

Online Appendix for: The Long-lasting Effects of Newspaper Op-Eds on Public Opinion

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Appendix A Effects on All Dependent Variables

In the main text, we presented the effects of the op-eds on our main dependent variables, the composite scales constructed from all target-issue questions, and the “agreement” dichotomous variables constructed from the scales. In this appendix, we show the standardized effects on all of our dependent variables, in all waves, for both studies. In total, this comprises 21 questions by 5 treatments by 3 waves = 315 coefficient estimates for Mechanical Turk and 16 questions by 4 treatments by 2 waves = 128 coefficient estimates for the elite sample. Because of the very large number of estimates to be presented and the difficulty of apprehending the overall pattern from these estimates and their standard errors, we present these results as “heatmaps”, where the standardized effect estimates are shown as depth of color and the statistical significance of the estimates represented by stars.

These plots reiterate our main findings. By and large, the op-eds affect only their target issue areas; these effects persist for some time after treatment; the effects mostly replicate across samples, although there are exceptions.

Figure A.1: Standardized Effects on All Dependent Variables: MTurk Wave 1

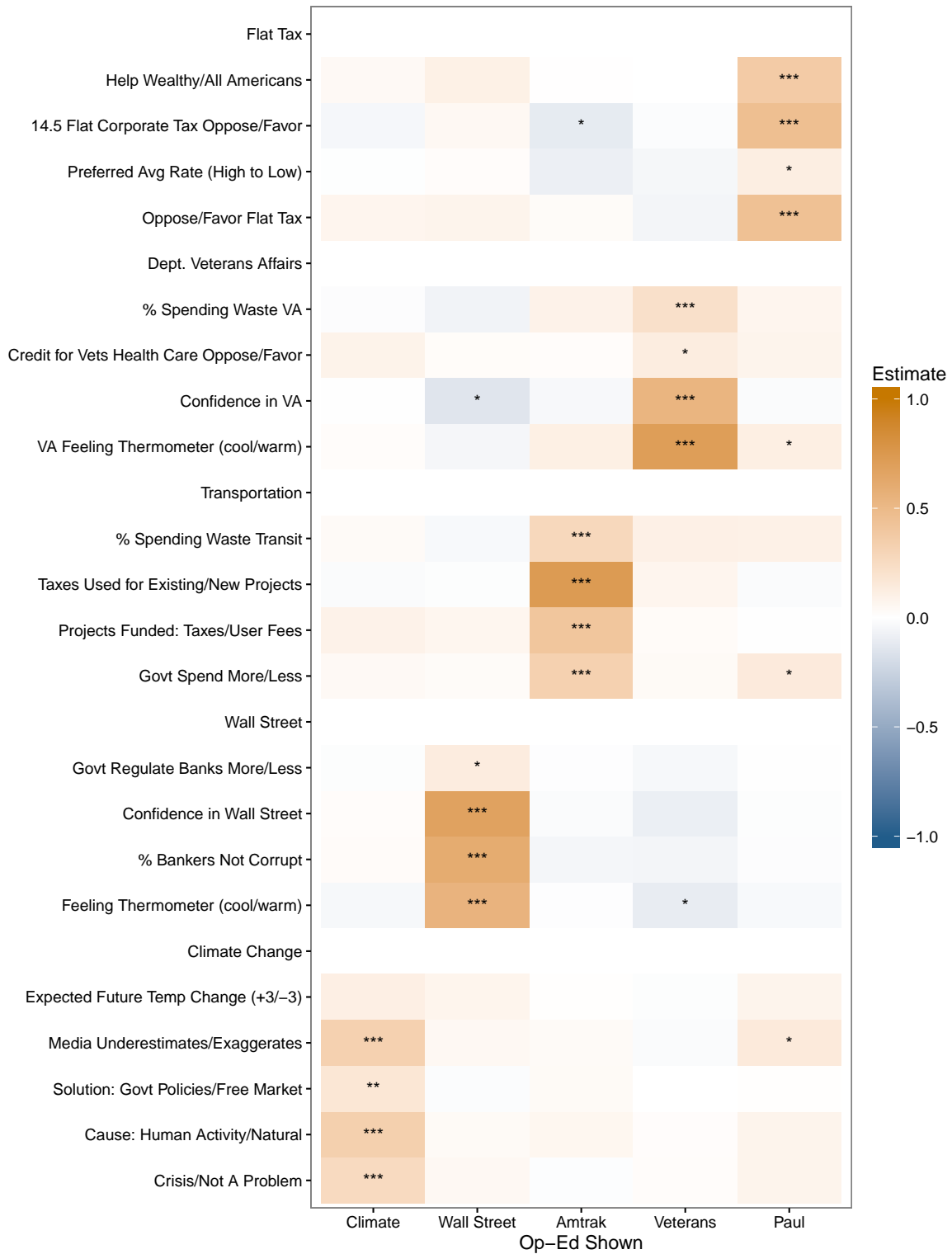


Figure A.2: Standardized Effects on All Dependent Variables: MTurk Wave 2

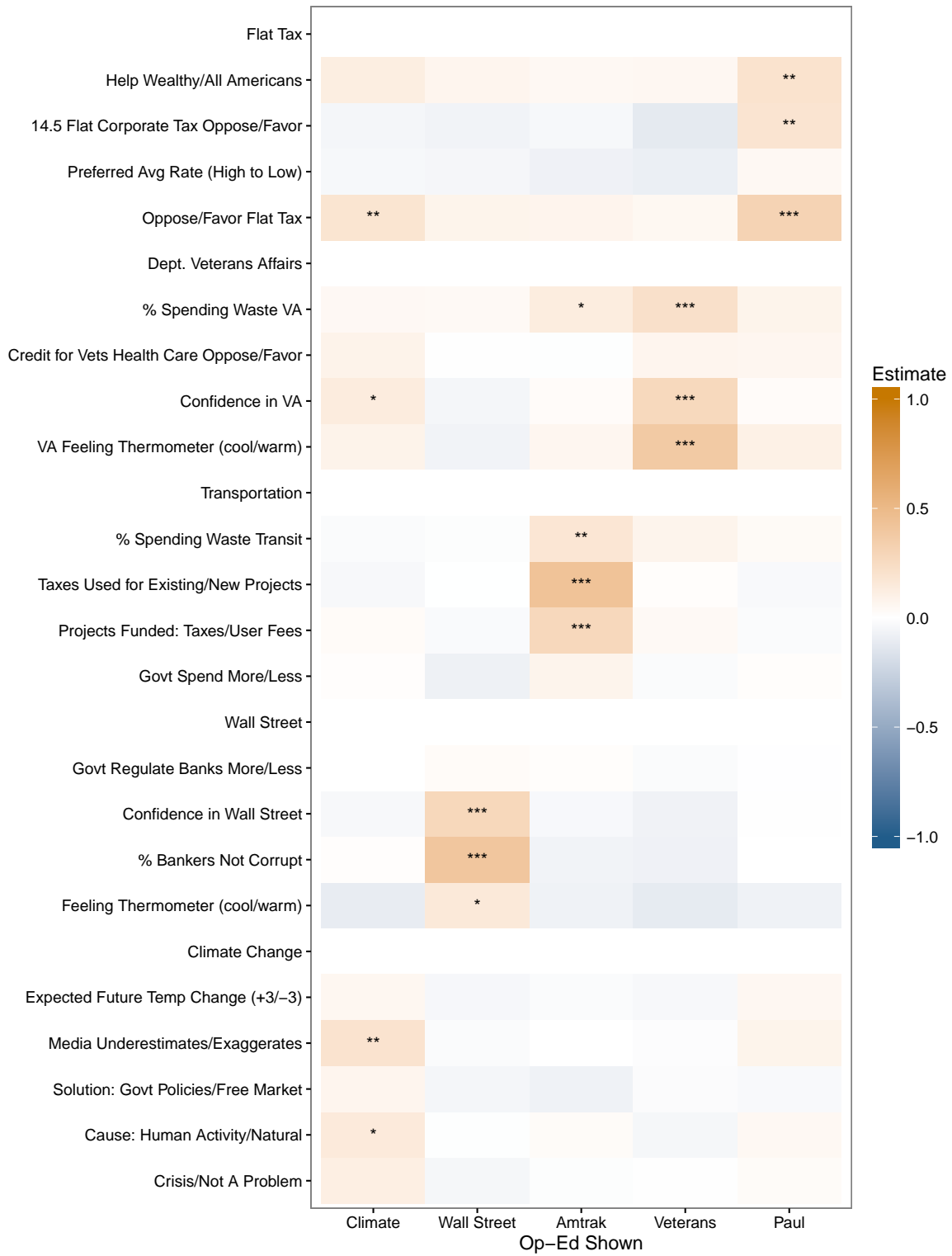


Figure A.3: Standardized Effects on All Dependent Variables: MTurk Wave 3

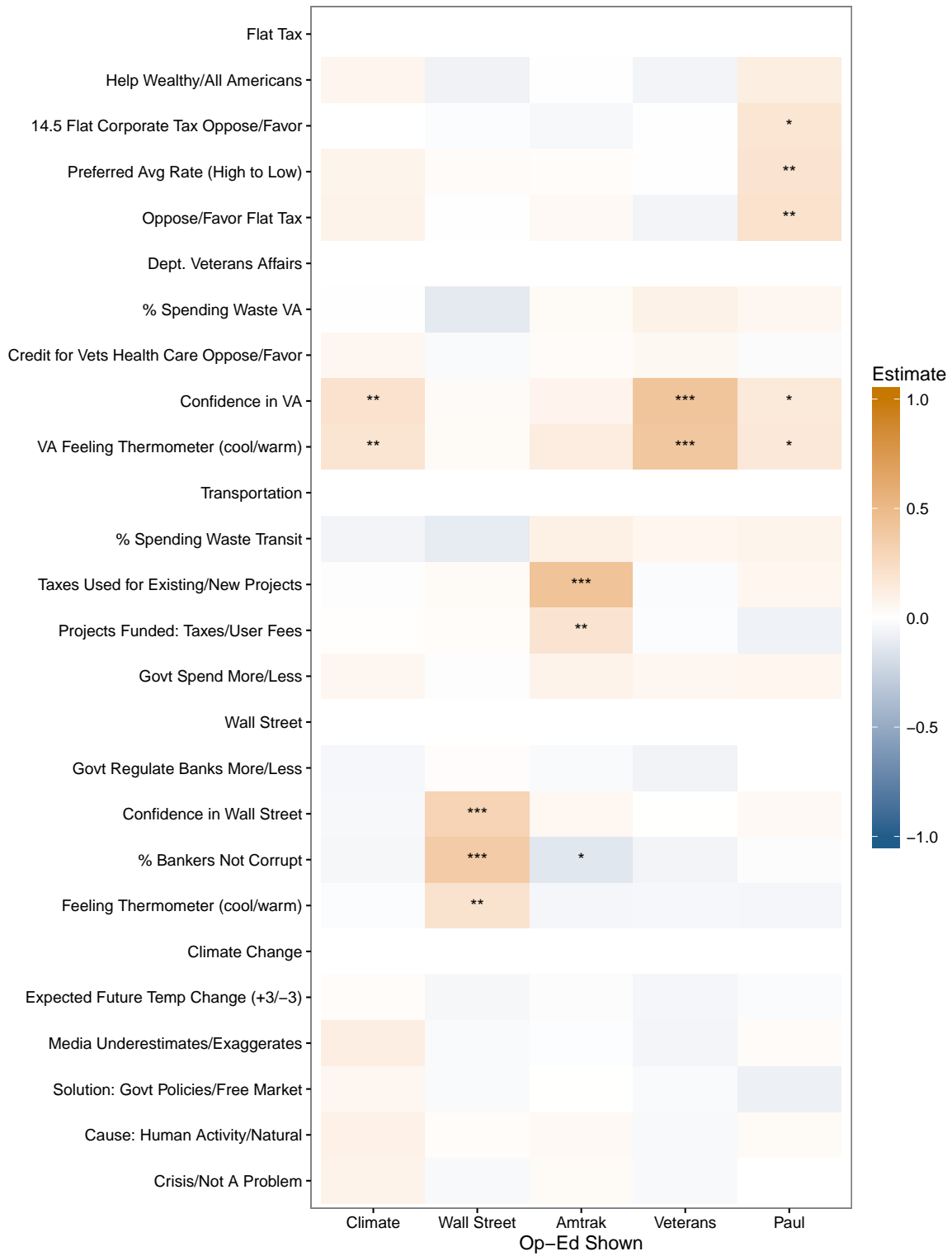


Figure A.4: Standardized Effects on All Dependent Variables: Elite Wave 1

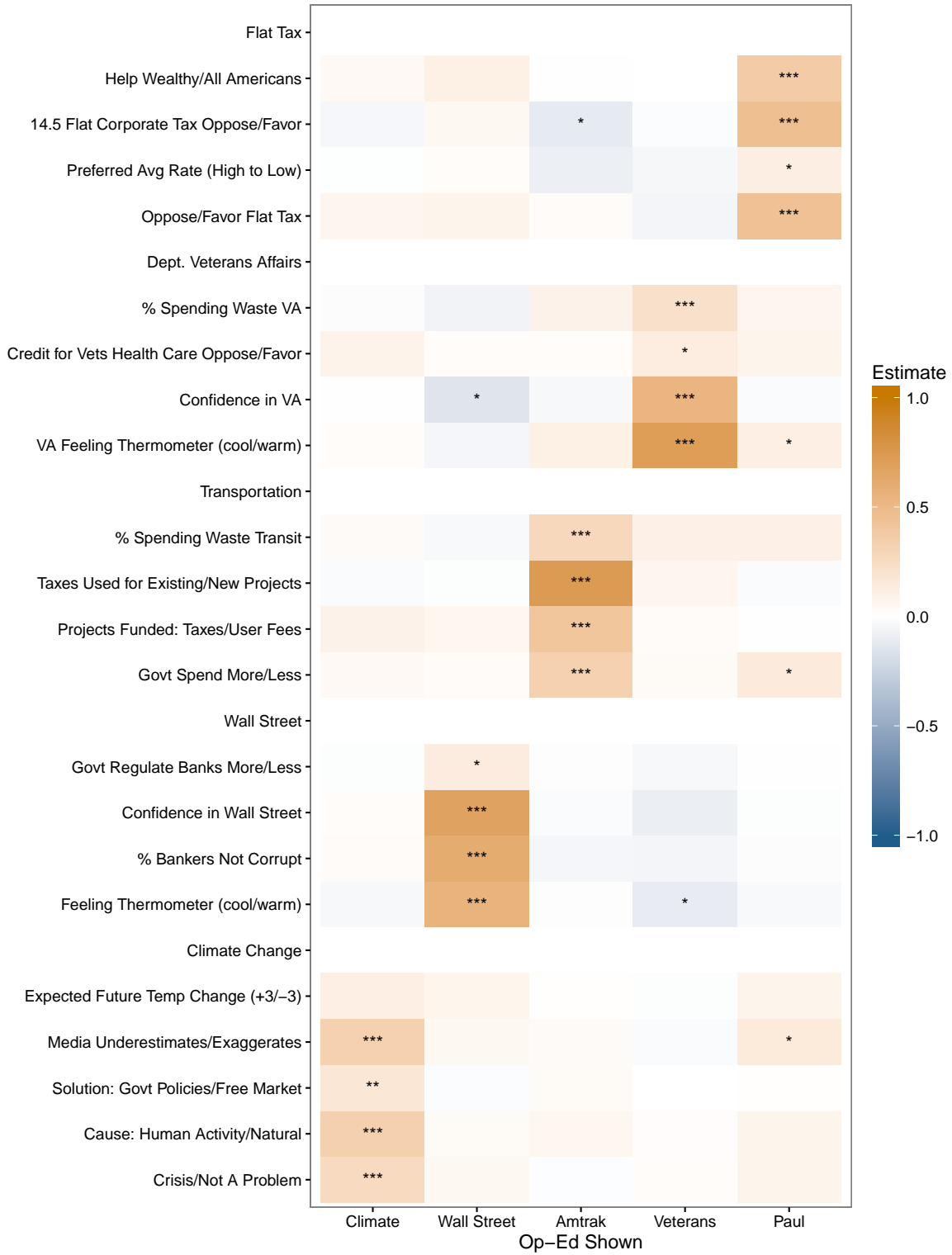


Figure A.5: Standardized Effects on All Dependent Variables: Elite Wave 2



Appendix B Balance and Demographics

Tables B.1 and B.2 show the distribution of the age, education, race, party id, ideology, and gender by treatment group for the MTurk and Elite experiments, respectively. The tables show that the distributions of these pre-treatments are consistent with random assignment. We conduct an omnibus test against the null hypothesis that the covariates do not jointly predict the treatment condition a unit is assigned to. This test is carried out via randomization inference. The test statistic is the difference in the log-likelihoods of two multinomial logit models: one predicting treatment assignment from covariates and a second predicting treatment assignment with an intercept only. We then compare that test statistic to a randomization distribution obtained by repeatedly re-drawing the treatment vector and re-estimating the test statistic. The p-values reported at the bottom of each table reflect the frequency with which the simulated test statistics exceed the observed test statistic. Both this formal test and a casual inspection of the distribution of these covariates confirm that subjects were indeed randomized into treatment conditions.

A comparison of Tables B.1 and B.2, however, reveals that the MTurk and Elite samples are quite different. The elite sample is older, much better educated, whiter, more partisan, and more male. The ideology item is difficult to interpret, because in the elite experiment, we added a “Progressive” item. For continuity of presentation, we folded this item into the “liberal” category. Nevertheless, chi-square tests reveal statistically significant differences across samples for all six of these pre-treatment demographics. These formal tests confirm our expectation that the Mechanical Turk and Elite samples are very different from each other.

Table B.3 shows the distribution of occupations among our elite sample.

Table B.1: MTurk Experimental Balance and Demographics

	Control	Amtrak	Climate	Flat Tax	Veterans	Wallstreet
18 - 29	0.469	0.456	0.419	0.463	0.436	0.428
30 - 39	0.310	0.302	0.309	0.298	0.302	0.323
40 - 49	0.116	0.124	0.153	0.129	0.125	0.118
50 - 59	0.084	0.080	0.086	0.078	0.105	0.091
60+	0.021	0.039	0.033	0.031	0.032	0.040
Less than High School	0.006	0.005	0.007	0.007	0.005	0.002
High School	0.092	0.094	0.096	0.123	0.096	0.085
Some College	0.391	0.380	0.375	0.370	0.380	0.395
College	0.395	0.397	0.382	0.356	0.383	0.418
Graduate School	0.116	0.124	0.139	0.145	0.135	0.101
Black	0.059	0.089	0.070	0.046	0.051	0.080
Hispanic	0.053	0.059	0.051	0.080	0.041	0.060
White	0.773	0.750	0.763	0.777	0.814	0.761
Other	0.114	0.102	0.116	0.097	0.095	0.100
Strong Democrat	0.183	0.216	0.179	0.182	0.184	0.222
Not very strong Democrat	0.285	0.236	0.265	0.227	0.245	0.277
Lean Democrat	0.150	0.166	0.163	0.158	0.164	0.138
Independent	0.148	0.166	0.153	0.150	0.159	0.149
Lean Republican	0.061	0.062	0.047	0.087	0.086	0.061
Not very strong Republican	0.117	0.092	0.137	0.135	0.108	0.100
Strong Republican	0.056	0.062	0.056	0.061	0.054	0.053
Liberal	0.452	0.469	0.461	0.402	0.456	0.444
Moderate	0.265	0.240	0.242	0.303	0.258	0.259
Libertarian	0.072	0.064	0.058	0.060	0.056	0.060
Conservative	0.174	0.179	0.202	0.198	0.171	0.189
Other	0.037	0.049	0.037	0.037	0.059	0.048
Male	0.527	0.518	0.511	0.537	0.500	0.522
Female	0.473	0.482	0.489	0.463	0.500	0.478
N	622	597	570	587	592	603

Omnibus balance test: $p = 0.43$

Table B.2: Elite Experiment Balance and Demographics

	Control	Amtrak	Flat Tax	Veterans	Wallstreet
18 - 29	0.069	0.069	0.078	0.071	0.071
30 - 39	0.181	0.187	0.177	0.183	0.151
40 - 49	0.214	0.158	0.216	0.185	0.181
50 - 59	0.241	0.271	0.233	0.240	0.268
60+	0.295	0.315	0.296	0.320	0.329
Less than High School	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
High School	0.004	0.005	0.006	0.000	0.007
Some College	0.013	0.022	0.032	0.041	0.045
College	0.272	0.229	0.261	0.210	0.271
Graduate School	0.710	0.744	0.700	0.749	0.678
Black	0.031	0.022	0.030	0.039	0.033
Hispanic	0.027	0.049	0.058	0.034	0.038
White	0.848	0.821	0.827	0.826	0.828
Other	0.094	0.108	0.084	0.100	0.101
Strong Democrat	0.337	0.297	0.315	0.352	0.273
Not very strong Democrat	0.138	0.147	0.145	0.124	0.162
Lean Democrat	0.094	0.123	0.111	0.105	0.075
Independent	0.112	0.123	0.121	0.121	0.120
Lean Republican	0.069	0.059	0.076	0.057	0.089
Not very strong Republican	0.098	0.125	0.128	0.112	0.151
Strong Republican	0.152	0.125	0.104	0.128	0.129
Liberal	0.277	0.269	0.302	0.297	0.264
Moderate	0.363	0.401	0.340	0.374	0.359
Libertarian	0.106	0.118	0.125	0.095	0.140
Conservative	0.212	0.179	0.174	0.192	0.206
Other	0.041	0.034	0.059	0.041	0.032
Male	0.696	0.663	0.648	0.699	0.689
Female	0.304	0.337	0.352	0.301	0.311
N	448	407	463	438	425

Omnibus balance test: $p = 0.28$

Table B.3: Elite Types

	Number	Percent of Total
Trade Association	563	25.81
Academics	429	19.67
Finance	309	14.17
Govt Affairs Professionals	305	13.98
Think Tank	181	8.30
Media	166	7.61
Hill Staffers	79	3.62
Other	73	3.35
Local Zoning/City Planner	34	1.56
Chamber of Commerce	32	1.47
World Affairs Council/Civil Leader	10	0.46
Total	2,181	100

Appendix C Distractor Task and Effects of Marijuana Op-Ed

Measured persistence effects in subsequent waves may overstate actual effects due to acquiescence bias. In other words, respondents may remember taking the survey from the first wave have a desire to answer in a similar way on subsequent surveys. For instance, they may wish to appear consistent or may want to provide answers they believe the researchers want to hear rather than what respondents really believe. In efforts to disentangle persistence effects from potential acquiescence bias we subjected our analysis to a stronger test. To do this, we randomly assigned half of the second wave subjects a new op-ed with a subject unrelated to the original treatments. This way we measure natural decay among half and “perturbed” decay among the other half. For this distractor treatment, we selected an op-ed written by a Cato Institute scholar on marijuana legalization. A benefit of this op-ed is that its subject matter is completely different from the original treatment op-eds on fiscal issues. Furthermore, since marijuana legalization is often associated with the political left, treated respondents had an opportunity to receive treatments with both conservative and liberal messages. The socially liberal message of marijuana legalization might dissuade politically sophisticated respondents from believing that researchers were looking for politically conservative answers.

Figure C.6: Effects of Marijuana Op-Ed on Marijuana Attitudes

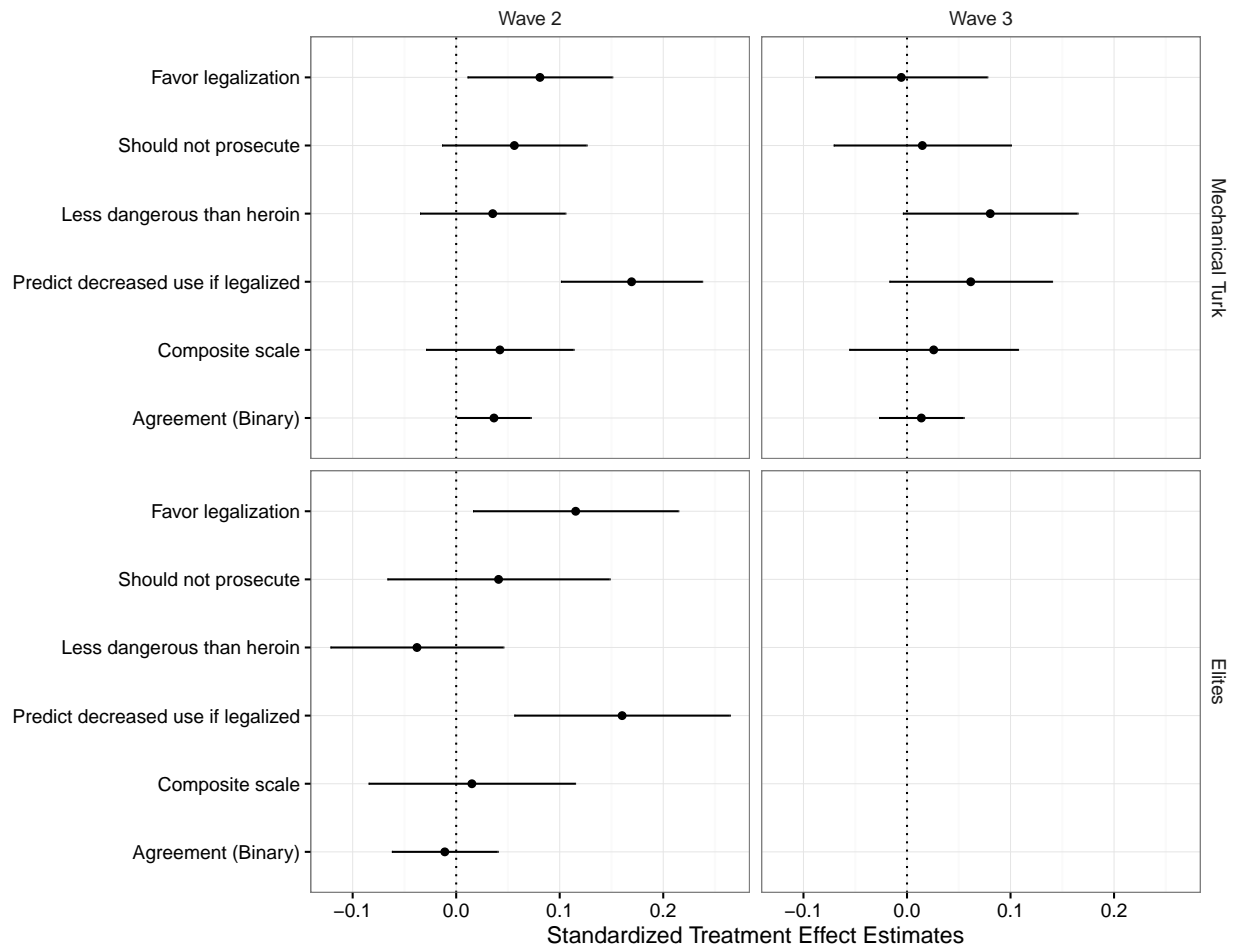
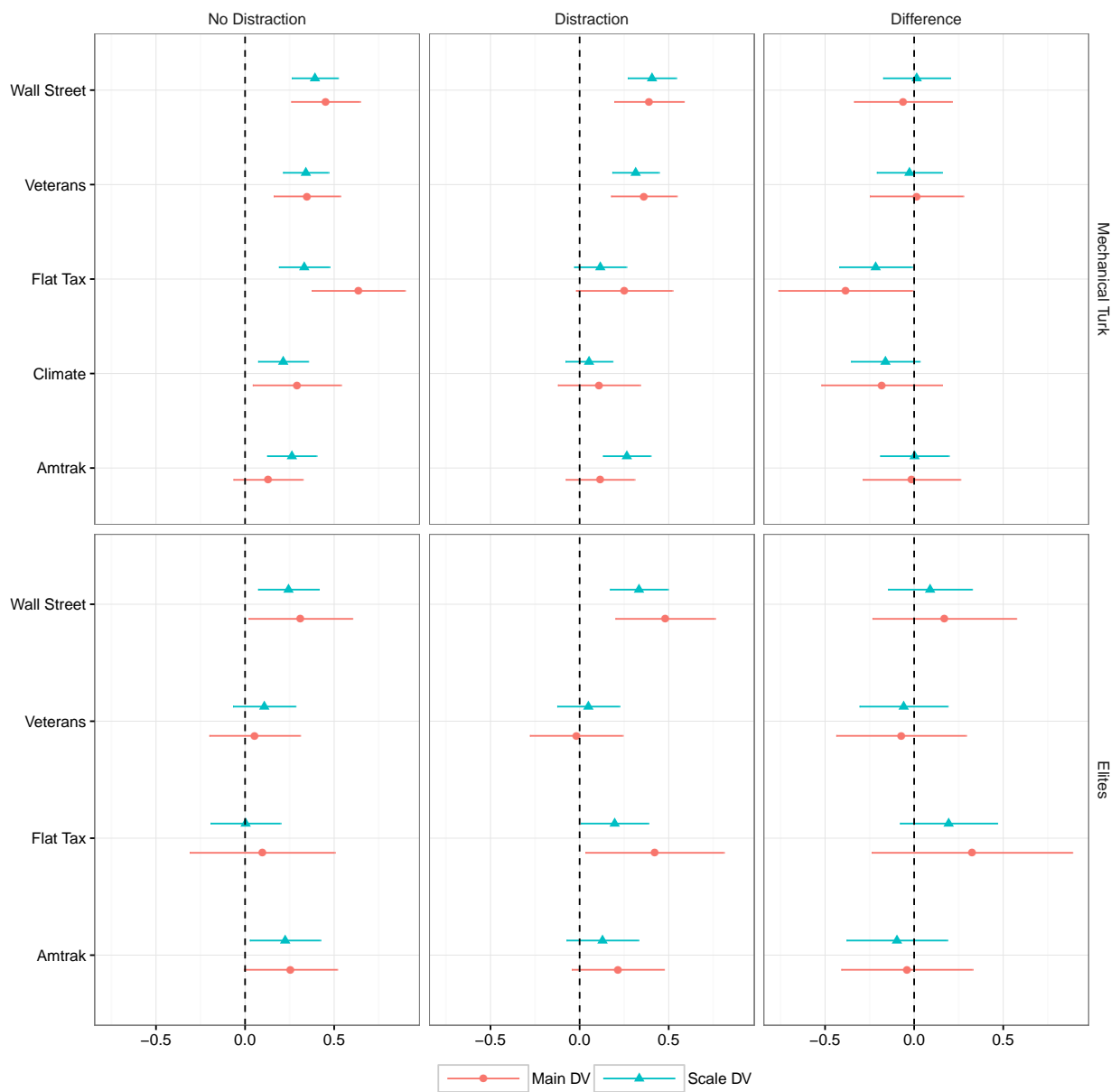


Figure C.7: Effects of Marijuana Op-Ed on Effects of Wave 1 Treatments



Appendix D Missingness

When exploring the persistence of treatment effects over time, we relied on an assumption that subjects could be partitioned into always-reporters and never-reporters. Wave 2 always-reporters respond in wave 2, regardless of their treatment assignment, likewise for wave 3 always-reporters. Wave 2 never-reporters do not respond in wave 2, regardless of treatment assignment. This assumption rules out types that would respond in, for example, wave 2 if and only if assigned to the Amtrak op-ed.

We can attempt to falsify this assumption by estimating the effect of the treatments on responding in wave 2. As shown in Table D.4, we do not see evidence that the rates of response in follow-up waves are affected by treatment in either experiment. This table bolsters the always-reporters assumption in that it does not provide evidence that it is false.

Table D.4: Predicting Follow-up Response From Treatment Condition

	Responded Wave 2		Responded Wave 3
Op-ed: Amtrak	0.016 (0.033)	-0.014 (0.022)	-0.006 (0.026)
Op-ed: Climate		0.034 (0.021)	-0.019 (0.027)
Op-ed: Flat Tax	-0.048 (0.032)	-0.002 (0.022)	-0.039 (0.027)
Op-ed: Veterans	0.014 (0.032)	0.037* (0.021)	-0.0002 (0.026)
Op-ed: Wall Street	0.010 (0.033)	0.006 (0.021)	0.004 (0.026)
Constant (Constant)	0.625 (0.023)	0.830 (0.015)	0.696 (0.018)
Sample	<i>Elite</i>	<i>MTurk</i>	<i>MTurk</i>
N	2,181	3,571	3,571
R ²	0.003	0.003	0.001

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Models estimated via OLS. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Always-reporters, of course, can and do differ from never-reporters. Table D.5 shows the results of a logistic regression on follow-up response on demographic characteristics. The follow-up sample is qualitatively different from the initial sample. However, since both the elite and MTurk samples are convenience samples to begin with, population inference is not our goal; the always-reporter samples can be thought of as different convenience samples among whom persistence can be studied without bias.

Table D.5: Predicting Follow-up Response From Demographics

	Responded Wave 2		Responded Wave 3
Age: 30 - 39	0.023 (0.226)	0.595*** (0.111)	0.646*** (0.088)
Age: 40 - 49	-0.214 (0.220)	0.676*** (0.163)	0.723*** (0.123)
Age: 50 - 59	0.042 (0.215)	0.866*** (0.201)	0.863*** (0.148)
Age: 60+	0.069 (0.214)	1.510*** (0.430)	1.113*** (0.251)
High School		0.281 (0.571)	0.504 (0.516)
Some College	0.946 (0.906)	0.487 (0.559)	0.582 (0.507)
College	1.528* (0.870)	0.815 (0.560)	0.828 (0.507)
Graduate School	1.795** (0.870)	0.790 (0.575)	0.598 (0.514)
Hispanic	0.374 (0.367)	-0.411* (0.246)	-0.149 (0.209)
White	0.715** (0.291)	0.051 (0.188)	-0.130 (0.152)
Other Race	0.482 (0.324)	-0.064 (0.226)	-0.171 (0.184)
Moderate	-0.210 (0.139)	-0.089 (0.131)	-0.301*** (0.101)
Libertarian	-0.005 (0.213)	-0.610*** (0.197)	-0.292* (0.168)
Conservative	-0.048 (0.216)	-0.075 (0.202)	-0.189 (0.150)
Other	0.109 (0.275)	-0.071 (0.234)	-0.445** (0.183)
Female	-0.262** (0.108)	0.047 (0.095)	-0.154** (0.075)
7-point Party ID	-0.001 (0.034)	0.010 (0.041)	0.052* (0.030)
Constant	-1.652* (0.920)	0.767 (0.591)	0.138 (0.531)
Sample	<i>Elite</i>	<i>MTurk</i>	<i>MTurk</i>
N	1,899	3,571	3,571
Log Likelihood	-1,230.551	-1,517.129	-2,154.779
AIC	2,495.101	3,070.257	4,345.558

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Models estimated via logistic regression. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Omitted Categories: Age 18-29, Less than High School, Black, Liberal, Male

Appendix E Experimental Stimuli

Newsweek

The Amtrak Crash: Is More Spending the Answer?

BY RANDAL O'TOOLE 5/13/15 AT 4:46 PM

It is too soon to tell what caused the Amtrak train crash that killed seven people on May 12. But advocates of increased government spending are already beginning to use the crash to promote more spending on infrastructure and are criticizing Republicans who voted to reduce Amtrak's budget the day after the crash.

Yet there is a flaw in the assumption that spending more money would result in better infrastructure. In fact, in some cases, the problem is that too much money is being spent infrastructure, but in the wrong places.

The reason for this is that politicians prefer to spend money building new infrastructure over maintaining the old. The result is that existing infrastructure that depends on tax dollars steadily declines while any new funds raised for infrastructure tend to go to new projects.

We can see this in the Boston, Washington, and other rail transit systems. Boston's system is \$9 billion in debt, has a \$3 billion maintenance backlog, and needs to spend nearly \$700 million a year just to keep the backlog from growing. Yet has only budgeted \$100 million for maintenance this year, and instead of repairing the existing system, Boston is spending \$2 billion extending one of its light-rail lines.

Similarly, Washington's Metro rail system has a \$10 billion maintenance backlog, and poor maintenance was the cause of the 2009 wreck that killed nine people. Yet, rather than rehabilitate their portions of the system, Northern Virginia is spending \$6.8 billion building a new rail line to Dulles Airport; D.C. wants to spend \$1 billion on new streetcar lines; and Maryland is considering building a \$2.5 billion light-rail line in D.C. suburbs.

On the other hand, infrastructure that is funded out of user fees is generally in good shape. Despite tales of crumbling bridges, the 2007 Minnesota bridge collapse was due to a construction flaw and the 2013 Washington state bridge collapse was due to an oversized truck; lack of maintenance had nothing to do with either failure.

Department of Transportation numbers show that the number of bridges considered structurally deficient has fallen by more than 50 percent since 1990, while the average roughness of highway pavement has decreased. State highways and bridges, which are almost entirely funded out of user fees, tend to be in the best condition while local highways and bridges, which depend more on tax dollars, tend to be the ones with the most serious problems.

Before 1970, almost all of our transportation infrastructure was funded out of user fees and the United States had the best transportation system in the world. Since then, funding decisions have increasingly been made by politicians who are more interested in getting their pictures taken cutting ribbons than in making sure our transportation systems run safely and smoothly.

Proponents of higher gas taxes and other increased funding on infrastructure may talk about crumbling bridges, but what they really want is to spend more money on new projects that are often of little value. For example, they want high-speed trains that cost more but go less than half the speed of flying and light-rail trains that cost more but can move fewer people than buses.

This country doesn't need more infrastructure that it can't afford to maintain. Instead, it needs a more reliable system of transport funding, and that means one based on user fees and not tax subsidies.

Randal O'Toole is a senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of Gridlock: Why We're Stuck in Traffic and What to Do About It.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Political Assault on Climate Skeptics

Members of Congress send inquisitorial letters to universities, energy companies, even think tanks.

By RICHARD S. LINDZEN
March 4, 2015 6:50 p.m. ET

Research in recent years has encouraged those of us who question the popular alarm over allegedly man-made global warming. Actually, the move from “global warming” to “climate change” indicated the silliness of this issue. The climate has been changing since the Earth was formed. This normal course is now taken to be evidence of doom.

Individuals and organizations highly vested in disaster scenarios have relentlessly attacked scientists and others who do not share their beliefs. The attacks have taken a threatening turn.

As to the science itself, it’s worth noting that all predictions of warming since the onset of the last warming episode of 1978-98—which is the only period that the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) attempts to attribute to carbon-dioxide emissions—have greatly exceeded what has been observed. These observations support a much reduced and essentially harmless climate response to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide.

In addition, there is experimental support for the increased importance of variations in solar radiation on climate and a renewed awareness of the importance of natural unforced climate variability that is largely absent in current climate models. There also is observational evidence from several independent studies that the so-called “water vapor feedback,” essential to amplifying the relatively weak impact of carbon dioxide alone on Earth temperatures, is canceled by cloud processes.

There are also claims that extreme weather—hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods, you name it—may be due to global warming. The data show no increase in the number or intensity of such events. The IPCC itself acknowledges the lack of

any evident relation between **extreme weather and climate**, though allowing that with sufficient effort some relation might be uncovered.

World leaders proclaim that climate change is our greatest problem, demonizing carbon dioxide. Yet atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide have been vastly higher through most of Earth's history. Climates both warmer and colder than the present have coexisted with these higher levels.

Currently elevated levels of carbon dioxide have contributed to increases in agricultural productivity. Indeed, climatologists before the recent global warming hysteria referred to warm periods as "climate optima." Yet world leaders are embarking on costly policies that have no capacity to replace fossil fuels but enrich crony capitalists at public expense, increasing costs for all, and restricting access to energy to the world's poorest populations that still lack access to electricity's immense benefits.

Billions of dollars have been poured into studies supporting climate alarm, and trillions of dollars have been involved in overthrowing the energy economy. So it is unsurprising that great efforts have been made to ramp up hysteria, even as the case for climate alarm is disintegrating.

The latest example began with an article published in the New York Times on Feb. 22 about Willie Soon, a scientist at the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Mr. Soon has, for over 25 years, argued for a primary role of solar variability on climate. But as Greenpeace noted in 2011, Mr. Soon was, in small measure, supported by fossil-fuel companies over a period of 10 years.

The Times reintroduced this old material as news, arguing that Mr. Soon had failed to list this support in a recent paper in *Science Bulletin* of which he was one of four authors. Two days later Arizona Rep. Raul Grijalva, the ranking Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, used the Times article as the basis for a hunting expedition into anything said, written and communicated by seven individuals—David Legates, John Christy, Judith Curry, Robert Balling, Roger Pielke Jr., Steven Hayward and me—about testimony we gave to Congress or other governmental bodies. We were selected solely on the basis of our objections to alarmist claims about the climate.

In letters he sent to the presidents of the universities employing us (although I have been retired from MIT since 2013), Mr. Grijalva wanted all details of all of our outside funding, and communications about this funding, including "consulting

fees, promotional considerations, speaking fees, honoraria, travel expenses, salary, compensation and any other monies.” Mr. Grijalva acknowledged the absence of any evidence but purportedly wanted to know if accusations made against Mr. Soon about alleged conflicts of interest or failure to disclose his funding sources in science journals might not also apply to us.

Perhaps the most bizarre letter concerned the University of Colorado’s Mr. Pielke. His specialty is science policy, not science per se, and he supports reductions in carbon emissions but finds no basis for associating extreme weather with climate. Mr. Grijalva’s complaint is that Mr. Pielke, in agreeing with the IPCC on extreme weather and climate, contradicts the assertions of John Holdren, President Obama’s science czar.

Mr. Grijalva’s letters convey an unstated but perfectly clear threat: Research disputing alarm over the climate should cease lest universities that employ such individuals incur massive inconvenience and expense—and scientists holding such views should not offer testimony to Congress. After the Times article, Sens. Edward Markey (D., Mass.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D., R.I.) and Barbara Boxer (D., Calif.) also sent letters to numerous energy companies, industrial organizations and, strangely, many right-of-center think tanks (including the Cato Institute, with which I have an association) to unearth their alleged influence peddling.

The American Meteorological Society responded with appropriate indignation at the singling out of scientists for their scientific positions, as did many individual scientists. On Monday, apparently reacting to criticism, Mr. Grijalva conceded to the National Journal that his requests for communications between the seven of us and our outside funders was “overreach.”

Where all this will lead is still hard to tell. At least Mr. Grijalva’s letters should help clarify for many the essentially political nature of the alarms over the climate, and the damage it is doing to science, the environment and the well-being of the world’s poorest.

Mr. Lindzen is professor emeritus of atmospheric sciences at MIT and a distinguished senior fellow of the Cato Institute.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Blow Up the Tax Code and Start Over

Apply a 14.5% flat tax to personal income and to businesses. Cut deductions. Watch the economy roar.

By RAND PAUL

June 17, 2015 7:09 p.m. ET

Some of my fellow Republican candidates for the presidency have proposed plans to fix the tax system. These proposals are a step in the right direction, but the tax code has grown so corrupt, complicated, intrusive and antigrowth that I've concluded the system isn't fixable.

So on Thursday I am announcing an over \$2 trillion tax cut that would repeal the entire IRS tax code—more than 70,000 pages—and replace it with a low, broad-based tax of 14.5% on individuals and businesses. I would eliminate nearly every special-interest loophole. The plan also eliminates the payroll tax on workers and several federal taxes outright, including gift and estate taxes, telephone taxes, and all duties and tariffs. I call this “The Fair and Flat Tax.”

President Obama talks about “middle-class economics,” but his redistribution policies have led to rising income inequality and negative income gains for families. Here's what I propose for the middle class: The Fair and Flat Tax eliminates payroll taxes, which are seized by the IRS from a worker's paychecks before a family ever sees the money. This will boost the incentive for employers to hire more workers, and raise after-tax income by at least 15% over 10 years.

Here's why we have to start over with the tax code. From 2001 until 2010, there were at least 4,430 changes to tax laws—an average of one “fix” a day—always promising more fairness, more simplicity or more growth stimulants. And every year the Internal Revenue Code grows absurdly more incomprehensible, as if it were designed as a jobs program for accountants, IRS agents and tax attorneys. Polls show that “fairness” is a top goal for Americans in our tax system. I envision a traditionally All-American solution: Everyone plays by the same rules. This means no one of privilege, wealth or with an arsenal of lobbyists can game the system to pay a lower rate than working Americans.

Most important, a smart tax system must turbocharge the economy and pull America out of the slow-growth rut of the past decade. We are already at least \$2 trillion behind where we should be with a normal recovery; the growth gap widens every month. Even Mr. Obama's economic advisers tell him that the U.S. corporate tax code, which has the highest rates in the world (35%), is an economic drag. When an iconic American company like Burger King wants to renounce its citizenship for Canada because that country's tax rates are so much lower, there's a fundamental problem.

Another increasingly obvious danger of our current tax code is the empowerment of a rogue agency, the IRS, to examine the most private financial and lifestyle information of every American citizen. We now know that the IRS, through political hacks like former IRS official Lois Lerner, routinely abused its auditing power to build an enemies list and harass anyone who might be adversarial to President Obama's policies. A convoluted tax code enables these corrupt tactics.

My tax plan would blow up the tax code and start over. In consultation with some of the top tax experts in the country, including the Heritage Foundation's [Stephen Moore](#), former presidential candidate Steve Forbes and Reagan economist Arthur Laffer, I devised a 21st-century tax code that would establish a 14.5% flat-rate tax applied equally to all personal income, including wages, salaries, dividends, capital gains, rents and interest. All deductions except for a mortgage and charities would be eliminated. The first \$50,000 of income for a family of four would not be taxed. For low-income working families, the plan would retain the earned-income tax credit.

I would also apply this uniform 14.5% business-activity tax on all companies—down from as high as nearly 40% for small businesses and 35% for corporations. This tax would be levied on revenues minus allowable expenses, such as the purchase of parts, computers and office equipment. All capital purchases would be immediately expensed, ending complicated depreciation schedules.

The immediate question everyone asks is: Won't this 14.5% tax plan blow a massive hole in the budget deficit? As a senator, I have proposed balanced budgets and I pledge to balance the budget as president.

Here's why this plan would balance the budget: We asked the experts at the nonpartisan Tax Foundation to estimate what this plan would mean for jobs, and whether we are raising enough money to fund the government. The analysis is positive news: The plan is an economic steroid injection. Because the Fair and Flat

Tax rewards work, saving, investment and small business creation, the Tax Foundation estimates that in 10 years it will increase gross domestic product by about 10%, and create at least 1.4 million new jobs.

And because the best way to balance the budget and pay down government debt is to put Americans back to work, my plan would actually reduce the national debt by trillions of dollars over time when combined with my package of spending cuts.

The left will argue that the plan is a tax cut for the wealthy. But most of the loopholes in the tax code were designed by the rich and politically connected. Though the rich will pay a lower rate along with everyone else, they won't have special provisions to avoid paying lower than 14.5%.

The challenge to this plan will be to overcome special-interest groups in Washington who will muster all of their political muscle to save corporate welfare. That's what happened to my friend Steve Forbes when he ran for president in 1996 on the idea of the flat tax. Though the flat tax was surprisingly popular with voters for its simplicity and its capacity to boost the economy, crony capitalists and lobbyists exploded his noble crusade.

Today, the American people see the rot in the system that is degrading our economy day after day and want it to end. That is exactly what the Fair and Flat Tax will do through a plan that's the boldest restoration of fairness to American taxpayers in over a century.

Sen. Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, is running for his party's presidential nomination.

The New York Times

The Other Veterans Scandal

By MICHAEL F. CANNON and CHRISTOPHER A. PREBLE JUNE 15, 2014

WASHINGTON — THE Department of Veterans Affairs is mired in scandal. More than 57,000 veterans have been waiting at least three months for a doctor's appointment. Another 64,000 never even made it onto a waiting list. There are allegations that waits for care either caused or contributed to veterans' deaths.

But another, even larger problem with the Department of Veterans Affairs is being overlooked: Even when the department works exactly as intended, it helps inflict great harm on veterans, active-duty military personnel and civilians.

Here's how. Veterans' health and disability benefits are some of the largest costs involved in any military conflict, but they are delayed costs, typically reaching their peak 40 or 50 years after the conflict ends. Congress funds these commitments — through the Department of Veterans Affairs — only once they come due.

As a result, when Congress debates whether to authorize and fund military action, it can act as if those costs don't exist. But concealing those costs makes military conflicts appear less burdensome and therefore increases their likelihood. It's as if Congress deliberately structured veterans' benefits to make it easier to start wars.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is supposed to help wounded veterans, but its current design makes soldiers more likely to get killed or injured in the first place. The scandal isn't at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The scandal is the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Is there a better way? We propose a system of veterans' benefits that would be funded by Congress in advance. It would allow veterans to purchase life,

disability and health insurance from private insurers. Those policies would cover losses related to their term of service, and would pay benefits when they left active duty through the remainder of their lives.

To cover the cost, military personnel would receive additional pay sufficient to purchase a statutorily defined package of benefits at actuarially fair rates. The precise amount would be determined with reference to premiums quoted by competing insurers, and would vary with the risks posed by particular military jobs.

Insurers and providers would be more responsive because veterans could fire them — something they cannot do to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans' insurance premiums would also reveal, and enable recruits and active-duty personnel to compare, the risks posed by various military jobs and career paths.

Most important, under this system, when a military conflict increases the risk to life and limb, insurers would adjust veterans' insurance premiums upward, and Congress would have to increase military pay immediately to enable military personnel to cover those added costs.

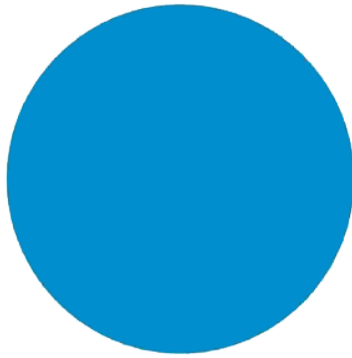
Consider how this system might have prevented Congress's misbegotten decision to authorize President George W. Bush to invade Iraq. In 2002, the Bush administration played down estimates that the war would cost as much as \$200 billion, insisting the cost would be less than \$50 billion. To give you a sense of how mistaken this was: The economists Linda J. Bilmes and Joseph E. Stiglitz put the cost of veterans' benefits alone, from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, at roughly \$1 trillion.

Like others before her, Hillary Rodham Clinton has admitted that voting to authorize the Iraq invasion was a "mistake," though she "made the best decision I could with the information I had." How many members of Congress would have voted differently if confronted with the long-term health and disability needs of the troops they had already sent into Afghanistan and those they were sending into Iraq? How many would have pressed harder to end the wars sooner if they had to confront the mounting cost of veterans' benefits, in addition to the wars' other growing costs, every year the wars dragged on?

The alternative system we propose combines the universal goal of improving

veterans' benefits with conservative Republicans' preference for market incentives and antiwar Democrats' desire to make it harder to wage war. Pre-funding veterans' benefits could prevent unnecessary wars, or at least end them sooner. We can think of no greater tribute to the men and women serving in our armed forces.

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Wall Street offers very real benefits: Opposing view

But headlines focus on the bad behavior.

Thaya Knight 7:16 pm May 26, 2015

Not every person on Wall Street is a morally corrupt Gordon Gekko. Do Wall Street traders want to make money? Yes. Are they generally people who thrive in a fast-paced, competitive environment? You bet. And that is a good thing.

At its core, here's what Wall Street does: It makes sure that companies doing useful things get the money they need to keep doing those things. Do you like your smartphone? Does it make your life easier? The company that made that phone got the money to develop the product and get it into the store where you bought it with the help of Wall Street.

When a company wants to expand, or make a new product, or improve its old products, it needs money, and it often gets that money by selling stock or bonds. That helps those companies, the broader economy and consumers generally.

When we have flashing headlines about Wall Street traders acting badly, as we had last week with news of five major banks pleading guilty to criminal charges, it is very easy to hate Wall Street. But we only hear headlines about the worst behavior.

No one writes news stories about traders who go about their business every day, carefully complying with the many (and there are many) rules and regulations that govern their work. Also, the financial sector, which is usually what people mean when they say "Wall Street," isn't only or even mostly the big banks.

There are small firms, banks, funds and advisers that make up a large portion of our financial industry. While the news about corruption, corporate welfare and lawbreaking is very bad, it doesn't mean the entire industry is rotten. Or, more important, that we don't need it.

Wall Street could be better. We could eliminate regulations that crowd out competition for the big banks. We could reform the system to do away with "too big to fail," making it harder for bad traders to get away with bad behavior. Either way, we shouldn't lose sight of the very real economic and social benefits Wall Street provides.

Thaya Knight is associate director of financial regulation studies at the Cato Institute.

Appendix F Outcome Measures

Amtrak Outcomes:

- Do you think the government should spend more, less, or about what it does now on transportation and infrastructure? [1: A lot more, A lot less]
- Would you prefer government pay for building and maintaining roads and infrastructure through raising taxes for transportation spending, or through charging user-fees, like paying tolls when you drive on the highways? [1: Fund entirely through tax increases, 4: Both Equally, 7: Fund entirely through user fees]
- If the government raised taxes to pay for more transportation spending, do you expect that money would primarily go toward building new infrastructure projects or maintaining and improving existing infrastructure? [1: Entirely toward NEW infrastructure projects, 4: Both Equally, 7: Entirely toward maintaining EXISTING infrastructure]
- For every dollar the government spends on transportation and infrastructure projects, about how many cents do you think are spent inefficiently? [Slider 0 - 100, How Many Cents Spent Inefficiently?]

Climate Outcomes:

- Would you say that climate change is best described as a ... (1: Crisis, 7: Not a problem at all)
- From what you've read and heard, do you believe increases in Earth's temperature are due... (1: Entirely due to the effects of pollution from human activity, 7: Entirely due to natural causes)
- Do you think the solution to the climate change problem will primarily come from government policies or technological innovation in the free market? (1: Entirely from the free market, 7: Entirely from government policies)
- Thinking about what's in the news, is the seriousness of global warming generally exaggerated, correct, or underestimated? (1: Generally exaggerated, 4: Generally Correct, 7: Generally underestimated)
- How many degrees (Fahrenheit) do you believe the Earth will warm over the next 100 years? (Select "0" if you think the temperature will stay about the same) [Slider -3 to 3]

Flat Tax Outcomes:

- Would you favor or oppose changing the federal tax system to a flat tax, where everyone making more than \$50,000 a year pays the same percentage of his or her income in taxes? [1: Strongly Favor, 7: Strongly Oppose]
- What percentage of income, from 0 to 100, do you think Americans should pay in federal taxes on average? [Slider 0 - 100, Average Tax Rate]
- Do you favor or oppose reducing the business and corporate tax rate to 14.5% percent? [1: Strongly Favor, 7: Strongly Oppose]
- Do you think a flat tax on incomes over \$50,000 without tax deductions or credits will do more to help all Americans or do more to help wealthy Americans? [1: Do more to help ALL Americans, 7: Do more to help WEALTHY Americans]

Veterans Outcomes:

- How would you rate your feelings toward the Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA) on a scale of 0 to 100, where a rating of 100 means you feel as warm and positive as possible and 0 means you feel as cold and negative as possible? How do you feel toward... [Department of Veterans Affairs]
- How much confidence do you have in the Department of Veterans Affairs' ability to care for veterans? [1: A Great Deal, 7: None At All]
- Would you favor or oppose changing the healthcare system for Veterans to a system where the government provides additional money sufficient for Veterans to purchase a government-approved health insurance plan from private health insurance companies? [1: Strongly Favor, 7: Strongly Oppose]
- For every dollar the government spends on Veterans Benefits, about how many cents do you think are spent inefficiently? [Slider 0 - 100, How Many Cents Spent Inefficiently?]

Wall Street Outcomes:

- How would you rate your feelings toward the following on a scale of 0 to 100, where a rating of 100 means you feel as warm and positive as possible and 0 means you feel as cold and negative as possible. How do you feel toward... [CEOs; Wall Street Bankers; Government Regulators]
- What percentage of Wall Street bankers, from zero to one hundred, do you think are corrupt? [Slider 0 - 100: % Wall Street Bankers Corrupt]
- How much confidence do you have in Wall Street bankers and brokers to do the right thing... [1: A Great Deal, 7: None at all]
- Compared to what it's doing now, do you think the federal government needs to regulate banks and financial institutions [1: A lot more, A lot less]

Marijuana Outcomes:

- Do you favor or oppose legalizing marijuana? [1: Strongly Favor, 7: Strongly Oppose]
- As you may know, some states have decided to allow marijuana use, but it is still prohibited under federal law. Do you think the federal government should or should not prosecute people who use marijuana in these states? [1: Federal government should not prosecute, 7: Federal government should prosecute]
- Under federal law, marijuana is categorized as a drug equally dangerous to heroin. Do you think federal law should categorize marijuana as more dangerous than heroin, less dangerous than heroin, or equally dangerous as heroin? [1: A lot less dangerous, 7: A lot more dangerous]
- If marijuana is legalized, do you expect marijuana usage will increase, decrease, or stay the same? [1: Decrease a lot, 7: Increase a lot]