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OF MARIJUANA AND MONOPOLIES: INCREASING CORRECT VOTING IN U.S.
BALLOT MEASURE ELECTIONS WITH THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE REVIEW

NATHAN J. LARKIN
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

John Gastil
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences and Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Lori Bedell
Senior Lecturer in Communication Arts and Sciences
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines whether deliberative voter guides, similar to the Citizens' Statements written by the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR), can increase the rate of correct voting on ballot referenda. The study also investigates the possibility that such guides have a motivational effect that can encourage information-seeking behavior on other ballot measures. The empirical analysis is based on an online survey of registered Ohio voters that took place before the November 2015 general election. Participants were asked to cast votes on two conflicting ballot measures — one technical in nature, and the other values-based — that appeared on their ballot. Some participants were exposed to a CIR-like voter guide before reporting how they would vote, and others were not. Results showed that using a CIR-like voter guide increased correct voting on the technical ballot measure but not for the values-based measure. Further, the voter guide effect for the technical measure was erased under certain ballot ordering conditions. Also, exposure to a CIR-like voter guide increased likelihood of voluntarily choosing to use a similar voter guide on a subsequent ballot measure, regardless of a participant's prior internal political efficacy or political knowledge. These findings suggest that deliberative voter guides may be most effective on technical issues and that informative guides can encourage information seeking further down the ballot.

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Introduction

We live in an age where citizens feel increasingly disconnected from their elected officials and more doubtful that they have a say in public policy. A recent survey (Pew Research Center, 2015) survey found that only 23 percent of Americans believe their elected officials in Washington “care what people like me think,” and 74 percent believe those same officials “put their own interests first,” before those of the nation. This survey also asked participants to state what they believe to be the biggest problems with elected officials in Washington, and the responses offered might indicate why citizens tend to feel ignored or inconsequential to elected officials. In descending order of frequency, participants said that officials are overly influenced by special interest money, dishonest, out of touch with Americans, or concerned only about their careers. Given this widespread cynicism, some citizens may desire to circumvent these representatives to exercise more direct influence on lawmaking. Local and statewide ballot measures provide citizens the opportunity to do just that.

Initiatives and referenda provide a special opportunity for citizens to review or establish the laws that govern them. Prominent ballot measures in various states have served as catalysts for swift policy change, as was the case for marriage equality (Lugo, 2012) and marijuana legalization (Smith, 2012).

Ballot measures, however, ask voters to make decisions regarding complex public policies that may have implications far beyond those explicitly addressed in the title and summary of a measure. Given the constraints on voters’ time and attention (Popkin, 1994), it

comes as no surprise that many voters lack the information necessary to understand the policy implications of a given ballot measure (Gastil, Reedy, & Wells, 2007; Reedy, Wells, & Gastil, 2014; Wells, Reedy, Gastil, & Lee, 2009). That lack of information suggests that voters on ballot measures often fail to vote “correctly.” That is, too often voters do not make the voting choices that best align with their values, as informed by the facts available at the time of an election (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006).

To provide voters with high-quality, unbiased information, the non-profit Healthy Democracy created the Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR) in 2009. After a pilot in 2010, the Oregon legislature made this a permanent part of that state’s electoral process in 2011. The CIR assembles a group of 20-24 ordinary citizens to evaluate a given ballot measure. Participants are chosen through stratified random sampling to be demographically representative of the state. Once assembled, CIR panelists spend three-to-five days together examining their ballot measure. The participants hear from (and ask questions of) experts on issues relevant to the measure and advocacy groups that support or oppose the measure. Panelists also deliberate amongst themselves, ultimately writing a “Citizens’ Statement” that summarizes their “key findings,” as well as what they consider the strongest arguments for and against the measure. Although the CIR is still in its infancy, research on the Oregon process, along with pilots held in Arizona, Colorado, and Massachusetts, suggest its potential efficacy as a means of voter education (Gastil, 2014; Knobloch et al., 2013; Gastil et al., 2016, 2017).

The question remains, however, whether the CIR actually helps people vote more *correctly*, as the term has been defined in recent political science research (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Lau, 2013). Additionally, since even a broadly expanded CIR would not cover every ballot measure voters might encounter, it is important to investigate whether people exposed to the CIR

become more likely to seek and more carefully consider available information about other ballot measures. This study will investigate both of those questions through a survey testing how voters used, and responded to, abbreviated mock-CIR statements on two ballot measures in the 2015 Ohio general election.

I first explore the current literature regarding deliberative decision making in elections, as well as the roles and expectations of various agents within a democracy, such as citizens, elected officials, the media, and others. Next, I examine the potential for the CIR to function as a mechanism for making our democracy more deliberative by specifically measuring the CIR's effect on correct voting and internal voter efficacy. I then present hypotheses and describe the specific aspects of the experiment utilized to test said hypotheses. After presenting my results, I discuss the implications of my findings.

Deliberative Democracy and the Citizens' Initiative Review

A deliberative democracy is one in which the foundation for democratic decision making is robust deliberation involving ordinary citizens in the process of establishing, reviewing, and applying laws (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). To do this, a deliberative democracy demands its citizens go beyond the minimal duty of voting on election day. A deliberative citizen must refine their political opinions based on well-reasoned thought, consideration of all sides of an issue, and respectful discourse with others whom both they agree and disagree (Yankelovich, 1991). To develop more sophisticated judgments on public issues, citizens must engage in deliberative political conversation and discussion.

That is not to imply, however, that the burden of forming such enlightened opinions falls solely on the shoulders of lay citizens. A deliberative democracy must include a deliberative media system, electoral system, and government decision-making processes (juries, hearings, public meetings, etc.), as well as deliberative local communities (Gastil, 2008; Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012).

Typically, elected officials form public policy in the United States at nearly all levels of government; thus, the most common means by which citizens can translate their preferences into policy is by electing officials who they believe will enact policies that are consistent with their preferences. This model, however, is imperfect because candidate elections are rarely deliberative (Gastil, 2000). For reasons ranging from the purely political to the purely practical, elected officials are sometimes unable or unwilling to enact certain policies — even those which might be heavily favored by a given official's constituents. Further, many scholars have observed that voters frequently lack sufficient information about candidates to determine which candidate in a race is the one more closely aligned with their own beliefs and preferences (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). Consequently, voters sometimes select a candidate that they would not have selected under conditions of full information.

Given these problems with the model of representative elections and policy formation, some argue that a more direct model of policy formation better aligns with the public's policy preferences (Matusaka, 2008). In many American states, this sort of direct democracy exists in the form of ballot measures and referendums. Because they allow citizens to set directly the laws that govern them, ballot measures and referendums have the potential to represent a superior form of citizen engagement by which to overcome the deliberative shortcomings of representative

elections and policy-making. It is tempting, then, to conclude that ballot measures are inherently more conducive to fostering a deliberative democracy; however, this is not always the case.

As LeDuc (2015, p. 139) points out, “a deliberative model emphasizes the importance of *voice* whereas referendums prioritize *votes*.” That is to say, direct democracy elections are often subject to same types of impediments to deliberativeness that candidate elections are. Like candidate elections, moneyed political interests and campaigns that eschew key information and confuse voters often influence high profile ballot measure elections. Similarly, voters often lack sufficient information regarding the issues relevant to ballot measures to accurately determine their stance on the measure. Worsening this phenomenon is the notion that the text of ballot measures as it appears in the polling booth often lacks clarity, further confusing voters who may be already uninformed or inaccurately informed. Finally, voters attempting to navigate the government decision making process are subject to the same deliberative shortfalls that elected officials are, but to an even greater extent, in that referendum voters are generally not engaged throughout the ballot initiative process and therefore fail to adhere to the analytic processes of deliberation when determining their vote on an issue (Gastil & Richards, 2013; Gastil, Reedy, & Wells, 2007).

Nevertheless, a democratic mechanism that allows citizens to govern themselves directly, such as referendum elections, has enormous potential to enhance the deliberativeness of American democracy — that is, if its flaws can be mitigated. To that end, the Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR) endeavors to improve ballot measure elections by engaging lay citizens in a rigorous deliberative process to assess the merits of specific ballot measures and referendums. Scholars examining the CIR concluded that the program meets “a high standard of deliberation” and that panelists produced “a well-reasoned Citizens’ Statement” that featured “high quality

Key Findings and Arguments in Favor and Opposed” (Knobloch & Gastil, 2014). Given that it contains useful information gathered through a deliberative process, the CIR should help citizens who read its summary Citizens’ Statement to navigate direct elections.

There are many ways one might measure whether a voter guide such as the CIR Citizens’ Statement “helps” voters, but my study will focus on the notion that a voter guide should increase rates of *correct voting* amongst those who use it. A modest-sized literature has developed in political science has argued that one can, in fact, distinguish “correct” votes from erroneous voting choices (Lau and Redlawsk, 1997; Lau, Anderson, and Redlawsk, 2008). In this approach, the correctness of a vote is determined by whether a particular vote aligns with the values and beliefs of the person completing the ballot. Indeed, citizens sometimes lack sufficient information about a candidate or ballot question to vote in a manner that is consistent with their own preferences; consequently, voters sometimes inadvertently make choices in the polling booth that are “incorrect.” Given that a lack of accurate information is the impetus of the phenomenon of incorrect voting, Lau and Redlawsk (1997, p. 586) propose that “a correct vote decision is one that is the same as the choice which would have been made under conditions of full information.”

Because the CIR employs a deliberative process to compile high quality information and disseminate it to voters, it should aid in alleviating issues caused by insufficient information. Further, the CIR will be especially effective at informing voters because they will be more receptive to it than other types of voter guides or campaign communications. Indeed, research shows that people tend to view their peers, rather than the political or media elite, as more trustworthy sources of political information, and CIR statements are formulated by lay citizens

specifically selected to reflect the community in which the given ballot measure at hand has jurisdiction (Warren & Gastil, 2015).

Measuring Correct Voting

The research literature on correct voting principally uses two approaches to measuring whether a vote is correct. The first relies on the notion that incorrect voting is the product of insufficient or inaccurate information. Thus, experimental participants might be provided with some limited amount of information that may be conflicting or confusing, like that which a voter might encounter during political campaigns. Participants are then asked to cast a vote based on the information provided. After the initial vote, participants are given more in-depth and comprehensible information to simulate conditions of “full information” to the greatest extent possible. Participants are then asked to vote again, in light of the new information. If a participant’s initial vote matches his or her vote under conditions “full information,” the participant is said to have voted correctly, and vice versa (Lau & Redlawk, 1997).

The second approach to measuring correct voting – also proposed by Lau and Redlawk (1997) – is known as the “normative-naïve” measure. This type of measure involves determining participants’ individual values, beliefs, and preferences via a survey at the beginning of an experiment. After the participants’ preferences are determined, they are asked to cast a vote. Researchers then determine if each individual’s vote is consistent with that individual’s reported preferences, at least according to expert knowledge of how beliefs and votes should align in a given information environment. Those votes that are consistent with prior beliefs are said to be correct, and vice versa.

These approaches are typically used to study voting in candidate election scenarios, not for direct voting on ballot question. In recent years, however, scholars have begun to study correct voting in direct democratic elections, particularly Milic (2012) and Nai (2015), both of whom focus on Swiss referendum elections, and both of whom propose alternate approaches to measuring correct voting.

Nai (2015) utilizes an approach that, like the normative-naïve method, relies on survey data in which participants self-report their political beliefs and preferences. Nai's approach diverges, though, in that it involves isolating a proxy group of well-informed, systematically reasoning participants whose votes – given that they are “well-informed” – are assumed to be “correct.” The votes of less-informed (and less cognitively systematic) participants are then compared to the votes of members of a proxy group that shares their same ideological beliefs. Those nonsystematic participants whose votes match the vote of their ideological doppelgangers in the proxy group are said to have cast a correct vote, and vice versa.

Milic (2012) takes issue with this approach on the grounds that it only allows for the nonsystematic reasoners' vote choices to be measured for correctness. Milic also argues that this method makes it impossible to determine a correct vote choice because some ideologically identical members of the “well-informed” proxy group still disagree with one another.

For this reason, Milic (2012) takes the approach more closely aligned with that of Lau and Redlawsk (1997), in which the information provided to study participants is manipulated. Milic used VOX data that is collected after Swiss referendum elections, in which voters are surveyed via telephone after the election is concluded. VOX surveys have been conducted after each federal Swiss election since 1977, and part of their goal is to determine citizens' knowledge about issues and candidates on the ballot. Voters are asked whether they agree with arguments

both for and against each of the referendums on the ballot that emerged in the public narrative in the weeks leading up to the election. It is assumed that many of these arguments may present new lines of thought and new information, especially for uninformed voters; therefore, Milic treats the post-election VOX survey as a situation of full information. In Milic's approach, voters have made correct choices in the polling booth if their responses to arguments for and against various referendums are consistent the manner in which they voted on the corresponding referendum.

In this study, I propose an alternative method to measuring correct voting, which significantly differs from the aforementioned approaches. Indeed, it is unique to my study and appropriate only because of the nature of the two ballot measures I studied. For the two ballot measures investigated, a particular vote combination was logically and politically inconsistent – most likely to be cast by voters who lacked sufficient information about the ramifications of each ballot measure. This approach will be discussed more thoroughly in the Methods section below, but the basic idea is this: those voters who voted for marijuana legalization were determined to have cast an incorrect *second* vote if they favored a seemingly unrelated technical measure, which was designed solely to undercut marijuana legalization.

Regardless of which measurement technique scholars employ, a common finding that emerges is that incorrect voting is present to some degree in nearly all elections. It is sometimes prevalent enough to shape electoral outcomes (Lau and Redlawsk, 1997; Lau, Anderson, and Redlawsk, 2008), and researchers need to both understand its causes and what electoral reforms can reduce the rate of incorrect voting.

Research Hypotheses

As noted above, scholars have concluded that the Oregon CIR has provided voters with high-quality information about issues on ballot measure elections. Furthermore, voters who have used the CIR in elections tend to report that they found it helpful when deciding their vote choice on ballot measures (Knobloch & Gastil, 2014). I therefore expect the CIR to increase correct voting, given that incorrect voting is a phenomenon engendered mainly by insufficient information.

Values Versus Technical Information

Nevertheless, I do not expect the CIR to have this effect for all types of ballot measures. Specifically, I expect differences in CIR's effectiveness on technical issues versus values-based issues. Cultural cognition can help explain why receiving new information regarding values-based issues may not alter individuals' opinions. According to Kahan et al. (2011, p. 148), "individuals are psychologically disposed to believe that behavior they find honorable is socially beneficial and behavior they find base socially detrimental." Applying this line of thinking to public policy, cultural cognitive theory holds that ingrained cultural values shape individuals' beliefs regarding the empirical outcomes of various policies. Cultural concerns are "prior" to factual claims in public policy debates, since people's worldviews shape their perceptions of reality. Indeed, the cultural cognition literature supports the idea that people's values and

worldviews are often so ingrained that they contribute to public disagreement over scientific facts (Kahan & Braman, 2006; Kahan, Jenkins-Smith, & Braman, 2011).

This idea is also supported by research based on Katz's (1960) theories of the functions of attitudes for the personality. Specifically, Katz's "values-expressive function" of attitude serves to express an individual's attitudes appropriate to his or her personal values and concept of self. Values-expressiveness can play a critical role in forming attitudes about public policy issues. Indeed, in their examination of the psychological determinants of support for the death penalty, Vollum and Buffington-Vollum (2010) found that support that was based on values-expressive foundations was more robust and unlikely to wane regardless of the presentation of new information or knowledge indicating problems with the death penalty.

This distinction is important to the ballot measures studied in this essay because one issue has a stronger values dimension than the other. Public opinion surveys and scholarship typically regard views on drug policy, such as marijuana legalization, as being informed by values rather than technical knowledge (Pew Research Center, 2013; Galston & Dionne Jr., 2013; Stylianou, 2004). Indeed, as support for marijuana legalization has grown in recent years, the public view that marijuana use is "immoral" has sharply declined (Pew Research Center, 2013). That Pew Research Center surveys public opinion on the morality of marijuana is indicative of the issue's status as being values-based. Furthermore, other scholars of public opinion have explicitly regarded marijuana as a "cultural" issue, akin to marriage equality (Galston & Dionne Jr., 2013). Thus, in Katz's (1960) terms, supportive or oppositional attitudes toward marijuana legalization are largely values-expressive and are, therefore, unlikely to wane when presented with new information.

By contrast, the other issue I examined concerns state-sanctioned monopolies. That issue is more technical than values-based in nature (Walstad, 1997). Though there are certainly ideological implications for any regulatory scheme, there is no ongoing debate about this particular issue that has strong cultural frames for the broader population. Specifically, Walstad (1997) found that public opinion on economic issues is predominantly informed by technical knowledge rather than cultural values. I therefore expect opinion on the Anti-Monopoly issue to be more malleable (i.e., responsive to new information) than opinion on the Marijuana Legalization issue.

Put another way, a technical issue, such as monopoly regulation, might very well show a CIR impact, but I do not expect the information provided in the mock-CIR voter guides to alter correct voting rates on marijuana legalization. For example, it is unlikely that an individual who finds marijuana usage morally reprehensible will be swayed to support legalization by an argument that doing so would increase tax revenues. It is equally unlikely that an avid marijuana user will be swayed not to support legalization by an argument that the specific legalization measure may create a monopoly.

Hypothesis 1: Mock-CIR exposure will increase rates of correct voting for the technical (anti-monopoly) issue, but not for the values-based (marijuana legalization) issue.

Ballot Ordering and Conflicting Initiatives

The issues on the Ohio November 2015 ballot presented an ideal opportunity to study the effects of receiving information on values-based issues and technical issues not only because the

ballot contained one of each type of issue, but also because the two issues were interrelated in a way that was not necessarily apparent to voters.

It is not uncommon for conflicting measures to appear on the same ballot. Conflicting measures, or “[counter-initiatives](#),” may appear on a ballot for a number of reasons. One such reason, which was the case in the Ohio 2015 general election, is that a state legislature may place a countermeasure on the ballot to undercut a citizen-initiated proposal that circumvented the legislature to reach the ballot. Countermeasures placed on the ballot for the specific purpose of defeating an existing measure are often successful (Banducci, 1998). In most cases, conflicting measures appear in a manner that does not make their true purpose apparent to voters. The California Commission on Campaign Finance Reform has called the use of such legislative [counter-initiatives](#) “a tactic to confuse voters” (Hugh-Jones, 2010, p. 403).

A small body of research regarding [counter-initiatives](#) has emerged in the political science literature. Elections that juxtapose proposals and counter-proposals generally involve more campaign spending and more negative campaigning (Banducci, 1998). Linking competing ballot initiatives through campaigns can also serve to add another layer of complexity to an election and confuse voters, which frequently results in voters choosing the status quo (Banducci, 1998). Furthermore, particularly polarizing campaigns engendered by the presence of [counter-initiatives](#) on a ballot can “push voters towards the naïve voting paradigm in which competing proposals are seen purely as rivals” (Hugh-Jones, 2010, p. 415). Some scholars have explicitly expressed concern that voters may be unable to cast an accurate vote when issues are linked on the ballot (Lacy & Niou, 2000).

The notion that initiatives and [counter-initiatives](#) are confusing to voters when they are linked through heavy campaigning is important for this particular study. Media outlets, interest

groups, and the Ohio legislature linked the issues in the Ohio November 2015. News articles and editorials from various Ohio newspapers in the weeks and months leading up to the 2015 election contained headlines such as: “Competing marijuana ballot issues advancing,” “Ohio’s competing Issues 2, 3 vary in support, poll shows,” and “T-R Endorsement: Vote ‘no’ on Issue 3; vote ‘yes’ on Issue 2,” (Borchardt, 2015a; Provance, 2015a; Provance, 2015b; T-R Endorsement, 2015). Furthermore, a July, 2015 newspaper article about the election paraphrased Ohio Senate President Keith Faber as saying that the Anti-Monopoly issue was written and introduced by the legislature to override the Marijuana Legalization issue if voters approve both measures, even if the Marijuana Legalization issue received more votes (Provance, 2015a). Statements such as this, along with others from public officials and interest group leaders, show that the technical Anti-Monopoly issue was subsidiary to the values-based Marijuana Legalization issue in the election. That is, the Anti-Monopoly issue was on the ballot only because it was meant to undermine the larger issue of Marijuana Legalization.

As discussed above, new information is largely inconsequential for altering values-based public opinions. I therefore expect new information will not increase correct voting rates on either issue I studied if ballot ordering makes it apparent to voters that the technical issue is subsidiary to the values-based issue. Furthermore, the additional contextual information provided by the mock-CIR should make it clearer to voters that the technical issue undermines the values-based issue. Therefore, I expected the effects of the mock-CIR on the technical issue to be erased, as participants’ opinions on the values-based issue superseded their opinions on the technical issue.

Hypothesis 2: Mock-CIR exposure will not increase rates of correct voting for participants who are exposed to the values-based (Marijuana Legalization) issue before the related technical (Anti-Monopoly) issue.

Motivational Impact of CIR exposure

Because even a vastly expanded CIR program could not cover every ballot initiative in every election, it is necessary to assess whether CIR exposure can prompt people to seek out more information on their own. Prior research has examined the potential for participation in various types of deliberations to have a lasting impact on participants (Pinock, 2012). Nevertheless, no studies have examined whether small doses of deliberative exposure, such as that gained by reading a CIR-type statement, can impact future behavior, even on the short term basis.

There are a number of reasons why participants in deliberations frequently report increased willingness practice civic engagement in the future. First, deliberative participation can increase “deliberative faith,” thereby making deliberation habitual and more likely to recur (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002). Furthermore, participation in deliberative events can increase both internal political efficacy (Morrell, 2005) and external political efficacy (Fishkin, 2009), both of which can motivate people to increase civic and political engagement.

Gastil, et al. (2008) found that jury deliberation, in particular, is especially effective at prompting participants to become more civically engaged. Jury participation can increase electoral turnout among infrequent voters, and it can induce shifts in media use, political action,

and community involvement. Significantly, jury deliberation can make participants more willing to serve on a jury again in the future.

Juries and the CIR both represent similar types of deliberative “mini-publics” (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Both institutions assemble representative groups of citizens to learn about and make decisions on an issue through hearing opposing arguments and expert testimony and by deliberating among themselves. Given these similarities, it is unsurprising that researchers have observed impacts of CIR deliberation similar to those of jury deliberation.

Like jurors, CIR participants report increases in deliberative faith, internal and external political efficacy, and community-based engagement (Gastil, Richards, & Knobloch, 2014). The civic transformations undergone by CIR participants indicate that CIR participation should have an impact similar to juries, in that willingness to participate CIR deliberation in the future should increase. The CIR is unique from juries and many other types of deliberative mini-publics, though, because its processes and findings are summarized and disseminated to the public in a way that allows the public to “vicariously” experience CIR deliberation.

Surveys of the 2010 Oregon CIR found that Oregonians who vicariously participated in CIR deliberation by reading the CIR statements disseminated in their Voter Guides saw significant civic benefits. Voters who used the CIR statement learned new information and arguments about the issues in the statement, and they increased both internal and external political efficacy (Knobloch & Gastil, 2015). These findings indicate that even a small dosage of deliberation, such as that acquired through vicarious CIR deliberation, can have profound impacts similar to the impacts observed in participation in more intensive deliberation.

Given that vicarious deliberation can have many of the same impacts as more intensive firsthand deliberation, it is conceivable that vicarious deliberation should increase willingness to

partake in future deliberations. However, just as large doses of deliberation can increase willingness to partake in similarly large deliberative events in future—such as jury participation increasing willingness for future jury participation—I expect that small doses of deliberation will have an equal effect and increase willingness to participate in similarly small deliberative events. Specifically, I expect that vicarious deliberation experienced by reading a CIR statement for one ballot initiative will increase willingness to read another CIR statement moments later for a different initiative on the same ballot.

Hypothesis 3: Mock-CIR exposure on first issue makes participants more likely to choose mock-CIR for second issue, relative to non-exposure on first issue.

Efficacy and the CIR

As is noted above, participation in or exposure to deliberation can have a motivational impact that causes people to voluntarily become more politically and/civically engaged in the future. Exposure to deliberation, however, is hardly the only (let alone the strongest) predictor of political participation. Another prominent factor that can influence political participation is internal political efficacy.

Attitudes toward politics drive behaviors (Verba, Schlozman, and Bray, 1995). Specifically, those with higher political efficacy are generally more inclined and more likely to participate in politics and civic life. Some researchers have also identified a reciprocal relationship between efficacy and participation, in which the behavior of civic participation — particularly participation in a deliberation — can increase political efficacy. In this case, the

relationship between efficacy and participation can be viewed as perpetual and self-reinforcing: Those with higher efficacy are more likely to participate, and participation increases efficacy (Gastil & Xenos, 2010).

The existing literature on efficacy and participation indicates that those with high efficacy would predominantly choose to civically participate by using a mock-CIR, which should further increase their efficacy, thereby making them even more willing to participate again in the future. Under this scenario, the CIR would have the effect of creating more participation disparity between those who previously had high efficacy and those who had lower efficacy. Conversely, deliberation has been shown to increase efficacy and participation, even among those who originally had low political efficacy (Knobloch & Gastil, 2015). Given the arguably competing nature of these two possibilities, I assessed the relationship between political efficacy and voluntarily choosing to use a mock-CIR. Moreover, I examined whether ballot order had any impact on the relationship between efficacy and participation.

Research Question 1: Does internal political efficacy impact likelihood of voluntarily choosing to view the mock-CIR?

Research Question 2: Does ballot order (of technical versus values-focused issues) impact the relationship between internal political efficacy and voluntarily choosing to view the mock-CIR?

Methods

Research Context

This study was conducted in Ohio, ahead of the November 2015 general election. That election provided an ideal opportunity to study the effects of a CIR-type publication on a direct democracy election for two main reasons –the absence of any CIR-like voter guide in Ohio, and the content of the two measures that appeared on the ballot. Because Ohio does not currently utilize a CIR-like program, I was able to simulate a CIR Statement for voters who did have any familiarity or preconceived notions regarding the program. Furthermore, Ohio’s 2015 ballot featured two measures – Issue 2 and Issue 3 – that were in direct conflict to one another and were the subjects of heavy campaigning.

“Issue 3” on the November 2015 ballot in Ohio – referred to hereinafter as the “Marijuana Legalization issue” or “Marijuana Legalization measure” – was a constitutional amendment proposed by initiative petition called the Ohio Marijuana Legalization Initiative. Ohio’s Marijuana Legalization measure made it on to the Ohio ballot on the heels of successful marijuana legalization ballot initiatives in other states in preceding years. However, Ohio’s Marijuana Legalization measure was unique in that the language of the ballot called for what opponents described as a monopoly on the marijuana industry to be written into the state’s Constitution. According to its ballot title, the Marijuana Legalization measure would “grant a monopoly for the commercial production and sale of marijuana for recreational and medicinal purposes.” The specific measure would have limited the production of marijuana to 10 growth facilities at pre-selected locations and would have licensed 1,100 retail dispensaries throughout

Ohio (Issue 3, 2015). Although its ballot title explicitly states that it creates a monopoly, supporters of Issue 3 argued that amendment did not, in fact, do so (Borchardt, 2015b).

The campaign for the Marijuana Legalization measure was operated by ResponsibleOhio, an interest group formed specifically for the purpose of supporting the measure.

ResponsibleOhio collected the necessary petitions for the measure to appear on the ballot and subsequently managed and funded all aspects of the campaign for the measure's passage.

ResponsibleOhio's campaign was well funded and highly publicized, and it raised funds mainly through contributions from 10 primary donors. Each donor contributed a minimum of \$4 million to ResponsibleOhio for the campaign, and in return each was to become one of the ten licensed marijuana growers in Ohio, as was outlined in the measure (Borchardt, 2015b).

“Issue 2” on the November 2015 ballot in Ohio – referred to hereinafter as the “Anti-Monopoly issue” or “Anti-Monopoly measure” – was a legislatively referred constitutional amendment called the Ohio Initiated Monopolies Amendment. The Anti-Monopoly measure was referred to on the ballot as an “anti-monopoly amendment” which sought to “protect the initiative process from being used for personal economic benefit,” according to its ballot title. Significantly, the Anti-Monopoly measure was written such that it would nullify the Marijuana Legalization measure if both measures passed, even if Marijuana Legalization received more votes (Issue 2, 2015). While many elected officials attempted to cast the Anti-Monopoly measure as having merits on its own, others admitted that it was placed on the ballot by the legislature specifically to undermine the Marijuana Legalization measure (Sowinski & Krumeel, 2015). Further evidence of the purpose of the Anti-Monopoly measure is that the text of the measure included language explicitly stating that the measure would supersede other measures on the 2015 ballot (Issue 2, 2015).

The complex, conflicting relationship between the Anti-Monopoly measure and the Marijuana Legalization measure pit a number of overarching values against one another in a manner that may not have been obvious to voters. The campaigns for and against each measure were also highly publicized in the news media, as well as through ad buys, meaning that many voters received competing information in the time leading up to the election. This combination of competing values and information made the November 2015 election in Ohio an ideal situation for measuring the impact of CIR-like voter guides on correct voting.

Survey Sample

My survey collected 824 interviews October 29-31 from registered voters in Ohio who indicated that they intended to vote in the November 2015 election. This was a large enough sample to detect even small effects (Cohen, 1988). The respondents were recruited through Qualtrics, which provides demographically diverse convenience samples through its online recruiting system. A plurality (37.4%) of respondents identified as Democrats, with 29.2% calling themselves independents, 28.8% Republican, and 4.6% other/decline to state. A third of the sample (34%) was 65 or older, another third 35-64, and the remaining third under 35 years of age. One-third of the sample (33.0%) had some college education, with equal portions having no college or a college/graduate degree. Less typical was the gender balance of the sample, with 75.7% of those surveyed self-identifying as female.

Experimental Design

My experiment began by verifying that participants were registered voters in Ohio who had not yet voted in the November 2015 election. After participants had been vetted to meet these requirements, they were randomly split into two groups, each of which would undertake two differing experimental pathways. One group would first be exposed to the Anti-Monopoly measure and then to the Marijuana Legalization measure, and vice versa for the second group. Within each group, participants were randomly split into two subsets, one that would be exposed to a mock-CIR for the group's respective first issue, and one that would not be exposed to the mock-CIR for the group's first issue.

Participants in the mock-CIR exposure subsets were shown the mock-CIR for either the Anti-Monopoly measure or Marijuana Legalization measure before being directed to the ballot title, where they would cast their vote either for or against the measure at hand. Those in the non-CIR exposure group were directed straight to the ballot title for either the Anti-Monopoly measure or Marijuana Legalization measure to vote on the measure at hand.

After voting for the first measure assigned to their respective group, participants were asked whether they would like to view a mock-CIR before voting on the second Issue for their group. Those who requested a mock-CIR were provided one before being directed to the ballot titles to vote; those who did not request a mock-CIR were sent directly to the ballot titles to cast their vote.

All participants, regardless of whether they were exposed to a mock-CIR for the measure, were then asked to respond to a number questions regarding the truthfulness of claims about a measure's relationship to certain values, as well as the importance of those claims in determining whether to support or oppose the measure. For questions regarding truthfulness, participants

responded using a Likert scale ranging from “definitely false” (-2) to “definitely true” (2). For questions regarding importance, participants responded using a Likert scale ranging from “not at all important” (0) to “extremely important” (4). Once each group and subset had voted on the second Issue assigned to the group, the experimental portion of the survey was completed.

Subsequent to the experimental portion of the survey, participants were asked to answer a number of knowledge-based questions and questions about internal political efficacy to reveal political sophistication. The participants were also asked about demographics, and whether they have an appetite for an expanded CIR program.

Table 1. Experimental Design (sample size shown in each cell)

First Issue	Shown CIR on First Issue	Not Shown CIR on First Issue
Issue 2 (Monopoly)	200	220
Issue 3 (Marijuana)	199	205

Survey Measures

Correct Voting Index. To determine whether CIR exposure helped participants vote more correctly, it was first necessary to identify what constitutes an incorrect vote on the specific Issues on the ballot. A “yes” vote on both the Anti-Monopoly measure and Marijuana

Legalization measure was coded as incorrect, because in casting such a vote, a participant would be supporting both the legalization of marijuana and the nullification of marijuana's legalization. A participant who votes in such a manner lacks the information and understanding of the measures necessary to accurately express his or her beliefs on the ballot. The rate of correct voting, or *correct voting index*, is therefore determined by calculating the percentage of participants not voting "yes" on both the Anti-Monopoly measure and Marijuana Legalization measure.

Ballot Order. Ballot order refers to the order in which participants were exposed to and voted on each measure. Participants were randomly divided into two different ballot order groups: *Ballot Order 2,3* or *Ballot Order 3,2*. The numbers "2" and "3" refer to Issue 2 and Issue 3, the titles of the so-called Anti-Monopoly issue and Marijuana Legalization issue, respectively.

Mock-CIR Exposure. After dividing participants into groups based on ballot ordering, participants were again split into groups based on *Mock-CIR Exposure*. Some participants were experimentally exposed to the mock-CIR statement for the first issue in their assigned ballot order. *Mock-CIR Exposure* refers to whether participants were experimentally exposed to the mock-CIR on their first issue; it does not refer to whether they chose to view on their subsequent issue.

Voluntarily Choose Mock-CIR. *Voluntary Choose Mock-CIR* refers to whether participants not experimentally exposed to a mock-CIR statement freely choose to view one before voting on the relevant measure. I analyzed differences in the rate of voluntarily choosing a mock-CIR between participants with and without prior *Mock-CIR Exposure* to determine whether CIR exposure can motivate voters to seek out more information in the future.

Internal efficacy, general. My measures of efficacy are actually measures of both internal political efficacy as well as political knowledge. To determine *Internal Efficacy, general*, participants were asked to rate their own ability to both understand and impact government and public policy on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For example, one statement posed was, “I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.” Participants were also asked knowledge questions about national public affairs, and were scored based on correctness. For example, one question asked was “What is the office currently held by Harry Reid?” I combined these efficacy and knowledge items into a single scale called *Internal Efficacy (General)*.

Internal efficacy, Ohio. Similar to *Internal efficacy, general* (as described above), *Internal efficacy, Ohio* is a measure of both internal political efficacy as well as political knowledge. To determine *Internal Efficacy, Ohio*, participants were asked to rate their own ability to both understand and impact government and public policy at the state level on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For example, one statement posed was, “People like me have tremendous influence on Ohio state government.” Participants were also asked knowledge questions about Ohio public affairs, and were scored based on correctness. For example, one question asked was “Which political party has a majority of seats in the Ohio House of Representatives?” I combined these efficacy and knowledge items into a single scale called *Internal Efficacy (Ohio)*.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Increasing correct voting rate

To determine the potential effect of reading the CIR, I first tested whether CIR exposure affected participants' vote choices on an issue. Only after determining whether the CIR does indeed have an impact can I determine whether participants with CIR exposure were more or less likely to vote correctly. To test the effect of CIR exposure on vote choice, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between CIR exposure on an issue and participants' votes on that issue.

For the Anti-Monopoly measure, the relationship between these variables was significant, $X^2(1, N = 824) = 7.946, p = .005$. Those participants exposed to the CIR before voting on Issue 2 were more likely to cast a "no" vote than those who were not exposed to the CIR before voting. Participants who were exposed to the CIR disapproved of Issue 2, with 36.4% voting "yes" and 63.4% voting "no." Participants not exposed to the CIR prior to voting on Issue 2, on the other hand, approved of the measure, with 51.5% voting "yes" and 48.5% voting "no."

In contrast to the Anti-Monopoly measure, the mock-CIR had no effect on the vote choice of participants who were exposed to it for the Marijuana Legalization issue. Participants exposed to the mock-CIR before voting on the Marijuana Legalization issue disapproved of the measure, with 62.9% voting "no" and 37.1% voting yes. Participants not exposed to the mock-CIR similarly disapproved of the measure, with 64.9% voting "no" and 35.1% voting yes. The relation between CIR exposure and vote choice was not significant.

The above results demonstrate that the CIR influenced vote choice, but the question of whether those exposed to the CIR voted *correctly* more often remains. To test the rate of correct voting, I identified a vote combination that would be objectively “incorrect,” regardless of a participant’s individual ideology. A “yes” vote on both the Anti-Monopoly measure and Marijuana Legalization measure is counterintuitive and therefore incorrect, because in casting such a vote, a participant would be supporting both the legalization of marijuana and the nullification of marijuana’s legalization. Obviously, a participant who votes in such a manner lacks the information and understanding of the measures necessary to express accurately his or her beliefs on the ballot.

To test the effect of CIR exposure on correct voting, as defined in the scenario above, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between CIR exposure and logical consistency of a participant’s vote. For those participants who were exposed to a CIR on the Anti-Monopoly measure, the relationship between these variables was significant, $X^2(1, N = 824) = 12.168, p = .007$. Participants with CIR exposure on the Anti-Monopoly measure had a higher rate of correct voting, 93.1%, than those without CIR exposure, 82.2%.

Though the CIR had a significant impact on correct voting for participants who were exposed to it for the Anti-Monopoly measure, the same cannot be said of Marijuana Legalization measure. The rate of correct voting remained virtually the same amongst participants who were exposed to the CIR on the Marijuana Legalization measure and those who were not exposed at all, and the slight difference between these groups that was observed was not significant.

The table below shows a finer breakdown of the vote choice combinations selected by participants based on ballot ordering and whether they were experimentally exposed to the mock-CIR on the first issue in their ballot ordering.

Table 2. Results

	Hierarchical Ordering (3, then 2)		Converse Ordering (2, then 3)	
	Not shown CIR	Shown CIR	Not shown CIR	Shown CIR
Correct vote (Pro-marijuana): No on 2, Yes on 3	50.8%	47.4%	35.6%	47.7%
Correct vote (Anti-marijuana): Yes on 2, No on 3	27.0%	30.2%	33.7%	29.1%
Correct vote: No on 2, No on 3	14.8%	15.6%	12.9%	16.3%
Incorrect vote (Contradictory policy choices): Yes on 2 <u>and</u> 3	7.4%	6.8%	17.8%	7.0%
Totals	100% (n = 189)	100% (n = 192)	100% (n = 163)	100% (n = 172)

Hypothesis 2: Issue order effect

Hypothesis 2 posited that the impact of mock-CIR exposure observed for those exposed on the technical (Anti-Monopoly) issue would be erased if ballot ordering made it apparent to participants that the technical issue was subsidiary to the values-based (Marijuana Legalization) issue.

To test the impact of ballot ordering on correct voting, I contrasted the correct voting rates of participants who were experimentally exposed to the Hierarchical Ordering with those who were exposed to the Converse Ordering. The former presented the ballot measures in a way that made it apparent to participants that the technical issue was subsidiary to the values-based issue. The latter did not make the subsidiary nature of the technical issue apparent.

Among participants exposed to the Converse Ordering, 82.2% voted correctly if they were not exposed to the mock-CIR, and 93.0% voted correctly if they were exposed to the mock-CIR. In this case, the relationship between mock-CIR exposure and correct voting was significant, $X^2(1, N = 824) = 12.168, p = .007$, and correct voting increased 10.8% with mock-CIR exposure over non-exposure. This effect of mock-CIR exposure was not consistent for the Hierarchical Ordering.

For participants exposed to the Hierarchical Ordering, the difference in rate of correct voting between those with mock-CIR exposure and those without exposure was not statistically significant. In the Hierarchical Ordering, 92.6% of participants voted correctly if they were not exposed to the mock-CIR, and 93.2% voted correctly if they were exposed to the mock-CIR.

Hypothesis 3: Increasing the pursuit of additional information

Hypothesis 3 concerns the ability of the mock-CIR to whet one's appetite for more information and provoke participants to seek more information by voluntarily choosing to view another mock-CIR on their second ballot measure. To assess this potential impact, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between mock-CIR exposure on the first issue and whether participants would choose to view a mock-CIR for the second issue.

The relation between these variables was significant, $X^2(1, N = 824) = 9.424, p < .01$. Those participants exposed to the mock-CIR on the first issue were more likely to voluntarily choose to view the mock-CIR on the second issue. Among participants experimentally exposed to the mock-CIR on their first issue, 59.3% voluntarily chose to view the mock-CIR on their second issue, and 40.7% did not. Among participants not experimentally exposed to the mock-CIR on their first issue, only 48.7% voluntarily chose to view the mock-CIR on their second issue, and 51.3% did not.

Table 3. CIR Choice Results

Choice	Shown CIR on first issue in survey	Not Shown CIR on first issue in survey
Choose to see CIR on second issue in survey	59.3%	48.7%
Declined to see CIR on second issue	40.7%	51.3%
Totals	100% ($n = 413$)	100% ($n = 411$)

Research Questions

The first Research Question asked, *Does internal political efficacy impact likelihood of voluntarily choosing to view the mock-CIR?* As is shown in the table below, it was inconclusive whether efficacy alone made participants more or less likely to choose to view the mock-CIR for their second issue. I observed competing relationships between efficacy and choosing to use a mock-CIR under varying experimental conditions, such as ballot order and whether participants had prior mock-CIR exposure.

The second research question asked, *Does ballot order impact the relationship between internal political efficacy and voluntarily choosing to view the mock-CIR?* The table below

shows that ballot order influenced the relationship between efficacy and whether participants chose to view the mock-CIR on their second issue, given that those participants were exposed to the mock-CIR on their first issue. The relationship between efficacy and choosing to view the mock-CIR on the second issue was not significant for participants not exposed to the CIR on their first issue.

Participants with higher efficacy scores who were exposed to the Anti-Monopoly issue first were more likely to elect to view the mock-CIR for their second issue. Participants with higher efficacy first exposed to the Marijuana Legalization issue, though, were less likely to elect to view the mock-CIR on their second issue. These results are not significant at $p < .05$, though, the results are trending toward significance, $p < .10$, for both *Internal Efficacy (General)* and *Internal Efficacy (Ohio)* among participants first exposed to the Anti-Monopoly issue, and for *Internal Efficacy (Ohio)* among those first exposed to the Marijuana Legalization issue.

Table 4. Efficacy Results

Choice	Shown Issue 2 first (n = 193)	Shown Issue 3 first (n = 220)
Chose to see CIR on second issue in survey	IE $M = 3.2212$ ($SD = 0.87002$) IE-Oh $M = 3.2697$ ($SD = 0.89111$)	IE $M = 3.3531$ ($SD = 0.79464$) IE-Oh $M = 3.4593$ ($SD = 0.76714$)
Declined to see CIR on second issue	IE $M = 3.4297$ ($SD = 0.85782$) IE-Oh $M = 3.4900$ ($SD = 0.88090$)	IE $M = 3.2000$ ($SD = 0.89561$) IE-Oh $M = 3.2588$ ($SD = 0.85508$)
Significant difference	IE $t = 1.658$, $p = 0.099$ IE-Oh $t = 1.708$, $p = 0.089$	IE $t = -1.324$, $p = 0.187$ IE-Oh $t = -1.805$, $p = 0.073$

Note: IE indicates Internal Efficacy (General) and IE-Oh indicates Internal Efficacy (Ohio).

Discussion

The results of this study ought to be encouraging for proponents of the CIR on a number of fronts. Participants with mock-CIR exposure were far more likely to voluntarily choose to view a mock-CIR than their non-exposed counterparts, and this effect was generally constant across varying levels of political sophistication and efficacy. Furthermore, mock-CIR exposure increased the correct voting rate on the technical issue. This positive correct voting impact was not observed on the values-based issue, though, and the impact on the technical issue was erased under certain ballot ordering conditions.

That participants were more likely to choose to view a mock-CIR if they had previously been exposed to one is indicative of a perceived benefit of using the mock-CIR. This finding is further affirmation of Knobloch and Gastil's (2014) study of the Oregon CIR, in which real-world CIR users reported that CIR information was helpful in determining vote choice.

The lack of correlation found between efficacy and choosing to view a mock-CIR challenges the notion that those with higher political efficacy are more likely to exhibit participatory and information-seeking behaviors. This perhaps counterintuitive finding that participants with low political efficacy were just as likely to elect to view a mock-CIR as their higher-efficacy counterparts may be attributable to the idea that citizens prefer to learn from their peers, rather than from the political or media elite (Warren & Gastil, 2015). This finding also supports the theory that participating in a deliberation can increase "deliberative faith" and make deliberative participation more likely to recur (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002). Further, that participants saw the aforementioned benefits of participating in a deliberation merely through reading a mock-CIR supports the theory of "vicarious deliberation," which posits that the benefits of deliberation may be extended even to those not directly participating in

deliberation if they are exposed to it secondhand through publications such as CIR statements (Gastil, J., Richards, R., & Knobloch, K., 2014).

My study further extends correct voting theory into the world of direct democracy elections, and it is the first study of correct voting in an American initiative election. I found that mock-CIR exposure increased correct voting on the technical issue. This finding supports the predominant assumption that incorrect voting results from insufficient information and that providing voters with more information should remedy incorrect voting. Our study adds a new layer of complexity to this assumption, though. Indeed, the positive correct voting impact of mock-CIR exposure was erased when participants were exposed to the values-based (Marijuana Legalization) measure before the technical (Anti-Monopoly) measure. This phenomenon remained constant even if participants viewed the mock-CIR for both measures. This finding indicates that incorrect voting was not solely an issue of insufficient information. Rather, I am led to believe that providing more information may sometimes be inconsequential for increasing correct voting, particularly on values-based issues.

Cultural cognition theory can help explain why new information is largely ineffective at altering opinions on values-based issues, as was the case in my study. Cultural cognition holds that cultural concerns are often prior to facts in public policy debates, an idea that my finding supports (Kahan & Braman, 2006; Kahan, Jenkins-Smith, & Braman, 2011). I also extend Vollum's and Buffington-Vollum's (2010) similar conclusion that new information was ineffective in altering views regarding the death penalty into another values-based issue, marijuana policy. Finally, this finding is consistent with the characteristics of Katz's (1960) values-expressive function of attitude.

In this study, I propose a new method of determining correct vote choices on ballots with conflicting ballot measures. My method is most obviously useful for studying direct democracy elections, but it may also be extended into candidate elections in some instances. For example, in cases where voters are “ticket splitting” between candidates of different parties for different positions on the same ballot, there is a chance that one of the candidates does not share the values of the voter. To provide a more specific example: Pennsylvania voters in 2016 selected both Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump and Democratic Attorney General nominee Josh Shapiro, who ran on policies in stark contrast to Trump’s. In this case, it is likely that some voters who split their ballots and voted for both Trump and Shapiro voted incorrectly on one of the candidates.

My findings also have implications for the small body of research that exists on elections that include conflicting ballot measures. Conflicting ballot measures frequently appear on ballots as a deliberate effort to confuse voters and maintain the status quo (Banducci, 1998). I found that CIR-type information can help voters navigate conflicting ballot measures and vote more correctly, given that the measures deal with technical, rather than values-based, issues. I also found that the order in which conflicting initiatives appear on the ballot can impact how people vote. Specifically, I found that preferences on values-based issues superseded technical issues when ballot ordering was such that participants could distinguish that the technical issue had implications for the values-based issue.

My results demonstrate that incorrect voting on direct democracy elections is a very real — and potentially problematic — phenomenon that has gone woefully understudied. As democratic trends continue to shift toward favoring direct democracy and ballot measures gain a more prominent role in public policy formation, scholars should further examine correct voting

(or the lack thereof) as it pertains to initiative elections. Although my findings indicate that CIR-type information should help voters navigate initiative elections, further study is needed to assess whether this impact is legitimate on a larger scale.

A number of limitations were present in this study. It would have been useful to expose some participants to non-CIR voter guides, i.e. voter guides that were not compiled through a deliberative process. Comparing the effects of CIR-type voter guides and non-deliberative voter guides would have allowed me to determine whether the CIR might be more effective than other information sources (i.e. news articles, campaign communications, etc.) in helping voters navigate ballot measures. Second, measuring the amount of time participants spent reading mock-CIR statements would have allowed me to control for participants who may not have actually taken the time to read, comprehend, and digest the statements before voting on the associated ballot measure. Another limitation of the study is that it was conducted via an online survey. Conducting a similar experiment in a lab setting would allow a future researcher to examine finer-grained aspects of cognitive processing while participants read mock-CIR statements and navigate a ballot.

Conclusion

The results of my study have important implications for democratic reform efforts, particularly as trends continue to shift toward leaving important public policy decisions directly in the hands of lay citizens via ballot measures. This study was the first to assess correct voting in an American ballot measure election, and I found that incorrect voting was not only present, but that it is potentially prominent enough to warrant consideration as a legitimate factor in direct democracy elections.

Encouraging for future prospects of the CIR is this study's affirmation that even small, vicarious dosages of deliberation obtained via a CIR-like statement had a motivational impact that increased likelihood to voluntarily read another CIR-like statement. In other words, there appears to be an appetite for vicarious deliberation among the voting public. This could imply that people who experience some sort of deliberation, even if it is vicariously experienced, will more actively seek out political information in the future. That motivational effect of the CIR is important, because even a vastly expanded CIR program would have difficulty creating voter guides for every ballot measure in a given election.

My findings also reflect an important qualifying factor for the CIR. That being, the CIR appears to be better suited for technical, rather than values-based issues. Although more research is needed regarding this finding, it seems that democratic reformers would be best advised to administer CIR-like voting guides for technical ballot issues.

With a strong focus on direct democracy emerging, it is important that democratic reformers make every effort to ensure citizens have the tools they need to aptly navigate ballot

measure elections. The CIR appears poised to make an important contribution to that effort, given that it is utilized in an appropriate setting.

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Academic Vita of Nathan Larkin
nthnlarkin@gmail.com

Education

The Pennsylvania State University—Schreyer Honors College **University Park, PA**
Communication Arts & Sciences, B.A.—Economics, B.S. *May 2017*

- Dean's List all semesters

Awards and Fellowships

Penn State Rock Ethics Institute — Stand Up Award **University Park, PA**
Awardee *April 2016*

- Stand Up Award “honors Penn State undergraduate students who have demonstrated courage, fortitude, and ethical leadership by taking a stand for a person, cause, or belief”
- Recognized for “dedication to environmental justice and ethical leadership in organizing efforts to address climate change and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations”
- More information available at: <https://sites.psu.edu/standuppsu/>

Center for Democratic Deliberation — Birkle Student Engagement Award

University Park, PA
Awardee *April 2016*

- Birkle Award recognizes students “who have made significant contributions to public deliberation by speaking out about important political or social issues”
- Recognized for promoting understanding of intersectionality between climate change and social justice, and for organizing a large campus event with social justice-focused organizations

Dept. of Communication Arts & Sciences — O'Brien Memorial Award

University Park, PA
Awardee *April 2016*

- O'Brien Award recognizes three students per year for outstanding academic achievement in their first year as a major in Communication Arts & Sciences

Paterno Fellows Program **University Park, PA**
Paterno Fellow *August 2014 – Present*

- Honors Program within College of the Liberal Arts including advanced academic coursework, thesis, internships, ethics study, and leadership/service commitment

Leadership

Fossil Free PSU **University Park, PA**
Executive Director, Co-founder *January 2014 – Present*

- Direct student-run campaign environmental and social justice campaign
- Plan deliberative campus events such as public forums, lectures, discussion roundtables, etc.
- Work with Penn State administration and other stakeholders to pursue socially responsible investing, shareholder advocacy, and fossil fuel divestment

Governmental/Political Internships

Office of the President — Penn State University **University Park, PA**
Intern *February 2017 – Present*

- Conduct legislative research regarding allocation of state funds to public universities under the direct supervision of President Eric Barron
- Compile information into easily navigable report that will be utilized in Penn State's governmental relations efforts

NextGen Climate

State College, PA

Campus Organizing Fellow

August 2016 – November 2016

- Recruited and managed volunteers for phone banking, campus canvassing, and other events
- Registered voters and collected data using NGP VAN VoteBuilder database

S.R. Wojdak & Associates

Harrisburg, PA

Legislative and Research Intern

May 2016 – August 2016

- Performed legislative research and created reports for clients and staff
- Monitored activity of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and updated staff on developments
- Developed an intimate understanding of Pennsylvania public affairs issues by frequently meeting with key stakeholders and elected officials

Office of Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack

Harrisburg, PA

Staff Intern

May 2015 – August 2015

- Created written communications including speeches, social media content, constituent correspondence, and legislative summaries
- Conducted legislative research and attended committee meetings and legislative sessions
- Managed Lieutenant Governor's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts
- Developed media strategies by working with the Chief of Staff and Press Secretary
- Performed advance work and staffed the Lieutenant Governor at various events

Tom Wolf for Governor

York, PA

Communications and Research Intern

May 2014 – August 2014

- Conducted intensive opposition research and compiled reports for campaign use
- Assisted in developing campaign messaging and media techniques
- Tracked politicians at events and provided real-time analysis to Communications Department

Academic Research Experience

Department of Communication Arts & Sciences

University Park, PA

Honors Thesis Writer

September 2015 – Present

- Designed and executed experimental survey of 800 registered voters in Ohio
- Performed statistical analysis of survey data using SPSS software to test hypotheses

Department of Communication Arts & Sciences

University Park, PA

Research Assistant

January 2015 – May 2015

- Assisted in data and textual analysis for publication-quality social scientific research
- Studied hundreds of ballot initiatives and coded them based on content

Communications Experience

The Daily Collegian

State College, PA

Staff Writer, Columnist

September 2014 – September 2016

- Write weekly news stories and opinion columns for *The Daily Collegian* newspaper
- Interview sources and conduct research to cover government, politics, and policy

Pennsylvania College Democrats

Statewide, PA

Communications Director

April 2016 – Present

- Oversee all PA College Democrats communications efforts throughout the 2016 election cycle by coordinating with Pennsylvania Democratic Party and state and national campaigns

Sustainability Institute at Penn State

University Park, PA

Communications Intern

December 2015 – May 2015

- Press liaison: acted as spokesman, wrote and distributed press releases, maintained media list
- Managed Student Farm Initiative website and social media platforms