043 (0.090) | -0.124 (0.255) | 0.061 (0.110) | -0.175 (0.314) |
| Latino Writer | -0.103 (0.065) | -0.268 (0.167) | 0.015 (0.063) | 0.042 (0.171) | 0.044 (0.061) | 0.131 (0.176) | 0.036 (0.061) | 0.109 (0.178) |
| Black Writer | 0.020 (0.067) | 0.053 (0.172) | -0.035 (0.064) | -0.095 (0.172) | 0.046 (0.063) | 0.141 (0.181) | 0.035 (0.062) | 0.109 (0.181) |
| Constant | 0.526* (0.128) | -0.070 (0.330) | 0.590* (0.141) | 0.242 (0.390) | 0.277* (0.122) | -0.617 (0.350) | 0.328* (0.132) | -0.473 (0.375) |
| Observations | 349 | 349 | 350 | 350 | 340 | 340 | 339 | 339 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *Sig at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The survey was administered over four waves with municipal officials randomly assigned to waves. Because the control variables were only asked on some waves, we use multiple imputation to estimate the models with control variables