

A Ethical Considerations

As experimental research using public servants as subjects has proliferated, scholars have written about the ethical considerations researchers must take into account as they design and conduct such experiments. For recent work on this topic, see Naurin and Öhberg (2021) and Zittel et al. (2021). In this section we discuss some of the issues we have been mindful of while designing and conducting this audit study. First, even though the tasks we are asking legislators to complete are a low-cost part of their routine duties, the exercise does involve deception and the task itself (i.e., answering emails) takes time, which is a valuable resource. McClendon (2012, 14) notes that, "if there were no deception and if participants consented to having their communications observed, the research would almost certainly be exempt from IRB review." Public officials are considered to be less vulnerable than the average research subject; being scrutinized is part of their jobs and they do not necessarily expect the same level of privacy and confidentiality that other subjects might expect.

In order to detect coethnic or cominority biases in responsiveness, our study mimics a real-world scenario and thus uses hypothetical constituents and deception to do so. Informing legislators of the experiment beforehand would jeopardize the inferences we could make. In reality, legislators receive this type of email frequently and do not know whether their responses are being observed or shared. As McClendon (2012, 15) further notes, "whether public official or citizen subjects are involved, IRBs allow informed consent to be waived where interventions are ordinary, where answering the research question is of high social value and where obtaining informed consent in advance would damage the results of the experiment."

With the goal of minimizing the burden placed on the subjects, we purposely limit the emails in the study to information requests and refrain from asking policy-related questions. In addition to minimizing the amount of time legislators spend answering the emails, we want to be careful not to affect the policymaking process or actual policy outcomes. Keeping the requests short and simple ensures that we do not prevent elected officials from working for their constituents (Butler

and Broockman 2011). Finally, we ensure the anonymity of legislators' responses. Like previous studies of this nature, we summarize and present findings in a way that ensures that no individual legislator is identifiable. Our intent is not to draw attention to any particular individual, nor to tarnish his or her reputation.

B MTurk Pretest

Table B.1: MTurk Survey Results (N = 100)

White Names					
Ethnoracial Group	Dustin Miller	Colin Martin	Connor Clark	Jake Anderson	Dustin Baker
Hispanic/Latino	2.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	2.00%
Black/African-American	5.00%	6.00%	3.00%	2.00%	7.00%
White	93.00%	91.00%	95.00%	95.00%	89.00%
Don't Know	0.00%	2.00%	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Black Names					
Ethnoracial Group	Tyrone Washington	Terrell Jefferson	Trevon Booker	Jamal Jackson	DeShawn Banks
Hispanic/Latino	3.00%	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	1.00%
Black/African-American	93.00%	92.00%	83.00%	93.00%	94.00%
White	3.00%	7.00%	14.00%	5.00%	4.00%
Don't Know	1.00%	0.00%	1.00%	0.00%	1.00%
Latino Names					
Ethnoracial Group	Juan Hernández	José García	Pedro Sánchez	Héctor Ramírez	Javier González
Hispanic/Latino	96.00%	96.00%	92.00%	96.00%	93.00%
Black/African-American	2.00%	0.00%	6.00%	2.00%	4.00%
White	2.00%	4.00%	2.00%	0.00%	2.00%
Don't Know	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.00%	1.00%

C Text of Email Messages

Figure 2: Internship Email

HEADING:

From: [*Treatment Name*]
To: [Legislator's Email Address]
Subject: A question about internship opportunities

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Legislator's Last Name],

BODY - OPTION 1:

As a fellow [Partisanship] of your district, I am quite interested in learning about the work your office does.

I am committed to helping [*Black/Hispanic/-*] people, and so I am particularly interested in internship opportunities that may be available to me. Could you instruct me on what to do to get more information?

BODY - OPTION 2:

I am a [Partisanship] in your district who is very interested in politics. I am very invested in helping the [*Black/Hispanic/-*] community, so I was wondering if there are any internship opportunities that I could apply to.

BODY - OPTION 3:

I'm looking for internship opportunities in politics. I live in your district, I'm also a [Partisanship], and I care deeply about helping [*Black/Hispanic/-*] people, so I thought it would be a good idea to inquire about internship programs or to see if you have information on where I can look for some.

CLOSING:

I'm looking forward to your answer.

Thank you,

Treatment Name

Figure 3: Political Advice Email

HEADING:

From: *[Treatment Name]*
To: [Legislator's Email Address]
Subject: Question about how to get more involved

Hello [Representative/Senator] [Legislator's Last Name],

BODY - OPTION 1:

I have lived in your district my whole life. As a fellow [Partisanship], I was wondering what is the best way to get involved in politics here and thought it would be a good idea to ask you for advice. I am particularly interested in work related to improving the quality of life of the local *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community.

BODY - OPTION 2:

I'm a [Partisanship] of your district who is interested in getting involved in politics. I believe the current situation of the country requires many of us to get more involved, especially on issues related to our *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community. Do you have any recommendations on how to start?

BODY - OPTION 3:

As a fellow [Partisanship], I am really interested in getting more involved in the activities of the party in our district. I am specifically interested in activities that promote better living conditions for the local *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community. Do you know where I can get information on this?

CLOSING:

I'm looking forward to your answer.
Thank you,

Treatment Name

Figure 4: Campaign Email

HEADING:

From: *[Treatment Name]*
To: [Legislator's Email Address]
Subject: Question about this year's campaign

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Legislator's Last Name],

BODY - OPTION 1:

I hope this email finds you well.

I am one of your [Partisanship] constituents, and I was wondering where I can get information on how to get involved in this year's electoral campaign. I am already involved in many activities with the local *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community but have never participated in a campaign. Can you guide me on where to go or whom to contact?

BODY - OPTION 2:

I voted [Partisanship] in the last election and would really like to get involved in this year's campaign activities. I figured that planning should be starting now, so I would like to know how can I help? I am particularly engaged in activities of the local *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community, so that may be useful.

BODY - OPTION 3:

I am a [Partisanship], and I am part of your district's *[Black/Hispanic/-]* community. I am really interested in participating in this year's campaign activities. Is there a place where I can sign up for doing so?

CLOSING:

I look forward to your answer.
Thank you,

Treatment Name

D Share of Black and Latino Legislators by Party and State

State	Race	Party	Count	Total Seats	Share
Alabama	Black	Democrat	34	140	0.24
Alabama	Latino	Republican	0	140	0.00
Alabama	Black	Independent	0	140	0.00
Alabama	Latino	Independent	0	140	0.00
Alabama	Black	Republican	0	140	0.00
Alabama	Latino	Democrat	0	140	0.00
Alaska	Black	Independent	0	60	0.00
Alaska	Black	Republican	2	60	0.03
Alaska	Latino	Republican	0	60	0.00
Alaska	Latino	Democrat	0	60	0.00
Alaska	Latino	Independent	1	60	0.02
Alaska	Black	Democrat	1	60	0.02
Arizona	Black	Independent	0	90	0.00
Arizona	Black	Republican	1	90	0.01
Arizona	Latino	Democrat	19	90	0.21
Arizona	Latino	Republican	1	90	0.01
Arizona	Latino	Independent	0	90	0.00
Arizona	Black	Democrat	2	90	0.02
Arkansas	Black	Independent	0	135	0.00
Arkansas	Latino	Republican	0	135	0.00
Arkansas	Black	Republican	0	135	0.00
Arkansas	Latino	Independent	0	135	0.00
Arkansas	Latino	Democrat	0	135	0.00
Arkansas	Black	Democrat	15	135	0.11
California	Black	Republican	0	120	0.00
California	Black	Democrat	9	120	0.07
California	Latino	Democrat	29	120	0.24
California	Black	Independent	0	120	0.00
California	Latino	Independent	0	120	0.00
California	Latino	Republican	0	120	0.00
Colorado	Latino	Independent	0	100	0.00
Colorado	Black	Independent	0	100	0.00
Colorado	Black	Democrat	8	100	0.08
Colorado	Latino	Republican	1	100	0.01
Colorado	Black	Republican	0	100	0.00
Colorado	Latino	Democrat	13	100	0.13
Connecticut	Latino	Independent	0	187	0.00
Connecticut	Black	Democrat	17	187	0.09
Connecticut	Black	Republican	1	187	0.01
Connecticut	Black	Independent	0	187	0.00
Connecticut	Latino	Republican	0	187	0.00
Connecticut	Latino	Democrat	10	187	0.05

Delaware	Latino	Independent	0	62	0.00
Delaware	Black	Democrat	8	62	0.13
Delaware	Black	Independent	0	62	0.00
Delaware	Black	Republican	0	62	0.00
Delaware	Latino	Republican	1	62	0.02
Delaware	Latino	Democrat	0	62	0.00
Florida	Black	Independent	0	160	0.00
Florida	Latino	Republican	9	160	0.06
Florida	Black	Democrat	27	160	0.17
Florida	Latino	Democrat	8	160	0.05
Florida	Black	Republican	1	160	0.01
Florida	Latino	Independent	0	160	0.00
Georgia	Latino	Independent	0	236	0.00
Georgia	Black	Independent	0	236	0.00
Georgia	Black	Democrat	63	236	0.27
Georgia	Latino	Democrat	1	236	0.00
Georgia	Latino	Republican	0	236	0.00
Georgia	Black	Republican	0	236	0.00
Hawaii	Black	Democrat	2	76	0.03
Hawaii	Black	Independent	0	76	0.00
Hawaii	Latino	Republican	0	76	0.00
Hawaii	Latino	Independent	0	76	0.00
Hawaii	Black	Republican	0	76	0.00
Hawaii	Latino	Democrat	1	76	0.01
Idaho	Black	Independent	0	105	0.00
Idaho	Black	Democrat	1	105	0.01
Idaho	Latino	Republican	0	105	0.00
Idaho	Black	Republican	0	105	0.00
Idaho	Latino	Democrat	1	105	0.01
Idaho	Latino	Independent	0	105	0.00
Illinois	Black	Independent	0	177	0.00
Illinois	Latino	Republican	0	177	0.00
Illinois	Black	Democrat	31	177	0.18
Illinois	Black	Republican	0	177	0.00
Illinois	Latino	Independent	0	177	0.00
Illinois	Latino	Democrat	12	177	0.07
Indiana	Black	Republican	0	150	0.00
Indiana	Latino	Democrat	1	150	0.01
Indiana	Latino	Republican	0	150	0.00
Indiana	Latino	Independent	0	150	0.00
Indiana	Black	Independent	0	150	0.00
Indiana	Black	Democrat	13	150	0.09
Iowa	Black	Independent	0	150	0.00
Iowa	Latino	Independent	0	150	0.00
Iowa	Latino	Republican	0	150	0.00
Iowa	Black	Democrat	5	150	0.03
Iowa	Latino	Democrat	0	150	0.00

Iowa	Black	Republican	0	150	0.00
Kansas	Black	Independent	0	165	0.00
Kansas	Latino	Independent	0	165	0.00
Kansas	Black	Democrat	7	165	0.04
Kansas	Black	Republican	1	165	0.01
Kansas	Latino	Republican	0	165	0.00
Kansas	Latino	Democrat	3	165	0.02
Kentucky	Latino	Independent	0	138	0.00
Kentucky	Black	Democrat	9	138	0.07
Kentucky	Black	Republican	0	138	0.00
Kentucky	Latino	Democrat	0	138	0.00
Kentucky	Black	Independent	0	138	0.00
Kentucky	Latino	Republican	1	138	0.01
Louisiana	Black	Democrat	37	144	0.26
Louisiana	Black	Republican	0	144	0.00
Louisiana	Latino	Republican	1	144	0.01
Louisiana	Latino	Democrat	0	144	0.00
Louisiana	Latino	Independent	0	144	0.00
Louisiana	Black	Independent	0	144	0.00
Maine	Black	Independent	0	186	0.00
Maine	Black	Democrat	2	186	0.01
Maine	Latino	Republican	0	186	0.00
Maine	Black	Republican	0	186	0.00
Maine	Latino	Independent	0	186	0.00
Maine	Latino	Democrat	0	186	0.00
Maryland	Black	Democrat	54	188	0.29
Maryland	Black	Republican	0	188	0.00
Maryland	Black	Independent	0	188	0.00
Maryland	Latino	Republican	0	188	0.00
Maryland	Latino	Independent	0	188	0.00
Maryland	Latino	Democrat	1	188	0.01
Massachusetts	Black	Democrat	5	200	0.03
Massachusetts	Black	Republican	0	200	0.00
Massachusetts	Black	Independent	0	200	0.00
Massachusetts	Latino	Republican	0	200	0.00
Massachusetts	Latino	Independent	0	200	0.00
Massachusetts	Latino	Democrat	11	200	0.06
Michigan	Black	Independent	0	148	0.00
Michigan	Latino	Republican	1	148	0.01
Michigan	Black	Democrat	19	148	0.13
Michigan	Latino	Independent	0	148	0.00
Michigan	Black	Republican	0	148	0.00
Michigan	Latino	Democrat	3	148	0.02
Minnesota	Latino	Democrat	1	201	0.00
Minnesota	Black	Republican	0	201	0.00
Minnesota	Latino	Independent	0	201	0.00
Minnesota	Black	Independent	0	201	0.00

Minnesota	Black	Democrat	5	201	0.02
Minnesota	Latino	Republican	1	201	0.00
Mississippi	Black	Independent	0	174	0.00
Mississippi	Latino	Republican	0	174	0.00
Mississippi	Latino	Democrat	0	174	0.00
Mississippi	Latino	Independent	0	174	0.00
Mississippi	Black	Democrat	51	174	0.29
Mississippi	Black	Republican	1	174	0.01
Missouri	Black	Independent	0	197	0.00
Missouri	Latino	Republican	0	197	0.00
Missouri	Black	Democrat	21	197	0.11
Missouri	Latino	Independent	0	197	0.00
Missouri	Black	Republican	1	197	0.01
Missouri	Latino	Democrat	0	197	0.00
Montana	Latino	Republican	1	150	0.01
Montana	Latino	Independent	0	150	0.00
Montana	Black	Democrat	0	150	0.00
Montana	Black	Independent	0	150	0.00
Montana	Black	Republican	0	150	0.00
Montana	Latino	Democrat	1	150	0.01
Nevada	Black	Republican	0	63	0.00
Nevada	Latino	Independent	0	63	0.00
Nevada	Latino	Democrat	9	63	0.14
Nevada	Black	Democrat	10	63	0.16
Nevada	Latino	Republican	0	63	0.00
Nevada	Black	Independent	0	63	0.00
New Hampshire	Black	Independent	0	424	0.00
New Hampshire	Latino	Republican	1	424	0.00
New Hampshire	Black	Democrat	4	424	0.01
New Hampshire	Latino	Independent	0	424	0.00
New Hampshire	Black	Republican	0	424	0.00
New Hampshire	Latino	Democrat	1	424	0.00
New Jersey	Black	Independent	0	120	0.00
New Jersey	Black	Democrat	18	120	0.15
New Jersey	Black	Republican	1	120	0.01
New Jersey	Latino	Democrat	10	120	0.08
New Jersey	Latino	Republican	0	120	0.00
New Jersey	Latino	Independent	0	120	0.00
New Mexico	Black	Independent	0	112	0.00
New Mexico	Black	Democrat	1	112	0.01
New Mexico	Black	Republican	1	112	0.01
New Mexico	Latino	Democrat	33	112	0.29
New Mexico	Latino	Republican	5	112	0.04
New Mexico	Latino	Independent	0	112	0.00
New York	Black	Independent	0	213	0.00
New York	Black	Democrat	29	213	0.14
New York	Latino	Republican	1	213	0.00

New York	Black	Republican	0	213	0.00
New York	Latino	Independent	0	213	0.00
New York	Latino	Democrat	28	213	0.13
North Carolina	Latino	Democrat	0	170	0.00
North Carolina	Black	Democrat	36	170	0.21
North Carolina	Black	Independent	0	170	0.00
North Carolina	Black	Republican	0	170	0.00
North Carolina	Latino	Republican	0	170	0.00
North Carolina	Latino	Independent	0	170	0.00
North Dakota	Black	Republican	0	141	0.00
North Dakota	Latino	Democrat	0	141	0.00
North Dakota	Black	Independent	0	141	0.00
North Dakota	Latino	Republican	0	141	0.00
North Dakota	Latino	Independent	0	141	0.00
North Dakota	Black	Democrat	0	141	0.00
Ohio	Black	Independent	0	132	0.00
Ohio	Black	Republican	0	132	0.00
Ohio	Latino	Republican	2	132	0.02
Ohio	Latino	Independent	0	132	0.00
Ohio	Black	Democrat	18	132	0.14
Ohio	Latino	Democrat	1	132	0.01
Oklahoma	Latino	Republican	2	149	0.01
Oklahoma	Black	Independent	0	149	0.00
Oklahoma	Latino	Independent	0	149	0.00
Oklahoma	Black	Republican	0	149	0.00
Oklahoma	Black	Democrat	7	149	0.05
Oklahoma	Latino	Democrat	0	149	0.00
Oregon	Latino	Independent	0	90	0.00
Oregon	Latino	Democrat	3	90	0.03
Oregon	Black	Democrat	4	90	0.04
Oregon	Black	Republican	0	90	0.00
Oregon	Black	Independent	0	90	0.00
Oregon	Latino	Republican	0	90	0.00
Pennsylvania	Black	Independent	0	253	0.00
Pennsylvania	Black	Democrat	24	253	0.09
Pennsylvania	Latino	Republican	0	253	0.00
Pennsylvania	Latino	Independent	0	253	0.00
Pennsylvania	Black	Republican	0	253	0.00
Pennsylvania	Latino	Democrat	1	253	0.00
Rhode Island	Black	Democrat	7	113	0.06
Rhode Island	Black	Independent	0	113	0.00
Rhode Island	Latino	Republican	1	113	0.01
Rhode Island	Black	Republican	0	113	0.00
Rhode Island	Latino	Independent	0	113	0.00
Rhode Island	Latino	Democrat	6	113	0.05
South Carolina	Black	Independent	0	170	0.00
South Carolina	Latino	Republican	0	170	0.00

South Carolina	Black	Democrat	43	170	0.25
South Carolina	Black	Republican	0	170	0.00
South Carolina	Latino	Democrat	0	170	0.00
South Carolina	Latino	Independent	0	170	0.00
South Dakota	Latino	Republican	0	105	0.00
South Dakota	Black	Republican	1	105	0.01
South Dakota	Black	Independent	0	105	0.00
South Dakota	Latino	Independent	0	105	0.00
South Dakota	Latino	Democrat	0	105	0.00
South Dakota	Black	Democrat	0	105	0.00
Tennessee	Black	Democrat	17	132	0.13
Tennessee	Latino	Republican	0	132	0.00
Tennessee	Black	Independent	0	132	0.00
Tennessee	Latino	Independent	0	132	0.00
Tennessee	Black	Republican	0	132	0.00
Tennessee	Latino	Democrat	0	132	0.00
Texas	Black	Independent	0	181	0.00
Texas	Black	Republican	1	181	0.01
Texas	Latino	Republican	2	181	0.01
Texas	Latino	Democrat	31	181	0.17
Texas	Latino	Independent	0	181	0.00
Texas	Black	Democrat	16	181	0.09
Utah	Black	Independent	0	104	0.00
Utah	Black	Republican	0	104	0.00
Utah	Latino	Democrat	1	104	0.01
Utah	Latino	Republican	0	104	0.00
Utah	Latino	Independent	0	104	0.00
Utah	Black	Democrat	1	104	0.01
Vermont	Black	Independent	0	180	0.00
Vermont	Latino	Republican	0	180	0.00
Vermont	Black	Republican	1	180	0.01
Vermont	Latino	Independent	0	180	0.00
Vermont	Latino	Democrat	1	180	0.01
Vermont	Black	Democrat	1	180	0.01
Virginia	Black	Republican	0	140	0.00
Virginia	Black	Democrat	20	140	0.14
Virginia	Latino	Democrat	4	140	0.03
Virginia	Black	Independent	0	140	0.00
Virginia	Latino	Independent	0	140	0.00
Virginia	Latino	Republican	1	140	0.01
Washington	Latino	Independent	0	147	0.00
Washington	Black	Independent	0	147	0.00
Washington	Black	Democrat	5	147	0.03
Washington	Latino	Republican	1	147	0.01
Washington	Black	Republican	0	147	0.00
Washington	Latino	Democrat	5	147	0.03
West Virginia	Latino	Independent	0	134	0.00

West Virginia	Black	Democrat	3	134	0.02
West Virginia	Black	Republican	1	134	0.01
West Virginia	Black	Independent	0	134	0.00
West Virginia	Latino	Republican	2	134	0.01
West Virginia	Latino	Democrat	0	134	0.00
Wisconsin	Latino	Independent	0	132	0.00
Wisconsin	Black	Democrat	8	132	0.06
Wisconsin	Black	Independent	0	132	0.00
Wisconsin	Black	Republican	0	132	0.00
Wisconsin	Latino	Republican	1	132	0.01
Wisconsin	Latino	Democrat	2	132	0.02
Wyoming	Black	Independent	0	90	0.00
Wyoming	Latino	Republican	1	90	0.01
Wyoming	Black	Democrat	0	90	0.00
Wyoming	Latino	Democrat	0	90	0.00
Wyoming	Black	Republican	1	90	0.01
Wyoming	Latino	Independent	0	90	0.00
