THE INTERPLAY OF POLITICIAN AND PERCEIVER RACE ON SUPPORT FOR RACE-BASED PUBLIC POLICY

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This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful and loving parents who have always supported and encouraged me through all of my goals.

To my friends who provided necessary encouragement and of course, laughter during this process.

Finally, to Rachel, without her endless love and support I know for a fact this wouldn’t be possible.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Interplay of Politician and Perceiver Race on Support for Race-Based Public Policy

by

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Master of Arts in Psychology
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Since Barack Obama’s election to the United States presidency, race has become a divisive component in many public policy debates. Consequently, I examined the role of politician race and status threat on support for race-based public policy (e.g., immigration and voter ID policy), for both White and minority participants, Experiment 1 showed that Whites were less supportive of policies that may benefit racial minorities (e.g., non-restrictive immigration and voter ID policy) when the policy was presented by a politician whose race was central to that policy (i.e., Latino and immigration and Black and Voter ID). When a White politician presented these same policies however, Whites showed greater support. Minorities uniformly supported non-restrictive over the restrictive policy across politician race. Experiment 2 attempted to replicate these findings and to test mediation of the effects through status threat. Whites may feel status threat as a result of minority politicians advocating policy that seemingly benefits their group over Whites. I used a 3 (Politician Race: White, Black, Latino) x 2 (Policy Stance: restrictive, non-restrictive) x 2 (Participant Race: White, minority) between-participants design. Controlling for participants’ political ideology, Analyses of Covariance determined how politician/participant race and policy stance predict support towards race-based policy. Minorities supported non-restrictive immigration policy more than restrictive, across politician race. Whites showed no difference in immigration policy support. For voter ID policy, across politician/participant race, restrictive policy was supported more than non-restrictive policy. The 3-way interactions for both policy types were non-significant. Because of this, I could not conduct the mediation analyses. The perceived likability of politicians expressing support for these policies was also tested. Overall, politicians who supported restrictive immigration policy were judged more negatively, across politician/participant race. Latinos in particular judged politicians who supported restrictive immigration policy more negatively than those who supported non-restrictive policy across politician race. A significant difference did not emerge for Black participants compared to all other participants for restrictive voter ID policy. Overall, this work could potentially shed new light on how race may be a factor in the types of public policies that are endorsed.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Barack Obama’s historic election to the United States presidency marked a significant shift in the role of race in United States politics. Consequently, race has become a central and divisive component in many recent elections and public policy debates. President Obama, for instance, has faced challenges in enacting policy with which past presidents have not had to contend: questions concerning his place of birth, religion, and overall “Americanness” have been a consistent part of his presidency (West, Pearson, Dovidio, Johnson, & Phillips, 2014). Indeed, a question that stems from this controversy is: “Is the criticism that Barack Obama faces motivated because of ideological differences or because he is simply the first African American president?” In this thesis I argue that when racial minorities are in positions of governmental power it is seen as threatening to Whites, and it is this threat that is leading to increases in support for restrictive race-based policy.

A Shifting Racial Landscape

In a general sense, Whites’ feelings of threat may be due in part, to Barack Obama himself representing the shift in the racial make up of the United States: census estimates indicate that minorities will outnumber Whites in the coming decades, effectively making the United States a majority-minority nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Demographic studies done by the Pew Research Center indicate that within a century, America’s White population will have undergone a decline from 85% of the total population in 1960 to just 43% by 2060.
(Taylor, 2014). This report also predicted that by 2060, Latinos and African Americans combined would make up about 45% of the total United States population. While the demographic makeup of the United States had been undergoing shifts since before the election of Barack Obama, perhaps his relatively rapid ascendance in national politics, from junior Illinois Senator in 2005 to President-elect just three years later, has helped to intensify perceptions of these changes. Whites in the majority may feel threatened by the changing racial landscape of the United States, (Zárate & Shaw, 2010) and perhaps more central to the Obama presidency, a racial minority president could pose a threat to the White status quo (Parker, Sawyer, & Towler, 2009).

Previous work may help shed light on some of the controversy and criticism that has surrounded Barack Obama’s presidency. For instance, Devos and colleagues have shown that American identity is more strongly associated with Whites compared to racial minority groups (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Devos, Gavin, & Quintana, 2010). According to these findings, Barack Obama may be viewed as less American and in turn, less deserving of the office of President of the United States because he is from a racial minority group. Indeed, Devos and Ma (2013) demonstrated that Whites were more likely to ascribe an American identity to former British Prime Minister Tony Blair than to Barack Obama. From these findings, a deeper understanding becomes clearer of the unique challenges that Barack Obama has faced throughout his presidency. Due to the predominant views of the American national identity and how White group members tend to be its prototypes, Barack Obama, (and other racial minority politicians) appear to be at a disadvantage in enacting and advocating for their political agenda compared to White majority politicians.
Race Based Policy

During the 2008 and 2012 elections, White Americans were fearful that Barack Obama’s presidency would lead to a host of public policies that would seek to marginalize their group. Barack Obama was accused of advocating for redistributive policy that would seek to take money from hardworking “real Americans” and give it to those less deserving, thus inciting criticism from many that he lacked the ability to connect to real working Americans (Rohter, 2008). This criticism may have been thinly veiled racism, claiming that Obama wanted to take from “real Americans” (Whites) and give to “those people” (racial minorities) (Parker et al., 2009).

Perhaps increases in the number and influence of minorities in politics, both as voters and politicians could signal a threat to Whites’ status and power (McConnaughy, White, Leal, & Casellas, 2010). For example, Taylor (2014) found that the voters in the 2012 presidential election were the most racially diverse in America’s history. Also, Petersen (2012) found that the racial composition of the United States Congress is the most diverse it has been in decades. These changes, along with the election of Barack Obama to the United States Presidency could signal a threat to Whites’ status and power and this threat is leading to the subsequent increase in the proposal and support for restrictive race-based policy.

Prior research has shown that if Whites’ status and power within the social hierarchy is threatened, they become more likely to support conservative ideology, restrictive race-based policy, and general social inequality as a way to protect their dominant position (Craig & Richeson, 2014a, 2014b; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Morrison, Fast, & Ybarra, 2009; Outten, Schmitt, Miller, & Garcia, 2012). Hence, it is no surprise that restrictive race-based policies are largely proposed and heavily supported by members of the majority group—White Americans (Fussell, 2014).
These types of restrictive race-based policies have taken several forms, for example, restrictive immigration policies, and restrictive voter ID policies have been near the forefront of the political debate in recent years. Among the most notable restrictive immigration policies was Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070, (2010). This policy essentially would have allowed law enforcement the ability to request proof of citizenship from and detain anyone that was suspected of being an illegal immigrant—in other words, cross deputizing police officers as *de facto* border patrol agents (Epstein & Goff, 2011). After SB 1070’s passage, several other states soon followed suit and drafted similar restrictive immigration policies (e.g., Alabama, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina) (Na, 2010). Critics contended that such a broad policy scope would almost certainly lead to racial profiling of Latinos and other racial minorities (Bean & Stone, 2011; Nier, Gaertner, Nier, & Dovidio, 2012).

Also prominent have been restrictive voter ID policies that several states have proposed and sought to enact. These policies would increase the level of identification needed to register and vote in elections. Supporters claim that they are necessary in order to prevent voter fraud, and to ensure the legitimacy of the democratic process (Pew Research Center, 2012). Critics however, say that such policies unfairly target racial minority groups and those with lower socio-economic status as a way of suppressing their political enfranchisement. While voter ID policies are ostensibly not directly related to race, there is a historical connection in the United States between voting rights and racial inequality, through poll taxes and the segregationist laws of the “Jim Crow” era. These attitudes seem to have persisted to the present day; indeed, prior work has shown that support for restrictive voter ID policies is greater for those individuals who are highly conservative and have high levels of racial resentment and negative attitudes towards African Americans (Wilson & Brewer,
Wilson and Brewer also speculate that one’s attitudes towards voter ID policies may reflect their attitudes towards racial issues in general. They go on to say that the debate surrounding supposedly race-neutral voter ID policies is rife with contentious racial discourse and symbolism (McConahay, 1986).

The subsequent increase in the proposal and support of restrictive race-based policy may thus serve as a motivated response to help stem the tide of the changing racial and political landscape in the United States. For the majority group in the United States, in particular, the election of Barack Obama to the nation’s highest office and the increasing numbers of racial minorities entering political office may serve as the most salient reminder of these changes.

**Research Overview**

The aim of the present research is to examine how restrictive and non-restrictive race-based public policies are supported as a function of perceiver race and the race of the politician who presents them. In Experiment 1, by presenting participants with relevant political policies (e.g., Immigration policy similar to SB 1070 and a restrictive voter ID policy), and racially diverse politicians; I hypothesize that who is proposing the policy *and* who is exposed to the policy may have implications for how the policy is perceived and ultimately supported. Furthermore in Experiment 2, if differences in policy support do emerge as a function of politician race and policy stance, then are these effects mediated by feelings of threat elicited by the politician’s race?
CHAPTER 2

EXPERIMENT 1

The primary goal for Experiment 1 was to show that differences in support for restrictive race-based policy are influenced by the race of the politician presenting the policy, how the policy was framed (e.g., a restrictive or non-restrictive stance) and the race of the perceiver. For example, would a restrictive policy be viewed differently if it were proposed and supported by a racial minority politician, compared to a White politician?

Due to the relevance of the policy to the politician’s racial group, White participants might interpret restrictive policy differently when it is proposed by a member of their ingroup (a White politician) than when it is proposed by a member of their outgroup (a Latino or Black politician). The potentially counter intuitive effect of seeing a member of an outgroup, especially one who has a clear stake in the issue (i.e., Latino politician supporting restrictive immigration policy; Black politician supporting restrictive voter ID policy), might lead White participants to express stronger feelings of support for restrictive policy due to the outgroup politician shunning their own ingroup concerns and holding attitudes that are more similar to the majority group.

Given this, I hypothesized that White participants would support restrictive policy more than non-restrictive policy, and that minority participants would support non-restrictive more than restrictive policy. I further expected that these effects would be moderated by the race of the politician, such that, White participants would more strongly support a policy that is
presented by a minority politician if the policy stance is in line with the majority groups’
view. I expected that White participants’ support would be lower for non-restrictive policy
when a minority politician presents it, especially if the policy can be interpreted as benefiting
the minority politicians’ racial group. For minority participants, politician race may have
little effect on support for restrictive policy, over and above the policy stance itself, because
restrictive policy, regardless of who is supporting it, is antithetical to their groups’ interest.

**Politician Pre-Test for Experiment 1**

The politicians used in Experiment 1 were pretested prior to data collection. My intention
was to choose 3 politicians, (e.g., White, Black and Latino), from 9 who, at that time, likely
would be unfamiliar to participants (viz. Deval Patrick, Cory Booker, Anthony Foxx, Julian
Castro, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Chris Christie, Rand Paul, and Martin O’Malley). I wanted
to use politicians who were mostly unknown to participants so that any prior knowledge of
the politician or his political ideology would not bias responses.

**Pre-Test Method**

**Participants**

Forty-four SDSU undergraduates (8 males, 36 females) participated in the pretest in
exchange for partial course credit. Participants’ age ranged from 18-23 years ($M = 18.93$, $SD
= 1.17$). There were 13 White, 16 Latino/a, 11 Asian, and three multiracial participants.

**Procedure**

Participants were given a link to the pre-test survey that was administered online through
*Qualtrics* (Qualtrics, 2015). Participants were presented with the politician’s name and a
standard image from their campaign or office website. The politicians were as follows:
Black: Cory Booker, Anthony Foxx, and Deval Patrick. Latino: Ted Cruz, Julian Castro, and
Marco Rubio. White: Chris Christie, Martin O’Malley, and Rand Paul. For all 9 politicians, participants were asked the extent to which they are familiar with that politician on a 1 (not at all familiar) to 7 (very familiar) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater familiarity.

Pre-Test Results

As expected, mean familiarity ratings for all of the politicians were quite low (M = 1.67). On a 1 (not at all familiar) to 7 (very familiar) scale, the range of responses was as follows: Deval Patrick (M = 1.18) to Marco Rubio (M = 2.25). Based on this, the following 3 politicians were chosen because all 3 were about equally low, Cory Booker (M = 1.34), Julian Castro (M = 1.93) and Rand Paul (M = 2.07).

Method

Participants and Design

Two hundred and thirty-eight SDSU undergraduates (76 males, 162 females) participated in exchange for partial course credit. Participants’ age ranged from 18-29 years (M = 19.33, SD = 2.10). There were 99 White, 64 Latino/a, 58 Asian, and 17 Black participants. All participants self identified as United States citizens. A 3 (Politician Race: White, Black, Latino) x 2 (Policy Stance: restrictive, non-restrictive) x 2 (Participant Race: White, minority) between-participants design was used.

Procedure

This experiment was administered online through Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2015). After learning about the purpose of the experiment and providing their informed consent, participants were then randomly assigned to one of the politician race and policy stance conditions.

Politician Race
Politician race was varied by using one of three politicians—Cory Booker, Julian Castro, Rand Paul—identified from pre-testing. In all conditions participants saw a standardized image of the politician taken from his campaign or official office website. Below the image was a brief description of the policy and a statement of either support or opposition that ostensibly came from the politician. Although these statements were based in fact, they were entirely fictitious.

**Public Policies**

Participants were exposed to 5 different public policies presented in random order. In addition to our focal policies (viz. A policy similar to Arizona’s SB 1070, a policy similar to the DREAM Act and a restrictive voter ID policy), 2 controversial, but race-neutral policies were also included in order to help obscure the true purpose of the experiment. These 2 policies were about the labeling of genetically modified organisms and the construction of a proposed crude oil pipeline. All policies were written using a general, factual description of the issue that avoided any type of inflammatory language or political slant.

Within each condition, all 4 policies were presented with a consistent stance. For example, in the restrictive stance condition the politician would have expressed support for the SB 1070 type policy and restrictive voter ID policy; opposition to the DREAM Act, as well as support for the crude oil pipeline and genetically modified organism policies.

Whereas, in the non-restrictive stance condition the politician would oppose the SB 1070 type policy, the restrictive voter ID policy and would support the DREAM Act and oppose the crude oil pipeline and genetically modified organism policies.

**Policy Support.** After viewing the picture and reading the politician’s policy stance, participants were asked to indicate, “how strongly do you support this policy?” Responses
were recorded on a 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater policy support.

**Political Ideology.** After answering the policy support questions participants provided basic demographic information. Of particular interest was a single political ideology question that was used as a covariate in all analyses. Responses to this question (“what is your political ideology?”) were recorded on a 1 (strong liberal) to 7 (strong conservative) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater political conservatism. When done with the demographic section participants received a full debriefing.

**Results**

**Analytic Approach**

Simultaneous linear regression was used for all analyses. Predictor variables (policy stance, politician race, and participant race) were entered using orthogonal contrasts (Judd, McClelland & Ryan, 2008). Policy stance was coded as (−. 50 = restrictive and +. 50 = non-restrictive). A separate set of contrasts was used for politician race and immigration policy (+. 66 = Latino, −. 33 = Black and −. 33 = White) and (+. 50 = Black, −. 50 = White) and voter ID policy (+. 66 = Black, −. 33 = Latino, and −. 33 = White) and (+. 50 = Latino, −. 50 = White). This was done to examine the influence that the relevance of the issue to the politicians’ racial group would have on predicting policy support. Finally, participant race was coded as: (−. 50 = White, +. 50 = minority). Each dependent variable (e.g., support for the immigration policies and support for the voter ID policy) was then regressed onto each of the predictor variables, their interaction terms, and the political ideology covariate. Adjusted means for the immigration policy support and voter ID policy support outcome variables are found in Tables 1 and 2.
Immigration Policy Support

A main effect of policy stance was found, \( F(1, 238) = 39.22, p < .001, R^2 = .14 \). The non-restrictive policy stance (\( M = 4.35 \)) was supported more than the restrictive policy stance (\( M = 3.16 \)). This main effect was qualified by a 2-way interaction involving participant race and policy stance, \( F(1, 238) = 14.38, p < .001, R^2 = .06 \). This interaction indicated that minority participants supported the non-restrictive policy stance more than the restrictive policy stance (\( M = 4.79 \) vs. \( M = 2.87 \)) whereas White participants showed no difference in support between the non-restrictive and restrictive policy (\( M = 3.45 \) vs. \( M = 3.92 \)). A 2-way interaction involving policy stance and the Latino vs. White/Black politician contrast was also found, \( F(1, 238) = 4.46, p = .036, R^2 = .02 \). Restrictive policy was supported more when proposed by a Latino politician (\( M = 3.59 \)) than the average of the White/Black politicians (\( M = 2.95 \)), whereas this was not the case for the non-restrictive policy (\( M = 4.20 \) vs. \( M = 4.43 \)), \( F < 1 \).

Finally, the hypothesized 3-way interaction between participant race, policy stance and the Latino vs. White/Black politician contrast was found, \( F(1, 238) = 10.43, p = .001, R^2 = .04 \). White participants showed greater support for restrictive policy when the Latino politician presented it (\( M = 4.27 \)) than the average of the White/Black politician (\( M = 3.05 \)). For non-restrictive policy, Whites were more in support when a White or Black politician presented the policy (\( M = 4.25 \)) than a Latino politician (\( M = 3.27 \)). Minority participants’ support for restrictive policy did not differ based on politician race—Latino politician (\( M = 2.91 \)), White/Black politician (\( M = 2.85 \)), \( F < 1 \). Also, their support for non-restrictive policy did not differ based on politician race—Latino politician (\( M = 5.13 \)), White/Black politician (\( M = 4.62 \)), \( F(1, 238) = 1.71, p = .192 \).

Voter ID Policy Support
A main effect of policy stance was found, $F(1, 238) = 36.67, p < .001, R^2 = .13$. The restrictive stance ($M = 5.10$) was supported more than the non-restrictive stance ($M = 3.79$), opposite to the pattern found for the immigration policies. The main effect of the Black vs. White/Latino politician contrast was also significant, $F(1, 238) = 11.14, p = .001, R^2 = .04$. Voter ID policy was supported more when it was proposed by the average of the White/Latino politician ($M = 4.70$), than Black politician ($M = 3.95$), across participant race and policy stance. A significant 2-way interaction between participant race and the Black vs. White/Latino politician contrast was found, $F(1, 238) = 4.85, p = .029, R^2 = .02$. White participants supported voter ID policy more when the White/Latino politician ($M = 4.94$) presented the policy compared to when the Black politician, ($M = 3.71$) presented the policy. Minority participants did not show differences in their support for voter ID policy as a function of politician race, White/Latino, ($M = 4.45$), Black, ($M = 4.20$), $F < 1$.

The hypothesized 3-way interaction between participant race, policy stance, and the Black vs. White/Latino politician contrast was not significant, $F < 1$. However, a focused comparison within this interaction showed that Whites supported non-restrictive voter ID policy more when the White politician presented it ($M = 4.76$) than the Black politician ($M = 2.99$), $F(1, 238) = 10.55, p < .001, R^2 = .21$.

The remaining 3-way interaction between participant race, policy stance, and the Latino vs. White politician contrast was significant, $F(1, 238) = 6.62, p = .011, R^2 = .16$. White participants supported restrictive policy ($M = 5.76$) more than non-restrictive policy ($M = 4.07$) when a Latino politician presented the policy, $F(1, 238) = 8.79, p = .003, R^2 = .19$. Whites’ policy support did not change based on restrictive or non-restrictive policy stance when a White politician presented the policy ($M = 5.17$ vs. 4.76), $F < 1$. Minority participants
showed greater support for restrictive policy \( (M = 5.43) \) than non-restrictive policy \( (M = 3.31) \) when a White politician presented the policy, \( F(1, 238) = 19.51, p < .001, R^2 = .28. \) Minority participants’ policy support did not change based on restrictive or non-restrictive policy stance when a Latino politician presented the policy \( (M = 4.83 \text{ vs. } 4.23), F < 1. \)

**Discussion**

In general, I found that White participants preferred restrictive race-based to non-restrictive race-based public policies and this was particularly true when a minority politician presented the policy. White participants were also the most supportive of non-restrictive race-based policy when a White politician presented the policy as opposed to a minority politician. Whites seem to be more receptive towards policies that benefit racial minorities, but only when a member of their ingroup (i.e., a White politician) endorses the policy.

Minority participants supported non-restrictive immigration policy more than restrictive policy across all politician races, a position minorities would be expected to take given that non-restrictive policies benefit their respective groups and that it would be counter to their groups’ interest to support restrictive policy. However, for voter ID policy, minority participants seemed more open to the restrictive stance than the non-restrictive stance. Across all politician races, minority participants supported restrictive voter ID policy more than non-restrictive \( (M = 5.10 \text{ vs. } 3.63) \). This could be because the main group expected to disagree with restrictive voter ID policy (i.e., Blacks) are underrepresented in this sample \( (n = 17) \) compared to other racial minority groups (e.g., Latinos, \( n = 64 \), Asians, \( n = 58 \)). Furthermore, because increased restrictions in voter ID requirements are potentially seen as impacting Blacks more than other racial groups (Wilson & Brewer, 2013), Latinos and Asians might have attitudes more in line with Whites than Blacks on this issue. Finally, it may be the case
that because voter ID policy is also thought to be an issue for those low in socioeconomic status, race may not be as strongly tied to this policy as it is for immigration policy, which is largely seen as a “Latino” issue.
CHAPTER 3

EXPERIMENT 2

The goals for Experiment 2 were to replicate the effects from Experiment 1 and test for mediation of the effects. While the pattern of results found in Experiment 1 can be explained from a theoretical standpoint, I wanted to test experimentally my reasoning in Experiment 2.

Based on prior work, Whites would be expected to feel greater support towards policies that restrict racial minority groups especially when accompanied with information indicating gains in minority group population and status and potential decreases in White status. Participants read about information indicating that racial minorities would soon become a majority in the United States; because of this, White participants subsequently showed greater endorsement of conservative policy and ideology (Craig & Richeson, 2014b).

Past work also indicates that racial minorities, as compared to Whites, would express greater negativity towards an ingroup member going against the interests and norms of their group (i.e., greater ingroup bias and greater ingroup loyalty norms) (O’Brien, Major, & Simon, 2012). The “Black-sheep effect” (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988; Otten & Gordijn, 2014) describes this phenomenon whereby evaluations made towards ingroup members are stronger in valance (i.e., positive or negative) than similar evaluations made towards outgroup members.

Building off these past findings, I hypothesized that for White participants, viewing a racial minority politician endorse policy that favors racial outgroups primes a similar fear of
losing status, thus leading to the decreased support towards non-restrictive race-based policy. In other words, the mere presence of the racial minority politician and the fact that he is proposing non-restrictive race-based policy, elicits a greater and more salient threat for Whites. Finally, for racial minorities, viewing an ingroup politician express support for policy that is counter to their group interest would lead to greater negative evaluations of the politician and decreased support for the policy.

**Politician Pre-Test for Experiment 2**
Since the politicians used for Experiment 1 (viz., Cory Booker, Julian Castro, and Rand Paul) have become more prominent in the media and in nationwide politics, participants might now be more familiar with these politicians. Manipulating these politicians’ stance on race-based public policy might not be as believable to participants at this time. Hence, in Experiment 2 I used a new set of relatively unknown politicians. Using new politicians also allows for the generalizability of results between the two experiments to politician race, rather than to the specific politicians used in Experiment 1.

**Pre-Test Method**
Twenty-one SDSU undergraduates (5 males, 16 females) participated in the pretest in exchange for partial course credit. Participants’ age ranged from 18-26 years ($M = 20.33, SD = 2.61$). There were four White, 10 Latino/a, one Asian, three Black, and three multiracial participants.

**Procedure**
Participants were given a link to the pre-test survey that was administered online through Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2015). Participants were presented with the politician’s name and a standard image from their campaign or office website. The politicians were as follows:
Black: Hakeem Jeffries, Cedric Richmond, Marc Veasey. Latino: Pete Aguilar, Carlos Curbelo and Raul Ruiz. White: Ryan Costello, Robert Dold, and Lee Zeldin. For all nine politicians participants were asked the extent to which they are familiar with that politician on a 1 (not at all familiar) to 7 (very familiar) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater familiarity. Participants were also asked what they perceived each politician’s political ideology to be on a 1 (strong liberal) to 7 (strong conservative) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater conservatism. Ideally, the three politicians chosen for inclusion in Experiment 2 would be unfamiliar to participants and perceived to be both ideologically moderate and similar to each other.

Pre-Test Results

Politician Familiarity

As expected, the mean familiarity rating for all nine politicians was quite low, \( M = 1.39 \), \( SD = .707 \). The range of responses was as follows, Carlos Curbelo, \( M = 1.14 \) to Ryan Costello \( M = 1.67 \). Based on this, the following politicians were chosen for inclusion in Experiment 2, Hakeem Jefferies, \( M = 1.24 \), \( SD = .889 \) for the Black conditions, Pete Aguilar \( M = 1.43 \), \( SD = .978 \) for the Latino conditions and Ryan Costello \( M = 1.67 \), \( SD = 1.62 \) for the White conditions.

Perceived Political Ideology

Participants also indicated what they perceived each politician’s political ideology to be. The goal was to choose politicians who were perceived as being as ideologically moderate (e.g., closest to the 3.5 midpoint on a 7 point political ideology scale) and as similar to each other as possible. The range of responses from the politician perceived to be the most liberal to the most conservative was as follows, Raul Ruiz \( M = 2.81 \) to Robert Dold \( M = 5.29 \). In
general, participants rated the Latino and Black politicians to be politically moderate, \((M = 3.33, SD = 1.14\) and \(3.60, SD = 1.31\)) respectively. Unsurprisingly, White politicians were perceived to be more conservative \((M = 4.94, SD = 1.21)\). Perceived ideology ratings for the chosen three politicians are as follows: Hakeem Jefferies \((M = 3.81, SD = 1.97)\), Pete Aguilar \((M = 3.86, SD = 1.49)\), and Ryan Costello \((M = 4.52, SD = 2.02)\).

**Method**

**Participants and Design**

One hundred seventy-two SDSU undergraduates (65 males, 107 females) participated in the experiment in exchange for partial course credit. Participants’ age ranged from 18-55 years \((M = 20.30, SD = 4.26)\). Excluding three participants who were outside the typical college student/young adult age range did not affect the analyses therefore they were kept in the analyses. There were 83 White, 41 Latino/a, 40 Asian, and eight Black participants. All participants self-identified as United States citizens. A 3 (Politician Race: White, Black, Latino) x 2 (Policy Stance: restrictive, non-restrictive) x 2 (Participant Race: White, minority) between-participants design, with participants’ political ideology as a covariate was used.

**Procedure**

The same procedure as Experiment 1 was used in this experiment; only the politicians presented to participants differed. Items designed to measure participants’ level of threat were also assessed as a potential mediator. To measure politician likability and to function as a test of the black-sheep effect, participants responded to a single likability item, (e.g., “How likable is the politician you were presented with?”). Responses were recorded on a 1 (not at all likable) to 7 (very likable) scale.
Mediation Items

After participants responded to the policy items, they were asked several questions about their feelings towards racial minority politicians. These items served as potential mediators.

**Threat.** Participants responded to three items that are designed to measure the level of threat they might feel towards an increase in the number of racial minorities holding political office (e.g., “To what extent do you feel that racial minority politicians tend to support policy that benefits their group rather than what’s best for everyone?”). Responses were recorded on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater threat ($\alpha = .72$).

**Personal views.** Next, participants responded to items regarding their personal views to the specific politician they were presented with. The same image of the politician accompanied these items. Participants were asked three items that assess the personal views they feel they have towards the politician they were presented with, (e.g., “To what extent do you feel that this politician is in touch with people like you?”). Responses were recorded on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater similarity ($\alpha = .91$).

Prior work has shown that partisans can interpret policy support by outgroup politicians as being based on ulterior motives (e.g., benefits they might receive for supporting that policy), but not for ingroup politicians (Munro, Weih, & Tasi, 2010). The previous items seek to test this hypothesis as a potential mediator of the decreased support Whites showed towards non-restrictive race-based public policy when proposed by a relevant racial minority politician.
**Political Ideology.** After answering the policy support items and the mediation items, participants provided basic demographic information. Of particular interest was a single political ideology question that was used as a covariate in all analyses, (“What is your political ideology?”). Responses were recorded on a 1 (strong liberal) to 7 (strong conservative) scale. Higher numbers indicate greater political conservatism. Once done with the demographic section participants received a full written debriefing.

**Results**

**Analytic Approach**

The same analytic approach that was used in Experiment 1 to test policy support was also used in this experiment. The only differences were the inclusion of the politician likability outcome variable to function as a test of the black-sheep effect. For the politician likability outcome variable, participant race was coded to test the effect of a racial minority politician supporting policy counter to their groups’ interest on the relevant minority group. For the Latino politician conditions, (Latino participants = +.50, all other races = -.50). For the Black politician conditions, (Black participants = +.50, all other races = -.50). Adjusted means for the immigration policy support and voter ID policy support outcome variables are found in Tables 3 and 4. Also, adjusted means for the politician likability outcome variables for Latino and Black participants are found in Tables 5 and 6.

**Immigration Policy Support**

There was a significant main effect of policy stance, $F(1, 172) = 52.47, p < .001, R^2 = .23$. Non-restrictive immigration policy was supported more ($M = 4.49$) than restrictive policy ($M = 3.04$). This main effect was qualified by a significant 2-way interaction involving policy stance and participant race, $F(1, 172) = 23.57, p < .001, R^2 = .12$. This interaction
indicated that minorities supported the non-restrictive policy stance more than the restrictive stance ($M = 5.03$ vs. $2.58$), $F(1, 172) = 76.56, p < .001, R^2 = .31$. White participants showed no significant difference in their support for non-restrictive or restrictive policy ($M = 3.96$ vs. $3.49$), $F(1, 172) = 2.62, p = .11, R^2 = .02$.

The hypothesized 3-way interaction between participant race, policy stance and the Latino vs. White/Black politician contrast was not found, $F < 1$.

**Immigration Policy and Politician Likability**

There was a significant main effect of policy stance, $F(1, 172) = 27.04, p < .001, R^2 = .14$. Across politician race, politicians who supported non-restrictive immigration policy were judged to be more likable than those who supported restrictive policy, ($M = 4.71$ vs. $3.30$). Furthermore, this main effect was qualified by a significant 2-way interaction involving the Latinos vs. other racial groups participant race contrast, $F(1, 172) = 8.57, p = .004, R^2 = .05$. Across politician race, Latino participants judged politicians who supported restrictive immigration policy as less likable than those who supported non-restrictive immigration policy ($M = 2.72$ vs. $4.93$), $F(1, 172) = 22.11, p < .001, R^2 = .11$. The same pattern was also found for participants of other races; across politician race they judged politicians who supported restrictive immigration policy as less likable than those who supported non-restrictive immigration policy ($M = 3.86$ vs. $4.48$), $F(1, 172) = 5.69, p = .02, R^2 = .03$. The hypothesized 3-way interaction that would serve as a test of the black-sheep effect was not found, $F < 1$.

**Voter ID Policy Support**

The political ideology covariate was significant, $F(1, 172) = 16.70, p < .001, R^2 = .09$. Greater political conservatism was associated with greater voter ID policy support across
politician race, participant race, and policy stance. There was a significant main effect of policy stance, $F(1, 172) = 33.84, p < .001, R^2 = .16$. Across politician and participant race restrictive voter ID policy was supported more ($M = 5.20$) than the non-restrictive policy ($M = 3.72$).

The hypothesized 3-way interaction between participant race, policy stance and the Black vs. White/Latino politician contrast was not found, $F < 1$.

**Voter ID Policy and Politician Likability**

No significant differences in politician likability emerged for Black participants compared to all other participant races for politicians who supported restrictive voter ID policy. All $F$s < 1.

**Discussion**

The primary hypothesis for Experiment 2 was that the interaction of participant race, relevance of the particular policy, stance relative to the politician’s racial group (e.g., Immigration policy for a Latino politician; Voter ID policy for a Black politician), and the perceivers’ race would predict policy support was not supported. Furthermore, because the focal 3-way interactions were not significant the meditation hypotheses could not be tested.

For immigration policy support, the only effects to emerge were a significant main effect of policy stance and a significant 2-way interaction between participant race and policy stance. Non-restrictive policy was supported more than restrictive across participant and politician race. This result replicates what was found in Experiment 1 and was expected given the generally liberal political leanings of a college undergraduate sample from southern California. As was also found in Experiment 1, minority participants did show a stronger preference for non-restrictive immigration policy over restrictive policy. Whites on the other
hand showed no significant differences in their immigration policy support. Their support 
though did trend towards preferring non-restrictive over restrictive, counter to the findings of 
Experiment 1.

For voter ID policy support, aside from the significant political ideology covariate, the 
only effect to emerge was a main effect of policy stance. Similar to the voter ID policy 
support results from Experiment 1, restrictive voter ID policy was supported more than non-
restrictive policy across politician and participant race. Again, this could be attributed to the 
low number of Black participants in this experiment’s sample compared to other minority 
groups and the perceived weaker link between voter ID policy and it targeting Blacks 
specifically (Wilson & Brewer, 2013).

Furthermore, the hypothesis that participants of racial groups that would be the primary 
target of restrictive race-based policies (e.g., Latinos and Immigration policy; Blacks and 
Voter ID policy) would be prone to view politicians of their ingroup that expressed support 
for these policies as less likable (i.e., the black-sheep effect) over other politician races was 
also not supported. Latinos for example, did view politicians who supported restrictive policy 
as less likable than those that supported non-restrictive policy, though this was across all 
politician races. There were no significant differences for Blacks compared to all other 
participants, though again these comparisons are expected to be unreliable due to the low 
number of Black participants in the sample.
CHAPTER 4

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of these two experiments demonstrate some initial support for the hypothesis that a politician’s race has an impact on how their stance on certain race-based policies is received by White and minority perceivers. How politician race leads to differential support for controversial race-based policies had not been directly examined until this work. Furthermore, this work also attempted to examine the role of group status threat posed by increases in the number of racial minorities in politics as a mediator of the effects for White participants. This particular goal was not reached as the hypothesized 3-way interactions for both the immigration policy support and voter ID policy support outcome variables were not significant.

Prior research (Craig & Richeson, 2014a, 2014b; Jost et al., 2003) has demonstrated that the changing racial landscape of America leads to greater status threat for Whites, and to greater support for restrictive political policies designed to bolster the status quo to prevent further gains in status and power for racial minorities. Along with the racial landscape changing, so has the political landscape; indeed, Petersen (2012) and the Pew Research Center (2012) have shown that racial minorities are exercising their political power, both as voters and as members of government, in a way never before seen in American history. Taken together, these two rapidly changing facets of American society can lead to increased feelings of threat for Whites. It was the combination of both the changing racial landscape
and the changing political landscape that lead to the hypotheses for this work. Namely, that the seeming relevance of the politicians’ race to the policy they are proposing would predict policy support differently for both White and minority participants. For White participants viewing a racial minority politician advocate for race-based policy that benefits their group would lead to increased feelings of group status threat and that this in turn would lead to decreased support for that policy.

Overall, the results of Experiment 1 supported my hypotheses regarding the role of politician race, perceiver race, and policy stance in predicting support for a variety of race-based public policies. Again, the relevance of the policy to the politicians’ racial group and the policy stance predicted support for both White and minority participants. White participants were more in support of restrictive policies when they were proposed by an outgroup politician (e.g., Latino politician for Immigration policy, Black politician for Voter ID policy) whereas Whites were more in support of non-restrictive policies that were proposed by a White politician. Minority participants generally supported non-restrictive policies over restrictive ones, with the exception of Voter ID policy. Here they supported restrictive voter ID policy more so than non-restrictive, holding attitudes that were generally more in line with the White majority. This could have been due to the perceived weaker link between voter ID law and race (Wilson & Brewer, 2013)—voter ID laws are generally not thought of as impacting minority groups to same extent as immigration policy.

While the results found for Experiment 1 supported my hypotheses, this was not the case for Experiment 2. The hypothesized 3-way interactions for Experiment 2 for both immigration policy support and voter ID policy support were not found. Because of this, the mediation hypotheses, that increases in the number of racial minorities in politics and
government advocating for non-restrictive race-based public policies would be seen as threatening to Whites and that this threat would predict decreased support for these policies on the part of Whites, could not be tested. Despite the hypothesized interactions not being found in Experiment 2, this experiment did show some similarities to the results of Experiment 1. Namely, participants overall supported non-restrictive immigration policy more than restrictive across both politician and participant race; this being especially true for minority participants compared to White participants. Though counter to Experiment 1’s findings, Whites did also show a slight preference for non-restrictive over restrictive immigration policy. Also interesting was the continued preference for restrictive voter ID policy over non-restrictive. As I speculated for Experiment 1, this could be the result of again having a low number of Black participants relative to other minority groups in the sample (i.e., eight Blacks compared to 35 Latinos and 35 Asians) as well as the potentially weaker link between voter ID policy and Blacks as a target compared to immigration policy and Latinos as a target (Wilson & Brewer, 2013).

The primary hypothesis for politician likability, functioning as a test of the black-sheep effect for minority participants also was not fully supported. Latino participants, compared to all other participants, judged politicians who supported restrictive immigration policy as less likable than those who supported non-restrictive policy, though counter to my hypothesis; this did not depend on politician race.

The black-sheep effect (Marques et al., 1988; Otten & Gordijn, 2014) would predict that Latino participants would express greater negativity towards a Latino politician expressing support for restrictive immigration policy than a politician of another race. A similar prediction would be made for Black participants and a Black politician expressing a
restrictive voter ID policy stance. In this experiment however, the results from this analysis are expected to be unreliable due to the extremely low number of Black participants ($n = 8$) compared to participants of other races ($n = 164$).

**Limitations/Future Directions**

One potential limitation of the research presented here could have been the unfamiliarity of the politicians used. It could be the case that stronger effects would emerge if the politicians used were well known and perceived to have some power or governmental influence in advocating for public policy. Participants could have assumed that lesser known politicians would have not have enough power to ultimately implement these policies. That is to say, if participants were inclined to believe that the politicians they were presented were more powerful or influential then they might be more reactive in their own self reported policy support.

This could be accomplished without using very well known politicians and therefore compromising the believability of manipulating the politicians’ policy stance. For example, presenting the specific political office the politician holds or is seeking to hold could be a way of increasing the perceived power and influence over policy the politician could have. Describing the politician as a potential presidential candidate versus a member of congress, for example.

Finally, the political and racial climate in the United States from the time of Experiment 1’s data collection to Experiment 2’s is undeniably different. During the data collection for Experiment 2 race relations concerning both African Americans and Latinos in America have featured prominently in the news (e.g., the Baltimore riots as a result of perceived police brutality over the death of Freddie Gray and the continued unrest in Ferguson, Missouri over
the shooting of Michael Brown). Also, President Obama’s executive action on immigration reform that mirrors the content of the DREAM Act and that would ultimately protect millions of undocumented immigrants from deportation. Perhaps the increased salience of racial issues in the national media have lead to a history effect (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Cook & Campbell, 1979), that negatively alters Experiment 2’s internal validity; leading to hypotheses that were not supported.

**Conclusion**

Overall, this research presents a more nuanced examination of the role of politician race on the support for race-based public policies. This is something that is sure to generate more public and research interest in the future as the political landscape becomes more racially diverse. In part due to President Obama’s historic election and the increasing representation of racial minorities in government, voters may now place a greater emphasis on the race of the politician supporting a policy. This being a determining factor for their support towards the policy over and above political party or ideology.
REFERENCES


## APPENDIX

### POLICY SUPPORT MEANS TABLES

**Table 1.** Experiment 1: Adjusted Means (SD) Immigration Policy Support as a function of Participant Race, Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>3.42 (1.62)</td>
<td>4.27 (1.90)</td>
<td>2.67 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.52 (1.54)</td>
<td>3.27 (1.07)</td>
<td>3.97 (1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minority Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>2.77 (1.40)</td>
<td>2.91 (1.65)</td>
<td>2.93 (1.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.56 (1.19)</td>
<td>5.13 (1.54)</td>
<td>4.68 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Experiment 1: Adjusted Means (SD) Voter ID Policy Support as a function of Participant Race, Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>White Participants</th>
<th>Minority Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>5.17 (1.51)</td>
<td>5.76 (1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.76 (1.33)</td>
<td>4.07 (2.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Experiment 2: Adjusted Means (SD) Immigration Policy Support as a function of Participant Race, Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Participants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>3.61 (1.32)</td>
<td>3.33 (1.48)</td>
<td>3.52 (1.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.26 (.953)</td>
<td>4.20 (1.32)</td>
<td>3.41 (1.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Participants</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician Race</td>
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<td>Latino</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>2.85 (1.48)</td>
<td>2.34 (1.11)</td>
<td>2.56 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.93 (1.27)</td>
<td>5.11 (1.02)</td>
<td>5.06 (1.31)</td>
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</table>
Table 4. Experiment 2: Adjusted Means (SD) Voter ID Policy Support as a function of Participant Race, Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Politician Race</th>
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<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictive Stance</strong></td>
<td>5.29 (1.79)</td>
<td>5.13 (1.30)</td>
<td>5.60 (1.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Restrictive Stance</strong></td>
<td>3.87 (1.62)</td>
<td>3.31 (1.90)</td>
<td>3.46 (2.02)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictive Stance</strong></td>
<td>5.02 (1.58)</td>
<td>5.12 (1.54)</td>
<td>5.03 (1.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Restrictive Stance</strong></td>
<td>3.87 (1.72)</td>
<td>3.85 (1.82)</td>
<td>3.84 (1.88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

POLITICIAN LIKABILITY MEANS TABLES

Table 5. Experiment 2: Adjusted Means (SD) Politician Likability ratings for Latinos vs. all other participants as a function of Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>Latino Participants</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>2.27 (1.11)</td>
<td>2.76 (1.39)</td>
<td>3.13 (1.46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>5.01 (1.87)</td>
<td>4.39 (.547)</td>
<td>5.40 (1.81)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>Latino Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.10 (1.74)</td>
<td>3.43 (1.35)</td>
<td>4.05 (1.46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.33 (1.65)</td>
<td>4.47 (1.36)</td>
<td>4.64 (1.33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Experiment 2: Adjusted Means (SD) Politician Likability ratings for Blacks vs. all other participants as a function of Politician Race and Policy Stance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician Race</th>
<th>Black Participants</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>1.00 (NA)</td>
<td>NA (NA)</td>
<td>4.25 (2.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>3.50 (.707)</td>
<td>NA (NA)</td>
<td>3.00 (NA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Other Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politician Race</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>3.75 (1.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Restrictive Stance</td>
<td>4.50 (1.71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

POLICY STANCE MANIPULATIONS

Immigration Policy Restrictive Stance

"I feel that allowing and supporting open immigration to this country has the effect of undermining American values by incorporating too many different cultures and viewpoints to the American landscape, and that we as Americans are better off when there are fewer immigrants to this nation."

“I feel that allowing law enforcement to inquire about one’s immigration status is crucial to the safety and security of this country. Furthermore, immigration to this country presents a threat to the values and ideals that we hold dear as Americans."

Immigration Policy Non-Restrictive Stance

“I feel that allowing and supporting open immigration to this country enables the incorporation of different cultures and viewpoints to the American landscape, and that we as Americans are better off when there is an increase of people immigrating to this nation.”

“I feel that allowing law enforcement to inquire about one’s immigration status undermines the civil liberties we value in this country. Furthermore, policies like this one present a problem of law enforcement greatly overstepping its boundaries.”

Voter ID Policy Restrictive Stance

“Requiring proof of photo identification when voting will make sure that our elections are kept fair and will reduce chances of election fraud.”

Voter ID Policy Non-Restrictive Stance

“Requiring proof of photo identification when voting is an unnecessary obstacle to voters. Furthermore, it will present a burden to voting for those in certain segments of the population.”