

Still Not Important Enough? COVID-19 Policy Views and Vote Choice Online Appendix

May 24, 2021

A Appendix

A.1 Summaries of news articles and Trump quotes on masks through Aug. 19

April 7: “I don’t think I’m going to be doing it.” ”I think wearing a face mask as I greet presidents, prime ministers, dictators, kings, queens, I don’t know. Somehow, I don’t see it for myself,” adding, ”I just don’t.” The larger historical and political context of the President’s remarks should be unpacked, but let’s stop for a moment and reflect on the personal mindset Trump revealed with them. Under his watch, the pandemic is running out of control in the US. America has perhaps been among the worst in the world in its response, even as he demands praise and appreciation. As death, grief, and suffering pooled around him, Trump’s thoughts turned to the optics of meeting people “sitting in the Oval Office behind that great resolute desk.” Who, in his right mind, would pause in the face of this pandemic to consider visiting dignitaries – including dictators, mind you – and how a medical mask might spoil his look? Aside from anything else, we all know that foreign delegations won’t be arriving at the White House any time soon. And if, by chance, it happened, the president should insist he be photographed wearing a mask if only to show his solidarity with and concern for, others. (The first lady, perhaps less concerned about a mask mussing her hair, encourages their use).¹

April 28: Despite CDC guidance that Americans should wear face masks in public to avoid spreading Covid-19, President Donald Trump joked about a man who wore one at the White House on Tuesday and Vice President Mike Pence refused to wear one while meeting doctors and patients at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. At one point, as Trump asked Ali Mills, the vice president of a family-owned contracting company from Pennsylvania to speak, he invited her husband and co-worker to join her on stage, and joked about the fact that he had worn a mask earlier. “Put that mask on, the way you had it,” Trump said to the

¹<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/opinions/trump-mask-coronavirus-dantonio/index.html>

man. As the president shook his head and smiled, some in the room laughed. (After the event, Mills explained in an email that her husband, who “has a great passion for President Trump,” has a Trump 2020 mask, which he showed the president before the event.)²

May 27: Mr. Trump retweeted a post from Fox News political analyst Brit Hume showing a picture of Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, wearing sunglasses and a black mask that covered much of his face at a Memorial Day ceremony. “This might help explain why Trump doesn’t like to wear a mask in public,” Hume wrote.³

June 28: “The mask is a double-edged sword,” he told The Wall Street Journal. He explained they might make wearers “a little cocky” and neglect other public health guidelines, such as not touching their faces.⁴

July 10: Miami-Dade mayor demands masks in public. But not for Trump⁵

July 11: “I think when you’re in a hospital, especially in that particular setting, where you’re talking to a lot of soldiers and people that, in some cases, just got off the operating tables, I think it’s a great thing to wear a mask.”

July 12: “I’ve never been against masks but I do believe they have a time and a place.”⁶

July 16: Republican governors break from Trump amid growing calls for mask mandates . . . More and more, Republican politicians are mandating masks statewide, breaking from President Donald Trump who still resists the idea even though he finally wore one in public, once, last weekend. . . . President Trump’s resistance trickles down to his supporters, Pepper says, and makes it harder for businesses to enforce mask rules. . . . White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany on Thursday rejected the idea of national mask mandate, saying, “We leave it to localities to make the decisions with regards to face coverings, and CDC guidelines remain the same today, recommended but not required.”⁷

July 16: Speaking to Fox Business Network last week, Mr Trump said: “I’m all for masks.” . . . The change of tone came as the US recorded 66,528 coronavirus cases on Saturday, a new daily record. But speaking to Fox News on Friday, Mr Trump said he didn’t agree with a national mask mandate, saying people should have a “certain freedom”. He also said he took issue with people touching their faces after taking their mask off. “They put their finger on the mask, and they take them off, and then they start touching their eyes and touching their nose and their mouth. And then they don’t know how they caught it?” he said.⁸

²<https://theintercept.com/2020/04/28/trump-mocks-mans-mask-white-house-pence-refuses-wear-one-mayo-clinic/>

³<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-mocks-joe-biden-wear-face-mask-public/>

⁴<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/28/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus-fallout/index.html>

⁵<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article244135532.html>

⁶<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53378439>

⁷<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/republican-governors-break-trump-amid-growing-calls-mask/story?id=71818051>

⁸<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53453468>

July 17: Atlanta mayor: Trump broke city’s mask rule, ignored science.⁹

July 21: “It will probably, unfortunately, get worse before it gets better. Something I don’t like to say about things, but that’s the way it is. It’s what we have.” “I have no problem with masks. I view it this way: Anything that can potentially help, is a good thing. I have no problem. I carry it. I wear it. You saw me wearing it a number of times, and I’ll continue.”¹⁰

July 29: Amid Virus Surge, Republicans Abruptly Urge Masks Despite Trump’s Resistance. Masks became a political cause for some in the early months of the pandemic. A growing set of Republican leaders are suddenly pushing Americans to wear them. . . . Protesters marched on the State Capitol in Texas, holding signs declaring that masks equal “medical tyranny.” Lawsuits filed in Florida courts argue that mask laws violate constitutional rights. President Trump mocked former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for wearing a mask and has rarely worn one himself.¹¹<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/us/coronavirus-masks.html>

August 3: President Donald Trump on Monday sent a campaign email, typically used for soliciting donations, to make a different request of his supporters: consider wearing a mask. “We are all in this together, and while I know there has been some confusion surrounding the usage of face masks, I think it’s something we should all try to do when we are not able to be socially distanced from others,” the email, sent by the Trump campaign and signed by the President, read.¹²

August 13: Trump attacks Biden for calling on governors to mandate masks.¹³

August 13: “We have urged Americans to wear masks. We’ve been saying wear them when it’s appropriate,” Trump said. “Maybe they’re great and maybe they’re just good, maybe they’re not so good. But frankly what do you have to lose? You have nothing to lose.” However, Trump claimed that Biden “wants to shut down our economy and close our schools and grind society to a halt.” “We’ll defeat this virus, but not by hiding in our basements, he’s got to come out of his basement. We’ll defeat this virus through a common sense mitigation effort, shielding those at highest risk and unleashing America’s medical and scientific genius.”¹⁴

⁹https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/atlanta-mayor-trump-broke-citys-mask-rule-ignored-science/2020/07/17/afc6dc54-c835-11ea-a825-8722004e4150_story.html <https://thehill.com/homenews/politics/101507609-white-house-defends-trump-over-atlanta-mayors-mask-accusations>

¹⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-masks.html>

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¹²<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/03/politics/trump-masks-campaign-email/index.html>

¹³<https://www.pressherald.com/2020/08/13/trump-attacks-biden-for-calling-on-governors-to-mandate-masks/>

¹⁴<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/13/trump-calls-bidens-coronavirus-plan-unscientific-rejects-call-for-national-mask-mandate.html>

B Question Wording

B.1 Agree-disagree questions including candidate placements

We are going to ask you several questions about political issues. For each one, please tell us:

What YOU think about the issue

What you think the PARTIES and CANDIDATES think about the issue

Please just give us your best guess. Many people don't know the answers.

- The government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks

- A constitutional amendment banning same sex marriages

- Lowering federal taxes

- Restrictions on whether a woman can get an abortion

- Strengthening background checks to prevent guns from being sold to people with criminal records or mental illness

- Restricting the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) factories can emit

- Preventing any Muslim who is not a US citizen from entering the country

- Repealing (Canceling) the Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare")

- The United States should be part of the World Health Organization (WHO)

- Building a wall along the Mexican border

- Requiring people to wear masks in public to slow the spread of the coronavirus

- Increasing free trade with other countries

- Reducing the size of the income gap between rich and poor Americans

- Closing non-essential businesses to slow the spread of the coronavirus

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
You			
Democratic Party			
Joe Biden			
Republican Party			
Donald Trump			

B.2 Government effort questions

Please tell us about how much effort YOU want from the federal government in each of these policy areas:

- Stopping employers from hiring illegal immigrants
- Coronavirus testing
- Protecting the environment
- Making sure people with the coronavirus stay at home
- Protecting Americans from the coronavirus
- Protecting the air we breathe

Response options: much more than now, somewhat more than now, the same as now, somewhat less than now, much less than now

B.3 Attention Check

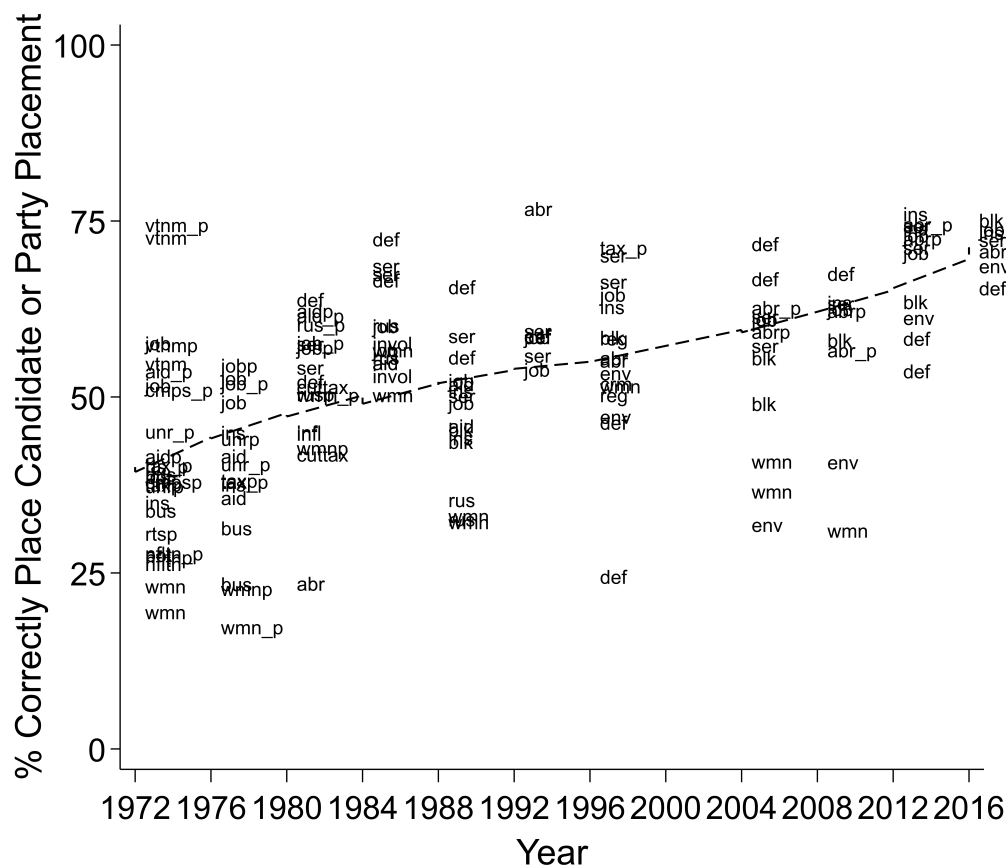
We only accepted respondents into the survey who accurately reported the date, as we describe in the Data section. We then asked this difficult attention check:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. We would like to ask you some questions about the political situation in the United States.

For our research, attention to the survey is really important. So we ask you to please pay careful attention and we apologize in advance for all the questions. If you have read this far, please click both “I understand” and “I don’t understand.”

C Placement Knowledge in the ANES

Figure A.1: Presidential Candidate and Party Policy Stance Knowledge in the ANES 1972-2016



Note: This figure presents the percent placing the candidates and the percent placing the parties on the right sides of each other for all available policy questions across ANES presidential election surveys. As in the paper, we code respondents as “correct” if they place the Democratic presidential candidate to the ideological left of the Republican anywhere on the scale for the presidential candidate questions. Likewise we code respondents as correct if they place the Democratic party to the ideological left of the Republican Party for the party placement questions. We code respondents who placed the candidates or parties at the same point, say don’t know to one or both candidates/parties or reverse the positions as incorrect. In 2016, the ANES only asked about candidate positions. Before 1972, the ANES did not ask about policy stance perceptions of presidential candidates or parties. We do not show the percentages for 2000 because of the split phone/face-to-face design. We weight the estimates in years when the ANES calculates weights.

Issue legend: tax (High-income tax-rate), unr (Urban unrest), cmpls (College campus

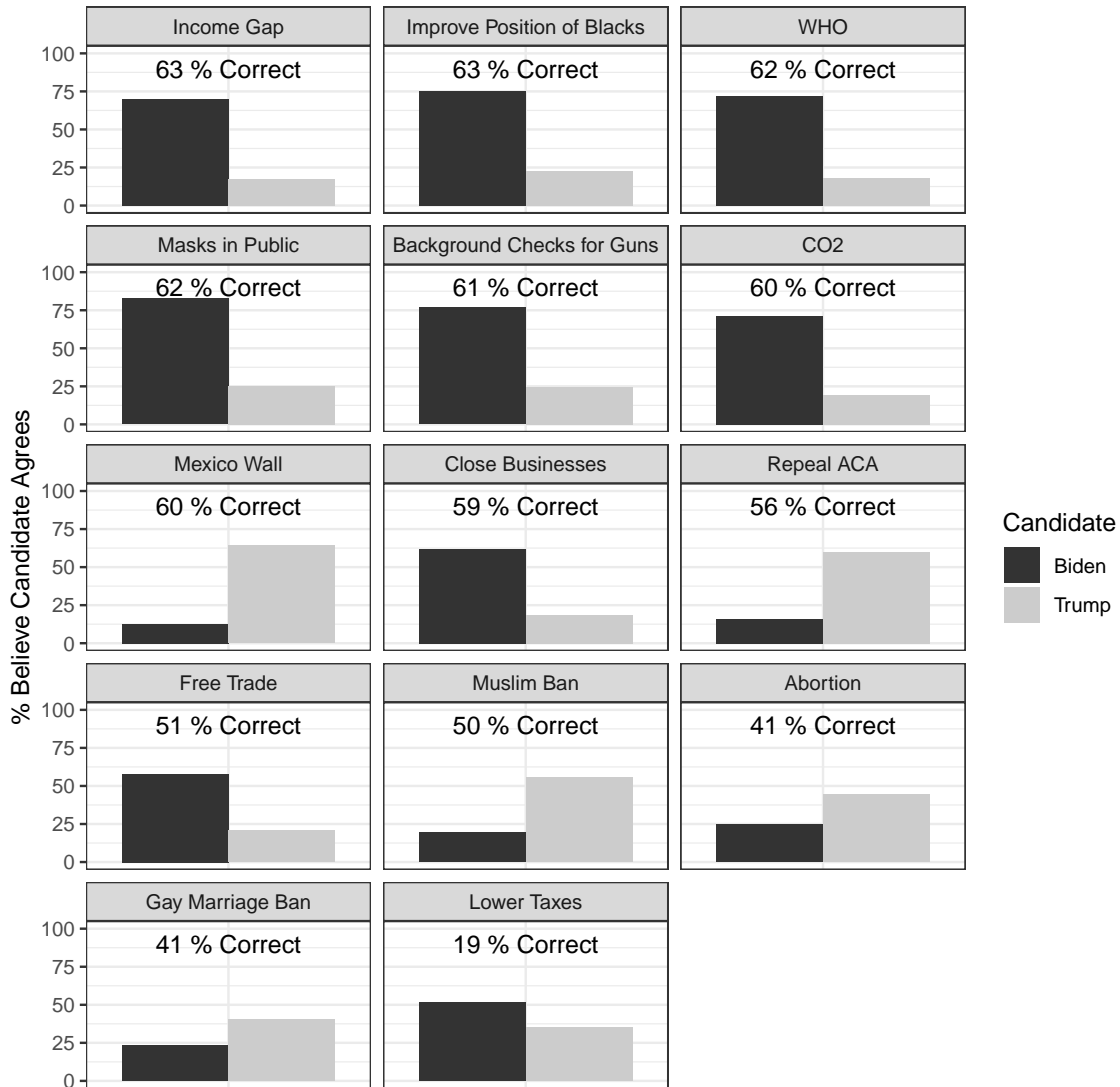
unrest), job (Government guaranteed jobs), pot (Legalization of marijuana), bus (School bussing), ins (Government provided health insurance), wmn (Women’s role in society), rts (Rights of the accused), aid (“Aid to minorities”), blk (Aid to blacks), def (Defense spending), ser (Government services and spending), infl (Inflation-unemployment tradeoff), abr (Abortion), invol (US involvement in Central America), rus (Cooperation with Russia), crm (Crime reduction), env (Environment-Jobs tradeoff), reg (Environmental Regulation). “_p” indicates that a question is from the postelection survey wave.

Several factors may account for the lower percent correct we observe in the Lucid survey compared to 2016 ANES. In 2016, the ANES only asked about party placements, whereas our survey asked about presidential candidate placements. Other factors may include that our survey took place in August, whereas ANES usually interviews respondents across September and October and then after the election, giving people more time to learn from campaign exposure. The ANES may select for more politically knowledgeable respondents who are willing to sit through an hour-long survey about politics, whereas Lucid respondents mostly answer short marketing surveys. Low-quality responding from Lucid respondents may also contribute, as we discuss in the paper. Question format differences may also contribute.

In 2012, the ANES had a unusually low response rate, which may account for the somewhat higher numbers in that year. In 2016, however, the response rate rose.

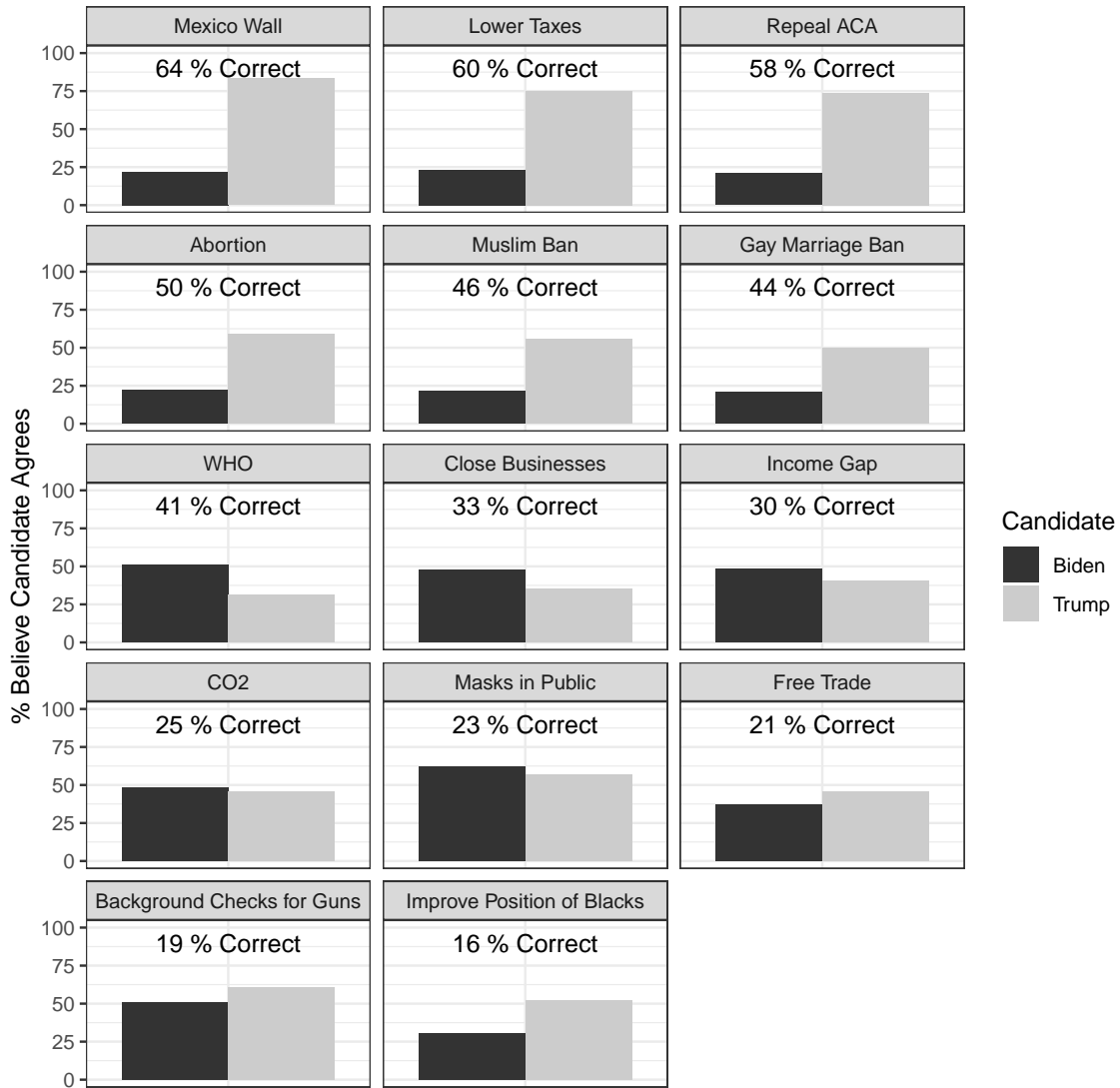
D Placement Knowledge Across All Issues

Figure A.2: Placement Knowledge Among Biden Voters



Note: Bars in this figure show the percentage of Biden voters who believe each candidate agrees with each policy statement. At the top of each facet, the percentage of respondents who correctly place the candidates relative to each other on the issue is indicated. Issues are ordered by the percentage of Biden voters who correctly place the candidates.

Figure A.3: Placement Knowledge Among Trump Voters



Note: Bars in this figure show the percentage of Trump voters who believe each candidate agrees with each policy statement. At the top of each facet, the percentage of respondents who correctly place the candidates relative to each other on the issue is indicated. Issues are ordered by the percentage of Trump voters who correctly place the candidates.