Does “Disagree Better” Depolarize Americans?

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Cox-Peterson PSA

- Submitted to the *Strengthening Democracy Challenge*
  - Large experiment
  - 32K participants, 25 interventions tested
- Reduced partisan animosity, support for partisan violence, support for undemocratic practices
- Increased support for bipartisan cooperation
“Disagree Better” Campaign

Spencer Cox (Governor, Utah), Jared Polis (Governor, Colorado), Eric Holcomb (Governor, Indiana), Clint Lamb (Mayor, Indiana), Mike Parson (Governor, Missouri), Laura Kelly (Governor, Kansas), Wes Moore (Governor, Maryland), Jack Coburn (Mayor, Maryland), Michelle Lujan Grisham (Governor, New Mexico), Mark Gordon (Governor, Wyoming), Kay Ivey (Governor, Alabama), Bill Lee (Governor, Tennessee), John Carney (Governor, Delaware), Phil Scott (Governor, Vermont), Abby Cox (First Lady, Utah), Albert Bryan (Governor, Virgin Islands), Mills (Governor, Maine), Sununu (Governor, New Hampshire), Dan McKee (Governor, Rhode Island), Kevin Stitt (Governor, Oklahoma), Sonia Sotomayor (Supreme Court Justice), Amy Coney Barrett (Supreme Court Justice), Robert Gates (Former Secretary of Defense)
“Disagree Better” Experiment

- With Chagai Weiss, Don Green
- Survey Experiment
- 6,500 participants
- Treatment vs. Placebo
Treatment Condition

Govs. Cox & Polis

Gov. Holcomb & Mayor Lamb

Govs. Parson & Kelly
Placebo Condition
Depolarizing Effects of Disagree Better

- Partisan Animosity: 0.097 (0.031)
- Conversational Receptiveness: 0.118 (0.031)
- Support for Bipartisanship: 0.2 (0.034)

Effect Size (in SDs)
Effects of Disagree Better on Governor Favorability

Effect Size (in SDs)

Full Sample
Democratic Primary Voters
Republican Primary Voters
Effects of Disagree Better on Governor Favorability

In-Party Governor Favorability

- Strong Dem
- Dem
- Ind Lean Dem
- Ind Lean Rep
- Rep
- Strong Rep

Placebo vs. NGA PSAs
Why did this work?

- Correcting misperceptions of out-partisans
- Sympathetic, respectful out-partisans
- Highlighting common identities
- Trusted Leaders
Leadership Matters
Thank You!

Chagai M. Weiss
Donald P. Green
Chrystal Redekopp
Luiza Santos
James Chu
Jan Voelkel
Nick Stagnaro
Sophia Pink