Everybody Wins Experiment (#98392)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
Research Question: How does the American publican respond to credit claiming and pork busting messages on congressional earmarks?

Hypothesis 1: On average, both credit claiming and pork busting messages increase MC approval.

Hypothesis 2: Credit claiming messages increase perceptions of MCs' effectiveness in Congress.

Hypothesis 3: Pork busting messages increase perceptions of MCs' fiscal responsibility.

Hypothesis 4: Credit claiming messages increase MC approval among Democrats and fail to increase MC approval among Republicans.

Hypothesis 5: Pork busting messages increase MC approval among Republicans and fail to increase MC approval among Democrats.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
Our first dependent variable (used to test Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5) is legislator approval. Our primary measure for legislative approval is a post-treatment feeling thermometer (0-100) for the fictional member of Congress featured in the experiment.

Our second dependent variable (used to test Hypothesis 2) is perceived legislator effectiveness at passing legislation that helps their community. We measure this variable using a 0-10 slider scale question as part of the post-treatment MC evaluation.

Our third dependent variable (used to test Hypothesis 3) is perceived legislator fiscal responsibility. We measure this variable using a 0-10 slider scale question as part of the post-treatment MC evaluation.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
Respondents will be randomly assigned to one of three treatment message conditions: credit claiming message, advertising message, or pork busting message.

Additionally, the party of the fictional member of Congress will be randomized.

The 3 x 2 design yields six total treatment conditions.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
To test Hypothesis 1, we will compare support for the MC across the three messaging treatment conditions. We average across legislator party for this analysis, meaning there are three treatment groups.

First, we will visually compare mean earmark support across treatment groups with 95% confidence intervals. Second, we will use analysis-of-variance (ANOVA) with Tukey multiple pairwise-comparisons to compare mean feeling thermometer scores across the three treatment groups. Third, to alleviate concerns that results are confounded by party identification, we will control for matching partisanship between respondent and MC. The variable is coded as +1 when a Democratic [Republican] respondent is randomly assigned to a news story about a Democratic [Republican] MC, -1 when a Democratic [Republican] respondent is randomly assigned to a news story about a Republican [Democratic] MC, and 0 when the respondent is an Independent. We will regress the feeling thermometer responses on the experimental treatment variable and partisan match variable using OLS.

To test, Hypotheses 2 and 3, we will replicate the analysis described above on the legislative effectiveness and fiscal responsibility variables rather than the feeling thermometer variable.

To test, Hypothesis 4, we will complete the following steps:
- Subset the sample by respondent party (grouping Democratic leaners with Democrats and Republicans leaners with Republicans) and remove all respondents who received the pork busting treatment.

- Complete a difference of means test on each of the two subsets, testing whether there is a difference in mean feeling thermometer ratings between the credit claiming and advertising groups. Hypothesis 4 predicts that there will be a significant difference among the Democratic subset but not the Republican subset.

To test, Hypothesis 5, we will complete the following steps:
- Subset the sample by respondent party (grouping Democratic leaners with Democrats and Republicans leaners with Republicans) and remove all respondents who received the credit claiming treatment.
- Complete a difference of means test on each of the two subsets, testing whether there is a difference in mean feeling thermometer ratings between the pork busting and advertising groups. Hypothesis 5 predicts that there will be a significant difference among the Republican subset but not the Democratic subset.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
We will exclude participants who fail either of the two attention checks.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.
1700 observations.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
In addition to the feeling thermometer variable, we also measure legislator approval with a binary (approve/disapprove) variable. We will use this variable to provide additional tests of Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5. Because this measure is binary, we will use difference of proportions tests and logistic regression rather than difference of means tests and OLS regression.

We also intend to perform an interaction analysis between respondent party and the representative's assigned party. We do this by regressing the message treatment group and interaction on the dependent variables used in hypotheses 1-3.