

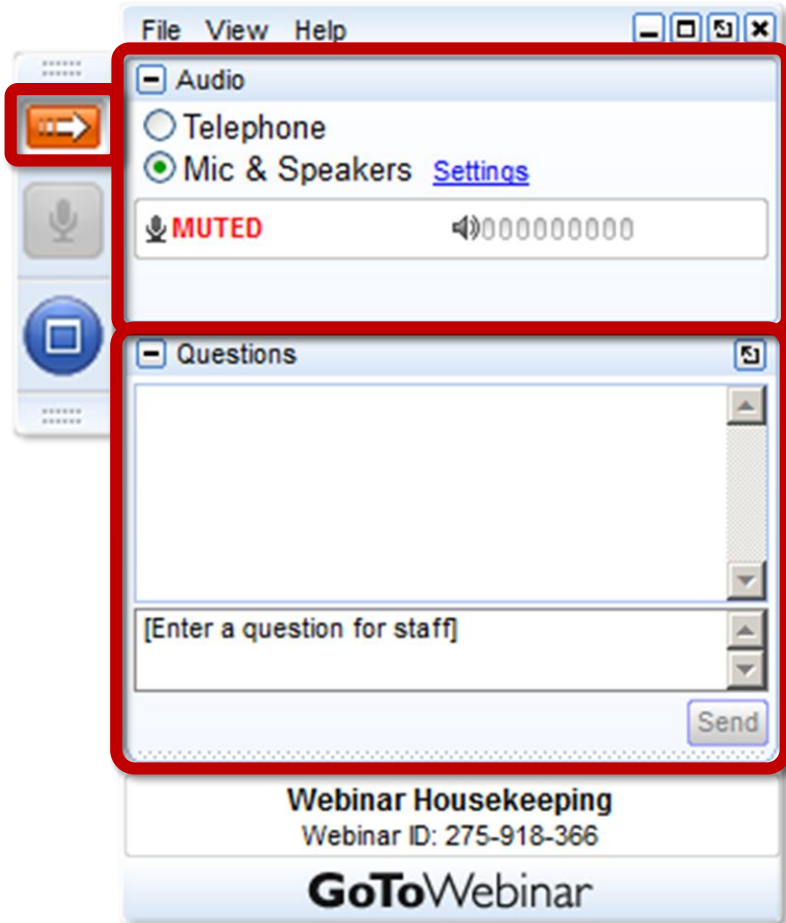
RPS Collaborative Webinar

Factors Influencing Public Support for RPSs

Hosted by
Warren Leon, Executive Director, CESA

October 12, 2017

Housekeeping



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Clean Energy States Alliance



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity



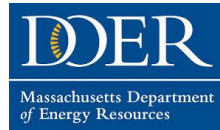
NYSERDA



Maryland Energy Administration



Department of Commerce
Innovation is in our nature.



Office of the People's Counsel
District of Columbia
Advocating, Protecting and Educating DC Consumers



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



www.cesa.org

RPS Collaborative

- With funding from the Energy Foundation and the US Department of Energy, CESA facilitates the **Collaborative**.
- Includes **state RPS administrators, federal agency representatives**, and other stakeholders.
- Advances dialogue and learning about RPS programs by **examining the challenges and potential solutions** for successful implementation of state RPS programs, including **identification of best practices**.
- To sign up for the Collaborative listserv to get the **monthly newsletter** and announcements of **upcoming events**, see: www.cesa.org/projects/renewable-portfolio-standards



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY



Guest Speaker

- **Leah Stokes**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara



University of California Santa Barbara

POLITICAL SCIENCE



FACTORS INFLUENCING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RPS POLICIES

Leah Stokes

Assistant Professor

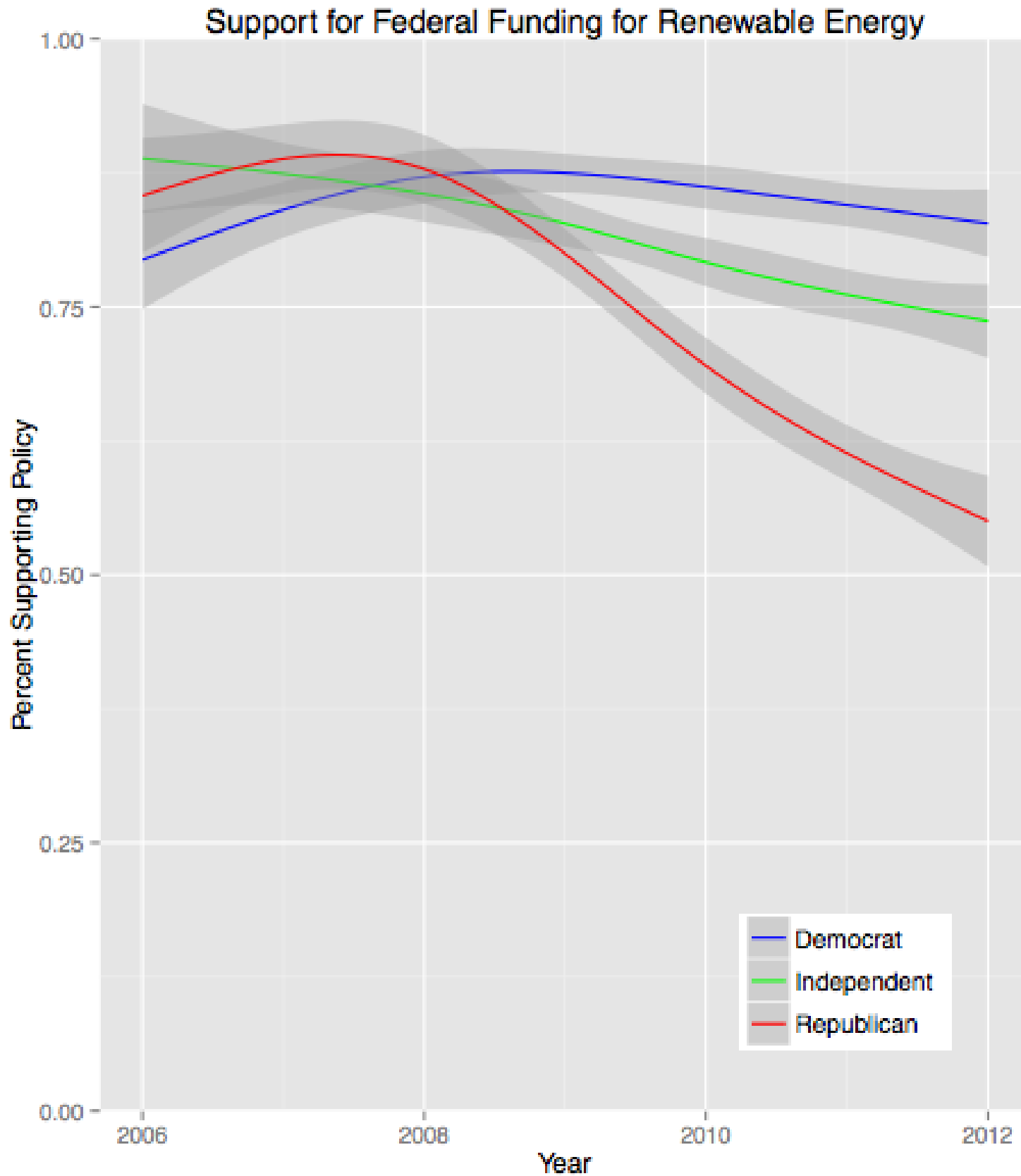
University of California Santa Barbara

Clean Energy States Alliance Webinar

October 12, 2017

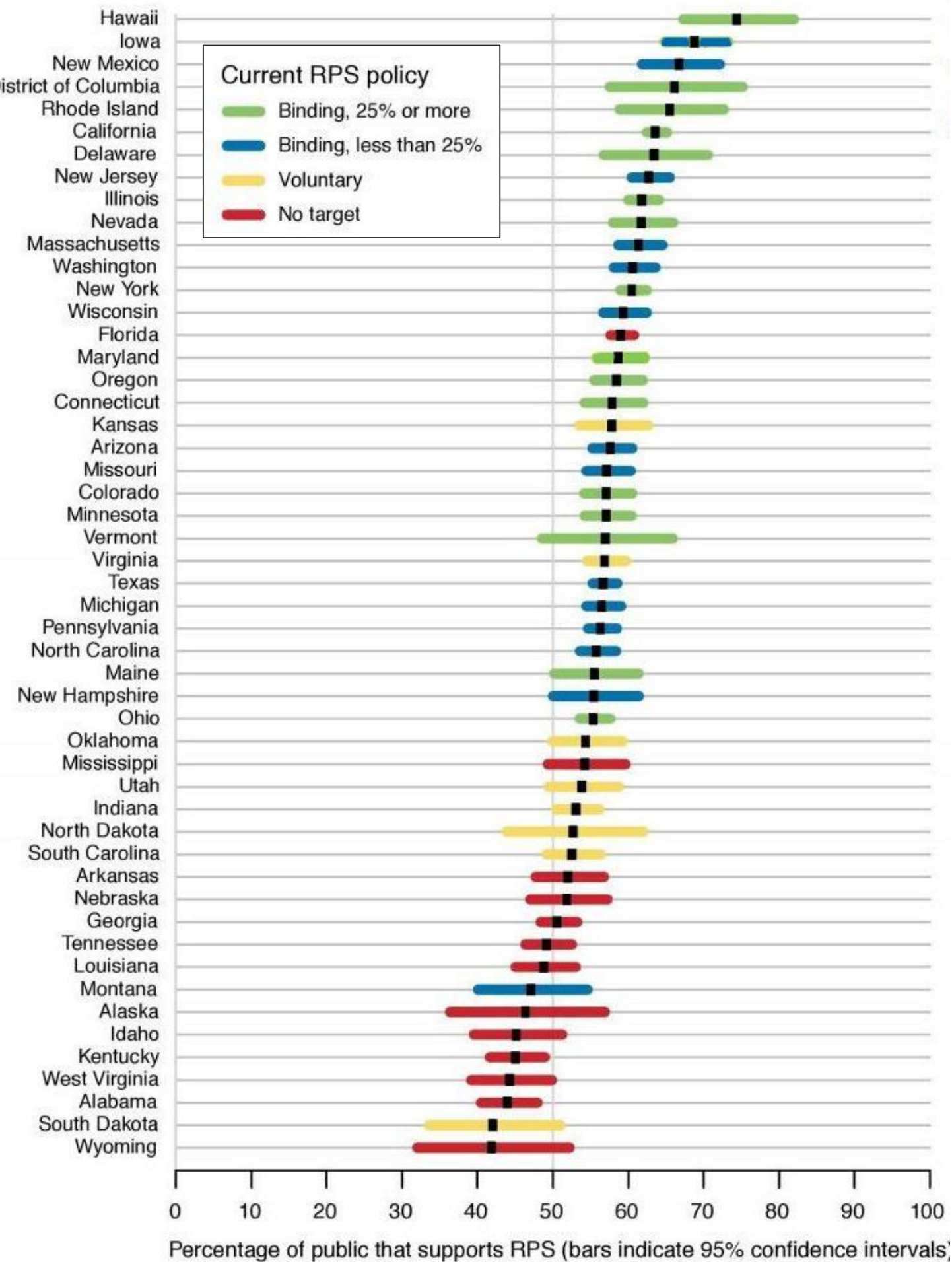
AGENDA

- Context: Public opinion on renewable energy and RPS.
- Research design: Survey experiment.
- Findings: What frames work.
- How frames are used in practice: Examples from advocates and opponents.
- Concluding thoughts: Using public opinion strategically.
- Q&A!



CONTEXT: PUBLIC OPINION ON RENEWABLES

- Declining support among Republicans.
- Increasing polarization in a policy area that was traditionally bipartisan.



PUBLIC OPINION ON RPS

- Broad correlation between public opinion and RPS policies.
- Does not mean public opinion caused adoption.
- But public opinion can be used strategically to inform decision-makers.

HOW COULD DIFFERENT
FRAMES AFFECT PUBLIC SUPPORT
FOR RENEWABLE PORTFOLIO
STANDARDS?

Renewable energy policy design and framing influence public support in the United States

Leah C. Stokes¹ and Christopher Warshaw^{2*}

The United States has often led the world in supporting renewable energy technologies at both the state and federal level. However, since 2011 several states have weakened their renewable energy policies. Public opinion will probably be crucial for determining whether states expand or contract their renewable energy policies in the future. Here we show that a majority of the public in most states supports renewable portfolio standards, which require a portion of the electricity mix to come from renewables. However, policy design and framing can strongly influence public support. Using a survey experiment, we show that effects of renewable portfolio standards bills on residential electricity costs, jobs and pollution, as well as bipartisan elite support, are all important drivers of public support. In many states, these bills' design and framing can push public opinion above or below majority support.

RESEARCH DESIGN: REALISTIC SURVEY EXPERIMENT

Over the past decade, many state legislatures passed renewable energy laws. These laws require some of the state's electricity to come from wind, solar, or other renewable energy sources.

During the next legislative session, legislators may consider a new bill that would require Massachusetts to meet 35% of its electricity needs with renewable energy sources by the year 2025.

Where available, here are a couple details about the bill in Massachusetts:

Most Republicans in the state legislature support these renewable energy requirements. If this bill is passed, it would likely add \$10 per month to each resident's electricity bill. Experts predict that the bill would probably create several thousand jobs in Massachusetts. Supporters of the bill argue that increasing renewable energy would reduce harmful air pollution in Massachusetts, including toxins like mercury. The bill's supporters argue that global warming is a serious problem, and increasing renewable energy would reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming. The bill's opponents argue that climate change is not a serious problem, and for this reason increasing renewable energy is not important.

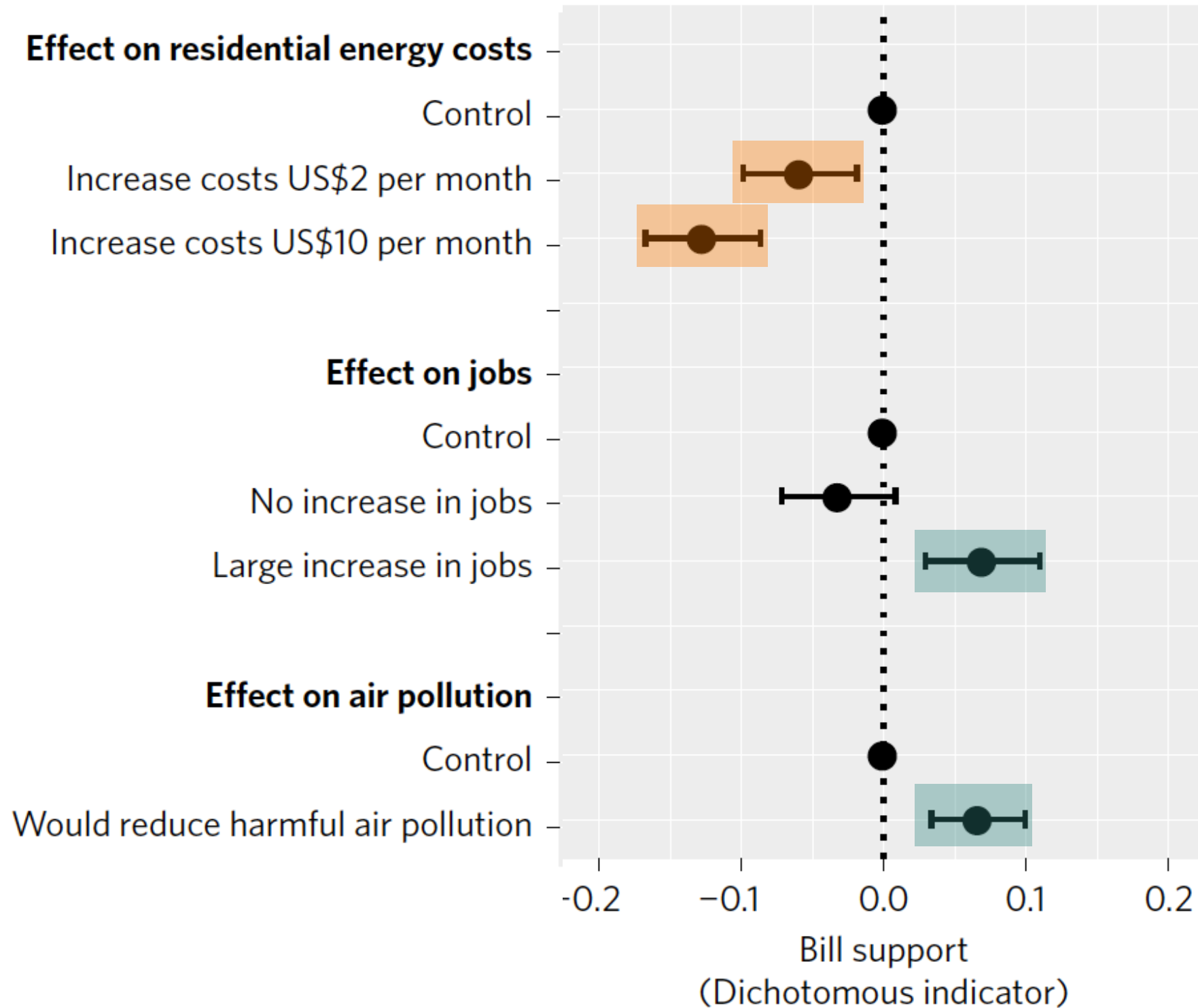
On the next page, we will ask you about your support for this bill.

- Strongly support Support Oppose Strongly oppose

Topic	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Control
Partisan support	Most Democrats support bill	Most Republicans support bill	No partisan information
Cost	Bill would add \$10 per month to electricity bills.	Bill would add \$2 per month to electricity bills.	No cost information
Jobs	Bill would probably create thousands of jobs in state	Bill would probably not create many jobs in state	No jobs information
Harms	Bill would reduce harmful air pollution including mercury		No harms information.
Climate change	Climate change is a serious problem this bill would address.	Climate change is not a serious problem.	No climate information.

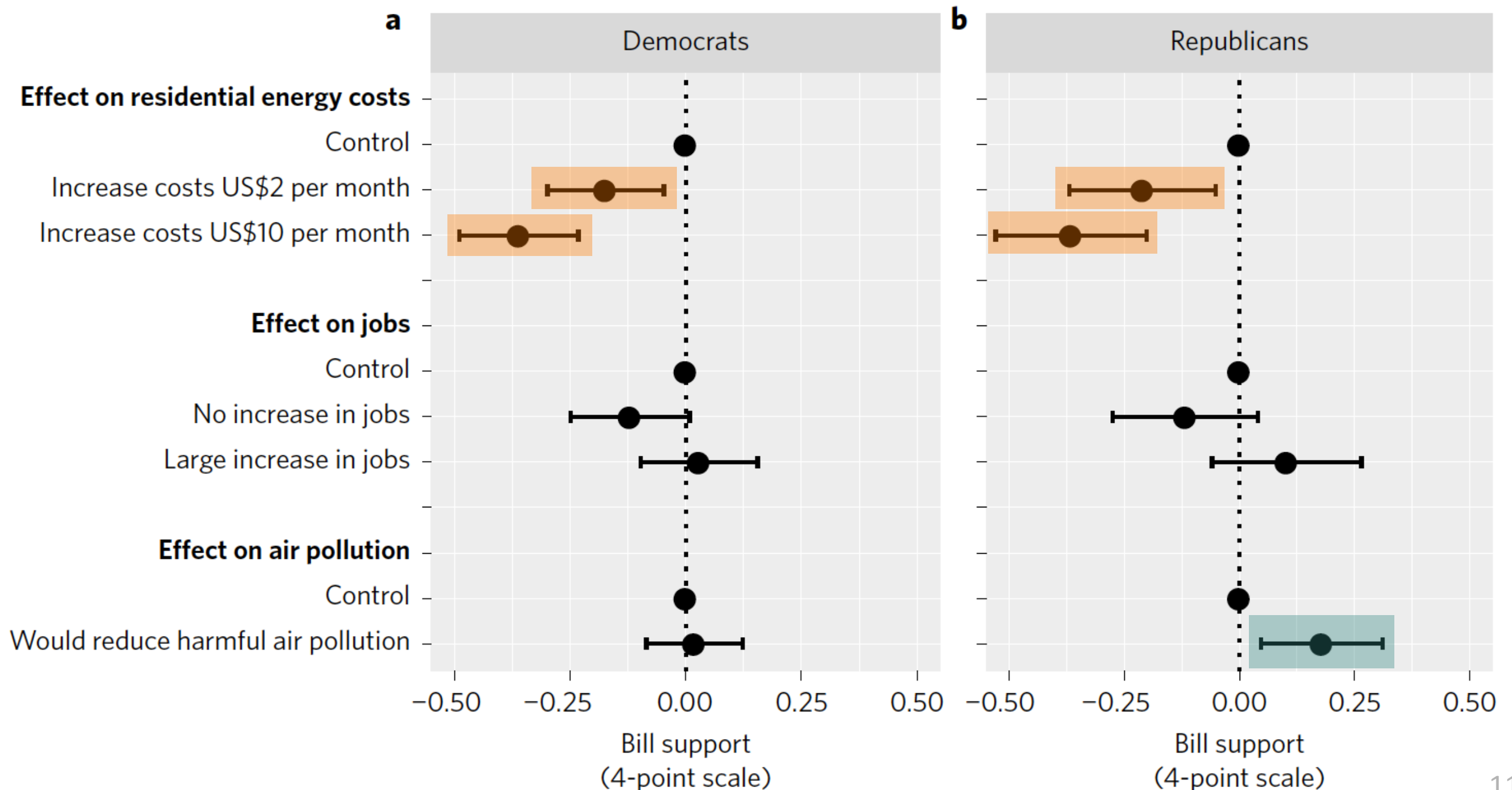
RESULTS

MESSAGING ON POLICY EFFECTS: COST, JOBS & AIR POLLUTION

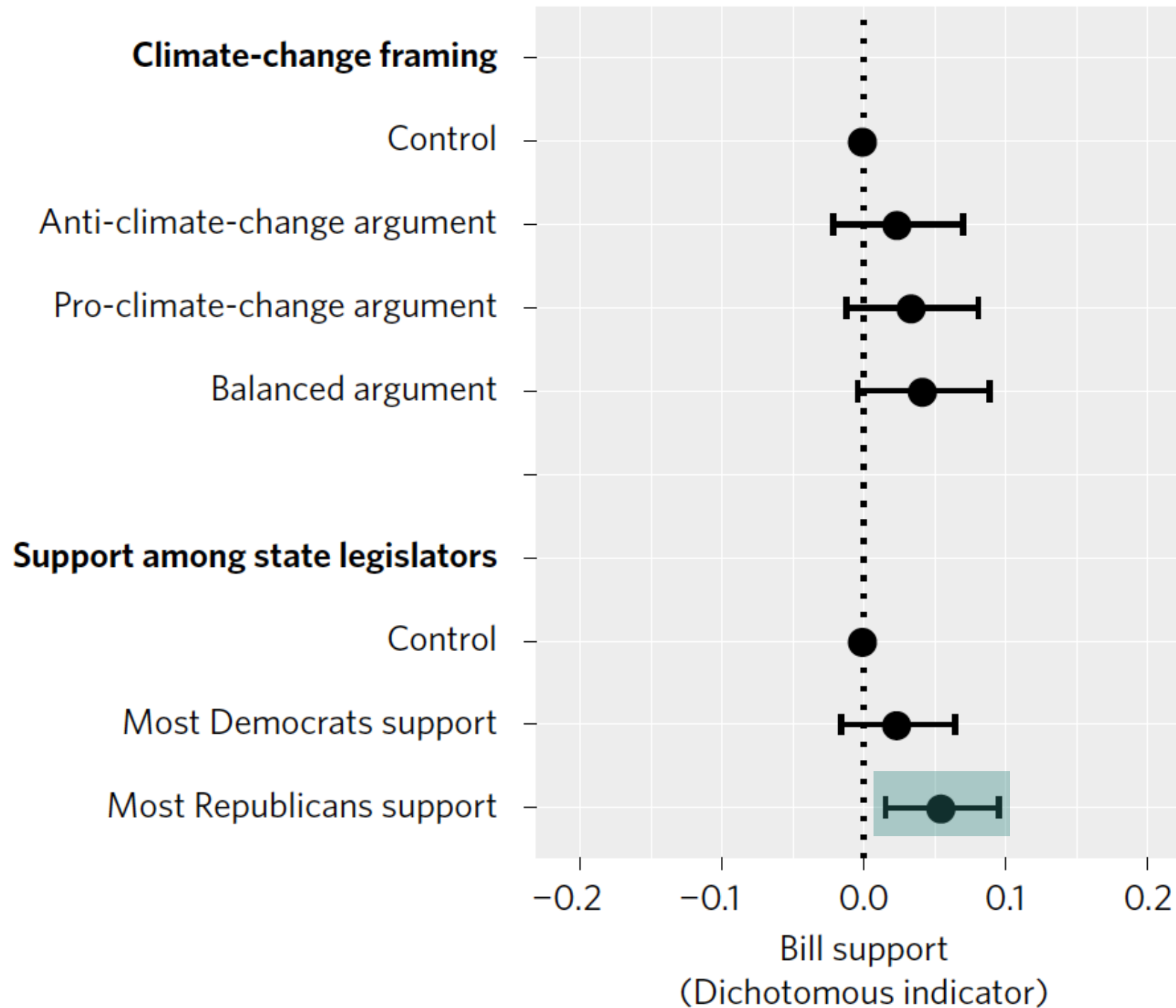


MESSAGING ON POLICY EFFECTS: COST, JOBS & AIR POLLUTION

PARTISAN EFFECTS

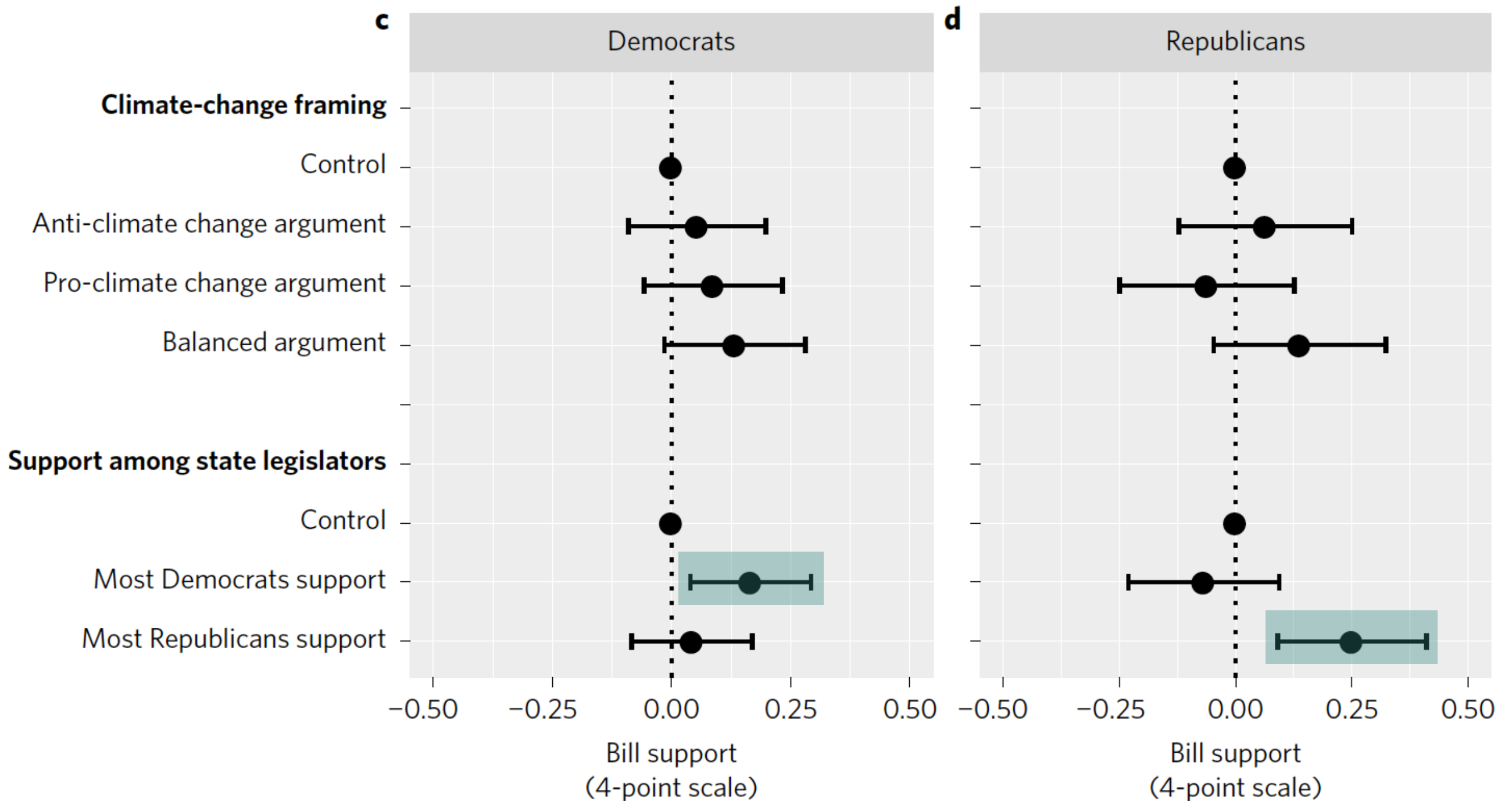


MESSAGING ON POLITICS: CLIMATE CHANGE & PARTISAN CUES



MESSAGING ON POLITICS: CLIMATE CHANGE & PARTISAN CUES

PARTISAN EFFECTS

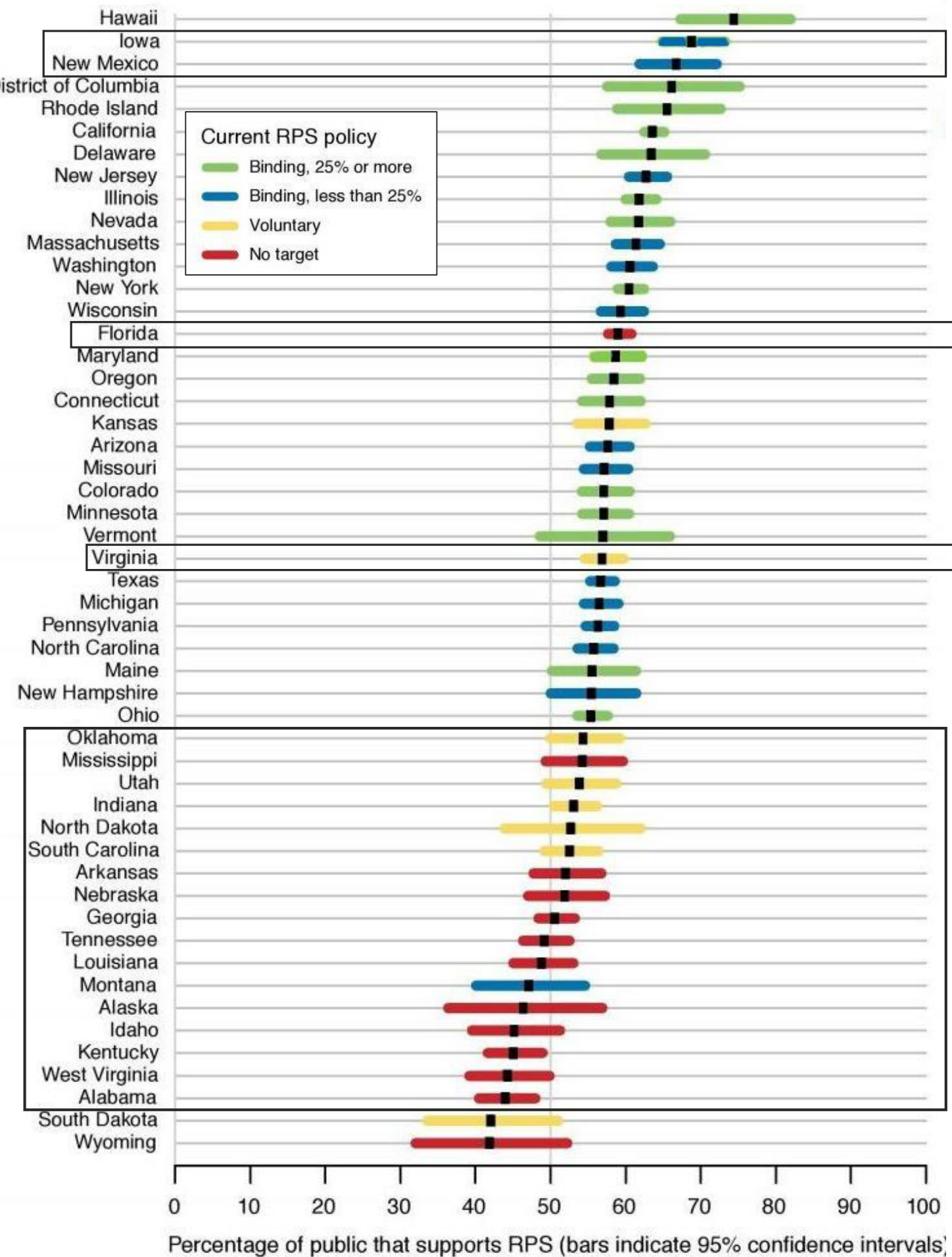


WHERE SUPPORT CROSSES 50%

	Number of states with majority support for RPS	Change from baseline
Baseline RPS support	40	0
Increases electricity costs \$2 per month	27	-13
Increases electricity costs \$10 per month	7	-33
No increase in jobs	35	-5
Large increase in jobs	48	+8
Reduces air pollution	48	+8
Democrat elites support	43	+3
Republican elites support	47	+7

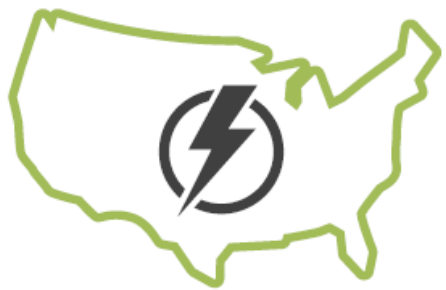
OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing targets in places where the public is very supportive: New Mexico, Iowa.
- Targets in supportive places where they do not exist: Florida, Virginia.
- Creating more support for RPS policies where they haven't been passed: Bottom states.



HOW FRAMES ARE USED IN PRACTICE PRO-RPS

Clean power creates American



2.2 MILLION
PEOPLE IN THE US ARE
EMPLOYED IN THE
DESIGN, INSTALLATION,
OR MANUFACTURING
OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY
PRODUCTS AND
SERVICES

- US Department of Energy

In 2015,
RENEWABLE ENERGY JOBS
in the US reached
769,000
employing the same number of
people in the US as

**EXXON, MICROSOFT,
BEST BUY, MARRIOTT,
BOEING, PFIZER, &
WHOLE FOODS**

COMBINED

- IRENA & Fortune



The

creating jobs

12X FASTER

than the rest of the
US economy.

- EDF

ENERGY
GETS
CHEAPER

HOW FRAMES ARE USED IN PRACTICE ANTI-RPS



KANSAS SENIORS ARE ALREADY FINANCIALLY STRESSED

HIGHER UTILITY BILLS AREN'T HELPING.

Rising costs of gasoline, groceries, and health care have put seniors and those on fixed incomes in a tough financial position. To make matters worse, our utility bills are going up.

Since the Renewable Portfolio Standard passed in 2009, our state legislature has forced energy companies to use more

expensive energy sources rather than the proven, abundant, and affordable resources that have kept our bills low.

The result has been some Kansans have seen 15 rate hikes since this law went into effect. Kansans aren't alone. In other states with these laws, rates have gone up an average of 27%.

Call Rep. Don Hineman at 785-296-7636 and tell him to repeal the RPS Mandate.

KEEPING SOLAR AFFORDABLE



AMENDMENT 1
PROTECTS OUR SENIORS

OTHER IDEAS

Pro-RPS / NEM frames:

- “Freedom” of choice, from utility monopolies
- “Energy Security” for the United States

Anti-RPS / NEM frames:

- “Fairness” / “Rights” for net metering customer compensation
- “Corporate welfare” linking policies to Solyndra
- “Out of state corporations”

USING PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGICALLY

Texas 1999 - RPS policy (Stokes, 2017):

- Deliberative opinion polling exercise
- Advocates continuously discussed findings — high public support — with politicians.

Value Question	Response
<i>Lowest-cost electricity</i>	The value of lowest-cost electricity showed more variation than many of the values tested. The expressed importance of lowest-cost electricity started out high and declined in the after-event polls. In some polls, there was a fairly large shift in this value.
<i>Protecting the environment</i>	Protecting the environment rated lower among the customer values, particularly before the event.
<i>Meeting everyone's basic electricity needs</i>	Having everyone's basic needs for electricity met was an important value.
<i>Having enough electricity</i>	Having enough electricity was one of the most important values. It started high and remained high in the after-event polls. It is an important value that impacts preferences for different energy solutions.
<i>Fewest outages possible</i>	Having the fewest outages possible also showed little change before and after the town meeting events. While rated as important, it was not rated as highly as having enough electricity or meeting everyone's needs for electricity. We suspect that since electricity has been fairly reliable in Texas, participants expected that it would remain reliable. Also, we did not observe this issue being addressed in small group discussions.

USING PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGICALLY

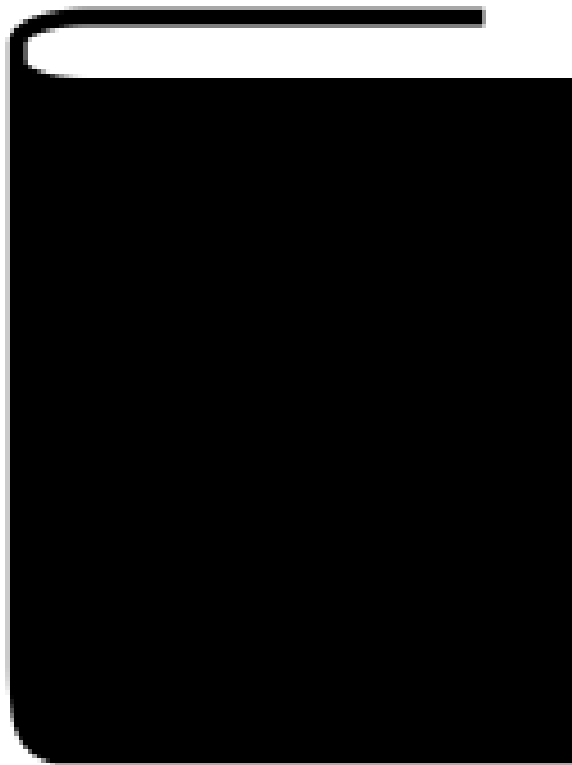
Today:

- A majority in of public in support of ambitious (35%) RPS across 40 states.
- Advocates as brokers between politicians and public
 - Politicians need to be aware of public preferences. They are often not (Hertel-Fernandez, Mildemberger & Stokes, 2017). Advocates need to communicate these preferences.
 - Advocates can mobilize people - phone calls, letter writing campaigns.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Imposing even small costs on ratepayers will likely reduce support.
- Importance of keeping policy costs as low as possible.
- Who should pay for renewables / RPS?
- Industrial consumer opt-outs' long term sustainability?
- Need for renewed Republican leadership. Some hope from Kansas.
- Focus on air pollution and jobs may increase public support.

BOOK PROJECT: The Politics of Implementing State Energy Policy



Cases: Policy failures + rollbacks

Texas RPS Solar Expansion

Kansas RPS repeal

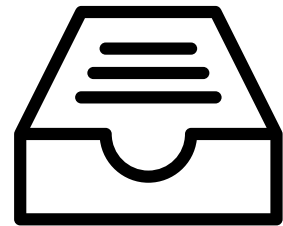
Ohio RPS freeze

Arizona NEM fees

Still conducting interviews on these cases.

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!



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@leahstokes

Thank you for attending our webinar

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Visit our website to learn more about the RPS Collaborative
and to sign up for our e-newsletter:

www.cesa.org/projects/renewable-portfolio-standards

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