

Do Policymakers Listen To Experts?  
Evidence from a National Survey of Local and State Policymakers

**Online Appendix**

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<sup>1</sup>Replication materials available at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/S2SNOT>.

# A Sample Representativeness

CivicPulse has a comprehensive contact list of the elected and appointed officials in all township, municipality, county, and state legislative districts in the United States with populations of 1,000 or more (98% coverage). From this contact list, a random sample of policymakers was invited to participate in a survey.

Table A1: Coverage of Local and State U.S. Public Officials in CivicPulse Sampling Frame

type	n	coverage
county	3,061	98%
municipality	10,226	98%
township	5,568	97%
state leg	7,363	99%
state leg staffers	9,432	95%

To characterize the representativeness of this sample, the covariates described below were merged to the survey response data (97% match rate). In addition, probability weights were created with a post-stratification raking procedure using these same covariates. This procedure follows the methodology outlined in Debell and Krosnick (2009) for the American National Elections Study (ANES).

- **College-educated.** The proportion of 25-years-or-older residents in the given geographic unit who have completed a 4-year, post-secondary degree. This data was taken from 2015 American Community Survey.
- **Population size.** The total number of residents living in the given geographic unit. This data is taken from the 2015 American Community Survey.
- **Urbanicity.** The proportion of residents in the given geographic unit who reside in an urban area. This data is taken from the 2010 Census.
- **Presidential vote share.** The proportion of the votes, by county or state legislative district, for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential election. Note: Each sub-county government is matched to the relevant county in which it is contained.

Table A2: Representativeness of Sub-county Officials in Sample

	Median Sub-county	Sample
Urban	0.78	1
College-educated	0.21	0.29
Population	3,526.5	24,695
Trump share	0.58	0.48

Table A3: Representativeness of County Officials in Sample

	Median County	Sample
Urban	0.4	0.55
College-educated	0.19	0.23
Population	25,784	55,214
Trump share	0.67	0.59

Table A4: Representativeness of State Legislative Officials in Sample

	Median Legislative District	Sample
Urban	0.88	0.98
College-educated	0.26	0.28
Population	46,251.5	92,519
Trump share	0.51	0.39

Figure A1: Geographic Location of Local and State U.S. Public Officials in CivicPulse Sampling Frame

**Officials With Publicly Available Emails**

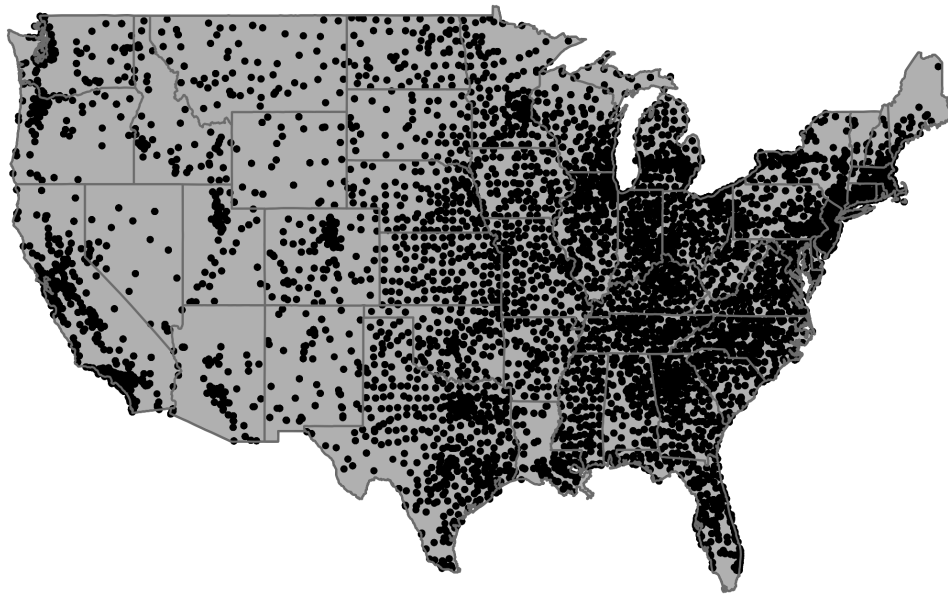
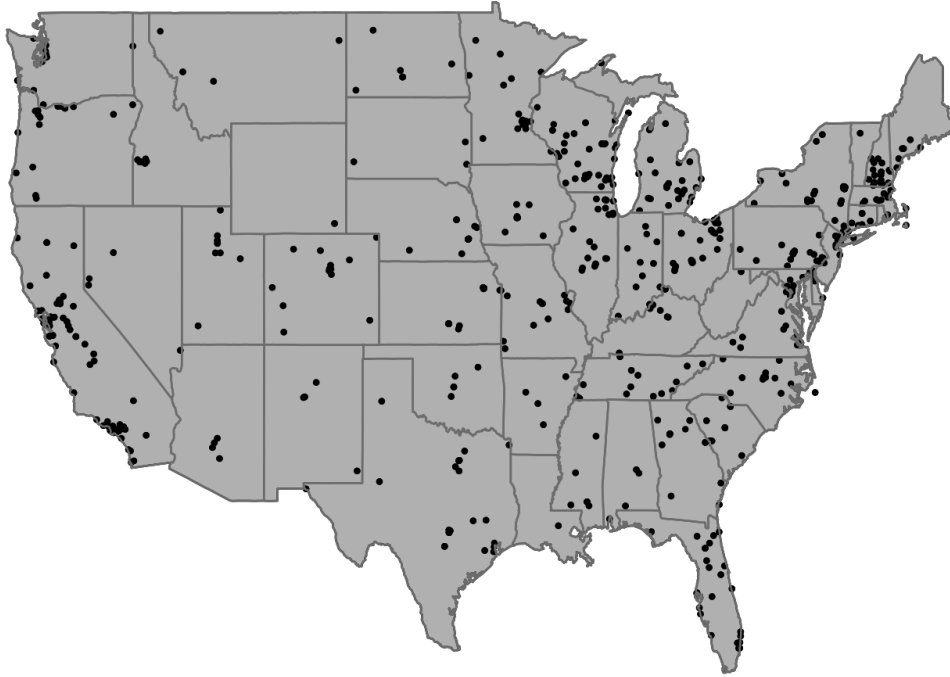


Figure A2: Geographic location of survey respondents.



## B Survey Text

**Prior Familiarity.** Have you heard about *{needle exchange programs/genetically modified organisms (GMOs)/rent control}* before?

- Yes, I know a lot about *{them/them/it}*. (1)
- Yes, I know a little about *{them/them/it}*. (1)
- Yes, but I don't remember what *{they are/they are/it is}*. (0)
- No, I have not heard of *{them/them/it}*. (0)

**Background.** *{A needle exchange program is a social service which provides clean needles to drug users to reduce the spread of disease (like HIV or Hepatitis C). However, some people think these programs encourage drug use./Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are crops that have had changes made in their DNA to improve resistance to disease or herbicides. However, some people think they are unsafe to eat./Rent control is intended to increase the availability of affordable housing by limiting the cost of rent for some housing units. However, some people think that these policies fail to achieve this goal.}*

**Expert Deference.** Consider a situation where you had to choose whether to support or oppose *{the implementation of a needle exchange program/GMO ban/a rent control policy}*. How

important would each of the following factors be to you? **Rows:** Preferences of my constituents; Evidence from {*public health experts/scientists/economists*}; My own values and experiences; The policy stance of my party. **Columns:** Not at all important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Very important, Extremely important.

**Perceived Polarity.** If you were to guess, do you think Democrats or Republicans are more likely to support the use of {*needle exchange programs/a GMO ban/rent control*}?

- Democrats are more likely to support the use of {*needle exchanges/a GMO ban/rent control*}
- Neither party is more likely than the other to support the use of {*needle exchanges/a GMO ban/rent control*}
- Republicans are more likely to support the use of {*needle exchanges/a GMO ban/rent control*}

**Perceived Source Bias.** Which of the statements below is closest to your belief about {*public health experts/scientists/economists*} at universities who conduct research related to {*needle exchange programs/GMOs/rent control*}?

- They are biased in favor of Democrats
- They try to be as accurate and objective as possible
- They are biased in favor of Republicans

**Treatment** (only some respondents receive). {*Experts/scientists/economists*} from several universities have examined this issue and concluded that {*needle exchanges do not increase drug use./GMO foods are safe to eat./rent control does not increase the overall availability of affordable housing.*}

**Factual Belief.** If you were to guess, what percentage of {*public health experts/scientists/economists*} who conduct research related to {*needle exchanges/GMOs/rent control*} believe {*these programs do NOT increase drug use/GMO foods are safe to eat/rent control policies do NOT increase the overall availability of affordable housing*}? **Answer Choices:** Less than 20%, 20 - 40%, 40 - 60%, 60 - 80%, More than 80%.

**Policy Preference.** Do you support or oppose the use of {*needle exchange programs/GMO bans/rent control*}? **Answer Choices** (for needle exchanges and rent control): Strongly support, Moderately support, Slightly support, Neither support nor oppose, Slightly oppose, Moderately oppose, Strongly oppose. **Answer Choices** (for GMOs): Moderately support a ban, Slightly support a ban, Neither support nor oppose a ban, Slightly oppose a ban, Moderately oppose a ban, Strongly oppose a ban.

**Within-subject Treatment and Follow-up.** Respondents in the control group then receive the identical message and are subsequently asked the same two questions with the added preface, *In light of this information,....*

## C Additional Tables

Table A5: **Demographic characteristics of policymaker sample.**

Median Age	54
Proportion Democrat	0.47
Proportion Republican	0.48
Proportion with Bachelors	0.84
Sample Size	690

Table A6: **Balance between conditions by issue.**

Group	Needle Exchange		GMO		Rent Control	
	control	treated	control	treated	control	treated
n (count)	218	258	210	246	271	276
Age (median)	52	57	58	50	49	54
Democrat (prop.)	0.5	0.47	0.44	0.47	0.49	0.49
Republican (prop.)	0.47	0.48	0.51	0.48	0.46	0.47
Conservative (prop.)	0.39	0.35	0.37	0.41	0.35	0.39
Liberal (prop.)	0.35	0.34	0.29	0.33	0.35	0.30
Bachelors Degree or higher (prop.)	0.48	0.44	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.37

Table A7: **Familiarity with policy issues.** Self-reported familiarity with each policy issue was assessed using a dichotomized measure of the "prior familiarity" question. The mean response for each issue for each level of government is shown.

Policy issue	Gov level	mean
Needle Exchanges	state	0.81
Needle Exchanges	county	0.73
Needle Exchanges	sub-county	0.83
GMO Foods	state	0.94
GMO Foods	county	0.84
GMO Foods	sub-county	0.86
Rent Control	state	0.91
Rent Control	county	0.69
Rent Control	sub-county	0.83

Table A8: **Estimated Effect of Exposure to Expert Findings on Beliefs About Expert Community from Cross-subject Experiments.** Beliefs are based on the question, "What percentage of [*relevant expert community*] who conduct research related to [*policy issue*] believe [*relevant claim*]?" { 20 - 40%, 40 - 60%, 60 - 80%, More than 80%}. Independents are excluded from analysis, and Democrats are the reference category.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.10*** (0.03)	0.07** (0.04)	0.08** (0.04)	0.03 (0.06)	0.14*** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.04)
republican		-0.14*** (0.04)		-0.14* (0.07)		0.004 (0.04)
treated:republican		0.03 (0.05)		0.08 (0.08)		0.06 (0.05)
Constant	0.67*** (0.02)	0.75*** (0.03)	0.69*** (0.04)	0.76*** (0.06)	0.47*** (0.02)	0.47*** (0.03)
Observations	483	462	301	281	555	525

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A9: **Estimated Effect of Exposure to Expert Findings on Policy Preferences from Cross-subject Experiments.** Policy preferences are based on the question, "Do you support or oppose [*relevant policy*]?" {Strongly support, Moderately support, Slightly support, Neither support nor oppose, Slightly oppose, Moderately oppose, Strongly oppose}. Independents are excluded from analysis, and Democrats are the reference category.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.08*** (0.03)	0.08** (0.04)	0.09*** (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)
republican		-0.29*** (0.04)		0.10** (0.04)		0.29*** (0.03)
treated:republican		-0.02 (0.05)		0.01 (0.06)		0.05 (0.04)
Constant	0.65*** (0.02)	0.80*** (0.03)	0.56*** (0.02)	0.51*** (0.03)	0.49*** (0.02)	0.35*** (0.02)
Observations	485	464	465	439	560	530

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A10: **Average Degree of Updating of Beliefs following Exposure to Expert Findings from Within-subject Design.** Beliefs are based on the question, "What percentage of [*relevant expert community*] who conduct research related to [*policy issue*] believe [*relevant claim*]?" { 20 - 40%, 40 - 60%, 60 - 80%, More than 80%}. Prior belief congruence is assigned in the following way: answers under 40% are labeled "Expert-incongruent;" greater than 60% are labeled "Expert-congruent;" and answers at the midpoint (40-60%) are labeled "Neither." The outcome measure is the pre-post difference in the 5-point belief, re-scaled to -1 to 1. The reference case is average updating for the "Neither" group of respondents.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
Constant	0.14*** (0.02)	0.25*** (0.04)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.04)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.03)
Least Accurate		0.12** (0.05)		0.12 (0.08)		0.29*** (0.04)
Most Congruent		-0.21*** (0.04)		-0.07 (0.05)		-0.11** (0.04)
Observations	218	218	52	52	269	269

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A11: **Average Degree of Updating of Policy Preferences following Exposure to Expert Findings from Within-subject Design.** Policy preferences are based on the question, "Do you support or oppose [*relevant policy*]?" {Strongly support, Moderately support, Slightly support, Neither support nor oppose, Slightly oppose, Moderately oppose, Strongly oppose}. Prior preference congruence is assigned in the following way: for needle exchanges, all "support" answers are labeled "Expert-congruent;" all "oppose" answers are labeled "Expert-incongruent;" and "Neither support nor oppose" is labeled "Neither." For GMO bans and rent control, this labeling is reversed, where "opposed" answered are congruent and "support" answers are incongruent. The outcome measure is the pre-post difference in the 7-point preference, re-scaled to -1 to 1. The reference case is average updating for the "Neither" group of respondents.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
Constant	0.03*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.04** (0.02)
Least congruent		-0.01 (0.02)		0.04 (0.03)		0.04* (0.02)
Most congruent		-0.05** (0.02)		-0.06** (0.03)		-0.02 (0.02)
Observations	218	218	211	211	273	273

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01



Table A12: **Average Degree of Updating of Beliefs Following Exposure to Expert Findings from Within-subject Design, with Survey Weights.** Beliefs are based on the question, "What percentage of [*relevant expert community*] who conduct research related to [*policy issue*] believe [*relevant claim*]?" { 20 - 40%, 40 - 60%, 60 - 80%, More than 80%}. Prior belief congruence is assigned in the following way: answers under 40% are labeled "Expert-incongruent," greater than 60% are labeled "Expert-congruent," and answers at the midpoint (40-60%) are labeled "Neither." The outcome measure is the pre-post difference in the 5-point belief, re-scaled to -1 to 1. The reference case is average updating for the "Neither" group of respondents.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
Constant	0.14*** (0.02)	0.24*** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.06* (0.03)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.04)
Least Accurate		0.07 (0.05)		0.20** (0.08)		0.30*** (0.05)
Most Congruent		-0.19*** (0.04)		-0.01 (0.04)		-0.16*** (0.05)
Observations	218	213	52	52	269	263

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A13: **Average Degree of Updating of Policy Preferences Following Exposure to Expert Findings from Within-subject Design, With Survey Weights.** Policy preferences are based on the question, "Do you support or oppose [*relevant policy*]?" {Strongly support, Moderately support, Slightly support, Neither support nor oppose, Slightly oppose, Moderately oppose, Strongly oppose}. Prior preference congruence is assigned in the following way: for needle exchanges, all "support" answers are labeled "Expert-congruent," all "oppose" answers are labeled "Expert-incongruent," and "Neither support nor oppose" is labeled "Neither." For GMO bans and rent control, this labeling is reversed, where "opposed" answered are congruent and "support" answers are incongruent. The outcome measure is the pre-post difference in the 7-point preference, re-scaled to -1 to 1. The reference case is average updating for the "Neither" group of respondents.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
Constant	0.03*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Least congruent		-0.01 (0.02)		0.05* (0.03)		0.01 (0.02)
Most congruent		-0.05** (0.02)		-0.08*** (0.03)		-0.06*** (0.02)
Observations	213	213	208	208	267	267

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A14: **Treatment Effects On Preferences Moderated by Self-reported Ideology.** The absence of evidence of partisan motivated reasoning may be due the fact that ideology is a better proxy for directional motivation than party affiliation. To address this concern, I run an interaction model with 3-factor ideology variable (collapsed from the standard 5-pt Likert). The reference category is liberal. The absence of significant differences between ideological groups is consistent with the absence of significant differences between parties.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)	0.08*** (0.03)	0.08* (0.05)	0.09*** (0.03)	0.06 (0.04)
moderate		-0.26*** (0.04)		0.02 (0.05)		0.20*** (0.04)
conservative		-0.39*** (0.04)		0.11** (0.05)		0.32*** (0.04)
treated:moderate		0.05 (0.06)		0.03 (0.07)		-0.02 (0.06)
treated:conservative		0.0003 (0.05)		-0.03 (0.06)		0.06 (0.05)
Constant	0.65*** (0.02)	0.87*** (0.03)	0.56*** (0.02)	0.51*** (0.04)	0.49*** (0.02)	0.31*** (0.03)
Observations	485	485	465	465	560	560

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A15: **Treatment Effects on Preferences Re-coded as Binary Variable.** Policy preferences are re-coded as a binary indicator variable which takes on '1' for any choice that is congruent with respect to the expert findings and '0' otherwise. Comparing the standard outcome measure with the binary one, the overall results are similar. One exception is for rent control: the interaction with party is statistically significant at the 95% level. The binary coding also provides a more “real word” way of interpreting the treatment effects, namely, we can then estimate the implied percentage of the subgroup of respondents in control who are not congruent that would become congruent as a result of treatment. We can do this by dividing the treatment effect estimate by the percentage of respondents who are not yet congruent. In the case of GMOs, for example, this would be  $(0.1/(1 - 0.34)) = 15\%$  for Democrats and  $(0.11/(1 - 0.44)) = 20\%$  for Republicans. Using this interpretation, a higher percentage of the respondents who could change their mind in the direction of the evidence when they are in the party for whom the evidence is more congenial. A similar pattern holds for the other two issues. This alternative interpretation using a binary outcome variable, therefore, provides stronger evidence in favor of the existence of directional motivations operating alongside accuracy motivations.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.06)	0.08** (0.04)	0.10 (0.07)	0.06* (0.03)	0.05 (0.05)
republican	-0.29*** (0.04)	-0.35*** (0.06)	0.10** (0.04)	0.10 (0.07)	0.29*** (0.03)	0.36*** (0.05)
treated:republican	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.06 (0.08)	0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.09)	0.05 (0.04)	0.16** (0.07)
Constant	0.80*** (0.03)	0.82*** (0.04)	0.51*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.05)	0.35*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.04)
Binary Outcome?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	464	464	439	439	530	530

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A16: **Treatment Effects on Beliefs Re-coded as Binary Variable.** Beliefs are re-coded as a binary indicator variable which takes on '1' for the responses choices "60 - 80%" and "More than 80%" and '0' otherwise. Comparing the standard outcome measure with the binary one, the overall results are similar.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.07**	0.11*	0.03	0.08	0.11***	0.13**
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.11)	(0.04)	(0.06)
republican	-0.14***	-0.19***	-0.14*	-0.17	0.004	-0.02
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.04)	(0.06)
treated:republican	0.03	0.05	0.08	0.14	0.06	0.12
	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.05)	(0.08)
Constant	0.75***	0.73***	0.76***	0.67***	0.47***	0.32***
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Binary Outcome?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	462	462	281	281	525	525

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A17: **Average Updating of Beliefs and Preferences for Respondents with "On-the-fence" Priors.** The results below subset on the respondents who chose the midpoint answer for each outcome ("40-60% of experts" for beliefs, and "Neither support nor oppose" for preferences). The outcome measure is the pre-post difference in the 5-point belief and 7-point preference measures, respectively, re-scaled to -1 to 1. The reference case is average updating for Democrats. This provides an "apples-to-apples" comparison of updating by party, conditional on prior. Consistent with the cross-subject results, Republicans and Democrats update similar amounts across most issues and outcomes. The sole exception to this is for policy preferences concerning rent control, wherein Democrats appear to behave in a way consistent with motivated skepticism.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
Constant	0.28***	0.12	0.13***	0.08**	0.05*	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Republican	-0.02	0.00	-0.07	-0.03	0.04	0.08***
	(0.06)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Outcome	Beliefs	Preferences	Beliefs	Preferences	Beliefs	Preferences
Observations	43	14	82	29	81	70

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A18: **Potential Ceiling Effects for Cross-subject Design.** A confounding factor in interpreting the difference in treatment effects between parties in the cross-subject design is that the party with more accurate beliefs or more congruent preferences will potentially be more constrained in the extent of possible movement post-treatment. This could create a bias against finding significant differences by party. To investigate the seriousness of this concern, this table shows the average proportion of respondents in each party for each issue who hold the most accurate belief or most congruent preference between treatment and control conditions. An increase in this proportion between treatment and control would provide suggestive evidence of a possible “ceiling effect.” A difference in the magnitude of this increase between parties would provide suggestive evidence that ceiling effects are differentially constraining the two parties. The results below suggest that this is the case. Consequently, while this evidence does clearly support the accuracy motivation hypothesis, it cannot be used to rule out the directional motivation hypothesis either.

<b>Policy issue</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Treated</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Needle Exchanges	Belief	Democrat	0.42	0.57	0.15
		Republican	0.19	0.30	0.11
Needle Exchanges	Preference	Democrat	0.45	0.50	0.05
		Republican	0.14	0.10	-0.04
GMO Food	Belief	Democrat	0.52	0.50	-0.02
		Republican	0.14	0.35	0.21
GMO Food	Preference	Democrat	0.11	0.15	0.04
		Republican	0.18	0.38	0.20
Rent Control	Belief	Democrat	0.11	0.18	0.07
		Republican	0.09	0.22	0.13
Rent Control	Preference	Democrat	0.02	0.04	0.02
		Republican	0.23	0.40	0.17

Table A19: **Potential Ceiling Effects for Within-subject Design.** A confounding factor in interpreting the difference in treatment effects between pre-treatment groups in the within-subject design is that the group with more accurate beliefs or more congruent preferences will potentially be more constrained in the extent of possible movement post-treatment. This could provide an alternative explanation for why the least accurate/congruent respondents tend to update as much or more than the somewhat congruent/accurate. To investigate this possibility, this table shows the average proportion of respondents by pre-treatment group for each issue who hold the most accurate belief or most congruent preference between prior and posterior conditions. (By construction, this average is '0' for all groups and all measures in the prior condition, since the most accurate/congruent pre-treatment respondents are not included in the analysis.) An increase in this proportion between prior and posterior would provide suggestive evidence of a possible "ceiling effect." If this increase is different between pre-treatment groups for the same issue, this would provide suggestive evidence that such an effect is differentially constraining the estimated treatment effects by group. The results below do not provide evidence for such a concern.

<b>Policy issue</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Prre-treatment Group</b>	<b>Prior</b>	<b>Posterior</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Needle Exchanges	Belief	Least accurate	0.00	0.18	0.18
		Somewhat accurate	0.00	0.29	0.29
Needle Exchanges	Preference	Least congruent	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Somewhat congruent	0.00	0.03	0.03
GMO Food	Belief	Least accurate	0.00	0.17	0.17
		Somewhat accurate	0.00	0.07	0.07
GMO Food	Preference	Least congruent	0.00	0.05	0.05
		Somewhat congruent	0.00	0.04	0.04
Rent Control	Belief	Least accurate	0.00	0.16	0.16
		Somewhat accurate	0.00	0.17	0.17
Rent Control	Preference	Least congruent	0.00	0.01	0.01
		Somewhat congruent	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table A20: **Treatment Effects on Preferences Excluding Staffers.** The absence of evidence of partisan motivated reasoning may be driven by the inclusion of non-elected legislative staffers in the sample. To address this concern, I compare the treatment effects on preferences from the cross-subject experiment with and without legislative staffers. The estimates are not substantially changed by the exclusion of legislative staffers.

	Needles	Needles	GMO	GMO	Rent Control	Rent Control
treated	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.08** (0.04)	0.08 (0.05)	0.06* (0.03)	0.07* (0.04)
republican	-0.29*** (0.04)	-0.24*** (0.05)	0.10** (0.04)	0.09* (0.05)	0.29*** (0.03)	0.27*** (0.04)
treated:republican	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)	0.05 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)
Constant	0.80*** (0.03)	0.79*** (0.03)	0.51*** (0.03)	0.51*** (0.04)	0.35*** (0.02)	0.38*** (0.03)
Excludes Staffers?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	464	333	439	321	530	400

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A21: **Treatment Effects On Preferences Moderated by 2016 Presidential Vote Share.** The survey sample modestly over-represents municipalities, counties, and districts that are more liberal than the national averages. To examine whether policymakers representing more liberal areas are more responsive to expertise, I run an interacted model of the cross-subject regression where treatment is interacted with a binary indicator variable for whether the respondent represents an area with an above-median 2016 county (or district for state legislators and staffers) presidential vote share for Trump (“high”) or below-median (“low”) (the reference category). The coefficient for the interaction term is marginally significant for needle exchanges, but in a way that further supports the accuracy motivation interpretation: officials in more conservative areas were more likely to update in response to public health experts. For GMOs and rent control, the interaction is not significant.

	Needles	GMO	Rent Control
treated	-0.02 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.05 (0.04)
Voteshare_binHIGH	-0.22*** (0.05)	0.06 (0.04)	0.07* (0.04)
treated:Voteshare_binHIGH	0.10* (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)
Constant	0.76*** (0.03)	0.54*** (0.03)	0.46*** (0.03)
Observations	376	356	433

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A22: **Treatment Effects On Preferences Moderated by Urbanicity of Represented Area.** The survey sample modestly overrepresents municipalities, counties, and districts that are more urban than the national averages. To examine whether policymakers representing more urban areas are more responsive to expertise, I run an interacted model of the cross-subject regression where treatment is interacted with a binary indicator variable for whether the respondent represents an area with a level of urbanicity that is above-median (“high”) or below-median (“low”) (the reference category). The coefficient for the interaction term is not significant for any of the policies.

	Needles	GMO	Rent Control
treated	0.03 (0.04)	0.12*** (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)
Urban_binHIGH	0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
treated:Urban_binHIGH	0.05 (0.06)	-0.06 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)
Constant	0.65*** (0.03)	0.57*** (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)
Observations	385	362	446

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A23: **Treatment Effects On Preferences Moderated by Education Level of Represented Area.** The survey sample modestly overrepresents municipalities, counties, and districts that are more college-educated than the national averages. To examine whether policymakers representing more college-educated areas are more responsive to expertise, I run an interacted model of the cross-subject regression where treatment is interacted with a binary indicator variable for whether the respondent represents an area with an education level that is above-median (“high”) or below-median (“low”) (the reference category). The coefficient for the interaction term is not significant for any of the policies.

	Needles	GMO	Rent Control
treated	0.07 (0.04)	0.08** (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)
Education_binHIGH	0.12*** (0.05)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
treated:Education_binHIGH	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
Constant	0.58*** (0.03)	0.56*** (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)
Observations	401	382	461

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01



Table A24: **Treatment Effects On Preferences Moderated by Population of Represented Area.** The survey sample modestly overrepresents municipalities, counties, and districts that are more populated than the national averages. To examine whether policymakers representing more populated areas are more responsive to expertise, I run an interacted model of the cross-subject regression where treatment is interacted with a binary indicator variable for whether the respondent represents an area with an above-median population (“high”) or below-median population (“low”) (the reference category). The coefficient for the interaction term is not significant for any of the policies.

	Needles	GMO	Rent Control
treated	0.005 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
Population_binHIGH	0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.09** (0.04)
treated:Population_binHIGH	0.06 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	0.08 (0.05)
Constant	0.64*** (0.03)	0.58*** (0.03)	0.54*** (0.03)
Observations	402	383	460

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## D Additional Figures

Figure A3: **Perceived Polarity of Policies.** The y-axis displays the difference between the percentage of respondents who perceive the support for the policy to be aligned with the Republican Party and the percentage of respondents who perceive support to be aligned with the Democratic Party (prior to experiment).

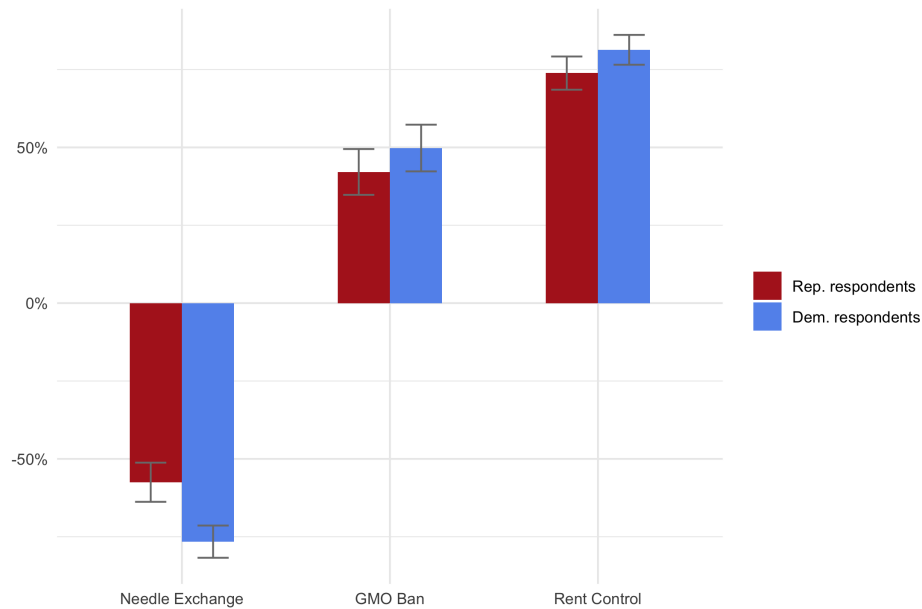


Figure A4: **Perceived Unbiasedness of Experts by Policy.** The y-axis displays the percentage of respondents who perceive the experts to be unbiased (prior to experiment).

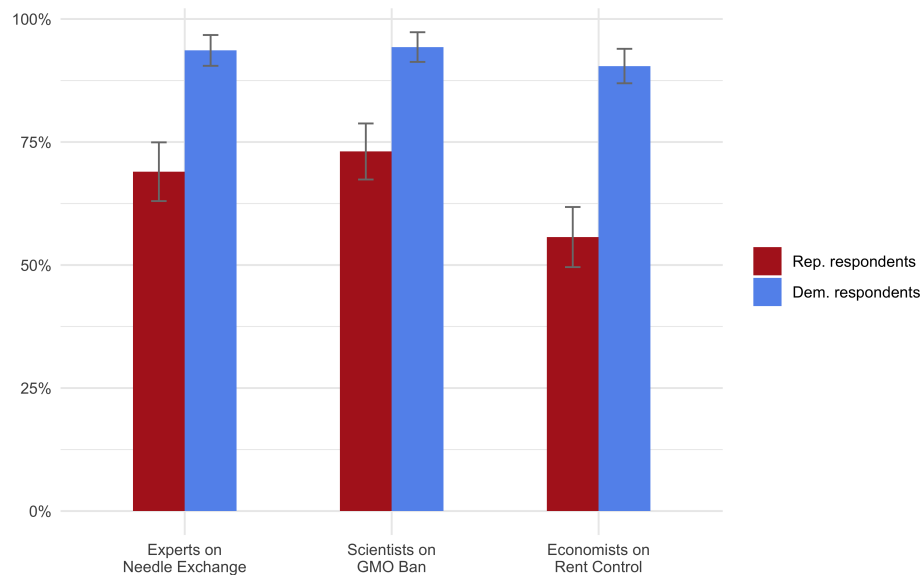


Figure A5: **Expert Deference by Policy.** The y-axis displays the percentage of respondents who view evidence from experts as at least “moderately” important in arriving at a policy decision (prior to experiment)

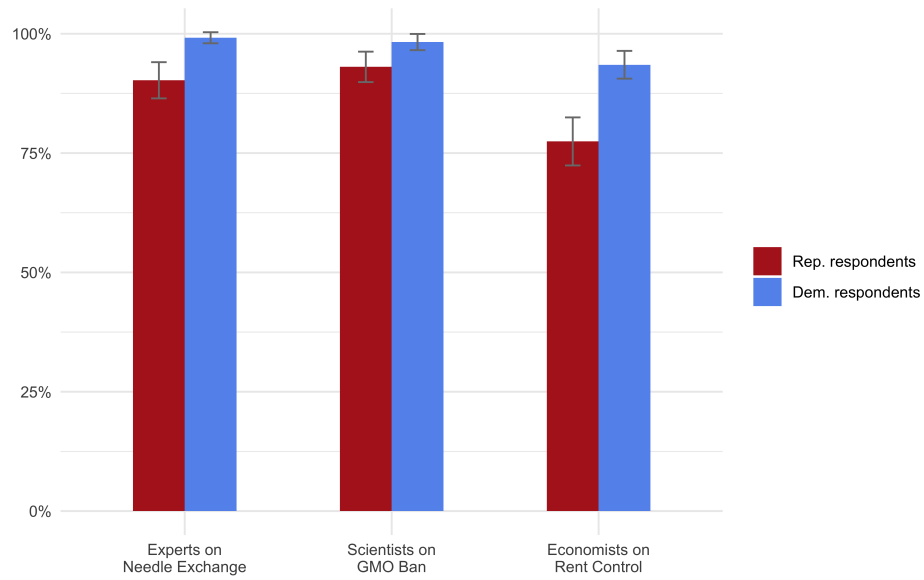


Figure A6: **Alternative visualization of cross-subject treatment estimates.**

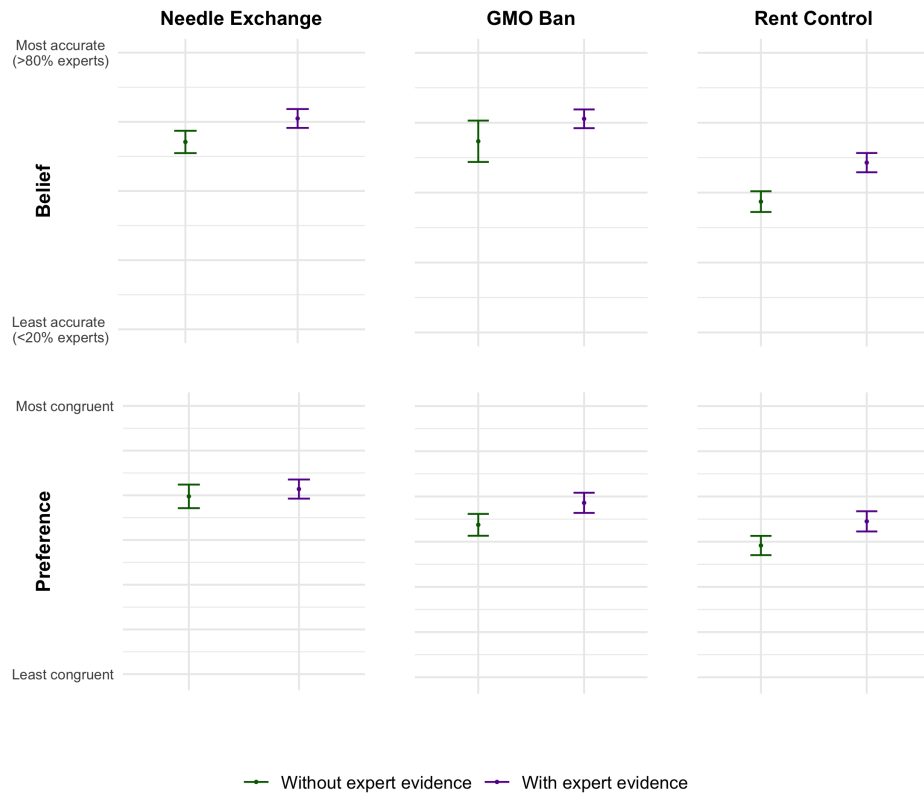


Figure A7: Alternative visualization of cross-subject treatment estimates, by party.

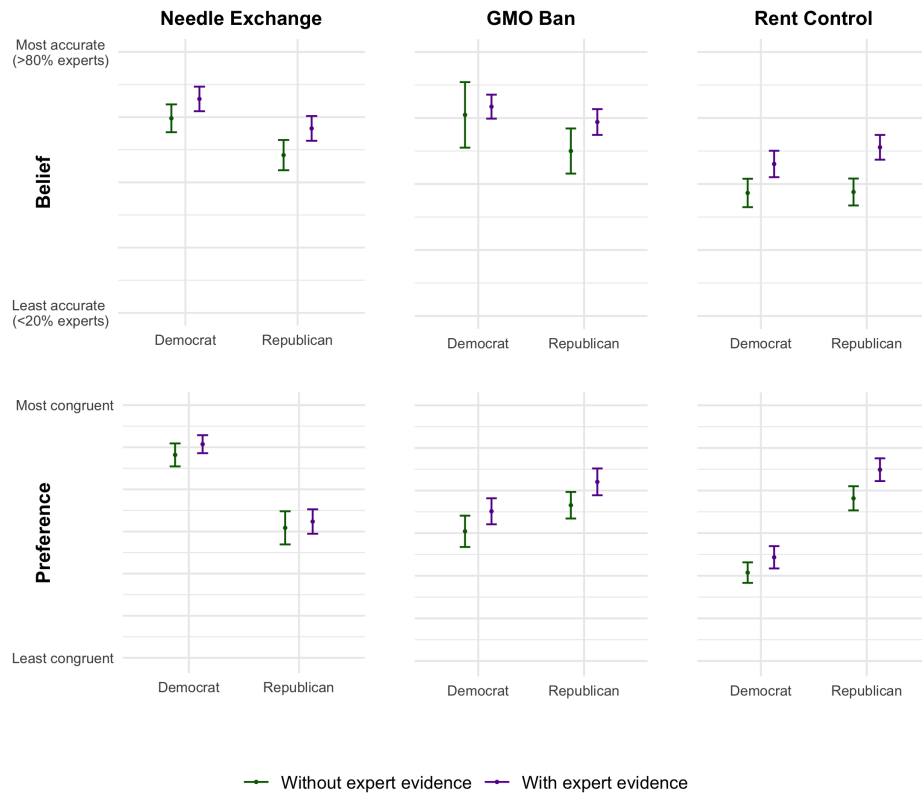


Figure A8: Alternative visualization of within-subject updating, by prior.

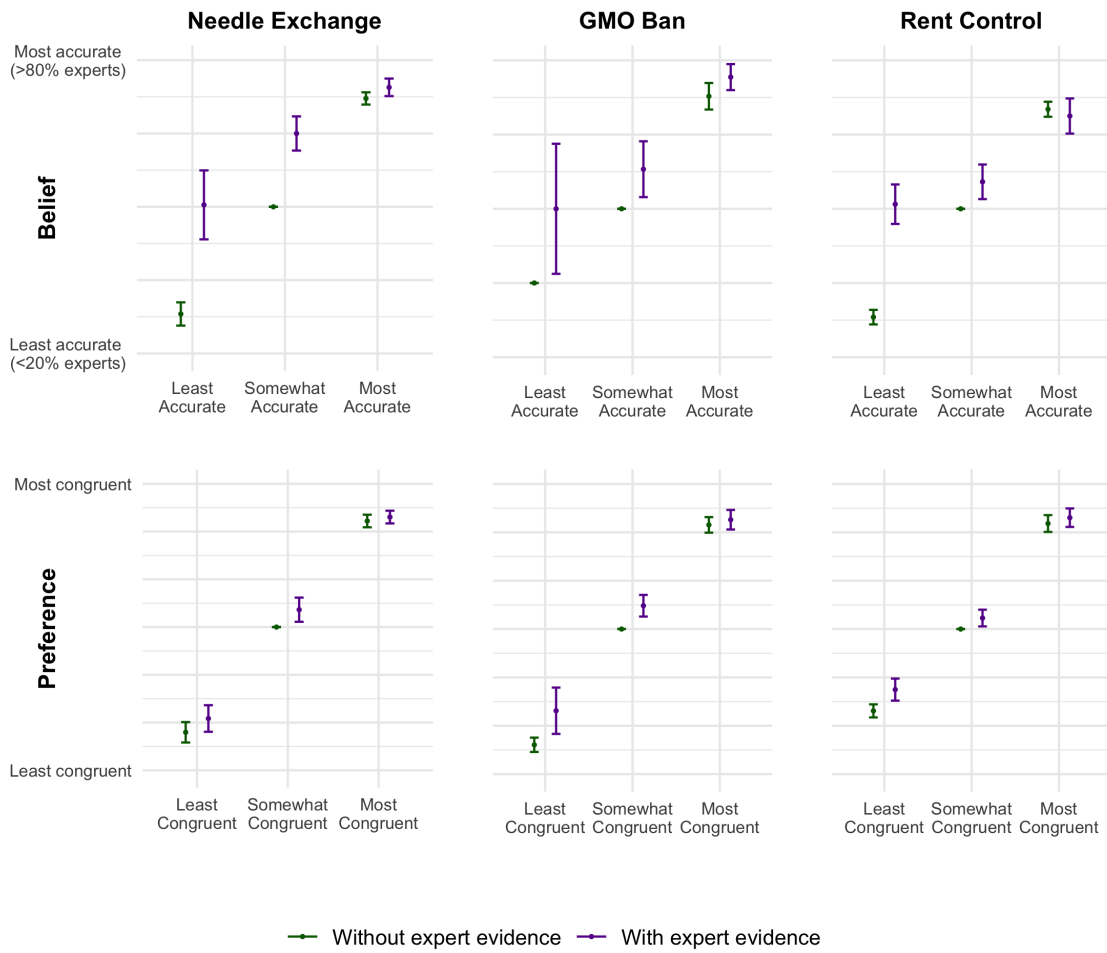


Figure A9: Within-subject updating by dichotomized measure of prior familiarity.

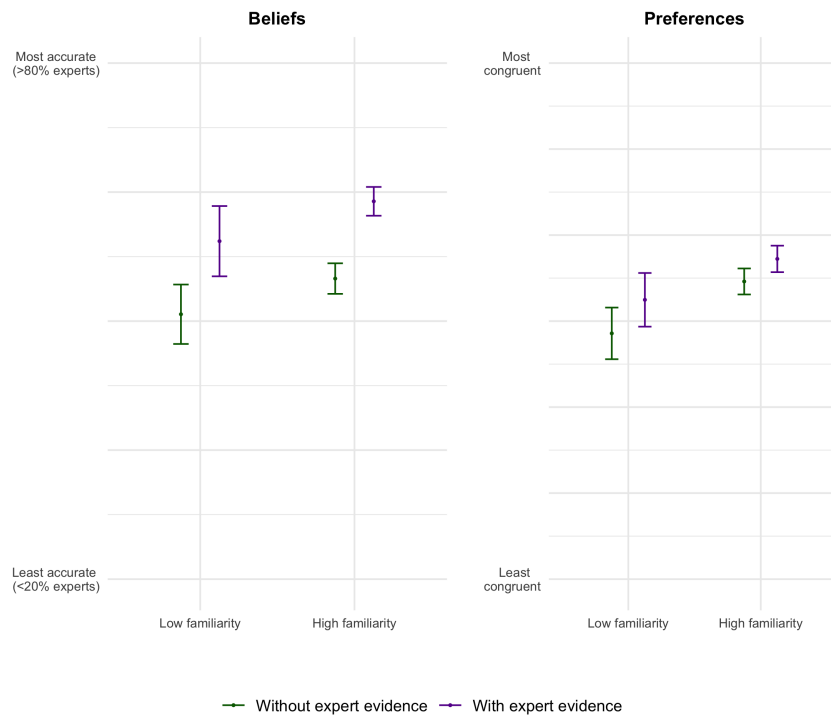


Figure A10: Within-subject updating by dichotomized measure of perception of source bias.

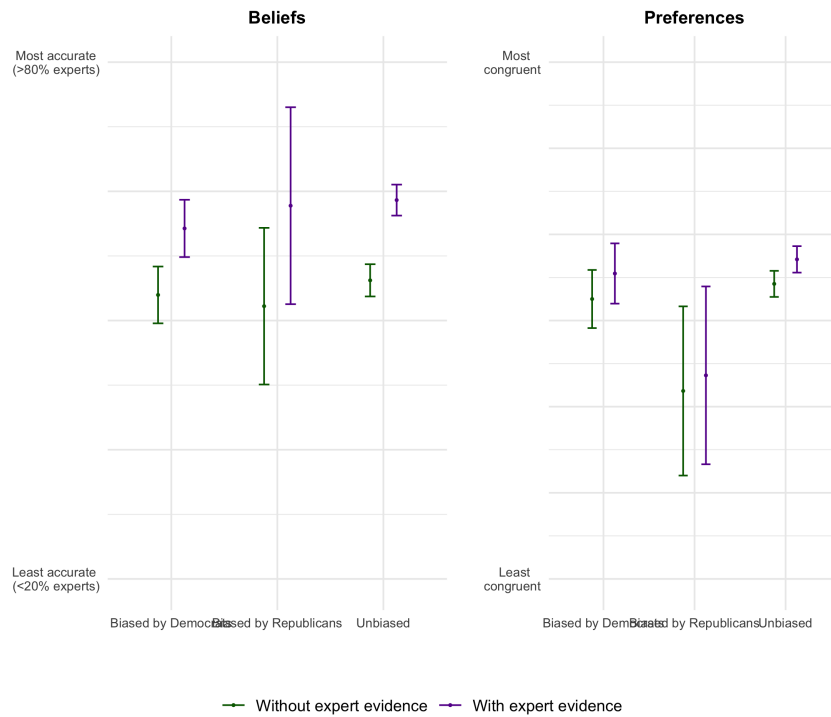


Figure A11: Within-subject updating by dichotomized measure of deference to expertise.

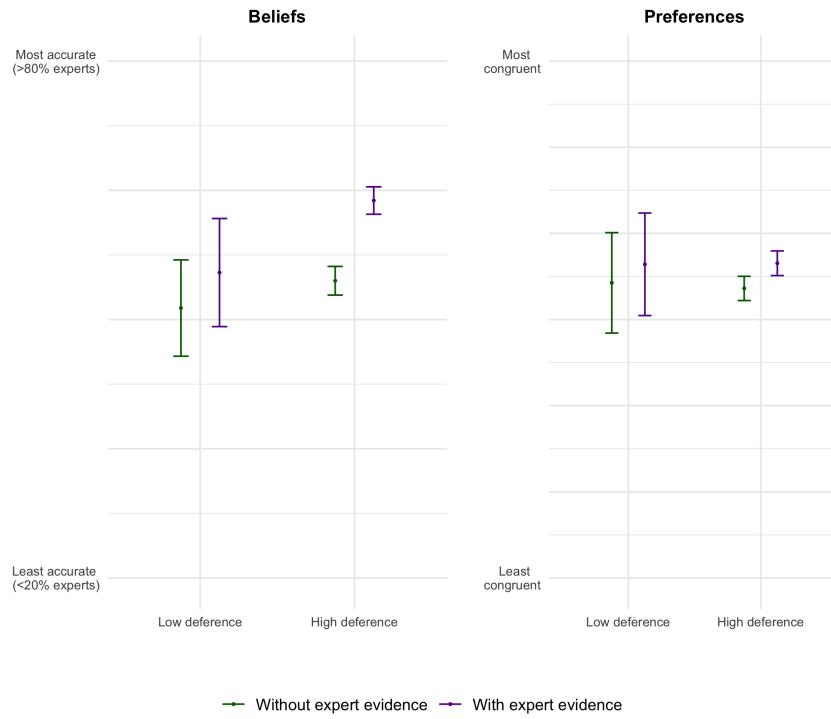


Figure A12: Within-subject updating by level of government.

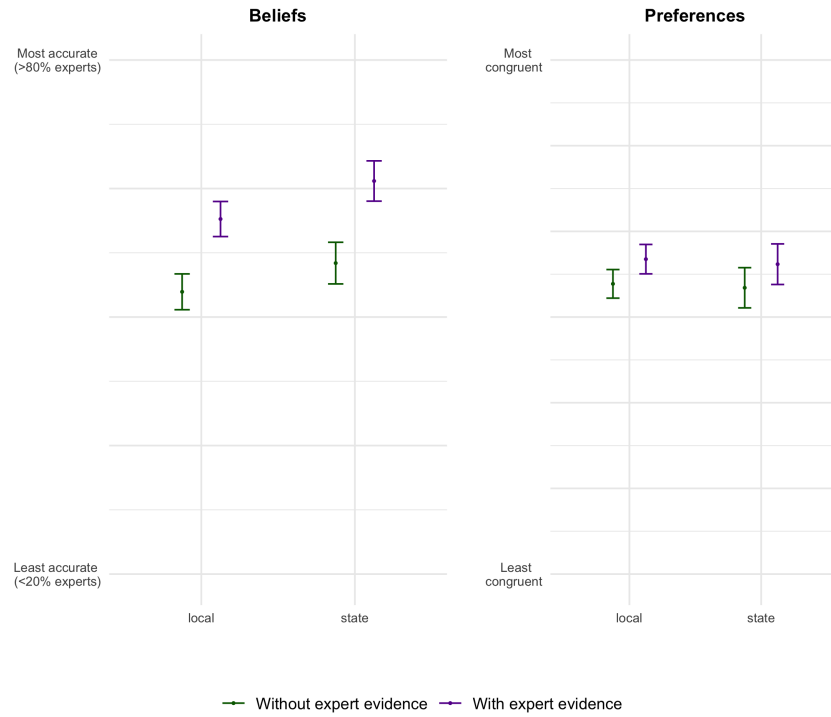


Figure A13: Within-subject updating by position.

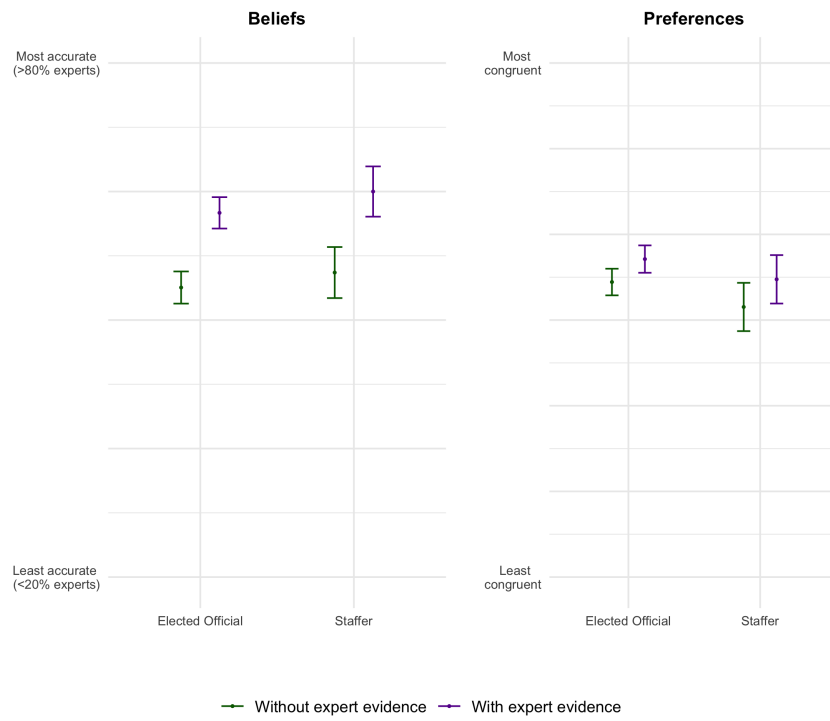


Figure A14: Within-subject updating by gender.

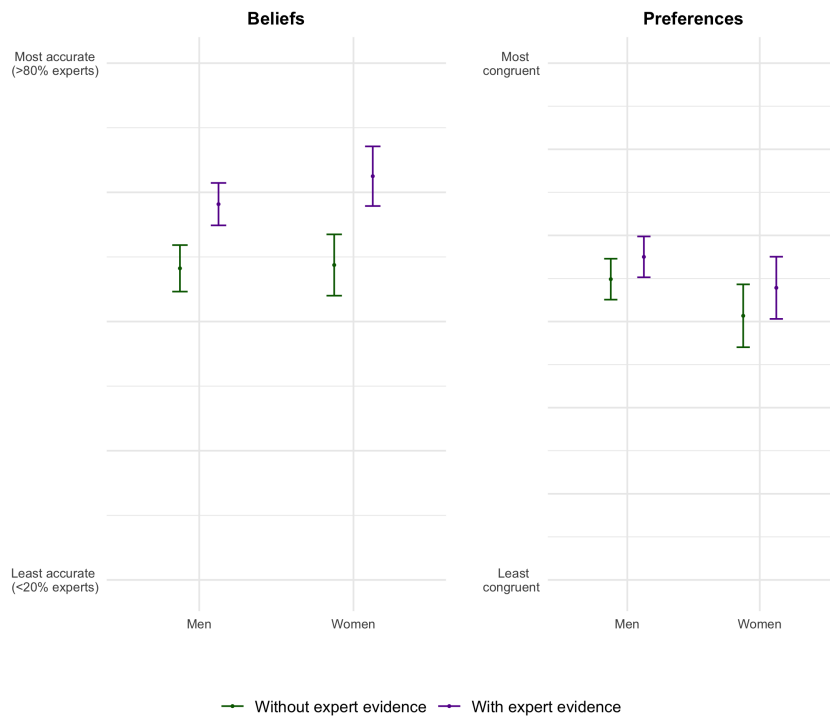




Figure A15: Within-subject updating split above and below median level of age.

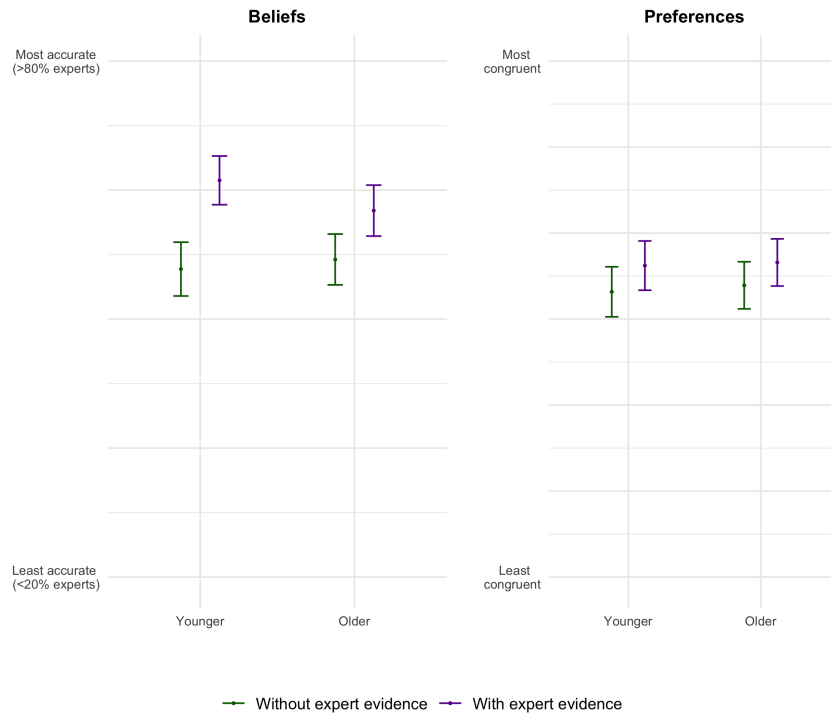


Figure A16: Within-subject updating split above and below median level of government experience.

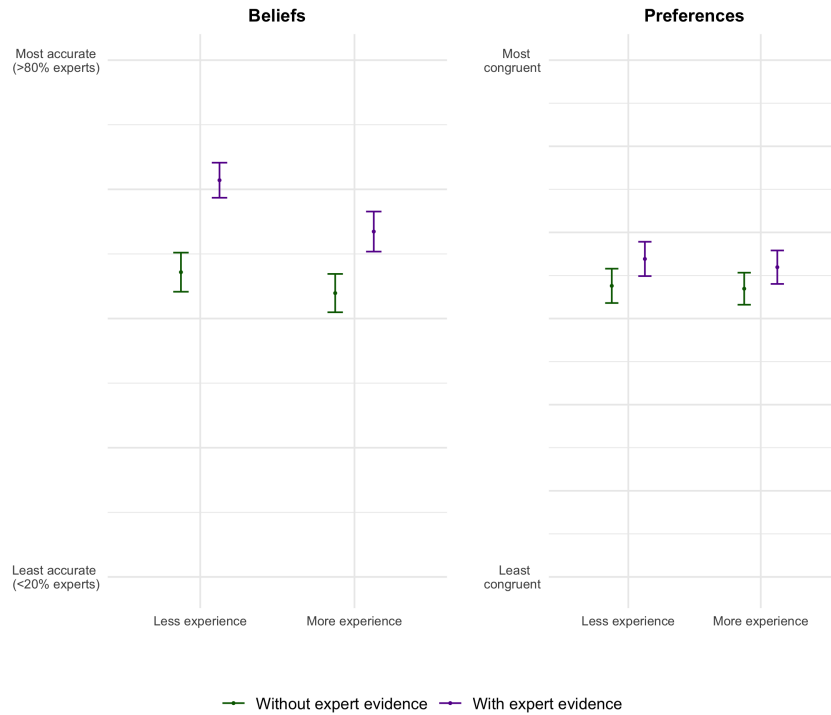


Figure A17: **Cross-subject Experimental Estimates Versus Within-subject Pre-post Estimates.** Responsiveness to expert findings is assessed in two ways in this study. The first is through a standard cross-subject information experiment in which the treatment group receives the evidence and the control group does not, and both groups are subsequently asked the outcome questions (beliefs about experts and policy preferences). In the second design, the control group also receives the information treatment and is subsequently asked the outcomes questions again. The difference between the pre-treatment and post-treatment outcomes provides a measure of within-respondent updating. To validate the use of these measures, I graphically compare them to the cross-subject experimental estimates. Across outcomes, the estimates are similar. Average preference updating is slightly lower than the experimentally-estimated treatment effects which is consistent with a modest anchoring effect of asking the respondents their preferences prior to treatment.

