**Online Appendix**

The Civic Option?

Using Experiments to Estimate the Effects of

Consuming Information in Local Elections

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**Policy Questions**

We would like to know your opinion on the following San Francisco policy issues.

*(Respondents answer eight of the 10 policy questions selected at random.)*

New York City is currently considering a traffic congestion pricing plan. Under the plan, all vehicles that enter certain geographic areas or zones would be charged a fee. The fee varies by time of day (higher when streets are congested) and by vehicle type (higher for trucks and other large vehicles).

Would you support implementing a similar congestion pricing plan for San Francisco’s downtown business districts, with the revenue used to pay for public transit projects? Drivers would be charged using FasTrak and camera technology, much as they are now charged for crossing toll bridges.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

In 2017, San Francisco became the first city to pull out of the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force. Proponents of the task force believe close cooperation between local and federal law enforcement agencies is necessary to prevent terrorist attacks. Opponents of the task force believe that local police will be used to spy on Muslims and those who disagree with President Donald Trump.

Do you support renewing SFPD’s involvement with the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

In 2015, San Francisco adopted a Transportation Sustainability Fee (TSF) that requires developers of large commercial and residential projects to pay a fee to offset the increased costs of providing transportation services to the new residents and workers such projects bring.

Would you support increasing the Transportation Sustainability Fee (TSF) by $5/square foot from $19.04 to $24.04 on commercial property?

1. Yes, I support the 8 Washington Street project
2. No, I oppose the 8 Washington Street project
3. Don’t know

Do you support the June 2018 ballot measure to provide SF police with tasers?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

Do you support the expansion of charter schools in San Francisco?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

In June, voters will consider a local ballot measure that would give all San Franciscans the right to legal representation when their landlord attempts to evict them. Do you support this ballot measure?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

This year, the California legislature considered a proposal to override local zoning controls on height, density, and parking minimums on properties within a certain distance of major public transit facilities. The proposal would have allowed housing projects with heights of 4 to 5 stories to be built within a half-mile of train, subway, and ferry stops.

Do you support this proposed legislation to override local zoning controls and allow housing projects of 4 to 5 stories near public transit facilities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

In 2002, voters approved a San Francisco ballot measure that replaced the system of runoff elections with ranked-choice voting. (Under the runoff system, if no candidate won a majority of the votes, a second election was held between the top two candidates.) Opponents of ranked-choice voting say it confuses voters and can lead to races with too many candidates, and they argue for a return to runoff elections. Supporters of ranked-choice voting argue that it leads to more diversity in elected officials and is less expensive than holding separate runoff elections.

In your opinion, which is the better system?

1. The current ranked-choice system
2. The previous runoff system
3. Don’t know

This year, the California legislature will consider a proposal that would allow cities to appoint a guardian for persons who suffer from chronic homelessness accompanied by severe mental illness, drug addiction, repeated commitments, or exceptionally frequent use of emergency medical services. The guardian would be able to manage the affairs of the homeless person, including ordering them into supportive housing or treatment facilities.

Do you support this proposed legislation to allow cities to appoint guardians to manage the personal affairs of homeless people with severe mental illness or drug addiction?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

Currently, cities in California are not allowed to collect personal or corporate income taxes. Do you support changing the state’s’ revenue and taxation code to allow San Francisco to levy personal and corporate income taxes?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don’t know

**Control Group**

How about London Breed and Richie Greenberg? Do you prefer Breed over Greenberg or Greenberg over Breed?

1. Breed over Greenberg
2. Greenberg over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Breed over Kim or Kim over Breed?

1. Breed over Kim
2. Kim over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Breed over Leno or Leno over Breed?

1. Breed over Leno
2. Leno over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Greenberg over Kim or Kim over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Kim
2. Kim over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Greenberg over Leno or Leno over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Leno
2. Leno over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Jane Kim and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Kim over Leno or Leno over Kim?

1. Kim over Leno
2. Leno over Kim
3. Don’t know

**Party Cues Treatment**

The candidates running for mayor have received endorsements from the Democratic and Republican parties. Below is a table that summarizes the endorsements each candidate received from these political parties. Please take a look at the table and then answer a few questions about your preferences between the leading candidates. The table will remain on the screen while you answer the questions.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | London Breed | Richie Greenberg | Jane Kim | Mark Leno |
| Democratic Party |  |  | Endorsed #2 | Endorsed #1 |
| Republican Party |  | Endorsed #1 |  |  |

How about London Breed and Richie Greenberg? Do you prefer Breed over Greenberg or Greenberg over Breed?

1. Breed over Greenberg
2. Greenberg over Breed
3. Don’t kno

How about London Breed and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Breed over Kim or Kim over Breed?

1. Breed over Kim
2. Kim over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Breed over Leno or Leno over Breed?

1. Breed over Leno
2. Leno over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Greenberg over Kim or Kim over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Kim
2. Kim over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Greenberg over Leno or Leno over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Leno
2. Leno over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Jane Kim and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Kim over Leno or Leno over Kim?

1. Kim over Leno
2. Leno over Kim
3. Don’t know

**Voter Guide Treatment**

The candidates running for mayor have answered many questions about policy issues affecting San Francisco. Their responses are summarized in the voter guide table below. Please take a look at it and then answer a few questions about your preferences between the leading candidates. The voter guide will remain on the screen while you answer the questions.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | London Breed | Richie Greenberg | Jane Kim | Mark Leno |
| Override local zoning to allow housing residential buildings of 4-5 stories near subway, train, and ferry stops | Yes | No | No | No |
| Renew the City’s involvement with the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Increase the transportation fee on commercial property by $5 per square foot | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Allow City to appoint guardians for the chronically homeless, mentally ill and drug users, forcing them to accept services | Yes | ? | No | No |
| Provide San Francisco police with tasers | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Fund lawyers for tenants who are facing eviction | ? | No | Yes | Yes |
| Expand charter schools in San Francisco | No | ? | No | Yes |

How about London Breed and Richie Greenberg? Do you prefer Breed over Greenberg or Greenberg over Breed?

1. Breed over Greenberg
2. Greenberg over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Breed over Kim or Kim over Breed?

1. Breed over Kim
2. Kim over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Breed over Leno or Leno over Breed?

1. Breed over Leno
2. Leno over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Greenberg over Kim or Kim over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Kim
2. Kim over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Greenberg over Leno or Leno over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Leno
2. Leno over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Jane Kim and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Kim over Leno or Leno over Kim?

1. Kim over Leno
2. Leno over Kim
3. Don’t know

**Information Choice Treatment**

The next questions on the survey ask you to make one-on-one comparisons between the candidates for San Francisco Mayor. Before you answer these questions, you may view some additional information about the candidates, if you wish. Please click the button below to receive either:

* Political party endorsements. Choose this option if you would like to see the Democratic and Republican Party endorsements in the mayoral election.
* Issue-oriented voter guide. Choose this option if you would like to see a voter guide that summarizes the candidates’ stated positions on policy issues affecting San Francisco.
* No additional information. Choose this option if you would like to proceed to the next questions without receiving additional information.

[*If respondents select the political party endorsements, then they receive the table of endorsements from the “party cues” treatment group. If respondents select the voter guide, then they receive the table of the candidates’ policy positions used in the “voter guide” treatment group. If they choose “no additional information,” then they express their preferences for the candidates without party cues or the voter guide, just like respondents assigned to the control group.*]

How about London Breed and Richie Greenberg? Do you prefer Breed over Greenberg or Greenberg over Breed?

1. Breed over Greenberg
2. Greenberg over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Breed over Kim or Kim over Breed?

1. Breed over Kim
2. Kim over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about London Breed and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Breed over Leno or Leno over Breed?

1. Breed over Leno
2. Leno over Breed
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Jane Kim? Do you prefer Greenberg over Kim or Kim over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Kim
2. Kim over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Richie Greenberg and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Greenberg over Leno or Leno over Greenberg?

1. Greenberg over Leno
2. Leno over Greenberg
3. Don’t know

How about Jane Kim and Mark Leno? Do you prefer Kim over Leno or Leno over Kim?

1. Kim over Leno
2. Leno over Kim
3. Don’t know

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| **Table A1. Difference of Means Tests of the Effects of Information** |
|  |  |
| *Control Group* | 53.80*N*=1026 |
| *Party Cues* | 60.00*N*=1195Difference = **6.20**Std. Error = 2.10 |
| *Voter Guide* | 61.43*N*=1221Difference = **7.62**Std. Error = 2.09 |
| *Information Choice* | 58.38*N*=1134Difference = **4.58**Std. Error = 2.14 |
| Numbers indicate percentage of respondents in each treatment and control group who choose the candidate in a pair that has the closer (more proximate) ideal point. Differences and standard errors calculated using two-sample t-tests. Boldface indicates difference with control is significant p < .05, two-tailed. |

|  |
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| **Table A2. Demographics of Sample and Citywide Electorate** |
| Variable | 2018 Sample | 2011 Citywide Electorate |
| ***Partisan Affiliation***  |  |  |
| Democrat | 66.4% | 59.4% |
| Republican | 8.7% | 9.9% |
| Independent / Decline to State  | 17.0%(Independent) | 26.6%(Decline to State) |
| Other | 7.9% | 4.0% |
| ***Sex***  |  |  |
| Female | 42.8% | 48.3% |
| Male | 57.2% | 51.7% |
| ***Race and Ethnicity***  |  |  |
| White | 56.9% | 59.3% |
| Black | 3.8% | 3.5% |
| Asian & Chinese / Asian & Pacific Islander | 26.3%(Asian & Chinese) | 28.1% (Asian & Pacific Islander) |
| Latino | 8.5% | 8.3% |
| Other | 4.6% | 0.7% |
| ***Education***  |  |  |
| High school degree or less | 2.9% | Not available |
| Some college | 15.2% |  |
| Bachelor’s degree | 41.1% |   |
| Professional degree | 40.9% |  |
| ***Political Interest***  |  |  |
| Followed mayor’s race:Very closely | 9.9% | Not available |
| Somewhat closely | 46.7% |  |
| Not closely | 43.5% |   |
| Citywide electorate data is drawn from Appendix 5 of Cook and Latterman’s (2011) analysis of the 2011 municipal election in San Francisco. The citywide data reflect the demographics of voters who actually turned out to vote in this 2011 election. Parentheses denote differences in question wording/categories between our exit poll survey and the Cook and Latterman data.  |

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| **Table A2. Demographics of Sample and Citywide Electorate (cont.)** |
| Variable | 2018 Sample | 2011 Citywide Electorate |
| ***Self-Reported Ideology (Conservative)***  |  |  |
| Strong progressive (most liberal/left) | 14.5% | Not available |
| Progressive | 22.3% |  |
| Lean progressive | 15.6% |   |
| In the middle | 21.9% |   |
| Lean moderate | 9.2% |   |
| Strong moderate | 9.3% |   |
| Conservative (least liberal/left) | 7.2% |  |
| ***Political Knowledge***  |  |  |
| *Number of correct answers to 4 questions about local political institutions and figures*: |  |  |
| 0 | 7.0% | Not available |
| 1 | 13.9% |  |
| 2 | 30.1% |  |
| 3 | 33.4% |  |
| 4 | 15.7% |   |
| Citywide electorate data is drawn from Appendix 5 of Cook and Latterman’s (2011) analysis of the 2011 municipal election in San Francisco. The citywide data reflect the demographics of voters who actually turned out to vote in this 2011 election. Parentheses denote differences in question wording/categories between our exit poll survey and the Cook and Latterman data.  |

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| **Table A3. Education and Income in San Francisco and Other Big Cities** |
| Variable | **San Francisco** | **Seattle** | **Boston** | **Portland** | **Chicago** | **Minneapolis** |
| ***Education*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| High school graduate or higher | 85.7% | 92.4% | 84.2% | 89.9% | 80.2% | 88.0% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bachelor’s degree or higher | 51.4% | 55.8% | 42.8% | 42.0% | 32.9% | 44.7% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Median Household Income*** | $72,947 | $61,856 | $51,739 | $50,177 | $47,371 | $47,478 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Percent Below Poverty Level*** | 12.3% | 13.2% | 21.4% | 16.8% | 21.4% | 22.3% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Homeownership Rate***  | 37.1% | 48.0% | 34.6% | 54.2% | 47.0% | 50.4% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Population*** | 797,983 | 603,174 | 609,942 | 576,543 | 2,700,741 | 381,833 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Data on each city is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables S1501, DP03, DP04, and DP05. Generated using American FactFinder. <http://factfinder.census>.gov. |

**Distribution of Candidate and Citizen Ideal Points**

To estimate candidates’ and respondents’ ideal points, we use the item-response model developed by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004). We estimated a one-dimensional model with uninformative priors. The first dimension correctly classifies 77.0 percent of candidate and voter responses.  Adding a second dimension produces only mild improvement. Consistent with previous research, we find that a dominant progressive-moderate dimension explains a large share of candidates’ and voters’ policy positions in San Francisco’s elections.

The distribution of these ideal points is summarized in Figure A1. The two progressive candidates, Kim and Leno, are positioned on the left side of the scale. These candidates were endorsed by the local Democratic Party. Breed, who consistently voted with the moderate bloc on the Board of Supervisors, is located center right. Greenberg, the Republican Party’s endorsee, is well to the right of the other candidates. Our results also indicate significant overlap between the ideal points of Democrats, Republicans and other citizens. That is, partisanship and ideology are weakly correlated in this local setting.

|  |
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| **Figure A1. Distribution of Candidate and Citizen Ideal Points** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A4. Determinants of Choosing to Receive Information** |
|  | Coeff.(Std. Err.) |
| High Interest | **-0.956**(0.552) |
| College Degree | 0.428(0.319) |
| Ideology (Conservative) | **-0.203**(0.099) |
| Minority | **1.097**(0.327) |
| Female | 0.060(0.340) |
| Independent/Other | 0.154(0.436) |
| Republican | 0.146(0.553) |
| Constant | 0.174(0.445) |
|  |  |
| *N* | 180 |
| pseudo r2 | 0.081 |
| Numbers are logit coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. Boldface indicates p < 0.05, one-tailed. |

**Figure A2. Determinants of Choosing to Receive Information**

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NOTE: Symbols are predicted first differences (with 90 percent confidence intervals) in the probability of choosing to receive information generated from the model in Table A3 using CLARIFY among respondents assigned to the information choice treatment group.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table A5. Randomization Check** |
| **Variable** | **Control** | **Party Cues** | **Voter Guide** | **Info. Choice** | **Differences** |
| ***Partisanship*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Independent/Other | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.19 | 0.16 | No significant differences |
| Republican | 0.07 | 0.11 | 0.06 | 0.11 | No significant differences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Education*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| College Degree | 0.75 | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.89 | Party Cues, Info. Choice different from Control |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Gender*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | 0.46 | 0.44 | 0.44 | 0.38 | No significant differences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Race*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Latino | 0.12 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.07 | No significant differences |
| Chinese/Asian | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.27 | No significant differences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Political Interest*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| High (Follow Race “Very Closely”) | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.10 | 0.10 | No significant differences |
| Low (“Not Closely”) | 0.43 | 0.44 | 0.47 | 0.37 | Voter Guide different from Info. Choice |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Ideology (Conservative)*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ideo. Rating (1-7) | 3.49 | 3.38 | 3.40 | 3.57 | No significant differences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Political Knowledge*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge Score (0-4) | 2.37 | 2.35 | 2.39 | 2.49 | No significant differences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *N* | 171 | 200 | 204 | 191 |  |
| Numbers in four middle columns are mean scores for each group except row labeled *N*. Column labeled “Differences” summarizes the results of difference of means tests conducted for each pair of our control and three treatment groups. Unless noted, differences between groups were not significant at the .05 level (two-tailed). Where noted, differences were significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).  |

**Ethics Statement**

This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UC Davis (protocol number 1244101-1) and adheres to the American Political Science Association’s Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research.

The study did not use deception and was deemed by the IRB to involve minimal risk. Thus, IRB granted a waiver of a signed consent form. Instead, participants read a study information page that described costs, benefits, confidentiality, and compensation associated with taking the survey. From the study information page, participants could click a link to consent and begin taking the survey.

At the conclusion of the study, participants read a debriefing page that informed them that some people who took the survey received particular types of information about the candidates before expressing their preferences and views about the candidates while others did not. The page explained that this allows us to examine whether information makes a difference for people’s preferences for and perceptions of candidates.

Participants were compensated for taking the survey. Specifically, they received a $5 Amazon gift card for their participation. We chose this amount because it was small enough to not be coercive, yet still provided meaningful compensation for the time people spent taking the survey.