**Stimulus File**

**Study 1**

*Pre-message attitudes + filler:*

What is your political affiliation?

* Democrat
* Republican
* Independent
* Other

How much would you support a junk food tax policy to reduce obesity? (1 - not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you support a university tuition plan that allowed students to receive reduced tuition by working part time for the university? (This plan would not affect students choosing not to participate.) (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*\*pre-message attitude item\**

How much do you support the building of more nuclear power plants in your state? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you support the labeling of genetically modified food? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Instructions*

For the rest of the study, we would like you to imagine that it is election season, and a citizen, Greg, is advocating for a ballot initiative. Even though the scenario is made up, we would like for you to pretend that it is real.

You are about to read a passage that Greg wrote. The message was a part of a speech he gave advocating for a ballot measure to provide funding to build more nuclear power plants in your state.

*Message focus versus Person focused instructions (condition does not moderate our results)*

*Message focus*: As you know, our views on issues can be based on many different types of information. In this experiment, we are interested in how people form an opinion on an issue based on a written communication. Thus, when presented with the written information on the next screen, please consider the statements in relation to your own views on the issue.

*Person focus*: As you know, our views on issues can be based on many different types of information. In this experiment, we are interested in how people form an impression of another person based on something that he/she has written. Thus, when presented with the written information on the next screen, please consider Greg, the author, and the types of characteristics that he might possess.

*Strong versus Weak Message*

*Strong Arguments:*

 As the world worries about global climate change, even some environmentalists are looking a bit more kindly on the largest power source that doesn't worsen the problem: nuclear power.

 As people realize how bad traditional sources of energy, such as fossil fuels, are for the environment, many people are starting to explore alternative sources of energy. The National Academy of Sciences called this month for the swift development of new nuclear plants to help fight global climate change. New atomic plants already on the drawing board would replace power stations that burn coal and oil, fossil fuels that belch heat-trapping carbon dioxide—the primary greenhouse gas—into the atmosphere. Many scientists applauded the findings of the independent academy, which conducted a 15-month federally funded study of global climate change.

 Nuclear power plants are already prevalent in many parts of the world. France, for example, obtains over 75% of its energy from state-run nuclear plants. The French convert their high-level waste into a stable, glassy substance and store it in concrete bunkers. France is the world's largest net exporter of electricity due to its very low cost of generation, and gains over EUR 3 billion per year from this.

 In the US, Nuclear Power Plants have operated almost without incident in the past 20 years. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s standards for safety in plants and transportation of related materials are extremely high. For example, highway transport containers must be able to withstand a 30 foot drop and truck crash, as well as a 30 minute 1,475 degree F fire.

 It is estimated that nuclear energy can provide a billion times more energy than wind and water sources and a million times more energy than chemical sources. Given the alternatives, the choice seems clear. Much of our future energy needs will be met by nuclear power.

Join me in supporting more nuclear energy in our state this election cycle!

*Weak Arguments:*

 As the world worries about global climate change, even some environmentalists are looking a bit more kindly on a power source that doesn't worsen the problem any more than currently active coal and oil power plants: nuclear power.

 New, highly-automated atomic plants would replace power stations that employ thousands of workers. Although many of the remaining jobs would constitute low-level unskilled positions (e.g., custodial and maintenance staff), the development of nuclear plants would also pave the way for a small number of highly specialized, well-paying technical positions. The increase in efficiency with these automated plants could offset the large “up-front” costs of plant construction and would allow the nuclear plants to pay for themselves within 40 years of their completion. It is estimated that consumers would eventually save as much as 5% off electricity costs, although initial rate hikes might be necessary during the initial phases of construction.

 In addition to efficiency and savings, nuclear plants are more aesthetically pleasing than conventional power plants, and thus might boost tourism. Because the hourglass towers stream steam, rather than smoke, into the sky, small puffy clouds often form and dot the surrounding sky. Because conventional oil or coal plants were often built many years ago, such plants are often dirty and look like run-down boxes.

 The building of nuclear plants will also help keep related businesses running. For example, companies that produce the white lab coats that are often worn in nuclear plants would receive a marked increase in demand, and this prosperity would likely spread to many of the third world countries in which such textiles are often produced.

 Given the alternatives, the choice seems clear. Much of our future energy needs can and should be met by nuclear power.

Join me in supporting more nuclear energy in our state this election cycle!

*Thought Listing*

We are now interested in what you were thinking about as you were reading Greg's speech.

Simply write down your first idea in the first box, your second idea in the second box, and so on. You should record only the ideas you had while reading Greg's speech. Please state your ideas as concisely as possible - a phrase is sufficient.

[Six Boxes for Thoughts, each labeled with “Thought [#]”]

*Instructions*

Now we will ask you some questions about your impression of Greg, who advocated for building more nuclear power plants.

*Argument Quality Manipulation Check*

How strong were Greg's reasons for supporting the building of more nuclear power plants? (1 – not at all strong, 9 – very strong)

*Perceptions of Bias*

To what extent do you feel that Greg's position on nuclear power is a product of personal bias? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you think that Greg has a biased perspective on nuclear power? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How objective do you think Greg is in evaluating nuclear power? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much) \*reverse coded\*

*Perceptions of Expertise*

How qualified did you think Greg was to speak on nuclear power? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent does it seem like Greg is an expert on nuclear power? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent does it seem like Greg is knowledgeable about nuclear power? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Trustworthiness*

To what extent does it seem like Greg is trustworthy? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent does it seem like Greg is honest? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you think Greg truly believes what he is saying? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Likability*

How much do you like Greg? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How likable do you think Greg is? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you enjoy spending time with Greg? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Intelligence*

How intelligent do you think Greg is? (1 – not intelligent, 9 – very intelligent)

How smart do you think Greg is? (1 – not smart, very smart)

How high is the Greg's IQ? (1 – low IQ, 9 – high IQ)

*Open ended response question*

Why do you think Greg is endorsing building more power plants?

*Post-message attitudes toward nuclear power*

Now we will ask you some questions about whether or not you think that building nuclear power in your state is a good idea.

To what extent is building more nuclear power plants in your state a good idea? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you support building more nuclear power plants in your state? (1 – definitely opposed, 9 – definitely in favor)

How much is building more nuclear power plants in your state positive? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

**Studies 2 – 9 Front End Materials**

*Instructions*

In this study, we are trying to examine how people evaluate political campaigns. We will be giving you information about a pretend political campaign and would like you to evaluate it as if it were a real campaign in your locality.

In this pretend campaign, Ben Patton is running against Jim Smith for local county commissioner.

Local resident Cami Chambers is supporting Ben Patton in this election cycle.

Jim Smith is running against Ben Patton in the election for county commissioner. As you know, Cami supports Ben Patton, not Jim Smith.

To put the election in context, we are now going to provide you with some information about Jim Smith.

\*As mentioned in the text, as our argument quality manipulation, we manipulated which candidate received the strong or weak arguments. When Ben Patton had the strong arguments, Jim Smith had the weak arguments and vice versa\*

*Strong versus Weak Arguments*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strong Message | Weak Message |
| Ben Patton has been in public office since 1983. He will be running for one of the two vacant seats on the local county commission in the fall elections. Patton was born in 1952. He earned his undergraduate degree from the Stanford and his law degree from Northwestern University.Patton has a long history of public service. He served two terms as a state senator and has served for ten years as the local treasurer.“I have cherished the opportunity to help the residents of my county. I continue to be invested in my community. In my spare time, I like to spend time with my grandchildren and volunteer at the local animal shelter.” Patton thinks that education is of primary importance to any society and as such has championed funding for elementary and high schools in the county, as well as fighting for university funding in the state senate.Join me in supporting Ben Patton for county commissioner! | Ben Patton has been in public office since 2010. He will be running for one of the two vacant seats on the local county commission in the fall elections. Patton was born in 1952. He attended California Community College for three semesters, and attended Southern Illinois University for one semester.Patton worked as a clerk for the city for two years before he left the position for reasons that were undisclosed.  “As a clerk, I had to learn how to work with people during their most trying times. I continue to be invested in my community. In my spare time, I enjoy reading magazines.”Patton thinks that it is important to support education and as such has regularly donated pens and pencils to local school children as well as attending university football games.Join me in supporting Ben Patton for county commissioner! |

*Instructions*

Next you will see the script of a campaign commercial in which local resident Cami Chambers is endorsing Ben Patton for county commissioner.

As you read the information, please consider your impressions of Cami Chambers and why she might be supporting Ben Patton.

\*arguments for Ben Patton went here\*

*Instructions*

Now you will respond to a number of questions about Cami, who is campaigning for Patton to be your local county commissioner. Cami endorsed Patton in the commercial that you just read.

*Perceptions of Argument Quality*

How strong were Cami's reasons for supporting Patton? (1 – very weak, 9 – very strong)

How effective were Cami's arguments in supporting Patton's candidacy? (1 – very weak, 9 – very strong)

\*Perception Measures are Counter-balanced in Study 3\*

*Perceptions of Bias*

To what extent do you feel that Cami the campaigner’s opinion of Patton as a candidate is a product of personal bias?

How much do you think that Cami the campaigner has a biased perspective about the candidate she is supporting?

How objective do you think Cami the campaigner is in evaluating Patton as a candidate? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)(reverse coded).

*Perceptions of Trustworthiness*

*\*all items anchored with “not at all” to “very much”- measured on 7-point scales in Studies 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and on 9-point scales in Studies 3, 8, and 9\**

To what extent does it seem like Cami the campaigner is trustworthy?

To what extent does it seem like Cami the campaigner is honest?

How much do you think that Cami truly believes what she is saying?

*Perceptions of Expertise*

*\*all items anchored with “not at all” to “very much”- measured on 7-point scales in Studies 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and on 9-point scales in Studies 3, 8, and 9\**

How qualified did you think that Cami was to speak about Patton as a candidate?

To what extent does it seem like Cami is an expert on Patton as a candidate?

To what extent does it seem like Cami who wrote this message is knowledgeable about Patton?”

*Perceptions of Likeability*

*\*only in Studies 3, 7, 8, and 9\**

How much do you like Cami? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How likeable do you think Cami is? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you enjoy spending time with Cami? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Intelligence*

*\*only in Studies 3, 7, 8, and 9\**

How intelligent do you think Cami is?(1 - not intelligent, 9 - very intelligent)

How smart do you think Cami is? (1 - not smart, 9 - very smart)

How high is Cami’s IQ?” (1 = low IQ, 9 = high IQ)

*Attitudes toward Ben Patton*

How much do you support Patton as a candidate for your local county commissioner? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would it be a good idea for Patton to be elected to be your local county commissioner? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much is Patton a good candidate for your local county commissioner? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

**Back end of Study 4**

*Instructions*

Many times in life, we receive several messages from the same person. As such, we would like you to imagine that Cami provided a second message after her message about Ben Patton.

People can give us information on a range of topics. We will present you with a number of topics that Cami could provide information on. For each topic, we would like you to imagine that Cami presented a message on that topic after the message she gave about Ben Patton (rather than one after the other).

We will ask you how you would perceive Cami if she provided a message on the given topic.

*Perceptions of Bias – Most Related Topics*

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a political candidate from her political party. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the political candidate from her political party? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about federal tax policy. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about federal tax policy? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about gun rights. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about gun rights? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Bias – Moderately Related Topics*

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a county-level program to address a local heroin epidemic. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the county-level program to address a local heroin epidemic? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about implementing a county recycling program. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about implementing a county recycling program? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a county transportation initiative. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the county transportation initiative? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Bias – Least Related Topics*

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a local bike shop. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the local bike shop?(1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a painting. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the painting? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about coffee. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about coffee? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Relevance to a Political Bias – Most Related Topics*

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a political candidate from their same political party was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on federal tax policy was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on gun rights was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Relevance to a Political Bias – Moderately Related Topics*

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a county-level program to address a local heroin epidemic was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on implementing a county recycling program was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a county transportation initiative was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Relevance to a Political Bias – Least Related Topics*

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a local bike shop was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a painting was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on coffee was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

**Back end of Study 5 Materials**

*Instructions with manipulation of whether participants were told about all topics ahead of time – the bolded section was included in the condition in which they were told about all topics ahead of time.*

Many times in life, people are recruited to be spokespeople on several different topics. As such, we would like you to imagine that Cami provided a second message after her message about Ben Patton.

People can give us information on a range of topics. We'd like you to consider what your impressions of Cami would be if she provided a message on each topic after her message about Ben Patton.

**The topics we would like you to consider will be:**

**gun rights, federal taxes, a political candidate from her own political party, coffee, a local bike shop, and a painting.**

For each topic, we would like you to imagine that Cami presented a message on that topic after the message she gave about Ben Patton (rather than one after the other).

We will ask you how you would perceive Cami if she provided a message on the given topic.

*Perceptions of Bias – Most Related Topics*

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a political candidate from her political party. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the political candidate from her political party? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about federal tax policy. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about federal tax policy? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about gun rights. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about gun rights? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Bias – Least Related Topics*

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a local bike shop. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the local bike shop?(1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about a painting. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about the painting? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

Imagine that Cami provided a message about coffee. To what extent would you perceive Cami as biased about coffee? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Relevance to a Political Bias – Most Related Topics*

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a political candidate from their same political party was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on federal tax policy was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on gun rights was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Perceptions of Relevance to a Political Bias – Least Related Topics*

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a local bike shop was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on a painting was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

To what extent would you perceive that a person's opinion on coffee was related to whatever political bias that person might have? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

**Back end of Studies 6 and 7**

*Instructions*

In the next part of the study, we are going to give you more information about other issues that Cami is endorsing in this election. But first we would like to ask you a few questions about your opinions

What is your political affiliation?

* Democrat
* Republican
* Independent
* Other

Please select choice C

* A
* B
* C
* D
* E
* F

How much would you support a junk food tax policy to reduce obesity? (1 - not at all, 9 – very much)

*\*pre-message attitude item\**

How much would you support a university tuition plan that allowed students to receive reduced tuition by working part time for the university? (This plan would not affect students choosing not to participate.) (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you support the building of more nuclear power plants in your state? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you support the labeling of genetically modified food? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Instructions*

Now you will receive the transcript of a speech given by Cami Chambers. This election cycle, she is also supporting a ballot measure for a state-wide program through which students at state universities could work as part time staff members for the university in order to get reduced tuition. This new plan would have no impact on students choosing not to participate.

*Only in Study 6*: This plan is backed by Cami's political party.

*Message: Strong or Weak Arguments*

*Strong*

Join me this election season in supporting the university service tuition program! This program will allow students at our state's universities to get reduced tuition by working as part-time staff members at the university. This plan is good for our state and good for our students! Here's why:

First, the option for students to provide university services will ensure that a university education will remain affordable for the vast majority of students desiring to earn a university education. Another "across the board" raise in tuition would make the price of a university education, already at a high level, virtually prohibitive to a great number of students pursuing a university degree.

Second, this provision for university service by students will allow universities to direct fiscal expenditures toward maintaining and increasing the quality of the faculty. That is, a greater portion of the university budget can be invested in monetary incentives for research and teaching. Exceptional faculty, currently employed in the university system will be more likely to remain in their respective universities. Moreover, the funding will be available to recruit additional outstanding professors, researchers, and Nobel prize-winning laureates.

In addition to increasing the quality of the faculty at universities, there will also be improvements in the courses offered. With the additional money available, more teaching positions can be funded for both professors and graduate teaching associates. Therefore, more courses can be offered as well as a greater number of smaller classroom sessions and individualized instruction possibilities.

With students performing university services, the additional funds and personnel will be available to maintain and increase the quality of services provided by the library systems. More money can be spent on the acquisition of new books and journals. In addition, students providing library services will ensure that the libraries will be able to maintain and even extend current operating hours.

Students working in university services will help to alleviate the huge monetary pressure placed on university budgets that are currently dedicated merely for maintaining the physical upkeep of the university. With students performing basic grounds keeping services such as landscaping, mowing, and painting, university campuses will remain beautiful and the money will become available for the fundamental purpose of the university: education.

Finally, students' participation in university services will provide the opportunity for students to enhance their social life by meeting and getting to know other students with whom they otherwise would not have the opportunity to become friends. Universities are an environment in which diversity is encouraged. However, often one's experiences with people, especially early on, can be vastly limited to one's classes or one's dormitory floor. The university service program can provide the opportunity to widen one's experiences and one's circle of friends.

Anything that can help increase the quality of education in universities, and thus add to the positive reputation of each university, may enhance the desirability of a degree in the real world. That's what this program is capable of doing.

*Weak*

Join me this election season in supporting the university service tuition program! This program will allow students at our state's universities to get reduced tuition by working as part-time staff members at the university. This plan is good for our state and good for our students! Here's why:

First, enrollments at state-funded universities are sure to decrease because some students won't want to work extra hours. Therefore, for instance, universities will likely return to a size more comparable to local community colleges. This will reduce the student load on many of the university facilities, parking lots, and paths. Tickets to athletic events should also be easier to acquire as a result of the decrease in enrollments.

Second, students that choose to perform university services will have a substantial reduction in their amount of leisure time. This will help students to learn how to structure their remaining time to maximize the efficiency with which they study, work, and relax. This, of course, will be excellent training for when students graduate from university, become employed, and have families. They will have gained the experience of having to maximize the quality of their leisure time.

In addition to learning how to maximize their leisure time, there will be much less time for students to spend partying, drinking, and frequenting bars. Therefore, there will be a reduction in the number of campus police and security officers necessary to keep student rowdiness under control. There will likely be a large reduction in the number of civil disturbance complaints, and fewer campus crimes.

Students will also have less time to spend in the libraries and computer labs because they will be performing the university services. Therefore, it will be possible to reduce the numbers of hours these facilities must remain open and staffed. This will contribute to an increase in the savings of university money that can be put to alternative uses.

With students performing university services, there will be a great deal more money with which to improve and beautify the campus environment. A greater proportion of the fiscal budget can be spent on materials such as paint for buildings, new machinery for mowing and landscaping, and planting shrubbery, flowers, and trees, in order to make each university an even more scenic and beautiful place to spend one’s university years.

Finally, students working in university services will gain the experience of working in dining hall, janitorial, and clerical positions. Although these positions are not likely to contribute to work experience in students' chosen majors, the work experience might prove useful in obtaining other part-time jobs during their university years and for some time after graduation.

Anything that can help increase the quality of education in universities, and thus add to the positive reputation of each university, may enhance the desirability of a degree in the real world.

That's what this program is capable of doing.

*Thought Listing*

We are now interested in what you were thinking about as you were reading Cami's speech. You might have had ideas all favorable to the university service program, all opposed, all irrelevant, or a mixture of the three. Any case is fine: simply list what it was that you were thinking for the last few minutes.

Simply write down your first idea in the first box, your second idea in the second box, and so on. You should record only the ideas you had while reading Cami's speech. Please state your ideas as concisely as possible - a phrase is sufficient.

[Six Boxes for Thoughts, each labeled with “Thought [#]”]

Now we would like to know your impressions of the university service tuition program.

*Post-message Attitudes toward the University Service Program*

How much is the university service program a good idea? (1 - not at all, 7 - very much)

How much do you support the university service program? (1 - definitely opposed, 7 - definitely in favor)

How much is the university service program positive? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

Now we will ask you a few more questions about your impression of Cami Chambers, who gave the speech you just read.

*Perceptions of Bias*

To what extent do you feel that Cami's position on the university service program is a product of personal bias? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

How much do you think that Cami has a biased perspective on the university service program? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

How objective do you think Cami is in evaluating the university service program? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

**Back end of Study 8**

*Instructions*

In the next part of the study, we are going to give you more information about other issues that Cami is endorsing in this election. But first we would like to ask you a few questions about your opinions

What is your political affiliation?

* Democrat
* Republican
* Independent
* Other

Please select choice C

* A
* B
* C
* D
* E
* F

How much would you support a junk food tax policy to reduce obesity? (1 - not at all, 9 – very much)

*\*pre-message attitude item\**

How much would you support a plastic bag tax through which people would be charged 10 cents for each plastic bag they used at the grocery store? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you support the building of more nuclear power plants in your state? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you support the labeling of genetically modified food? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Instructions*

This election cycle, Cami is also supporting a ballot measure for a plastic bag tax through which people would be charged 10 cents for each plastic bag they used at the grocery store.

On the next several screens, you will see a message Cami provided about the plastic bag tax.

*Plastic Bag Ban Messages: Strong or Weak Arguments*

**Strong**

Plastic Bag Taxes: An Effective Solution

We should tax the use of plastic bags in supermarkets in order to get people to use them less.

Every year, Americans throw away 100 billion plastic bags, a huge waste of resources. Worldwide, consumers use an estimated 1 trillion plastic bags each year—nearly 2 million a minute—with the use time of a typical bag just 12 minutes. Yet, the consequences of plastic bag use extend far beyond that 12 minutes.

Many cities have tried simply recycling plastic bags. However, these initiatives have largely failed with only about 5% of bags being recycled and 95% still being thrown away

Each year, tens of thousands of whales, birds, seals, and turtles die after getting entangled with bags or mistaking them for food. In 2010, a gray whale that was beached and died in Seattle was found to have more than 20 plastic bags in its stomach.

Plastic bag production uses almost 10 percent of the world's annual oil supply. The chemicals and compounds that go into making plastic bags could be utilized in a far more effective manner. For example, the oil used to make 14 bags would drive a car a mile.

In addition, plastic bags do not degrade well in our garbage dumps. No one is sure how long a plastic bag takes to decompose, but estimates range from 500 to 1,000 years. Even then, they never fully biodegrade; they just break down into ever-tinier plastic pellets.

Not only do plastic bags fill up our landfill sites, but people throw them into the streets. There, they clog up drains and create litter. As a result, we have to spend extra money on city maintenance and it looks like we don’t care about our city.

By taxing plastic bags, we will protect our environment, our city, and our resources.

**Weak**

Plastic Bag Taxes: An Effective Solution

We should tax the use of plastic bags in supermarkets in order to get people to use them less.

Because we have so many plastic bags, people have started making jewelry out of them. People feel compelled to make it so they feel like they are reusing something, but this jewelry is very ugly. If we didn’t have so many plastic bags, we could have less of this unattractive jewelry.

Importantly, the plastic bags look kind of like ghosts so they might scare children who see them blowing around. While this might be fun on Halloween, it would not be very good on all other days of the year.

Additionally, plastic is one of the tackiest materials. A lot of things that people think of as tacky, like yard flamingos or giant Christmas yard decorations are made out of plastic. Therefore, using plastic bags might remind people of these things and make them think that the other grocery shoppers are not classy people.

Sometimes people’s pets are scared of plastic bags when they bring them home. The poor pets don’t know what to make of the rustling noises that the plastic bags make. It would be much better to use cloth bags, which would not scare people’s pets.

It is impossible for individuals to make plastic bags themselves so if someone wanted to support individual entrepreneurs it would be impossible to do that. The plastic bag industry is necessarily ruled by corporations.

Finally, the overuse of plastic bags in grocery stores inhibits self-expression. In these stores, every bag is the same. If these uniform bags were banned, people would be free to exercise self-expression by using grocery bags that they have designed and decorated with buttons and pictures.

By taxing plastic bags, we will promote fashion, individual expression, and our pets.

*Thought Listing*

We are now interested in what you were thinking about as you were reading Cami's speech. You might have had ideas all favorable to the university service program, all opposed, all irrelevant, or a mixture of the three. Any case is fine: simply list what it was that you were thinking for the last few minutes.

Simply write down your first idea in the first box, your second idea in the second box, and so on. You should record only the ideas you had while reading Cami's speech. Please state your ideas as concisely as possible - a phrase is sufficient.

[Six Boxes for Thoughts, each labeled with “Thought [#]”]

*Post-message Attitudes*

How much is the plastic bag tax is a good idea? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you support the plastic bag tax? (1 – definitely opposed, 9 – definitely in favor)

How much is the plastic bag tax positive? (1 – not at all, 9 very much)

Now we will ask you a few more questions about your impression of Cami Chambers, who gave the speech you just read.

*Perceptions of Bias*

To what extent do you feel that Cami's position on the plastic bag tax is a product of personal bias? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you think that Cami has a biased perspective on the plastic bag tax? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How objective do you think Cami is in evaluating the plastic bag tax? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

**Back end of Study 9**

*Instructions*

In the next part of the study, we are going to give you more information about other issues that Cami is endorsing in this election. But first we would like to ask you a few questions about your opinions

What is your political affiliation?

* Democrat
* Republican
* Independent
* Other

Please select choice C

* A
* B
* C
* D
* E
* F

How much would you support a junk food tax policy to reduce obesity? (1 - not at all, 9 – very much)

*\*pre-message attitude item\**

How much would you support a mandatory university tuition plan through which the current tuition levels would be maintained by having the students work as secretarial and maintenance staff? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much do you support the building of more nuclear power plants in your state? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

How much would you support the labeling of genetically modified food? (1 – not at all, 9 – very much)

*Instructions*

This election cycle, Cami is also supporting a ballot measure for a state-wide program through which all university students would work as part-time secretarial and maintenance staff. The plan is an attempt to balance the budget and stop tuition increases throughout the state.

The plan requires students who choose not to participate in the program to pay Out-of-State tuition. In the new plan, the period of work would depend on the length of time left in the student's course of study, with a maximum requirement of four years of "university service." Of course, a number of student groups vehemently oppose such a bill.

*Strong, Mixed, and Weak Arguments*

**STRONG:**

1)  This university service plan will keep tuition affordable for students

2)  Our state universities will be able to keep and recruit outstanding faculty

3) Our universities will be able to offer a greater number of classes and have an overall smaller student to teacher ratio

4)  The state universities will be able to funnel more resources to the library and provide access to new electronic journals

5)  With students performing service, universities will be able to funnel funds previously used for grounds keeping into education.

6)  Finally this program will provide an opportunity for students to get to know others outside of their primary social circles.

7)  Anything that can help increase the quality of a university education may enhance the desirability of a degree in the real world. That's what this program is capable of doing.

**MIXED:**

1)  This university service plan will keep tuition affordable for students

2)  Because students won’t want to participate in this program, enrollment will decrease, allowing easier access to football tickets.

3)  OSU will be able to keep and recruit outstanding faculty

4)  With less leisure time, students will have to learn how to structure their day in order to maximize their time to relax, an important life skill.

5)  OSU will be able to offer a greater number of classes and have an overall smaller student to teacher ratio

6)  Students’ experiences as janitors and cafeteria workers may help them get a well-paying job in the future.

7)  Anything that can help increase the quality of education of an OSU education may enhance the desirability of a degree in the real world. That's what this program is capable of doing.

**WEAK:**

1)  Because students won’t want to participate in this program, enrollment will decrease, allowing easier access to football tickets.

2)  With less leisure time, students will have to learn how to structure their day in order to maximize their time to relax, an important life skill.

3)  There will be less time for students to drink so there will be less disturbances on campus.

4)  Students will have less time to spend at the library so the university won’t have to spend so much money on library services.

5)  With students performing service, the university will have more money to spend on campus beautification initiatives

6)  Students’ experiences as janitors and cafeteria workers may help them get a well-paying job in the future.

7)  Anything that can help increase the quality of a university education may enhance the desirability of a degree in the real world. That's what this program is capable of doing.

*Thought Listing*

We are now interested in what you were thinking about as you were reading Cami's speech. You might have had ideas all favorable to the university service program, all opposed, all irrelevant, or a mixture of the three. Any case is fine: simply list what it was that you were thinking for the last few minutes.

Simply write down your first idea in the first box, your second idea in the second box, and so on. You should record only the ideas you had while reading Cami's speech. Please state your ideas as concisely as possible - a phrase is sufficient.

[Six Boxes for Thoughts, each labeled with “Thought [#]”]

Then, for each thought, participants rated:

Is the following thought positive, negative, or neutral?

[Thought Text Piped Back]

* Positive
* Negative
* Neutral

*Post-message Attitudes toward the University Service Program*

How much is the university service program a good idea? (1 - not at all, 7 - very much)

How much do you support the university service program? (1 - definitely opposed, 7 - definitely in favor)

How much is the university service program positive? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

Now we will ask you a few more questions about your impression of Cami Chambers, who gave the speech you just read.

*Perceptions of Bias*

To what extent do you feel that Cami's position on the university service program is a product of personal bias? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

How much do you think that Cami has a biased perspective on the university service program? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)

How objective do you think Cami is in evaluating the university service program? (1 – not at all, 7 – very much)