

Appendix for  
“The Power of Trump’s Big Lie:  
Identity Fusion, Internalizing Misinformation, and  
Support for Trump”

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## A Sample Statistics

**Table A1** – Descriptive Statistics by Wave

	<b>Wave 1</b>	<b>Wave 2</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>
	N = 402	N = 284	N = 130
<b>Retained from Wave 1</b>		71%	32%
<b>Female</b>	58%	57%	53%
<b>Age</b>	46 (14)	47 (14)	54 (14)
<b>Education</b>	4.28 (1.27)	4.34 (1.24)	4.52 (1.21)
<b>White</b>	83%	81%	83%
<b>Trump Fusion</b>	3.87 (1.74)	3.73 (1.76)	3.49 (1.84)
<b>Big Lie Belief</b>	NA (NA)	4.47 (1.55)	4.11 (1.73)
<b>Affect toward Democrats</b>	18 (20)	19 (22)	19 (20)
<b>Outgroup Threat</b>	5.77 (1.30)	5.76 (1.44)	4.66 (1.55)
<b>Ideology</b>	5.48 (1.19)	5.46 (1.14)	5.56 (1.01)

Entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

**Table A2** – Wave 1 Descriptive Statistics for Attriters and Non-Attriters

	<b>Attritted</b>	<b>Did Not Attrit</b>
	N = 272	N = 130
<b>Female</b>	61%	52%
<b>Age</b>	44 (13)	51 (14)
<b>Education</b>	4.18 (1.28)	4.50 (1.22)
<b>White</b>	82%	83%
<b>Trump Fusion</b>	3.75 (1.72)	4.12 (1.76)
<b>Affect toward Democrats</b>	20 (21)	14 (16)
<b>Outgroup Threat</b>	5.74 (1.29)	5.86 (1.32)
<b>Ideology</b>	5.38 (1.26)	5.68 (1.01)

Entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

## B Regression Tables

**Table B3** – Alternative Linear Models of Change between 2021 and 2024 and Levels in 2024 with Out-Party Hate Instead of Perceived Out-Party Threat

	Change 2021-2024		Levels in 2024	
	Big Lie	Trump Fusion	Crimes	Policies
Change Variables				
$\Delta$ Trump Fusion	0.21*		0.23**	0.02
	(0.10)		(0.09)	(0.07)
$\Delta$ US Fusion	0.08	0.32**	0.06	0.17
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.09)
$\Delta$ Big Lie		0.20*	0.37***	0.40***
		(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.07)
$\Delta$ Out-party Hate	-0.02**	-0.01	0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Baseline Levels				
Out-party Hate <sub>Wave 1</sub>	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Trump Fusion <sub>Wave 1</sub>	0.20*	0.07	0.08	0.08
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.07)
US Fusion <sub>Wave 1</sub>	0.03	-0.05	0.20*	0.07
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.08)
Big Lie <sub>Wave 2</sub>	-0.43***	-0.24*	0.45***	0.39***
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.09)
Authoritarian Actions <sub>Wave 1</sub>	0.08	-0.10	-0.20	0.03
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Faith in Democracy <sub>Wave 1</sub>	-0.05	-0.17	-0.03	0.08
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.11)
Support for Jan. 6 <sub>Wave 2</sub>	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.06
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.08)
Ideological ID <sub>Wave 1</sub>	-0.04	-0.01	0.42***	0.19*
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.09)
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.30	0.23	0.45	0.47
Num. obs.	122	122	122	122

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

The dependent variables of the change models are first differences between wave 3 and wave 2. The dependent variable of the level models are values in wave 3. Standard errors in parentheses.

**Table B4** – Fixed-Effects Linear Models of Trump Fusion and Big Lie

	Change 2021-2024	
	Trump Fusion	Big Lie
Trump Fusion		0.23* (0.10)
US Fusion	0.33** (0.12)	0.05 (0.11)
Big Lie	0.24* (0.09)	
Outparty Hate	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)
Ideological ID	-0.03 (0.19)	0.24 (0.21)
Num. obs.	406	406

OLS estimates of fixed-effects models with cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses. Larger N reflects repeated measures of each respondent over time.

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

**Table B5** – Lagged Dependent Variable Linear Models of Trump Fusion and Big Lie

	Change 2021-2024	
	Trump Fusion	Big Lie
Big Lie <sub>Wave 2</sub>	-0.39** (0.15)	0.61** (0.19)
Big Lie <sub>Wave 3</sub>	0.24* (0.11)	
Trump Fusion <sub>Wave 2</sub>	0.66*** (0.09)	-0.09 (0.12)
Trump Fusion <sub>Wave 3</sub>		0.27* (0.11)
US Fusion <sub>Wave 2</sub>	-0.22 (0.13)	-0.06 (0.14)
US Fusion <sub>Wave 3</sub>	0.30* (0.14)	0.01 (0.15)
Outgroup Threat <sub>Wave 2</sub>	-0.08 (0.14)	-0.34 (0.18)
Outgroup Threat <sub>Wave 3</sub>	0.21 (0.12)	0.45*** (0.13)
Faith in Democracy <sub>Wave 1</sub>	-0.08 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.14)
Support for Jan. 6 <sub>Wave 2</sub>	0.14 (0.12)	0.05 (0.11)
Authoritarian Actions <sub>Wave 1</sub>	-0.04 (0.12)	0.03 (0.14)
Ideological ID <sub>Wave 1</sub>	0.06 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.14)
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.57	0.46
Num. obs.	122	122

OLS estimates of lagged dependent variable models with cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

# C Descriptive Statistics

## C.1 Histograms of Fusion with Trump

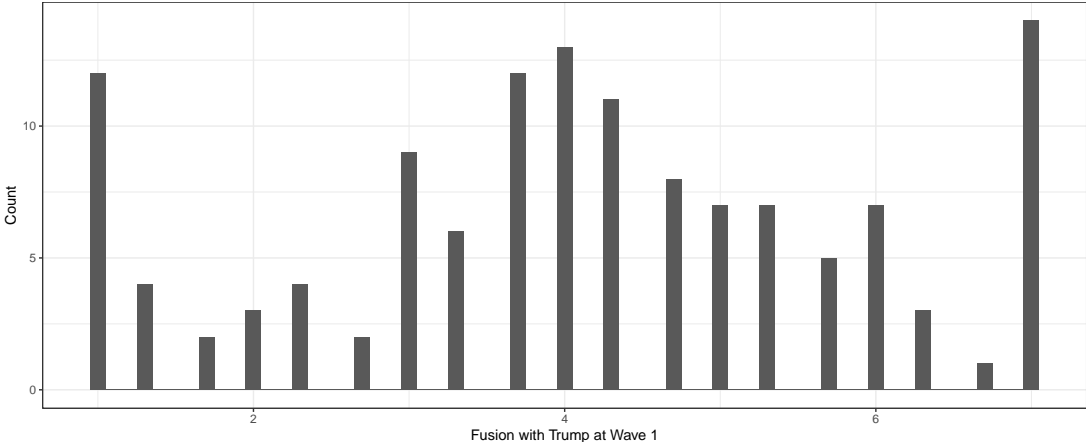


Figure C1 – Histogram of Fusion with Trump at Wave 1 (Nov. 2020)

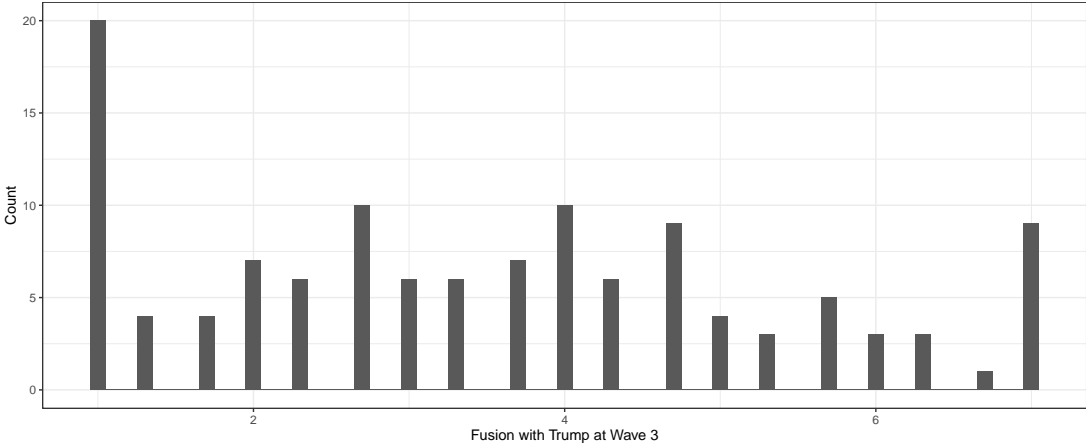
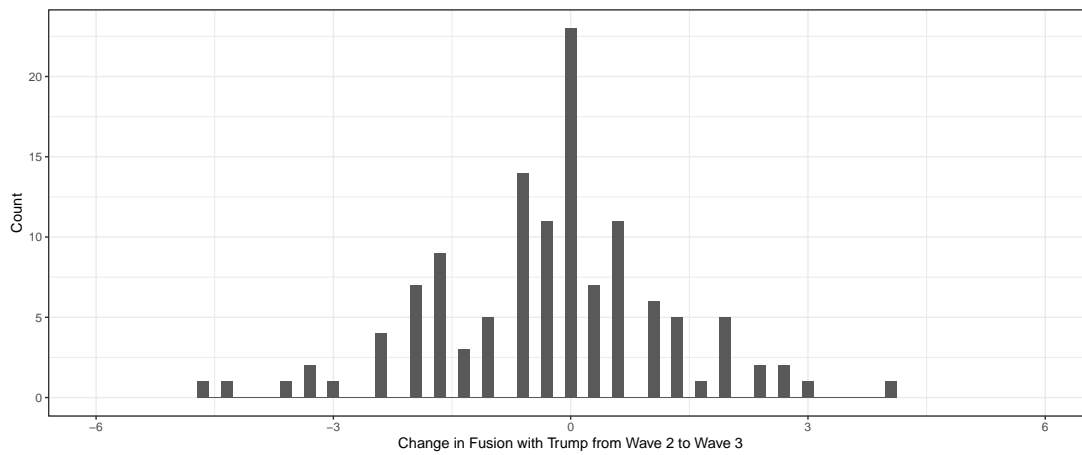


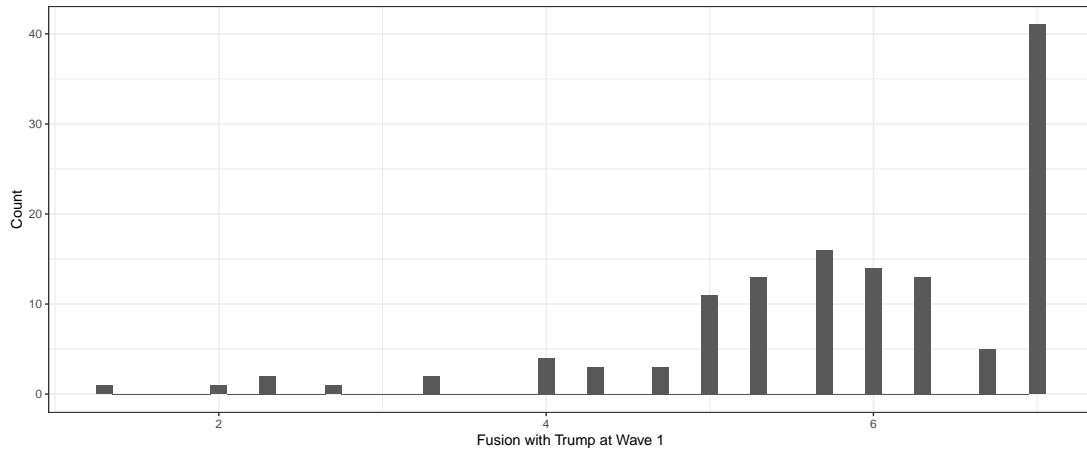
Figure C2 – Histogram of Fusion with Trump at Wave 3 (March 2024)



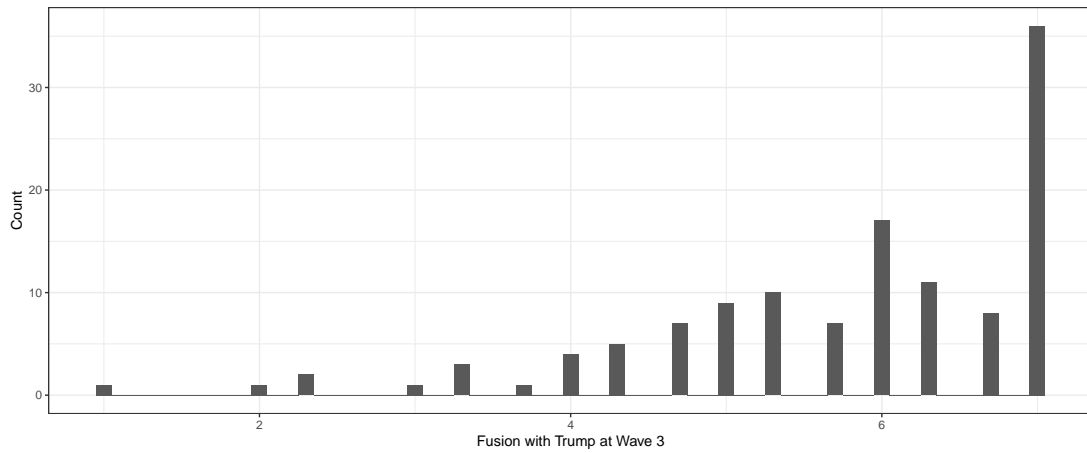
**Figure C3** – Histogram of Change in Fusion with Trump from Wave 2 (Jan. 2021) to Wave 3 (March 2024)



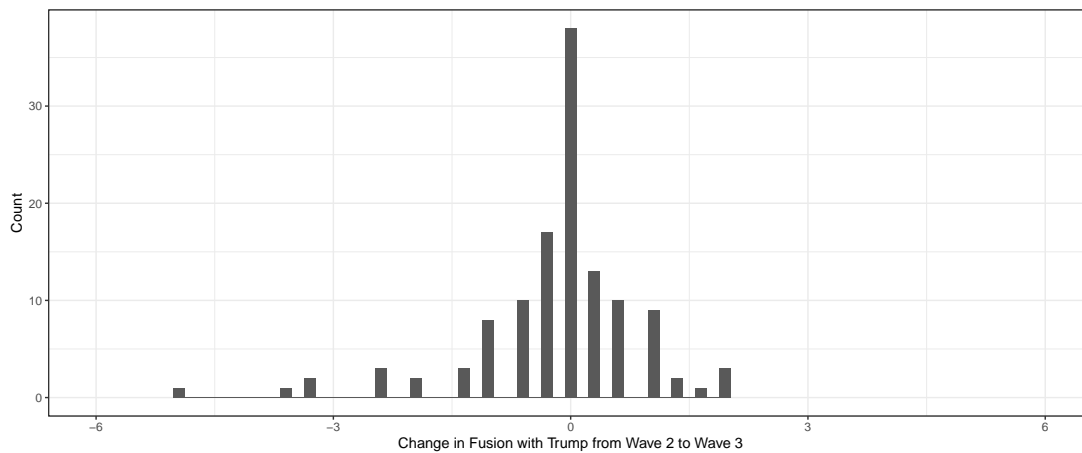
## C.2 Histograms of Fusion with the US



**Figure C4** – Histogram of Fusion with the US at Wave 1 (Nov. 2020)



**Figure C5** – Histogram of Fusion with the US at Wave 3 (March 2024)



**Figure C6** – Histogram of Change in Fusion with the US from Wave 2 (January 2021) to Wave 3 (March 2024)

### C.3 Histograms of Belief in the Big Lie

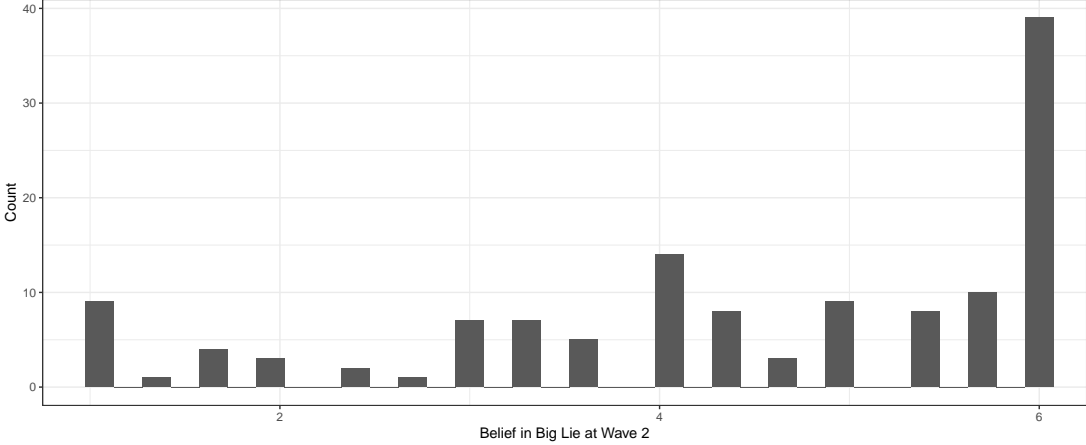


Figure C7 – Histogram of Belief in Big Lie at Wave 2 (Jan. 2021)

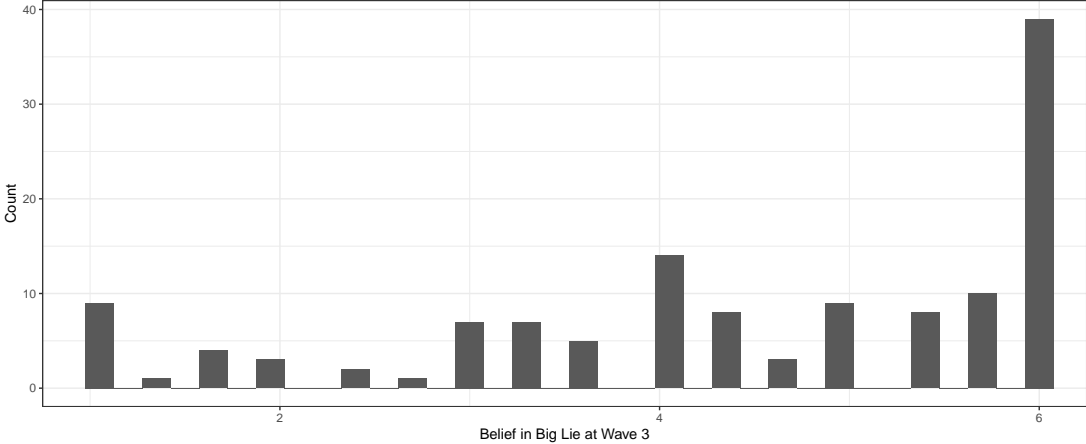
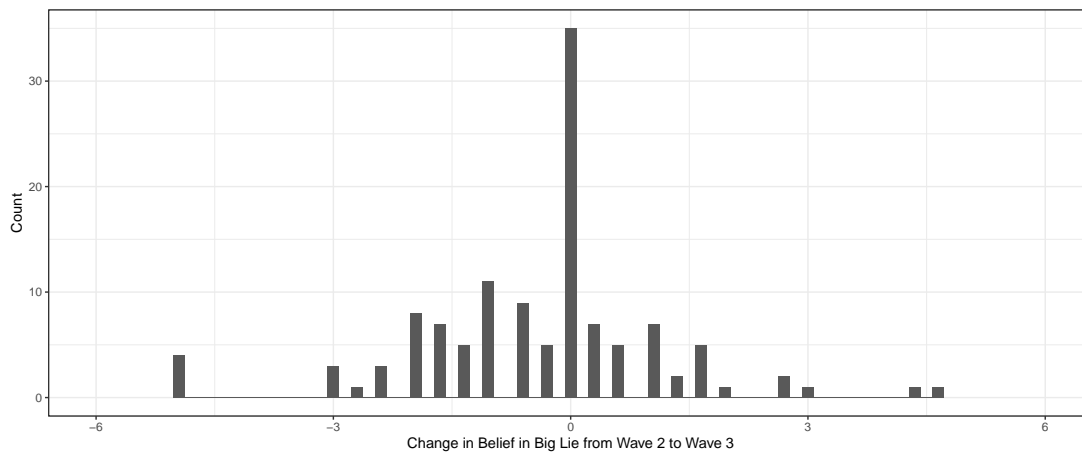


Figure C8 – Histogram of Belief in Big Lie at Wave 3 (March 2024)



**Figure C9** – Histogram of Change in Fusion with the US from Wave 2 (January 2021) to Wave 3 (March 2024)

## D Cross-Lagged Panel Model

An alternative choice for modeling the effect of baseline identity fusion with Trump (FT) on belief in the big lie (BBL) is the cross-lagged panel model (CLPM). CLPMs are structural equation models in which the independent and dependent variables are simultaneously modeled as functions of their own previous values and previous values of the other (Finkel 1995). Under certain assumptions, the estimates from such models are causal. We do not interpret them here as conclusive evidence of causation, but we note that they corroborate the results of the change-on-change model reported in the paper. The effect of fusion with Trump on change in belief in the big lie (FT  $\rightarrow$  BBL) is positive and significant, suggesting the more fused with Trump respondents were at wave 2, the more their belief in the big lie strengthened from wave 2 to wave 3. (The model omits wave 1 because belief in the big lie was not measured at wave 1, since it was before January 6, 2021.)

**Table D6** – Cross-Lagged Panel Model of Fusion with Trump and Belief in the Big Lie

FT $\rightarrow$ BBL	BBL $\rightarrow$ FT	FT $\rightarrow$ FT	BBL $\rightarrow$ BBL
0.174* [0.004, 0.345]	-0.355* [-0.574, -0.136]	0.864* [0.667, 1.061]	0.566* [0.341, 0.792]
<i>Model Fit Statistics</i>			
CFI	0.915		
RMSEA	0.105		
N	281		

Full-Information maximum likelihood estimates of a cross-lagged panel model using the `lavaan` R package. Fusion with Trump (FT) at wave 3 is regressed on FT<sub>Wave2</sub> and belief in the big lie (BBL) at wave 2. BBL<sub>Wave3</sub> is regressed on BBL<sub>Wave2</sub> and FT<sub>Wave2</sub>. 95% confidence intervals in brackets. \* $p < 0.05$ .

The fit of the model is acceptable though not exceptional. CFI (Comparative Fit Index) values above 0.95 and RMSEA (Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation) below 0.05 are typically considered good (Schumacker and Lomax 2004).

## E Coding Choices for Descriptives in Discussion

To calculate the percentages in the Discussion, we coded “big-lie believers” as respondents above the median on the belief in the big lie scale. Respondents who said Trump was at least somewhat innocent (more than “Not sure”) were coded as believing he’s innocent.

## F Ethical Considerations

The research presented in this manuscript directly engages with human participants and complies with APSA’s Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. In compliance with the principle of consent, prior to the surveys, all participants were informed of the nature of the questionnaire, what they could expect to see and do (particularly regarding possible harm and benefits), and that they could leave at any time without affecting their compensation. When considering the possible harms and traumas associated with participation, participants were told, as part of the consent process, that they would be not face any experiences different from a typical political conversation. Participants’ confidentiality was protected as part of this research by not collecting any personally identifiable information and storing all data on password-protected hard drives.

Participants were compensated at a rate of \$1 for their participation at each wave. With an average completion time of around 6 minutes per wave, this equates to \$10.00 per hour. Though not much higher than the U.S. federal minimum wage of \$7.25, it reflects what may be considered a high rate on the platform (Hara et al. 2018).

## G Survey Items

**Fusion with Trump** Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- I have a deep emotional bond with Donald Trump.

- Donald Trump is me.
  
- I make Donald Trump strong.
  - 1 - Completely disagree
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 - Completely agree

**Fusion with the US** Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- I have a deep emotional bond with the United States.
  
- The United States is me.
  
- I make the United States strong.
  - 1 - Completely disagree
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 - Completely agree

**Belief in the Big Lie** Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- There was widespread election fraud in the 2020 election.
- Millions of fake ballots were cast for Joe Biden.
- Donald Trump actually won the 2020 presidential election.

– 1 - Completely disagree

– 2

– 3

– 4

– 5

– 6

– 7 - Completely agree

**Beliefs about Trump's Innocence** As you may have heard, former President Donald Trump has now been indicted by a grand jury in four separate cases for alleged criminal activity related to the 2020 presidential election.

- Please rate how much do you agree with this statement: The legal actions against Donald Trump are appropriate and should be pursued.

– 1 - Completely disagree

– 2

– 3

– 4 - Neither agree nor disagree

– 5



– 6

– 7 - Completely agree

- Do you think Trump is innocent or guilty of these charges?

– 1 - Completely innocent

– 2

– 3

– 4 - Not sure

– 5

– 6

– 7 - Completely guilty

**Trump’s Policy Priorities** Here are five things that Donald Trump has said would be among his first priorities if he won the 2024 election. How much do you support or oppose these actions?

- Limit birthright citizenship by executive order
- Send troops to the southern border and order the mass deportation of illegal immigrants
- Order the Justice Department to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate President (Joe) Biden
- Strip civil service protections from tens of thousands of federal workers
- Increase domestic oil and gas drilling

– 1 - Strongly oppose

– 2

- 3
- 4 - Neither oppose nor support
- 5
- 6
- 7 - Strongly support

**Feeling Thermometers** We'd like to get your feelings toward some groups and people who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable and warm toward the group. You would rate them at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them.

Based on the feeling thermometer above, answer how you feel about the following groups and people:

- Democrats
- Republicans
- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden

**Out-Party Threat** Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- I think the future of the American way of life is under threat from Democrats.
- I believe that Democrats are purposefully trying to undermine the American way of life.

- I feel anxious about the threats Americans are currently facing from Democrats.
  - I am concerned about internal threats to the American way of life.
  - I think that the American way of life is in jeopardy due to Democrats.
- 1 - Completely disagree
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 - Completely agree

**Support for January 6 Capitol Insurrection** The following items are concerned with your perceptions of the events that occurred on Wednesday January 6th, 2021. Congress was scheduled to certify the election of Joe Biden but was interrupted by supporters of Donald Trump who entered the Capitol.

- I support the behavior of the Trump supporters who entered the Capitol.
  - The people who entered the Capitol were true patriots.
  - I wish those who entered the Capitol could have prevented the election results from being certified.
  - Members of Congress who certified the election of Joe Biden are traitors.
  - Members of Congress who certified the election of Joe Biden should be forcibly removed from office.
- 1 - Completely disagree

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 - Completely agree

**Ideological Identification** How would you describe yourself?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative