# Public Support for Cross-Issue Compromises in the U.S. *

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**Abstract**

Theoretically, cross-issue compromises can facilitate policy reforms, as multiple groups can win on an issue they prioritize. Under what conditions do Americans support them? Prior research emphasizes one-dimensional compromises or abstract support. We provide a theoretical framework to understand how support for cross-issue compromises differs from support from their components. We also generate hypotheses about the conditions when such compromises are especially likely, highlighting ideological extremity, partisan asymmetries, and moral issues. To test them, we employ four surveys (N = 5,250) fielded by NORC (2023) and YouGov (2021—2025). Overall, cross-issue compromises win substantial public support, but less than expected based on their components' popularity. Partisan asymmetries when respondents are asked about compromise abstractly decline or disappear when they face concrete trade-offs. Donors show less support for compromises, as do those who lose on an issue they deem important. There remain demand-side barriers to compromise among an influential segment.

# Introduction

For a Madisonian political system of divided powers, cross-party compromise can be critical in facilitating policy reforms (Pierson and Schickler, 2020). Yet in recent decades, the inability to compromise has been on stark display in the U.S. Congress. From the 2010 Affordable Care Act to the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, several of the most sweeping federal laws have passed without bipartisan support.[1] Strikingly, the 118th Congress (2023-2025) concluded as the session with the fewest bills passed in at least 30 years (Solender, 2024).

In response to this gridlock, there is a fast-growing literature on polarization across American legislatures (Shor and McCarty, 2011; Lee, 2016; McCarty, 2019), including research on the factors underpinning legislative compromise (Mansbridge and Martin, 2015). While some barriers to compromise lie at the elite level (Binder, 1999; Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, 2005; Lee, 2016), one key question is the extent to which voters' preferences reduce the prospects for political compromise among elected officials (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Harbridge and Malhotra 2011; see also Levendusky 2009; Mason 2018; Iyengar et al. 2019; Hill 2022; Westwood 2022; Levendusky 2023). Put differently, are there insights into the demand side of politics that may help explain today's supply-side gridlock?

As Table 1 illustrates, prior research on compromises has made progress by focusing either on support for compromise in the abstract (Noel, 2016; McLaughlin et al., 2017; Green-Pedersen and Hjermitslev, 2024; Wolak, 2022) or support for concrete compromises on a single dimension (Maoz and McCauley, 2005; Ryan, 2017; Bauer, Yong and Krupnikov, 2017; Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong, 2020; Brutger, 2021). In one pioneering study, Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) finds that while party elites often reject single-dimension compromises because they fear being penalized by primary voters, many voters actually support such compromises.

[1]That said, most bills that did pass continued to do so with bipartisan support (Curry and Lee, 2020).

We extend this research by investigating Americans' support for *concrete, cross-issue compromises*, or what are sometimes termed "logrolls" in legislative contexts (McGann, 2019). We define a cross-issue compromise as one in which two or more groups reach an agreement across multiple issues in which the resulting policy represents a move away from each group's preferred position on at least one issue. All of the policies we analyze reflect shifts away from the status quo.

In theory, the introduction of a second issue dimension has the potential to increase the set of possible compromises (McKelvey, 1976; Hinich and Munger, 1997; Roemer, 2009). Even if two groups have divergent preferences on two discrete issues, they may be able to reach an agreement if the groups prioritize those issues differently. In practice, Democrats and Republicans typically do emphasize different issues (Egan, 2013), encouraging our research into mass-level support for cross-issue compromises.

However, prior research also suggests potential barriers to voter support for cross-issue compromise, generating several hypotheses. One is loss aversion, a potential mechanism: voters may avoid such compromises because they are more attentive to policy losses than corresponding policy gains (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Arceneaux, 2012). Other hypotheses suggest the types of issues on which compromise might be more or less difficult. For example, support for compromise might be especially limited on issues that are seen in binary, moralistic terms (Ryan, 2017).

Still other hypotheses identify groups of voters who may be less supportive of compromise. For instance, while voters in general may not be averse to compromise, ideologically extreme citizens may object to compromises given that some elements are likely to be especially far from their preferences. Another hypothesis emerges from Grossmann and Hopkins (2016) and Noel (2016): Perhaps major-party supporters are asymmetric, with contemporary Democrats more committed to the expansion of public services and so more interested in or comfortable with compromise than Republicans. Two related possibilities are that politically engaged citizens or members of issue publics may be more averse to compromise (see esp. Anderson,

Butler and Harbridge-Yong, 2020), dampening politicians' incentives to pursue them. Such voters are disproportionately visible to politicians (Han, 2009; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012; Broockman and Skovron, 2018), and so may have outsized influence on politicians' perceptions of mass-level support for compromise.

We test these hypotheses using four surveys (total N= 5,250), including a 2023 population-based survey administered by NORC whose respondents were recruited via address-based sampling and surveyed online and by phone. The other three surveys are YouGov online, opt-in samples, either of activists or American adults. By using these firms, we are able to provide results from two high-quality pollsters who use different recruitment methods, a fact that should reduce concerns about generalizability (Kennedy et al., 2016). In addition to our four main studies, the Appendix provides evidence from two surveys run via the online pollster Civiqs (see Appendix Table A1). To make sure our results aren't dependent on a specific issue domain, our novel survey questions ask respondents about concrete trade-offs on 13 specific issues, including abortion, immigration, health care, energy/environment, foreign military aid, and voting access, among others. While this is only a fraction of the issues that might be reflected in cross-issue compromises, it enables us to consider compromises across various high-salience issues which may present hard cases for compromise. In each survey, respondents assessed hypothetical compromises involving a liberal position on one issue and a conservative position on the other.

Overall, we find meaningful support for compromise among Americans. We do observe a modest penalty for compromises relative to support for the underlying components. For example, respondents support compromises in which they favor one but not both policies at rates meaningfully lower than 50%. We also find that respondents who prioritize a given issue are less (more) supportive of compromises that include losses (gains) on that issue. Similarly, across multiple surveys, political donors prove less supportive of cross-issue compromises. To summarize, although significant fractions of Americans back cross-issue compromise, compromises are sometimes penalized relative to their component parts, and influential sub-

groups are particularly reluctant to compromise. Alongside substantial support, there are mass-level barriers to compromise.

Our main findings include:

**1. Overall:** *There is meaningful support for compromise among Americans: respondents backed 47% of the policy trade-offs we proposed.*

**2. Loss aversion:** *Evidence that respondents are more sensitive to losses than to gains is limited. In fact, loss-averse individuals appear more supportive of compromises overall.*

**3. Preference intensity:** *Individuals are more (less) likely to support a compromise when they gain (lose) on an issue they care more about. These effects are symmetric, further undercutting evidence of loss aversion.*

**4. Donors:** *Among activists, political donors are generally less supportive of cross-issue compromise than those who are not political donors.*

These results also provide methodological insights for future research. At times, the cross-issue measure we employ produces different conclusions than measures of support for abstract compromises. For example, while Republicans and Trump supporters are less favorable towards compromise in the abstract, they are *not* less favorable to concrete compromises in some surveys, and the partisan gap declines in others. Thus, asking about support for abstract compromise may not be a useful predictor of citizens' support when faced with specific proposals. Second, as we report in the Appendix (see Appendix Table A1), some online, opt-in surveys uncover less support for concrete compromises than does our population-based sample, which reinforces the possibility that some groups of highly engaged citizens are especially cool toward compromises. As with political donors, some of the citizens who are disproportionately visible to politicians are also disproportionately opposed to compromises.

# Theorizing Support for Cross-Issue Compromise

Congressional policymaking takes place in the shadow of future elections (Mayhew, 1974). Understanding both voters' views of compromise and politicians' perceptions of those views is thus critical (Harbridge and Malhotra, 2011). Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) provides a central contribution, showing that legislators fear that primary voters will punish them for supporting compromises. While such fears are grounded in public opinion to some extent, legislators tend to overstate them—it is only voters who oppose the particular details of the compromise who punish the politicians supporting them.

However, there are multiple ways one might define compromises when studying mass-level attitudes. One approach asks respondents about their support for compromises (or politicians advocating them) in general (Noel, 2016; McLaughlin et al., 2017; Green-Pedersen and Hjermitslev, 2024; Wolak, 2022). Such questions are not issue-specific, a potential advantage. Still, one concern with this approach is that it may partly detect partisan differences in how party officials talk about "compromise" rather than actual support for concrete compromises (Zaller, 1992; McLaughlin et al., 2017). Noel (2016) reports that Democratic activists are far more likely to prefer politicians who "compromise to get things done" while Republican activists prefer politicians who "stick to their principles, no matter what"(pg. 176), differences that could partly reflect messaging by the two parties. In a related finding, Wolak (2022) shows that the psychological trait of dogmatism predicts opposition to compromise in the abstract.

An alternative approach is to study compromises on specific issues. For example, Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) focuses on compromises on a single dimension, termed "half-loaf compromises," that move policy on one issue closer to both sides' ideal points. One key example from Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) is the gas tax. If one individual's preferred gas tax is 1% and another's is 5%, this approach asks whether both individuals would accept a compromise that slightly decreases the gas tax rate from the status quo of 10% in the direction of their ideal points.

Prior research has formalized such unidimensional policy compromises via extensive research on ideal points (e.g. Krehbiel, 1998). Assuming that respondents' utility is strictly decreasing as a policy proposal is further from their ideal point, someone whose ideal point is a 1% gas tax should not oppose a move from 10% to 8% on policy grounds. However, Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) finds that sizable minorities of legislators oppose one-dimensional compromises even when the resulting policy is closer to their ideal point.[2] They may do so for various reasons, including the possibility that voters may punish the "half-loaf" compromise or out of a concern that a compromise today could foreclose future, more sweeping changes.

Theoretically, the introduction of a second issue dimension can allow for a wider set of possible compromises (McKelvey, 1976; Hinich and Munger, 1997; Roemer, 2009). If the parties to the negotiation prioritize different issues, they can reach agreements that move policy in the direction of their preferences on the issue they prioritize. Such compromises are sometimes called "logrolls" (McGann, 2019). For example, if the Democrats' top priority is expanding health care access while the Republicans seek to limit immigration, there may be a cross-issue policy compromise which advances both parties' goals on the policy they deem more important. Yet as Table 1 demonstrates, key work has primarily studied compromise in the abstract or else one-dimensional policy compromises. Given that many potential compromises are cross-issue, and that cross-issue compromises may open the bargaining space, we formally define support for such compromises below.

## A Model of Support for Two-Issue Compromises

The two elements of the compromise can be summarized in the theoretical framework below, which builds on random utility models (see also Graham and Svolik, 2020). This framework assumes respondents ($i$) have single-peaked preferences over policies on multiple dimensions

[2]What's more, some distributions of unidimensional ideal points can give rise to gridlock (Brady and Volden, 2005).

| | Abstract Compromise | Single-Issue Compromise |
|---|---|---|
| Maoz and McCauley (2005) | | x |
| Noel (2016) | x | |
| Bauer, Harbridge, and Krupnikov (2017) | | x |
| McLaughlin et al. (2017) | x | x |
| Ryan (2017) | | x |
| Anderson, Butler, and Harbridge-Yong (2020) | x | x |
| Brutger (2021) | | x |
| Wolak (2022) | x | x |
| Green-Pederssen and Hjermitslev (2024) | x | |

Table 1: Classification of recent scholarship exploring public support for compromise.

$\theta_j$ and $\theta_k$ of a policy space $\theta$.[3] The utility $U()$ that respondent $i$ gets from a given compromise is a function of their ideal points and the compromise's location, $\theta_j^*$ and $\theta_k^*$:

$$U_i(\theta_j^*, \theta_k^*) = -\Big(\beta_{i,j}(\theta_{i,j} - \theta_j^*)^2 + \beta_{i,k}(\theta_{i,k} - \theta_k^*)^2\Big) + \delta_{i,j,k} + \epsilon_i. \quad (1)$$

That expression represents the utility from a compromise in which the proposed positions are $\theta_j^*$ and $\theta_k^*$ and respondent $i$'s ideal points on each dimension are $\theta_{i,j}$ and $\theta_{i,k}$. The parameters $\beta_{i,j}$ and $\beta_{i,k}$ indicate how each respondent $i$ weighs two dimensions. We include a random, mean-zero error term $\epsilon_i$ alongside a $\delta_{i,j,k}$.

This formalization indicates how differing issue weights have the potential to facilitate cross-issue compromises in ways not possible in a single dimension. When a respondent $i$ evaluates a compromise $\theta_{j,k}^*$ relative to a status quo $\theta'_{j,k}$, even if the proposal moves away her ideal point on one dimension (e.g. $(\theta_{i,j} - \theta_j^*)^2 > (\theta_{i,j} - \theta'_j)^2$), she may still support the proposal if other terms in the equation dominate. And that is more likely if the respondent prioritizes the other issue, e.g. $\beta_k > \beta_j$.

By construction, $\epsilon_i$ is mean 0, so systematic biases for or against compromise are accounted for by $\delta_{i,j,k}$, which is specific to the individual $i$ and the proposed compromise $(j, k)$. The $\delta_{i,j,k}$ term captures a systematic aversion to or support for compromise above and beyond respondent $i$'s support for its composite pieces. For example, if $\delta_{i,j,k} = 0$ for the status quo $\theta'_{j,k}$ but is negative for other policies, the status quo may be advantaged despite not

[3]In our application, $j$ reflects a liberal shift from the status quo and $k$ a conservative shift from the status quo, but they need not be so constrained.

minimizing the distance between the proposed policy $\theta*_j$ and the respondent's ideal point $\theta_{i,j}$.

In the subsequent sections, we use this formalization to develop hypotheses about the conditions under which $\delta_{i,j,k}$ may be lower as well as the Americans for whom it may be lower. While distinguishing the weights $\beta_{i,j}$ from the distances (e.g. $(\theta_{i,j}–\theta^*_{i,j})^2$) has been a highly productive approach in ideal point modeling (e.g. Clinton, Jackman and Rivers, 2000), we emphasize the role of $\delta_{i,j,k}$ and the differing weights $(\beta_j)$ and $(\beta_k)$. Put differently, we partly use the model to distinguish opposition to compromise that emerges from individuals' ideal points from those that stem from their weights $\beta$ or any anti-compromise bias $\delta_{i,j,k}$. However, one might easily extend this model such that the $\beta$ weight parameters are not linear or such that certain issues $j$ generate bonuses or penalties through the $\delta_{i,j,k}$ term. In fact, our hope is that our empirical analyses will provide researchers with the evidence needed to further restrict this model.

## Hypotheses

There are several reasons to think that citizens might not support cross-issue compromises. Here, we draw on prior research to identify some potential barriers to cross-issue compromise and fit them within the framework outlined above (see esp. Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong, 2020; Goya-Tocchetto et al., 2022). One example is the prospect that partisans do not trust that the deal would be fairly implemented, something which would enter via the $\delta_{i,j,k}$ term. However, we emphasize testable hypotheses that are unique to the setting of multi-dimensional compromises, in which respondents may be evaluating gains on one dimension relative to losses on another. After all, it is these cross-pressured respondents (see also Hillygus and Shields, 2008) whose response to a would-be compromise isn't clear from their positions on the individual issues alone. One key element of our framework is its capacity to differentiate support/opposition to compromise that is a function of the proposals and respondent preferences (e.g., $(\theta_{i,j} - \theta^*_j)^2$) or respondents' weighting of the issues (e.g. $\beta_{i,j}$)

from support/opposition that stems from the compromise itself (e.g. $\delta_{i,j,k}$).

*Loss Aversion.* On the single-issue compromises studied by Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020), parties do not face the prospect of policy moving away from their preferred position on some issues. However, multi-dimensional compromises typically involve losses as well as gains. That raises the specter of loss aversion (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), which holds that individuals experience losses as more negative than commensurate gains are positive. Extensive political science research shows that threats to existing policies can be especially mobilizing (Arceneaux, 2012; Mettler, Jacobs and Zhu, 2023). In our framework, one might incorporate loss aversion by introducing nonlinear weights $\beta_j$ and $\beta_k$ acknowledging that policy moves away from the respondent's ideal points are more influential than those towards her ideal point.[4]

If loss aversion is operative, we should expect that citizens will view compromises negatively when they involve roughly equivalent gains and losses. Note that loss aversion may operate across respondents as a whole or among specific respondents especially prone to it. If loss aversion operates on average across the population, support for a given compromise may be subadditive, meaning that support for the compromise as a whole may be lower than support for the specific elements that make up that compromise. This should result in a non-linearity in the mapping from respondents' support for the two discrete policies to their overall assessment of the compromise—if this form of loss aversion operates, support for compromise should fall non-linearly when either of the elements of the compromise moves policy away from the respondent's ideal point. However, we may observe such effects primarily or exclusively among respondents who themselves are high in loss aversion (Osmundsen and Petersen, 2020).

*Moral Issues.* Another hypothesis expects differences based on the issues under discussion. Delton, DeScioli and Ryan (2020) finds that moral conviction undermines compro-

[4]For example, those weights could vary depending on whether the proposed $\theta^*$ is closer to the respondent's ideal point than the status quo $\theta'$.

mise. When individuals' positions on a policy issue are rooted in their fundamental views of right and wrong, they are more likely to adopt aggressive bargaining strategies that hinder compromise. Examining Social Security, Ryan (2017) finds that moral conviction predicts opposition to politicians' willingness to compromise (see also Goren and Chapp, 2024). The resulting hypothesis is that compromises which involve moral issues will garner less support from those who stand to lose. Alternately, if either issue in a proposed compromise is a moral issue, $\delta_{i,j,k}$ may decline. Or moral issues may have higher weights ($\beta_j$ and $\beta_k$).

*Ideological Extremity.* Scholarship has long considered how legislators or voters respond to policy proposals that are not exactly aligned with their preference on a given dimension (Downs, 1957; Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989; Carroll et al., 2009). One common assertion (evident in our model) is that voters have quadratic loss functions, meaning that as the proposed policy gets more distant from their ideal point, they evaluate that policy disproportionately more negatively. For example, someone who prefers a 20% top marginal tax rate will view a move from 25% to 30% less negatively than a move from 35% to 40%. If so, when facing a compromise, a voter who is more ideologically extreme will be less likely to support the compromise because one of its elements will involve a more significant loss (but see Broockman, 2016). In a key study, Wolak (2022) finds a significant positive relationship between ideological extremity and rejecting compromise. This hypothesis indicates which respondents are most likely to oppose compromise: those whose extreme preferences mean that one part of the compromise is far from their ideal point.[5] In our formalization, this hypothesis is addressed via the quadratic loss function, which assumes that utility drops

[5]A related but distinct hypothesis holds that strong partisans will be less supportive of compromises. In line with research on affective polarization, Goya-Tocchetto et al. (2022) finds that partisanship is strongly correlated with attributions of intentionality in policy trade-offs: strong Democrats view the inevitable yet unintended consequences of Republican-led policy trade-offs as intentional, and vice versa. In turn, perceptions of intentionality are related to the likelihood of supporting the trade-off. However, analyzing proclivity for political compromise in the abstract, Wolak (2022) finds no relationship with partisanship's strength.

quadratically as the proposal shifts away from the respondent's ideal point.

*Asymmetric Polarization.* While classical models of two-party systems assume that the two parties' voters have symmetric preferences, recent work challenges this claim (see also Azari, 2016; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2016; Noel, 2016; Schlozman and Rosenfeld, 2024). Instead, Grossmann and Hopkins (2016) contends that the nature of the two parties' coalitions is different, with the Democratic Party being a coalition of diverse, policy-demanding interest groups while the Republican coalition is more homogeneous and oriented towards symbolic position-taking. If so, it is possible that Republicans—or at least a faction of them (Noel, 2016)—may be less supportive of policy compromises as the tangible policy outcomes are less valuable to them. Here, $E(\delta_{i,j,k})_{GOP} > E(\delta_{i,j,k})_{Dem}$. [6]

*Issue Publics.* Even if loss aversion doesn't operate widely throughout the public, it may explain attitudes among the smaller subset of people who are highly knowledgeable and engaged on a specific issue. Commonly termed "issue publics" (Ryan and Ehlinger, 2023), these groups have significant knowledge of a given issue—and may also have preferences that depart from those of the public generally (Anzia, 2022; Hill, 2022).[7] Those with pre-existing conditions who rely on the Affordable Care Act for health insurance may be especially averse to its repeal, for example. Here, the hypothesis holds that those who stand to lose on an issue they deem important will be disproportionately likely to reject compromise.

*Political Engagement.* A related possibility is that those who are more engaged with politics may have different preferences about compromise, especially if their political engagement is more expressive than instrumental in motivation (Hersh, 2020). For example, Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020) shows that while primary voters as a whole do not pun-

[6]Alternately, if one party's adherents prove more ideologically constrained than the other's, that heightened constraint may reduce the fraction of cross-pressured voters who are supportive of a given compromise (Lelkes and Sniderman, 2016; but see Lupton, Myers and Thornton, 2017).

[7]These ideas are closely related to the typology of Wilson (1973) focusing on whether costs/benefits to a given policy are concentrated or diffuse.

ish legislators for compromising, primary voters who oppose particular compromises are less likely to support politicians who compromise on those issues. However, Wolak (2022) shows that respondents who vote frequently or have participated in campaigns report *higher* levels of willingness to compromise. Some political activities may provide citizens with experiences that foster compromise while others do the opposite.

If this hypothesis holds, there is a related question about the forms of political behavior that predict the propensity to reject compromises. Donors need not ever interact with those from the other party, and so may maintain a particular dogmatism or purity about political engagement (Wolak, 2022). By contrast, people who engage in direct voter persuasion efforts may become more familiar with the diversity of political opinions, and so may become less polarized and more supportive of compromise (Kalla and Broockman, 2022). Kujala (2020) finds that major-party nominees to the U.S. House of Representatives are more responsive to donors than to either primary or general-election voters. If the highly engaged are more opposed to compromise—if they have higher $\delta_{i,j,k}$ on average—donors might represent a channel through which politicians learn that.

# Research Design

The various hypotheses make different demands on our data, and we were not able to include all the relevant measures on a single survey instrument. As a result, we conducted four separate surveys (2021-2025) which jointly enable us to investigate our hypotheses.[8] Some of our surveys contain more extensive measures of respondents' ideal points (e.g. $\theta_i, j$) and the related weights (e.g. $\beta_i, j$) while others probe different forms of political engagement. In some cases, we study political activists who engage in politics through behaviors beyond simply voting. This group's proximity to politicians makes them an especially valuable group

[8]In the Appendix, we report results for two additional surveys administered by Civiqs in 2020 and 2021 (see also Hopkins and Gorton, 2024).

to consider (Han, 2009; Broockman and Skovron, 2018). At the same time, these samples give increased statistical power to study influential but numerically small groups such as donors.

In each survey, we ask respondents to evaluate compromises which involve one liberal policy and one conservative policy, with the policies randomly drawn without replacement from two lists but constrained to be from different domains (e.g., health care, immigration, abortion, voting access, the environment/energy, etc.). To reduce the threat that status quo biases might confound our results, all the proposed policies reflect shifts away from the current status quo. By always comparing one shift from the status quo in a conservative direction with another shift in a liberal direction, we try to maximize cases in which respondents support one of the two underlying policies. Across the surveys, we probe attitudes on 13 different issues, providing variation to test our hypotheses about moral issues and to ensure that our results aren't driven by specific issue domains.

In every survey, subjects were asked standard demographic questions (i.e., partisanship, education, etc.) and (in every study except the 2023 NORC survey) questions about their political engagement. Our quantities of interest are sample estimates, and we sometimes consider populations such as "activists," so we do not employ survey weights.[9] Appendix Table A13 details the question wording. Table 2 describes the samples for each survey alongside the dates of administration and question batteries unique to that survey. Meanwhile, Table 1a lists the issues employed by survey. What follows is a brief discussion of each survey in turn.

[9]Our surveys did not include attention checks.

Table 2: Breakdown of Surveys

| Survey | Dates | Sample Method | Target Pop. | N | Explanatory variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| YouGov (2021) | April 23rd to April 29th, 2021 | Compensated opt-in online panel | Activists | 1,110 | Most important issues |
| NORC (2023) | June 28, 2023 to July 14, 2023 | Stratified sampling from AmeriSpeak Panel (probability-based panel recruited through address-based sampling | Nat'l | 1,540 | Issue position measures Open-ended responses |
| YouGov (2023) | November 17, 2023 to November 27, 2023 | Compensated opt-in online panel | Nat'l | 1,500 | Political engagement Ideology measures, primary support |
| YouGov (2024-25) | December 16, 2024 to January 05, 2025 | Compensated opt-in online panel | Activists | 1,100 | Issue importance, loss aversion, preference intensity |

## Surveys

Our goal is to differentiate the support or opposition to compromises that results from respondents' views about the underlying policies from their concerns about compromise per se. One of the key factors that distinguishes our four surveys is their measurement of respondents' preferences on the underlying issues, as we describe below. Moreover, since our hypotheses suggest a wide range of variables that might be related to support for cross-issue compromises, we emphasize the measurement of select variables in certain surveys. Here, we briefly describe the four surveys and the unique leverage each affords.

*YouGov 2021 Survey.* The 2021 YouGov survey was administered between April 23rd and April 29th to a sample of 1,110 party activists [CITATION SUPPRESSED]. To qualify, respondents had to meet one of two thresholds. The first was to report having done two political activities in the preceding four years: having donated to a candidate; attended a campaign event; volunteered for a political campaign; or made phone calls for a campaign. The second was to report having ever: been a paid staffer for a campaign or elected official; been a candidate for office; or held a position in a political party. Here, respondents evaluated 2 compromises drawn randomly from 5 policy areas.

*NORC 2023 Survey.* The 2023 NORC survey was drawn from AmeriSpeak, a panel of U.S. adults composed of individuals recruited through "randomly selected households... sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Frame and

address-based sample, and then contacted by U.S. mail and by NORC telephone and field interviewers" (NORC, 2024). The total sample was 1,540, and the survey was fielded between June 28th and July 14th. This survey asked detailed questions about respondents' support for the specific items included in each compromise separately as well as the compromises themselves. In all, respondents evaluated 2 compromises randomly drawn from 5 areas.

*YouGov 2023 Survey.* Our 2023 YouGov survey was administered between November 17th and 27th to a sample of 1,579 Americans drawn to be representative of the adult population on key demographics. This survey assessed various forms of political engagement and GOP primary support alongside support for hypothetical compromises in 5 different policy areas. In this case, we employed 2 compromises drawn randomly from 5 policy areas.

*YouGov 2024-25 Survey.* Our 2024-25 YouGov survey was administered between December 16, 2024 and January 5, 2025 and consisted of a sample of 1,100 American activists (550 Democrats and 550 Republicans). The qualifications for inclusion mirror those of the other activist sample. In this study, we both expanded the number of issues under consideration from 5 to 13 and also measured various potential individual-level predictors of support for compromise, such as the propensity to loss aversion. This survey also included multiple measures of preference intensity and attitudes, enabling us to more clearly differentiate the $\delta_{i,j,k}$ terms from other parameters (see also Lauderdale, Hanretty and Vivyan, 2018; Hill, 2022; Tausanovitch, 2024).

# Results

Our theoretical framework emphasizes the need to differentiate between the factors influencing compromise support related to respondents' views of the two policies (e.g. $\theta_{i,j}$,$\beta_{i,j}$) and factors inherent to the compromise itself (e.g. $\delta_{i,j,k}$)—and to focus where possible on the latter, which is more novel. Here, we first provide a basic description of which compromises tend to win higher levels of support, and then account for respondents' support

for the underlying compromises with increasingly nuanced measures of their views on the composite policies making up the compromise. Doing so also affords one test of the loss aversion hypothesis predicting an asymmetry, with respondents placing a greater weight on the policy they oppose. In subsequent analyses, we characterize which issues lend themselves to compromise and which groups of respondents are more or less supportive of it.

## Support for Compromise and its Limits

Overall, there is substantial support for compromise, with 47% of all the compromises we proposed receiving support from our respondents (N=11,458). That is true even though many of the policies we chose were meaningful departures from the status quo (such as opening Medicare to all or banning abortion nationwide). However, 53.4% of these policies won support when we separately asked respondents about them individually, meaning that these compromises win less support than we might expect from the distribution of public opinion on the specific issues alone (N=30,890).

Table 1a reports the overall results by survey and compromise element. It details the percentage of respondents in each survey who saw compromises involving the listed policy proposal and expressed support for the compromise. For example, 50% of the respondents to the 2021 YouGov activist survey who saw compromises involving deporting immigrants without authorization alongside a second (liberal) policy supported the compromise.

As expected, there is considerable variation by policy area and survey—of the 28 conservative and liberal policies included, a majority of respondents supported compromises with that particular element in 9 cases. When a policy is more popular, compromises involving it unsurprisingly win more support. For example, 67% of YouGov 2024-25 respondents backed a compromise when the conservative element was requiring a valid photo ID for state and federal elections, while 63% of our YouGov 2023 respondents backed compromises including opening Medicare to all.

There is some variation by survey and sampling frame. For example, for the population-

based NORC sample, median support for compromises grouped by the conservative side is 46.7% while grouped by the liberal side it is 44.7%. The 2023 YouGov survey of adults returns similar results, with median levels of support for compromises of 51.8% (conservative side) or 45.8% (liberal side). Among activists in our YouGov 2024-25 survey, median support for compromise stood at 47.47% when grouped by the conservative policies and 46.6% when grouped by the liberal policies. Overall, across surveys with differing sampling frames, support for compromises proves reasonably high, with a variety of compromises winning majority support.[10]

## Support for Compromise and Underlying Preferences

To assess whether the results are unexpectedly high or low, we need to compare how policies do when bundled as part of a compromise *relative to the levels of support for their constituent elements*. Tables A2 and A3 illustrate levels of support for a compromise for NORC and YouGov 2024-25 respondents who separately reported their support or opposition to the compromise's components. (For the same results grouped by the liberal policies, see Appendix Tables A4 and A5.) Overall, respondents who support both constituent elements of a compromise support the resulting compromise between 75% to 87% of the time, depending on the issue. Meanwhile, those who support one of the two policies support the compromise only 18% to 44% of the time, and those who support neither policy support the compromise between 7% and 23% of the time. It is clear that some of this may be measurement error, either in reporting attitudes towards the underlying policies or towards the compromises. But there is also a clear bias against compromises among those who support one of the two underlying elements, as Figure 1b illustrate. Indeed, in the corresponding Figure 1c, we see

[10]However, Appendix A1 shows that the Civiqs online panel sees meaningfully lower levels of support.

precisely the non-linearity we would expect given loss aversion.[11]

The results for the YouGov 2024-25 survey of activists, which asked about a wider variety of issues, are quite similar, as Table A3 demonstrates. In that case, when people report supporting neither policy, they still back the compromise between 14% and 43% of the time. Supporting both policies leads to backing the compromise between 69% and 92%, while supporting one of the two is associated with levels of support from 29% to 54%. Figure 1b provides the corresponding image, and again shows a non-linearity that is consistent with—though not conclusive of—loss aversion. Here, too, there is considerable slippage between what respondents think about the components and how they evaluate the overall compromise, with what seems like a bias against compromises and quite possibly measurement error.

But evidence of a non-linearity in the mapping from support for the underlying components to support for the compromise isn't universal. Figure 1c reports results from the YouGov 2024-25 survey of activists, which had by far the largest variety of policy areas considered and therefore is less dependent on the choice of issues. It illustrates the fraction of people who backed compromises given respondents' support for the underlying elements on a 1 ("strongly oppose") to 4 ("strongly support") scale. Respondents indicate support for the compromise 80% of the time when they separately report supporting both of its elements strongly, and they support the compromise 21% of the time when they reported strong opposition to both policies. (One possibility from these results: measurement error may explain up to 20% of people's responses to the compromise proposals.) When respondents "somewhat support" one element (3) and "somewhat oppose" the other (2), they back the resulting compromise 52% of the time.

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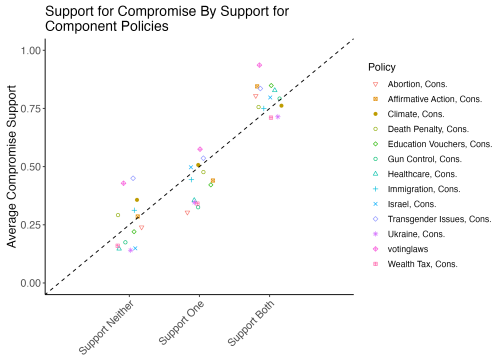
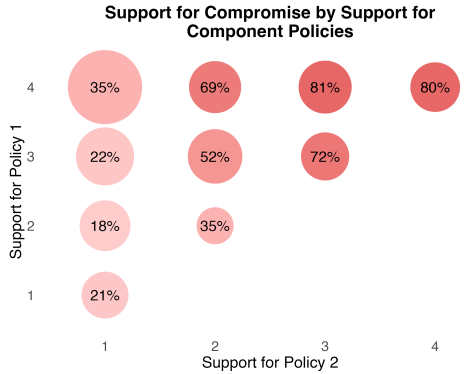
[11]We confirm this formally via linear regression, which indicates that the coefficient for an indicator variable of supporting one policy is 0.19 (SE=0.02) while coefficient for supporting two is 0.68 (SE=0.03). That is meaningfully different from a linear relationship, in which case the second coefficient should be approximately 0.38.

| Policy Area | Study | Conservative Policy | Support for Conservative Policy | Liberal Policy | Support for Liberal Policy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare | YouGov Activist '21 | Repeal Obamacare | 40.95 | Open Medicare to all | 51.77 |
| | NORC '23 | Work for Medicaid | 43.22 | | 54.29 |
| | YouGov '23 | | 42.21 | | 62.70 |
| | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | | 45.48 | | 56.02 |
| Abortion | YouGov Activist '21 | Make abortion illegal | 43.12 | Access to abortion nationwide | 46.61 |
| | NORC '23 | | 24.63 | | 51.63 |
| | YouGov '23 | | 32.03 | | 53.74 |
| | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | | 35.48 | | 45.02 |
| Immigration | YouGov Activist '21 | Deport immigrants without authorization | 50.11 | Immigrants without authorization legalized | 43.60 |
| | NORC '23 | | 49.23 | | 41.94 |
| | YouGov '23 | | 51.82 | | 41.62 |
| | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | | 48.87 | | 40.26 |
| Environment | YouGov Activist '21 | Eliminate regulations on power plant emissions and cars' gas mileage standards | 33.02 | Carbon tax that would increase electricity and gas prices | 45.60 |
| | NORC '23 | Increase drilling and mining for fossil fuels | 46.67 | Increase taxes on fossil fuels | 35.79 |
| | YouGov '23 | | 52.69 | | 43.27 |
| | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | | 53.9 | | 40.0 |
| Voting | YouGov Activist '21 | Valid photo ID requirement for state and federal elections | 65.74 | Eligible citizens registered to vote | 45.38 |
| | NORC '23 | | 64.59 | | 44.70 |
| | YouGov '23 | | 68.37 | | 45.78 |
| | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | | 67.08 | | 46.60 |
| Death penalty | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | Legalize the death penalty nationwide | 48.01 | Abolish the death penalty nationwide | 48.21 |
| Israel | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | Increase military aid to Israel | 50.32 | End military aid to Israel | 38.34 |
| Ukraine | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | End military aid to Ukraine | 37.24 | Increase military aid to Ukraine | 50.61 |
| Gun control | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | Make it legal to own an assault weapon nationwide | 35.94 | Make it illegal to own an assault weapon nationwide | 56.85 |
| Affirmative action | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | Ban affirmative action in hiring nationwide | 47.47 | Legalize affirmative action in hiring nationwide | 44.44 |
| Transgender issues | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | Ban transgender high school students from playing on sports teams that do not match their biological sex | 58.84 | Make it legal for transgender high school students to play on sports teams that do not match their biological sex | 30.79 |
| Wealth tax | YouGov Activists '24-'25 | Decrease income taxes on Americans making over $400,000 per year | 33.66 | Increase income taxes on Americans making over $400,000 per year | 58.31 |
| Private school voucher | YouGov Activist '24-'25 | Use public taxpayer dollars to give students vouchers for private education | 46.84 | Prohibit the use of public taxpayer dollars to give students vouchers for private education | 51.75 |

(a) Support for Compromises across All Studies. Cells shaded in light gray represent policies with average support below 50%. Cells shaded in gray represent policies with average support above 50%.




(b) Support for compromise by support for constituent elements (see exact estimates in Appendix Table A3). Figure A3 plots the corresponding results grouped by liberal positions. YouGov, 2024-25.




(c) Support for compromises by respondents' support for the two composite elements of the compromise, measured from 1 ('strongly oppose") to 4 ("strongly support"). YouGov 2024-25.

Figure 1: Comparison of support for compromise based on constituent elements and composite elements.

Again, a form of loss aversion would be evident if support dropped off markedly when respondents opposed either element. However, we see a fair amount of symmetry. For example, when respondents "strongly oppose" one element and "somewhat oppose" the other, they back the compromise 18% of the time, which is roughly symmetric with the percentage backing the compromise when they somewhat support one side and strongly support the other (e.g. 100%-18% $\approx$ 81%). However, because 4-point measures may not properly capture preference intensity, we must consider more finely calibrated tests before reaching firm conclusions about loss aversion and support for compromises.

**Accounting for Preference Intensity**

It is possible that the results above can be explained partly by unobserved differences in support for the underlying policy. Even two people who say they "strongly oppose" a policy may differ in the importance of that attitude (e.g., two individuals can "strongly oppose" an increase in aid to Israel, but one prioritizes health care policy over foreign policy whereas the other prioritizes foreign policy over health care policy). Thus, in our 2024-25 YouGov survey, we also measured the intensity of preferences using a conjoint-style set-up (see esp. Lauderdale, Hanretty and Vivyan, 2018; Tausanovitch, 2024) that we now detail.

Specifically, after respondents evaluated the compromise proposals, we asked them to rate 12 hypothetical candidate profiles in a standard conjoint set-up (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014). Every hypothetical candidate's profile included two positions on different issues, one conservative and one liberal. We chose the issues to match the four which the respondents saw as part of the proposed compromises.

Across the 12 candidate profiles, respondents were constrained to see each of the eight policy positions exactly three times, always alongside another position on a different issue. Respondents then rated each profile on a 1-7 Likert scale, enabling us to estimate Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs) which incorporate the intensity of preferences into their estimand (Abramson, Koçak and Magazinnik, 2022). We measure preference intensity

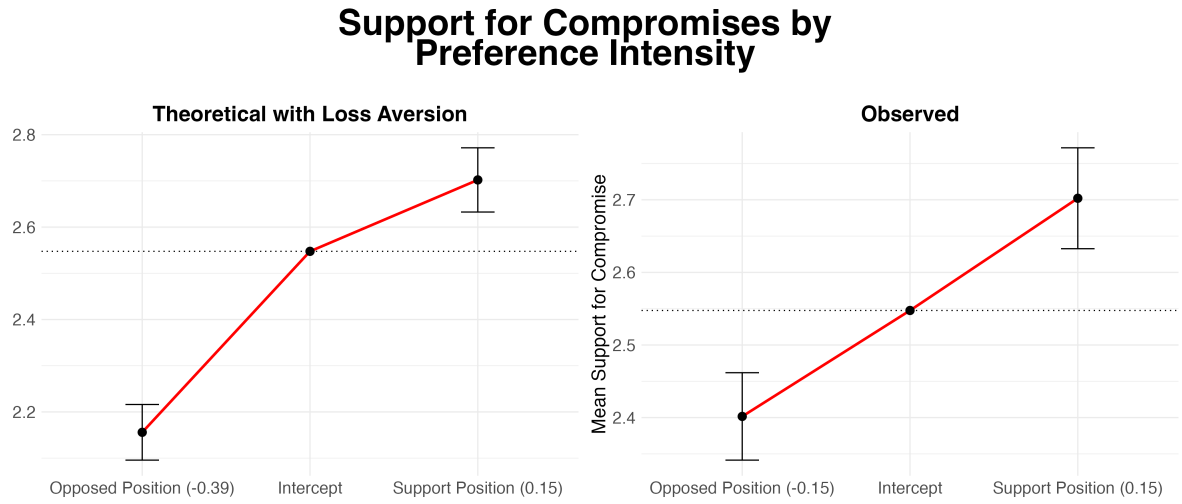



Figure 2: YouGov 2024-25. Models control for basic demographics (gender, education, age, race, party identification). Standard errors are clustered. N=2313. Regression models available in Appendix Table A6.

by calculating the average of the absolute difference between rating candidates advocating that position receive and the mid-point of the scale (4). A specific position that a respondent always rates at a 7 (or 0) regardless of the candidates' other attributes will have the highest score possible on this measure. We provide a summary of the preference intensity scores in Appendix Table A7.

With these new, more precise measures in hand, we can estimate the mapping of preferences to compromise support. We do so via linear regressions which also control for basic demographics and party identification. We report the results in Appendix Table A6, which shows that the coefficient for preference intensity when a respondent doesn't support a policy, -0.15 (SE=0.03), is basically identical in absolute magnitude to the coefficient when a respondent *does* support a policy (0.15, SE=0.04). As Figure 2's left panel shows, if respondents are especially sensitive to a policy move away from their preferences, the slope should be steeper on the figure's left half, as respondents shift from mildly opposed to more strongly opposed. However, the actual empirical evidence on the right-hand side contradicts this: the slopes are statistically indistinguishable as respondents move from neutrality towards strong support *or* opposition, suggesting no evidence of systematic loss aversion with a more finely

grained measure of preference intensity.

### Individual-level Loss Aversion

Loss aversion can operate across a population, but it can also be concentrated among certain respondents. In Appendix Table A8, we report the results of linear regressions predicting compromise support (1-4; from "strongly oppose" to "strongly support") as a function of individual-level loss aversion measures (Osmundsen and Petersen, 2020) and, in the second model, basic demographics with the 2024-25 YouGov activist sample.[12] The upshot: if anything, people who score higher on measures of loss aversion may be *more* supportive of compromise. That certainly isn't consistent with hypotheses emphasizing individual-level loss aversion.

## Conditions When Compromises Win More or Less Support

This paper has shown that there is substantial support for cross-issue compromises, but it falls somewhat short of the support for the underlying policy proposals. Why is that? We next probe that question by delving into the model's $\delta_{i,j,k}$ term—and seeing if there are factors specific to the respondents ($i$) or issues ($j, k$) that can help explain when compromises are more or less likely to win support.

### Moral Issues

Do proposed compromises involving moral issues garner lower levels of support? Table 1a reports suggestive evidence on that question, as it demonstrates low levels of support for compromises involving conservative abortion policies or liberal policies on transgender issues.

[12]For example, respondents agreed or disagreed: "When making a decision, I think much more about what might be lost than what might be gained."

Among the issues we study, prior research identifies abortion, transgender issues, and the death penalty as moralized issues (Pew Research Institute 2013; see also Baumgartner, De Boef and Boydstun 2008; Ryan 2017; Goren and Chapp 2024). Our 2024-2025 YouGov activist survey is thus uniquely positioned to probe the impact of moral issues, as it asked about not just abortion but all three issues.

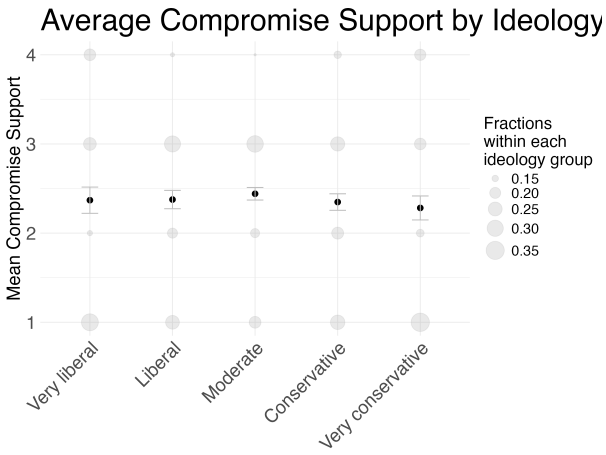
In Appendix Table A9, we examine how the inclusion of the aforementioned moral issues relates to support for compromise, controlling for basic demographics and party identification. As the Table's first column shows, moral issues do appear to have a particular influence on support for the underlying compromise, with those who support the policy element on a moral issue more likely to back the compromise and those who oppose it less likely to do so. But the table's second column shows that these results are simply an artifact driven by the different levels of support for these policies. Once we control for a measure of respondents' support for the underlying policies,[13] the seeming distinctiveness of moral issues vanishes.

**Ideological Extremity**

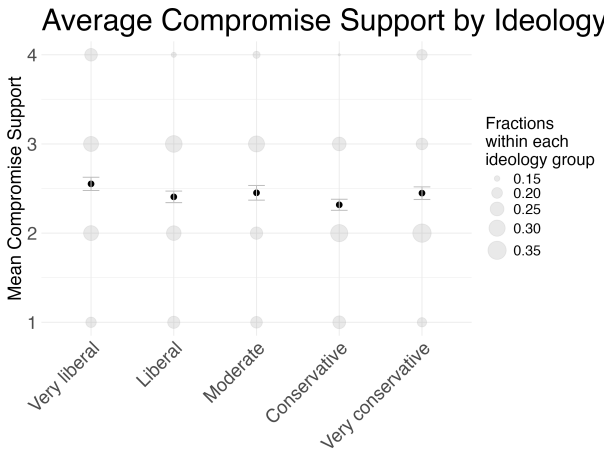
With respect to which individuals have higher or lower propensities ($\delta_i$) to back compromise, one possibility is that those on the ideological extremes may be less supportive, perhaps because the "losses" in our experimental set-up often involve moving one policy far from their preferred position. Figure 3a illustrates support for compromises in the 2023 YouGov survey by respondents' self-reported ideology. Those who term themselves "moderate" are slightly more supportive of compromise (mean=2.44) compared to both those who are very liberal (mean=2.37) and those who are very conservative (mean=2.28). While the moderate-very conservative difference is statistically significant (p=0.04), the moderate-very liberal difference is not (p=0.38).[14]

[13]This measure varies from 2 (respondent strongly opposes each policy) to 8 (respondent strongly supports each policy).

[14]P-values from two-sided t-tests.




(a) Average Compromise Support by Ideology. YouGov, 2023. (n=2682)




(b) Average Compromise Support by Ideology. YouGov, 2024-25. (n=4400)

Figure 3: Comparison of average compromise support by ideology across years.

However, Figure 3b illustrates that we do not see a similar pattern among activists. In our YouGov 2024-25 survey, average support among very conservative respondents (mean=2.45) and moderate respondents (mean=2.45) is virtually identical. Very liberal activists in fact display higher average support for compromise (mean=2.55) than moderate respondents or very conservative respondents, although the difference is not statistically distinguishable in either case (p=0.95 and p=0.08, respectively). While moderate American adults are more supportive of compromises, the substantive magnitude of the bump is limited, and that pattern doesn't persist with American activists.

### Asymmetric Polarization

Another prospect to consider is asymmetries in the parties, wherein Republicans (or perhaps pro-Trump Republicans; Noel, 2016) may be especially averse to compromise (Grossmann and Hopkins, 2016; McCarty, 2019). To answer that question, we turn to our YouGov 2023 survey, which included questions about Republicans who did or did not support Trump during the contested 2024 primary. Figure 3a hints in the direction of an asymmetry, with very conservative respondents being somewhat less supportive of compromise than those in

other groups (the differences, however, are not statistically significant). In Figure 4, we illustrate levels of support for compromise separately for respondents who identify as pure independents, Republicans (including leaners), and Democrats (including leaners), as well as for pro-Trump and other Republicans.

The red circles indicate support for abstract compromise, as measured via a question asking about respondents' preference for politicians who seek compromise versus sticking to their principles (Noel, 2016). Here, there are meaningful partisan differences, with Democrats 0.18 higher on the binary measure on average (95% CI 0.12 – 0.24). Pro-Trump Republicans score lower than other Republicans by -0.14 (95% CI -0.21 – -0.07).

But if we only assess support for abstract compromise, we risk mischaracterizing respondents' preferences. As Figure 4's blue triangles illustrate, the cross-party differences in support for concrete compromises are quite muted and statistically indistinguishable. For example, Democrats score only 0.24 higher than independents on a 1-4 Likert scale (95% CI 0.13 – 0.35), roughly half the effect observed in the abstract support for compromise when rescaling. Likewise, there is no discernible difference between Republicans and independents as far as concrete compromises are concerned. Nor is there a difference between pro-Trump Republicans and other Republicans.

### Issue Publics and Political Engagement

On a given issue, it's possible that the subset of Americans who are informed on that issue might prove especially compromise-averse (see also Ryan and Ehlinger, 2023). We test this possibility in Appendix Tables A11 and A12 by using the YouGov 2021 and 2024-25 data from activists to examine whether respondents who feel strongly about an issue are less likely to support a compromise on that issue.[15] The results indicate that they do: in our 2021 survey, respondents' support for compromise on a 1-4 scale drops by between 0.37 (modeled with

[15]In research published after we fielded some of our surveys, Ryan and Ehlinger (2023) argues for an alternative measure of issue publics.

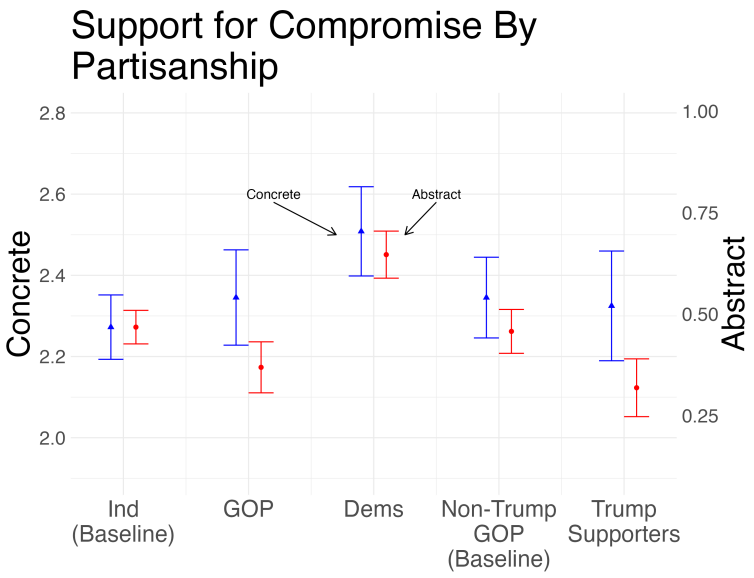
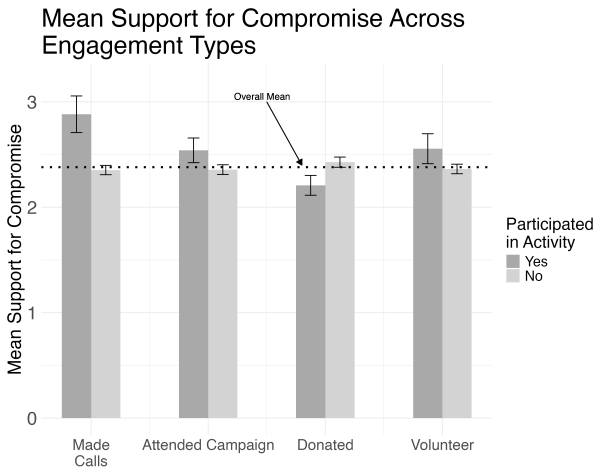


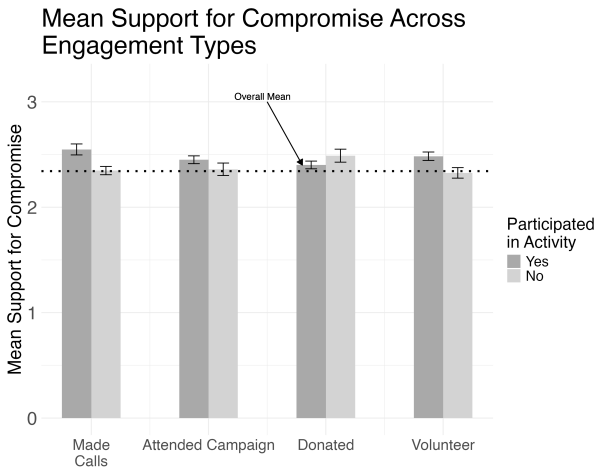

Figure 4: Support for compromise by partisanship. Clustered standard errors at the respondent level. Abstract all: n=2994, GOP subset n=1438. Concrete all: n=2472, GOP subset n=1203. YouGov 2023.

demographics; 95% CI from -0.52 to -0.22) and 0.46 (modeled without demographics; 95% CI from -0.65 to -0.29) when it involves an element which is opposed by their party on the issue they separately rated as most important. The results are slightly smaller but substantively similar when looking at issues that respondents rank as among their four most important. Furthermore, in our 2024-25 survey, support for compromise drops by between 0.53 (modeled with demographics; 95% CI from -0.70 to -0.36) and 0.69 (modeled without demographics; 95% CI from -0.85 to -0.52) when respondents would lose on their most important issue. The use of activist populations makes these tests hard ones in that the comparison is among highly engaged respondents. Loss aversion may be especially pronounced for the subset of people who stand to lose on an issue they consider a top priority (see also Hill, 2022).

A related possibility is that contemporary Americans who are heavily politically engaged may differ from others in various respects—they may be less instrumental and more expressive in their political engagement (Hersh, 2020). To test that prospect, Figures 5a and 5b present the average support for concrete compromises among the YouGov 2023 and YouGov 2024-25 respondents who reported making campaign calls, attending a campaign rally, do-




(a) YouGov, 2023. (Called, n=146. Attended campaign, n=338. Donated, n=572. Volunteered, n=234.)




(b) YouGov Activists, 2024-25. (Called, n=429. Attended campaign, n=803. Donated, n=778. Volunteered, n=705.)

Figure 5: Comparison of mean compromise support by political engagement across years.

nating to a campaign, or volunteering for a campaign. There is considerable heterogeneity in support for compromise by type of political engagement. In particular, in both surveys we observe that those who donate are less supportive of compromise (YouGov 2021 mean=2.21; YouGov 2024-25 mean: 2.40) relative to those who do not (YouGov 2021 mean=2.43; YouGov 2024-25 mean: 2.49).[16] As Appendix Table A10 demonstrates, the observation does not appear to be driven specifically by either Republican or Democratic donors. By contrast, those who make calls are *more* supportive of compromises than others by a difference of 0.53 in the YouGov 2023 survey (95% CI from 0.51 to 0.56) and 0.2 in the YouGov 2024-25 survey (95% CI from 0.13 to 0.27). The same is true for those who volunteered (difference of 0.20 in YouGov 2023; 95% CI from 0.18 to 0.24; 0.16 in the YouGov 2024-25 survey (95% CI from 0.10 to 0.22). Forms of engagement that involve interacting with voters seem to be positively associated with compromise while donations are not.[17] As Appendix Figure A4

[16]The difference between donors and non-donors in the YouGov 2023 survey is 0.22 (95% CI from 0.18 to 0.24); in the YouGov 2024-25 survey it is 0.09 (95% CI from 0.02 to 0.16).

[17]These findings persist in regression models which control for respondents' ideology, indicating that they are not driven by the association identified earlier between ideological

demonstrates, the patterns are quite different when respondents are asked about support for politicians who support compromise abstractly, reinforcing that that measure is quite distinctive.

# Conclusion

In November 2023, Congressional Republicans announced that they would only support additional U.S. aid to Ukraine if it was coupled with measures to improve border security and reduce immigration. However, negotiations on a joint package broke down in February 2024, and the U.S. House of Representatives passed Ukraine aid without any movement on immigration in April 2024. The attempted cross-issue compromise had failed.

What role does public opinion play in the failure of such cross-issue compromises? This paper uses four surveys, including a population-based survey, to investigate Americans' support for concrete, cross-issue compromises. Theoretically, it develops a framework which distinguishes respondents' views on the individual policies from other aspects of the compromise. We find substantial public backing for such compromises while also uncovering evidence that support for compromises is lower than for their component pieces. Consistent with Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong (2020), we find that there is heightened opposition to compromise among some groups of highly engaged respondents: donors prove especially opposed to compromise, as do those who would lose on an issue they rank as very important. Such patterns could lead politicians to overstate the opposition to compromises—and so to overstate the likely electoral penalty they might face for supporting them.

These results have methodological implications. Levels of support for cross-dimensional compromises were much lower in the uncompensated Civiqs surveys reported in the Appendix, which indicates that sampling frames can matter—and that the respondents who are most eager to provide their opinions hold views which may not be representative of

extremity and reduced support for compromise.

others. Also, these results uncover important differences between support for concrete compromises and for politicians who tend to back compromise in the abstract. It is possible that the abstract question taps intra-party divisions or symbolic orientations that aren't closely related to support for tangible compromises (see esp. Noel, 2016). The stark partisan divisions evident in abstract questions become more muted or disappear entirely when people consider specific proposed compromises.

These findings also have implications for research on American political polarization. For one thing, our results motivate future research exploring the political psychology of resistance to compromise among issue publics and donors. Why, for example, do donors support compromises at lower rates—does that opposition reflect an expressive orientation towards politics (see also Hersh, 2020)? Scholars could also investigate the effectiveness of various interventions aimed at encouraging issue publics and donors to back cross-issue compromise (see also Levendusky, 2023).

In an era when the connections between voters and politicians are often tenuous (Azari, 2016; Schlozman and Rosenfeld, 2024), these results help explain the role of public opinion in contemporary America's levels of legislative gridlock. Even while some compromises win majority support, opposition is concentrated among donors and issue publics, two of the groups that are especially likely to be visible to politicians.

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# Appendix

# Contents

# A1 Civiqs (2020-2021)

Table A1: Support for Compromises across Civiqs surveys (2020-2021).

| Policy Area | Study | Conservative Policy | Support for Conservative Policy | Liberal Policy | Support for Liberal Policy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health care | Civiqs PA 2020 | Repeal Obamacare | 18.92 | Open Medicare to all | 24.62 |
| | Civiqs PA 2021 | | 16.35 | | 43.75 |
| Abortion | Civiqs PA 2020 | Make abortion illegal | 18.07 | Access to abortion nationwide | 22.81 |
| | Civiqs PA 2021 | | 17.94 | | 33.23 |
| Immigration | Civiqs PA 2020 | Deport immigrants without authorization | 29.59 | Immigrants without authorization legalized | 18.54 |
| | Civiqs PA 2021 | | 40.90 | | 21.54 |
| Environment | Civiqs PA 2020 | Eliminate regulations on power plant emissions and cars' gas mileage standards | 15.83 | Carbon tax that would increase electricity and gas prices | 16.44 |
| | Civiqs PA 2021 | Complete new pipeline projects such as Keystone and Line 3 and reduced restrictions on fracking | 41.86 | Increase taxes on fossil fuels | 18.54 |

*Note: "Support for Conservative Policy" gives the average percent of support for proposals containing a conservative position for a given policy area. The comparable "Support for Liberal Policy" Table appears in the Appendix.*

# A2 Support for Compromise by Support for Component Policies

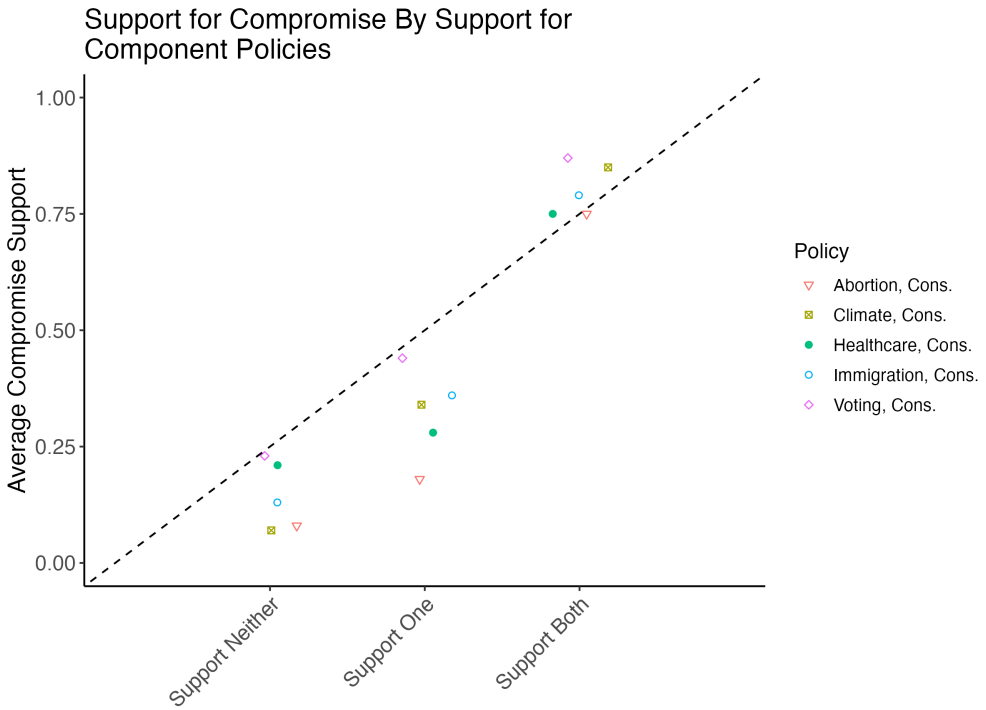


Figure A1: Support for compromise by support for constituent elements (see exact figures in Appendix Table A2). Figure A2 plots the corresponding results for liberal positions. NORC, 2023.

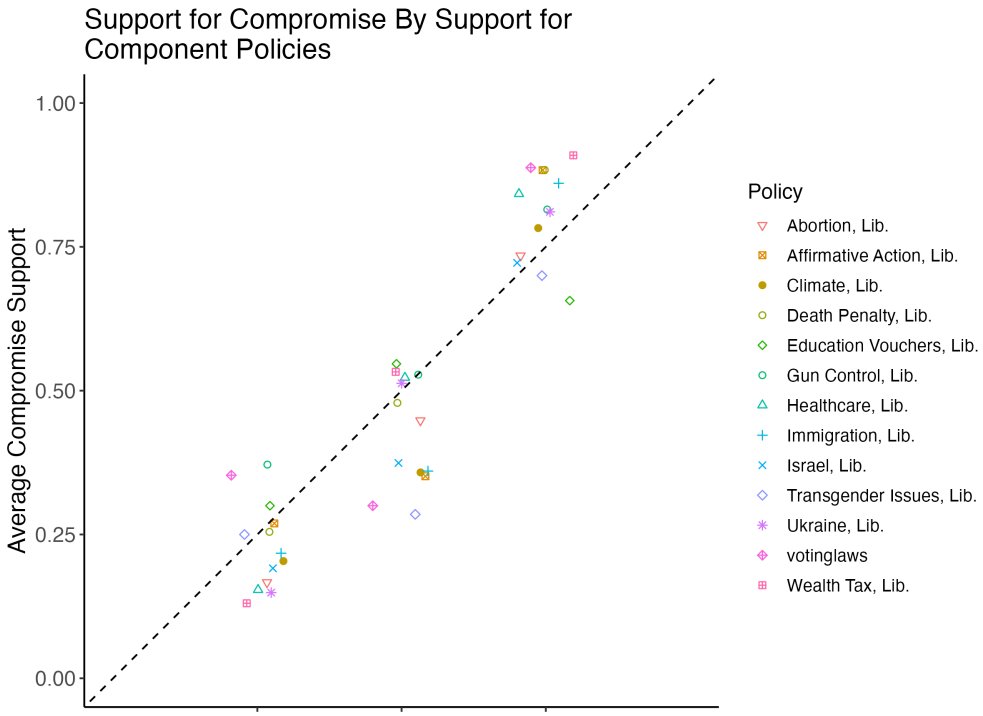


Figure A3: Support for compromise by support for constituent elements. YouGov 2024-25.

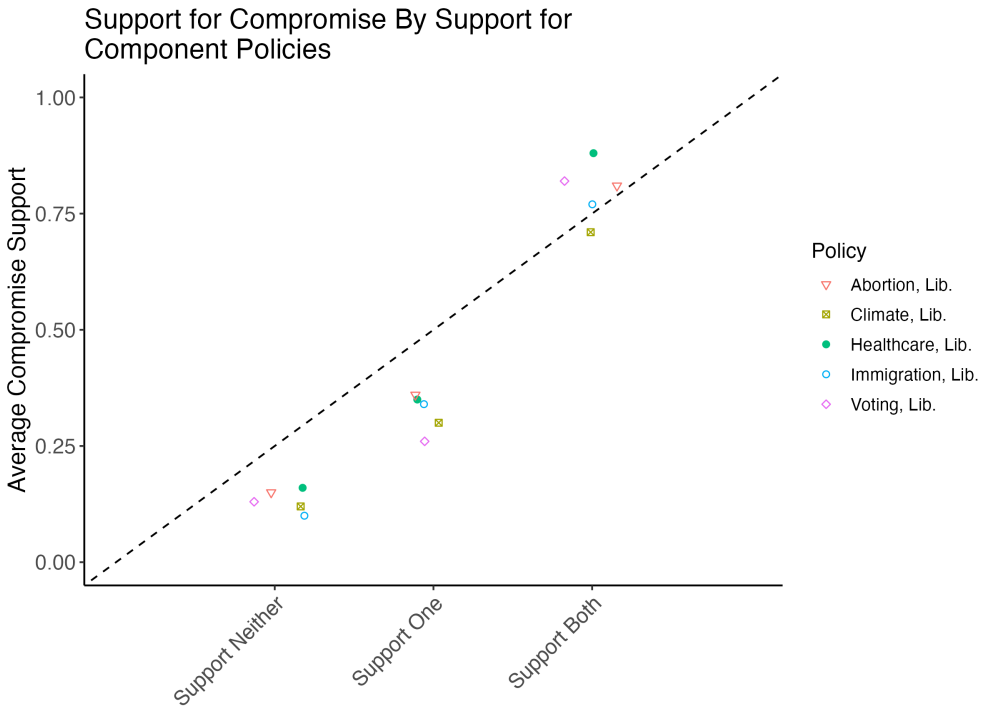


Figure A2: Support for compromise by support for constituent elements. NORC '23.

| | Support Both Policies | Support One Policy | Support Neither Policy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare, Cons. | 0.75 | 0.28 | 0.21 |
| Abortion, Cons. | 0.75 | 0.18 | 0.08 |
| Immigration, Cons. | 0.79 | 0.36 | 0.13 |
| Climate, Cons. | 0.85 | 0.34 | 0.07 |
| Voting, Cons. | 0.87 | 0.44 | 0.23 |

Table A2: Support for Compromise by Support for Its Elements. (NORC, n=1664)

| | Support Both Policies | Support One Policy | Support Neither Policy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare, Cons. | 0.79 | 0.33 | 0.15 |
| Abortion, Cons. | 0.79 | 0.29 | 0.23 |
| Immigration, Cons. | 0.72 | 0.42 | 0.30 |
| Climate, Cons. | 0.74 | 0.48 | 0.34 |
| Voting laws, Cons. | 0.92 | 0.54 | 0.43 |
| Affirmative Action, Cons. | 0.82 | 0.42 | 0.28 |
| Death Penalty, Cons. | 0.72 | 0.44 | 0.28 |
| Education Vouchers, Cons. | 0.84 | 0.41 | 0.21 |
| Gun Control, Cons. | 0.76 | 0.31 | 0.17 |
| Israel, Cons. | 0.76 | 0.47 | 0.15 |
| Transgender issues, Cons. | 0.79 | 0.50 | 0.44 |
| Ukraine, Cons. | 0.69 | 0.32 | 0.14 |
| Wealth tax, Cons. | 0.71 | 0.33 | 0.15 |

Table A3: Support for Compromise by Support for Its Elements. (YouGov '24-'25, n=1100)

| | Support Both Policies | Support One Policy | Support Neither Policy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare, Liberal | 0.88 | 0.35 | 0.16 |
| Abortion, Liberal | 0.81 | 0.36 | 0.15 |
| Immigration, Liberal | 0.77 | 0.34 | 0.10 |
| Climate, Liberal | 0.71 | 0.30 | 0.12 |
| Voting, Liberal | 0.82 | 0.26 | 0.13 |

Table A4: Compromise Support by Underlying Policy Views (NORC, n=1,664).

| | Support Both Policies | Support One Policy | Support Neither Policy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare, Lib. | 0.81 | 0.49 | 0.14 |
| Abortion, Lib. | 0.68 | 0.43 | 0.17 |
| Immigration, Lib. | 0.86 | 0.34 | 0.22 |
| Climate, Lib. | 0.77 | 0.34 | 0.20 |
| Voting laws, Lib. | 0.87 | 0.29 | 0.34 |
| Affirmative Action, Lib. | 0.83 | 0.33 | 0.25 |
| Death Penalty, Lib. | 0.81 | 0.45 | 0.25 |
| Education Vouchers, Lib. | 0.64 | 0.52 | 0.29 |
| Gun Control, Lib. | 0.80 | 0.50 | 0.36 |
| Israel, Lib. | 0.68 | 0.35 | 0.19 |
| Transgender issues, Lib. | 0.68 | 0.27 | 0.24 |
| Ukraine, Lib. | 0.81 | 0.48 | 0.14 |
| Wealth tax, Lib. | 0.89 | 0.49 | 0.12 |

Table A5: Support for Compromise by Support for Its Elements. (YouGov '24-'25, n=1100)

## A3 Intensity of Preferences

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 2.47626* | 2.54756* |
| | (0.13325) | (0.13828) |
| Opposed Position Importance | −0.14601* | −0.14593* |
| | (0.03076) | (0.03072) |
| Support Position Importance | 0.14982* | 0.15456* |
| | (0.03537) | (0.03545) |
| Female | −0.01856 | −0.03938 |
| | (0.04231) | (0.04351) |
| Education (5) | −0.01167 | −0.02153 |
| | (0.01753) | (0.01819) |
| Age | −0.00364* | −0.00325* |
| | (0.00131) | (0.00131) |
| White | 0.06119 | 0.05589 |
| | (0.07931) | (0.07822) |
| Black | 0.08720 | 0.04935 |
| | (0.12028) | (0.12166) |
| Hispanic | 0.24132* | 0.23482* |
| | (0.10125) | (0.09998) |
| Republican | | −0.09590* |
| | | (0.04606) |
| $R^2$ | 0.01954 | 0.02152 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.01614 | 0.01769 |
| Num. obs. | 2313 | 2313 |

*$p < 0.05$

Table A6: Outcome is 1-4 measure of compromise support. Position importance is derived from the conjoint excercize. Specifically, it is each respondent's average distance from indifference to a candidate (4 on a 1-7 scale) when the position was presented. 2304 DF. Adj. $R^2 = 0.018$. N=2313 compromises, 956 respondents. Clustered standard errors.

| Policy | Avg. Rating | Avg. Distance to Indiff. | Avg. Intensity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Require all voters to show a valid photo identification in all state and federal elections | 4.33 | 0.33 | 1.47 |
| Expand the Medicare health insurance program to allow all Americans to participate | 4.23 | 0.23 | 1.46 |
| Increase income taxes on Americans making over $400,000 per year | 4.21 | 0.21 | 1.47 |
| Ban transgender high school students from playing on sports teams that do not match their biological sex | 4.17 | 0.17 | 1.47 |
| Increase military aid to Ukraine | 4.11 | 0.11 | 1.49 |
| Increase military aid to Israel | 4.10 | 0.10 | 1.49 |
| Make it illegal to own an assault weapon nationwide | 4.10 | 0.10 | 1.45 |
| Increase drilling and mining for fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas on public lands | 4.03 | 0.03 | 1.45 |
| Abolish the death penalty nationwide | 3.99 | -0.01 | 1.45 |
| Introduce work requirements for all adults receiving health insurance through the Medicaid program | 3.95 | -0.05 | 1.43 |
| Ban affirmative action in hiring nationwide | 3.94 | -0.06 | 1.41 |
| Prohibit the use of public taxpayer dollars to give students vouchers for private education | 3.92 | -0.08 | 1.49 |
| Introduce automatic voter registration for all eligible American citizens | 3.91 | -0.09 | 1.52 |
| Deport all immigrants in the U.S. without authorization to their countries of origin | 3.89 | -0.11 | 1.53 |
| Legalize affirmative action in hiring nationwide | 3.84 | -0.16 | 1.44 |
| Legalize the death penalty nationwide | 3.82 | -0.18 | 1.42 |
| Use public taxpayer dollars to give students vouchers for private education | 3.79 | -0.21 | 1.53 |
| Make access to abortion without restrictions legal nationwide | 3.78 | -0.22 | 1.56 |
| Increase taxes on all fossil fuels, gasoline, coal, and natural gas to encourage conservation and the use of alternative energy sources | 3.72 | -0.28 | 1.46 |
| Decrease income taxes on Americans making over $400,000 per year | 3.71 | -0.29 | 1.56 |
| End military aid to Ukraine | 3.70 | -0.30 | 1.51 |
| End military aid to Israel | 3.64 | -0.36 | 1.62 |
| Allow all immigrants in the U.S. without authorization to become legal residents and later citizens | 3.60 | -0.40 | 1.60 |
| Make it legal to own an assault weapon nationwide | 3.56 | -0.44 | 1.53 |
| Make abortion illegal nationwide | 3.54 | -0.46 | 1.76 |
| Make it legal for transgender high school students to play on sports teams that do not match their biological sex | 3.48 | -0.52 | 1.55 |

Table A7: Intensity of preferences scores, derived from the conjoint exercise. The first column reports the average rating candidates recieved when upholding each policy. The second column reports the average distance to indifference (4). The third column reports the average absolute distance to indifference (4).

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 2.163* | 2.446* |
| | (0.075) | (0.120) |
| Think About Loss More Than Gain | 0.066* | 0.062* |
| | (0.020) | (0.019) |
| Loss Stays Longer in Mind | 0.011 | 0.025 |
| | (0.018) | (0.018) |
| Female | | −0.012 |
| | | (0.035) |
| Education | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.014) |
| Age | | −0.007* |
| | | (0.001) |
| White | | 0.042 |
| | | (0.066) |
| Black | | 0.125 |
| | | (0.090) |
| Hispanic | | 0.193* |
| | | (0.089) |
| $R^2$ | 0.005 | 0.026 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.005 | 0.025 |
| Num. obs. | 4148 | 4116 |

*$p < 0.05$

Table A8: Outcome is support for compromise. YouGov 2024-2025.

## A4 Loss Aversion

## A5 Moral Issues

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 2.853* | 2.324* |
| | (0.103) | (0.109) |
| Moral Issue, Support Policy | 0.191* | −0.001 |
| | (0.043) | (0.041) |
| Moral Issue, Oppose Policy | −0.235* | 0.040 |
| | (0.033) | (0.035) |
| Education | −0.014 | −0.021 |
| | (0.015) | (0.014) |
| Female | −0.041 | −0.012 |
| | (0.035) | (0.034) |
| Age | −0.006* | −0.003* |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Black | 0.060 | 0.071 |
| | (0.090) | (0.086) |
| White | 0.017 | 0.092 |
| | (0.064) | (0.060) |
| Hispanic | 0.185* | 0.180* |
| | (0.086) | (0.076) |
| Republican | −0.089* | −0.102* |
| | (0.037) | (0.035) |
| Composite Policy Support (3) | | −0.141* |
| | | (0.071) |
| Composite Policy Support (4) | | −0.089 |
| | | (0.064) |
| Composite Policy Support (5) | | 0.166* |
| | | (0.058) |
| Composite Policy Support (6) | | 0.660* |
| | | (0.072) |
| Composite Policy Support (7) | | 1.070* |
| | | (0.078) |
| Composite Policy Support (8) | | 1.194* |
| | | (0.084) |
| $R^2$ | 0.040 | 0.181 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.038 | 0.178 |
| Num. obs. | 4116 | 3752 |

*$p < 0.05$

Table A9: Outcome: Support for compromise. YouGov 2024-2025. Moral Issues are defined as transgender issues, abortion, and the death penalty.

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Donated | $-0.21^*$ | $-0.26^*$ |
| | $[-0.34; -0.08]$ | $[-0.42; -0.10]$ |
| Republicans | $-0.05$ | |
| | $[-0.16; 0.06]$ | |
| Donated × Republicans | $-0.06$ | |
| | $[-0.35; 0.22]$ | |
| Democrats | | $0.22^*$ |
| | | $[0.11; 0.33]$ |
| Donated × Democrats | | 0.03 |
| | | $[-0.20; 0.26]$ |
| (Intercept) | $2.44^*$ | $2.35^*$ |
| | $[2.38; 2.51]$ | $[2.29; 2.42]$ |
| $R^2$ | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| Clustered standard errors | ✓ | ✓ |
| N Clusters | 1316 | 1316 |
| N | 2472 | 2472 |

* Null hypothesis value outside the confidence interval.

Table A10: OLS model predicting support for compromise with Republican (Model 1) and Democratic (Model 2) interaction effects. YouGov, 2023.

## A6 Asymmetric Polarization

# A7 Issue Publics and Political Engagement

| | Top 1 Issue | | | Top 4 Issue | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
| Supportive, Top 1 Issue | −0.052 | −0.032 | 0.166 | | | |
| | [−0.235; 0.131] | [−0.115; 0.051] | [−0.010; 0.342] | | | |
| Opposed, Top 1 Issue | −0.464* | −0.163* | −0.368* | | | |
| | [−0.639; −0.289] | [−0.236; −0.090] | [−0.519; −0.217] | | | |
| Supportive, Top 4 Issue | | | | −0.061 | −0.012 | 0.114 |
| | | | | [−0.189; 0.066] | [−0.070; 0.046] | [−0.006; 0.233] |
| Opposed, Top 4 Issue | | | | −0.420* | −0.162* | −0.329* |
| | | | | [−0.546; −0.294] | [−0.218; −0.107] | [−0.440; −0.219] |
| Supportive and Opposed, Top 4 Issue | | | | −0.078 | −0.116 | 0.310 |
| | | | | [−0.602; 0.446] | [−0.345; 0.112] | [−0.238; 0.858] |
| Female | | | −0.153* | | | −0.142* |
| | | | [−0.254; −0.053] | | | [−0.243; −0.042] |
| Education | | | −0.103* | | | −0.103* |
| | | | [−0.138; −0.068] | | | [−0.138; −0.068] |
| Age | | | −0.022* | | | −0.022* |
| | | | [−0.025; −0.019] | | | [−0.025; −0.019] |
| White | | | 0.150 | | | 0.151 |
| | | | [−0.081; 0.381] | | | [−0.081; 0.382] |
| Black | | | 0.477* | | | 0.466* |
| | | | [0.220; 0.733] | | | [0.208; 0.723] |
| Hispanic | | | 0.137 | | | 0.139 |
| | | | [−0.155; 0.428] | | | [−0.150; 0.428] |
| (Intercept) | 2.216* | 0.426* | 3.799* | 2.240* | 0.433* | 3.804* |
| | [2.064; 2.368] | [0.359; 0.493] | [3.483; 4.115] | [2.087; 2.393] | [0.365; 0.501] | [3.487; 4.120] |
| Two-Way Fixed Effects | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Demographics | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Binary | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| $R^2$ | 0.067 | 0.061 | 0.250 | 0.076 | 0.070 | 0.257 |
| N | 2097 | 2097 | 2097 | 2097 | 2097 | 2097 |
| N Clusters | 1085 | 1085 | 1085 | 1085 | 1085 | 1085 |

* Null hypothesis value outside the confidence interval.

Table A11: OLS regression predicting support for compromise. In the columns 1, 3, 4 and 6 the outcome variable is a 1-4 support scale for compromise. In columns 2 and 4 the outcome variable is a binary support variable for compromise. Models 1, 2 and 3 look exclusively at respondents' most important issue. Models 4, 5 and 6 look at the four most important issues. All models are clustered standard errors at the respondent level. Baseline level did not see their most important issue (for Models 1, 2, 3) or their four most important issues (for Models 3, 4, 5). YG/Activists (2021).

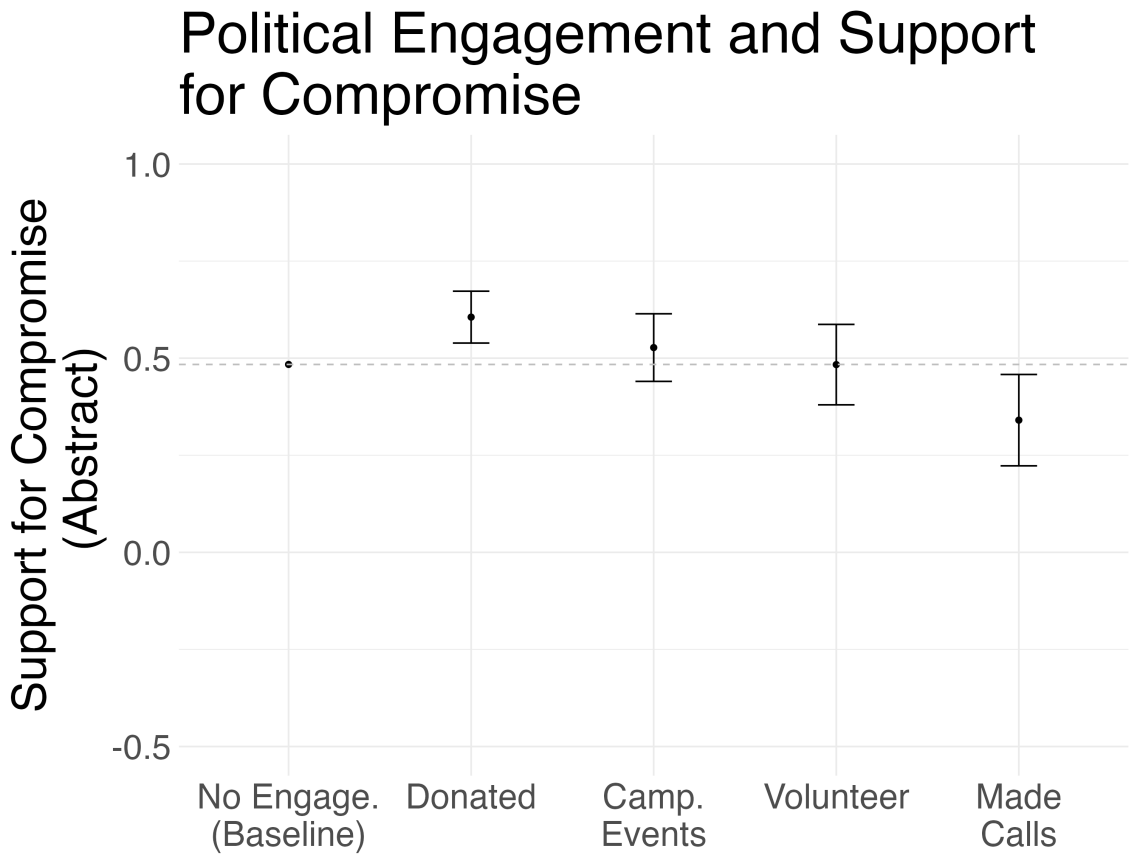


Figure A4: Abstract support for compromise by political engagement. Clustered standard errors at the respondent level. YouGov, 2023. (n=2994).

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supportive, Top 1 Issue | 0.355* | | 0.359* | | | |
| | [0.175; 0.535] | | [0.188; 0.530] | | | |
| Opposed, Top 1 Issue | −0.687* | | −0.528* | | | |
| | [−0.853; −0.522] | | [−0.695; −0.361] | | | |
| Supportive, Top 3 Issue | | | | 0.312* | | 0.331* |
| | | | | [0.198; 0.426] | | [0.221; 0.442] |
| Opposed, Top 3 Issue | | | | −0.461* | | −0.396* |
| | | | | [−0.578; −0.345] | | [−0.507; −0.284] |
| Supportive and Opposed, Top 3 Issue | | | | −0.293 | | −0.275 |
| | | | | [−0.672; 0.086] | | [−0.655; 0.106] |
| Female | | | −0.077* | | | −0.079* |
| | | | [−0.145; −0.010] | | | [−0.147; −0.012] |
| Education | | | 0.006 | | | 0.008 |
| | | | [−0.022; 0.034] | | | [−0.020; 0.036] |
| Age | | | −0.012* | | | −0.012* |
| | | | [−0.014; −0.011] | | | [−0.014; −0.010] |
| White | | | 0.028 | | | 0.043 |
| | | | [−0.108; 0.164] | | | [−0.093; 0.179] |
| Black | | | 0.149 | | | 0.155 |
| | | | [−0.032; 0.330] | | | [−0.028; 0.337] |
| Hispanic | | | 0.203* | | | 0.210* |
| | | | [0.044; 0.361] | | | [0.051; 0.369] |
| (Intercept) | 2.074* | | 2.522* | 1.954* | | 2.503* |
| | [1.946; 2.202] | | [2.275; 2.770] | [1.776; 2.133] | | [2.252; 2.754] |
| Two-Way Fixed Effects | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Demographics | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Binary | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| $R^2$ | 0.057 | | 0.139 | 0.094 | | 0.148 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.054 | | 0.132 | 0.088 | | 0.141 |
| Num. obs. | 4148 | 4148 | 4116 | 4148 | 4148 | 4116 |
| RMSE | 1.070 | | 1.024 | 1.050 | | 1.019 |
| N Clusters | 1081 | 1081 | 1072 | 1081 | 1081 | 1072 |

* Null hypothesis value outside the confidence interval.

Table A12: OLS regression predicting support for compromise. In the columns 1, 3, 4 and 6 the outcome variable is a 1-4 support scale for compromise. In columns 2 and 4 the outcome variable is a binary support variable for compromise. Models 1, 2 and 3 look exclusively at respondents' most important issue. Models 4, 5 and 6 look at the three most important issues. All models are clustered standard errors at the respondent level. Baseline level did not see their most important issue (for Models 1, 2, 3) or their four most important issues (for Models 3, 4, 5). YG/Activists (2024-25).

## A8 Survey Questionnaire

Table A13: Compromise experiment prompt wording across the surveys. In NORC 2023, the order of the conservative and liberal policies was randomized.

| **Survey** | **Phrasing** |
|---|---|
| YouGov (2023) | Republicans and Democrats in Washington, DC disagree on many issues, but there are also some compromises they might agree to. Please tell us if you support or oppose the proposal described assuming it would be fully enacted. What if the proposed compromise meant that CONSERVATIVE POLICY and also that LIBERAL POLICY? |
| NORC (2023) | Republicans and Democrats in Washington, DC disagree on many issues, but there are also some compromises they might agree to. Please tell us if you support or oppose the proposal described assuming it would be fully enacted. What if the proposed compromise meant that CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL POLICY and also that CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL POLICY? |
| PA Panel (2021) | Republicans and Democrats in Washington, DC disagree on many issues, but there are also some compromises they might agree to. Please tell us if you support or oppose the proposal described assuming it would be fully enacted. What if the proposed compromise meant that CONSERVATIVE POLICY and also that LIBERAL POLICY? |
| PA Panel (2020) | Republicans and Democrats in Washington, DC disagree on many issues, but there are also some compromises they might agree to. Please tell us if you support or oppose the proposal described assuming it would be fully enacted. What if the proposed compromise meant that CONSERVATIVE POLICY and also that LIBERAL POLICY? |
| YouGov Activists (2021) | Republicans and Democrats in Washington, DC disagree on many issues, but there are also some compromises they might agree to. Below, we are going to provide you with a few potential compromises. For each, please tell us if you support or oppose the proposal described assuming it would be fully enacted. What if the proposed compromise meant that CONSERVATIVE POLICY and also that LIBERAL POLICY? |

Table A14: Exact Wordings for All Studies

| **Policy Area** | **Study** | **Conservative Policy** | **Support for Conservative Policy** | **Liberal Policy** | **Support for Liberal Policy** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Healthcare | YG/Activists | the 2010 health reform law known as "Obamacare" was repealed in full | 40.95 | the Medicare health insurance program was expanded to allow all Americans to participate | 51.77 |
| | PA Panel 2020 | | 18.92 | | 24.62 |
| | PA Panel 2021 | | 16.35 | | 43.75 |
| | NORC | All adults receiving health insurance through the Medicaid program were required to work | 43.22 | | 54.29 |
| | YouGov | | 42.21 | | 62.70 |
| Abortion | YG/Activists | abortion became illegal nationwide | 43.12 | access to abortion without restrictions became legal nationwide | 46.61 |
| | PA Panel 2020 | | 18.07 | | 22.81 |
| | PA Panel 2021 | | 17.94 | | 33.23 |
| | NORC | | 24.63 | | 51.63 |
| | YouGov | | 32.03 | | 53.74 |
| Immigration | YG/Activists | Immigrants in the U.S. without authorization were deported to their countries of origin | 50.11 | immigrants in the U.S. without authorization were able to become legal residents and later citizens | 43.60 |
| | PA Panel 2020 | | 29.59 | | 18.54 |
| | PA Panel 2021 | | 40.90 | | 21.54 |
| | NORC | | 49.23 | | 41.94 |
| | YouGov | | 51.82 | | 41.62 |
| Environment | YG/Activists | the U.S. eliminated all regulations on power plant emissions and cars' gas mileage standards | 33.02 | the U.S. imposed a tax on carbon which would increase electricity and gas prices to reduce emissions that cause climate change | 45.60 |
| | PA Panel 2020 | | 15.83 | | 16.44 |
| | PA Panel 2021 | the U.S. completed new pipeline projects such as Keystone and Line 3 and reduced restrictions on fracking to reduce energy prices | 41.86 | the U.S. increased taxes on all fossil fuels, gasoline, coal, and natural gas to encourage conservation and the use of alternative energy sources | 18.54 |
| | NORC | the U.S. increased drilling and mining for fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas on public lands | 46.67 | | 35.79 |
| | YouGov | | 52.69 | | 43.27 |
| Voting | YG/Activists | All voters were required to show a valid photo identification in all state and federal elections | 65.74 | all eligible American citizens were automatically registered to vote | 45.38 |
| | NORC | | 64.59 | | 44.70 |
| | YouGov | | 68.37 | | 45.78 |

Table A15: Question wordings for the issue positions. All respondents were presented with each of the questions, and were asked to respond on a Likert scale with the options: "Strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," and "strongly disagree."

| Issue | Conservative | Liberal |
|---|---|---|
| Healthcare | Do you support or oppose work requirements for all adults receiving health insurance through the Medicaid program? | Do you support or oppose expanding the Medicare health insurance program to allow all Americans to participate? |
| Abortion | Do you support or oppose making abortion illegal nationwide? | Do you support or oppose making access to abortion without restrictions legal nationwide? |
| Immigration | Do you support or oppose deporting all immigrants in the U.S. without authorization to their countries of origin? | Do you support or oppose allowing all immigrants in the U.S. without authorization to become legal residents and later citizens? |
| Environment | Do you support or oppose the U.S. increasing drilling and mining for fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas on public lands? | Do you support or oppose the U.S. increasing taxes on all fossil fuels, gasoline, coal, and natural gas to encourage conservation and the use of alternative energy sources? |
| Voting | Do you support or oppose requiring all voters to show a valid photo identification in all state and federal elections? | Do you support or oppose automatic voter registration for all eligible American citizens? |