Balancing Act: Can Voters Pre-Emptively Restrain Presidential Policy-Making?

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Abstract

Do voters engage in anticipatory balancing by supporting limited congressional power for the party they expect to win the presidency? We provide a causal test of descriptive accounts by using a repeated-measures experiment (N $\approx$ 2900), incorporating three embedded randomizations to test multiple mechanisms of anticipatory balancing. By priming (i) each candidate's odds of winning the 2024 presidential election, (ii) the probability of extreme policy outcomes, and (iii) hypothetical election outcomes, we examine a range of mechanisms through which anticipatory balancing may occur. We find evidence only in the most extreme case: subjects engage in modest balancing ($\approx$ 4% shifts in preferences for congressional control and net vote share) in response to hypothetical scenarios of certain victory by one candidate, with effects driven by sophisticated voters. Our results suggest anticipatory balancing is possible, but limited in both magnitude and the contexts in which it can realistically occur.

Introduction

In the November 2024 general election, Donald Trump won the presidency and Republicans narrowly—by a margin of some 7,309 votes in the House of Representatives—won control of Congress.[1] In July 2025, a unified Republican Party enacted a sweeping reconciliation law that overhauled tax, Medicaid, and immigration policies. That bill proved deeply unpopular with the American public, and prediction markets now suggest the Republican Party is likely to lose seats—and with them, its unified control of Congress—in the 2026 midterm elections.

Punishing a party for enacting unpopular legislation after the fact is cognitively easier than making nuanced, ex ante judgments about how much power that party should wield, before any policy consequences unfold. The 2026 midterms will offer voters a classic opportunity to "balance" power by restraining the president through support for the opposition party, just as they have done in most recent midterm elections (Alesina and Rosenthal, 1995; Bafumi, Erikson and Wlezien, 2010; Erikson, 2016). However, the 2024 elections provided the electorate with ample opportunities to obviate the need for balancing by electing a divided government in the first place. For much of the twenty-first century, the first two years of a president's term have routinely resulted in major legislative accomplishments—from the Affordable Care Act in 2010 to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2017 and the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022—that swiftly became unpopular and contributed to midterm backlash. While midterm elections provide a form of accountability, they occur after far-reaching and unpopular policy changes have already been implemented.

Voters are often faced with binary choices between one partisan extreme or another. Presidential elections, like congressional contests, often feature pairs of candidates who are more ideologically extreme than the median American voter (Bafumi and Herron, 2010), and swathes of the electorate prefer some moderate policy outcomes (Fowler et al., 2023). However, concurrent elections allow voters to mitigate this problem by voting for a Congress

[1] https://www.insideelections.com/news/article/the-7309-vote-election-how-republicans-held-the-house1

of one party and a president of the other.

Scholars have theorized the existence of "anticipatory balancing" in which voters who expect one candidate in a presidential election to win prefer that candidate's party to wield less power in Congress (Erikson, 2016; Algara, Hale and Struthers, 2022). Yet to date, there has been no clear causal test of this phenomenon, and existing descriptive evidence remains ambiguous. Understanding whether anticipatory balancing occurs is especially important in an era of heightened elite polarization, when the legislative consequences of unified government are increasingly far reaching (McCarty, 2019). At the same time, individual vote choice may be ever more calcified, as partisan consistency and reduced ticket-splitting become more common both across and within elections (Jacobson, 2017; Smidt, 2017; Kuriwaki, 2024). Do supporters of a presidential candidate who learn about that candidate's likely victory act to restrain the power of their congressional co-partisans?

We begin by taking a theoretically broad view of anticipatory balancing, which we define as a causal relationship between beliefs about the likely winner of the presidential election—and that candidates' potential policy accomplishments—and a voter's preferences for congressional control. We offer three refinements to existing theories: (1) differentiating weak and strong forms of balancing at the individual voter level, (2) clarifying that balancing is a causal relationship between expectations of the result of the presidential election and preferences for control of Congress, and (3) emphasizing that anticipatory balancing differs from midterm balancing not just because of uncertainty, but also because it requires voters to anticipate policy changes—whereas those consequences are already known to voters who engage in midterm balancing. Drawing on this framework, we use a repeated-measures design with multiple embedded randomizations to test the effects of three distinct interventions.

We find precisely estimated null effects for the first two treatments, which employ realistic information about a candidate's odds of winning and likely policy consequences of their victory. These results allow us to rule out substantively meaningful shifts, cast-

ing doubt on the ability of campaign messages or horse-race coverage to induce balancing. In contrast, the third treatment—asking respondents to consider hypothetical election outcomes—produces statistically and substantively significant changes in both preferences for congressional control and reported vote intention. These findings suggest that while anticipatory balancing is possible, it appears to require a level of certainty about electoral outcomes that is rarely present in the contemporary era of closely contested presidential elections.

Theories of Anticipatory Balancing

We define anticipatory balancing as a forward-looking, causal relationship between a voter's belief about who will win the presidential election and the voter's preferences for congressional control and vote choice in concurrent congressional elections. In the sections below, we review prior evidence and explain how anticipatory balancing both overlaps with and departs from related concepts such as midterm balancing and other forms of strategic voting. Compared to prior definitions, ours clarifies that updating preferences for how much of Congress a party controls—not merely changing vote choices or majority control— constitutes evidence of balancing.

We begin with midterm balancing as a baseline: a well-established but less cognitively demanding behavior. While it is widely observed that the party of the incumbent president performs poorly in the midterms, a range of plausible explanations exist. These range from a "surge and decline" in turnout by co-partisans of the president (Campbell, 1986), retrospective evaluations of the president's performance, and reactions to economic conditions (Tufte, 1975; Fiorina, 1978; Jacobson, 1989). We focus on balancing theory, which suggests that voters strategically vote against the president's party to produce a more divided, or "balanced," partisan composition of government, thereby promoting more moderate policy outcomes Alesina and Rosenthal (1995); Mebane (2000); Bafumi, Erikson and Wlezien (2010). While a direct causal estimate of midterm balancing is not feasible, a state-level re-

gression discontinuity supports a similar conclusion: when one party wins the executive, its candidates suffer in the subsequent midterms Folke and Snyder (2012).

Existing balancing theories suggest that voters seek to constrain the power of the president's party, but they often treat vote choice as the sole mechanism through which this occurs. As we argue, however, voter preferences over which party holds majority control—or how large that majority should be—also offer evidence of balancing as a cognitive process. These different manifestations of balancing reflect divergent mental models of how Congress operates, and in turn, how voters believe they can restrain presidential power. On one end, some theories focus on the agenda-setting power of the majority party (Rohde, 1991; Aldrich and Rohde, 2000; Cox and McCubbins, 2005, 2007). If voters' conception of how policy outcomes are determined resembles these theories, then balancers would be identified only as those who change their preferences over majority control. In contrast, voters who share the intuitions of models that de-emphasize party control (Krehbiel, 2010) might prefer that a party controls fewer seats, even if they still favor it retaining the majority.

Notably, existing studies that do not ask about seat-share preferences cannot distinguish between these competing models. This distinction points to the potential for "strong" versus "weak" balancing: the former entails changes in both preferences for control and vote choice, while the latter involves only adjustments to seat-share preferences—but need not modify their real-world behavior. Our design captures both possibilities by measuring not just binary preferences over party control but also desired partisan seat shares. These preferences provide richer data on how committed voters are to their party's absolute control of Congress.

All possible forms of anticipatory balancing, however, assume a higher degree of political sophistication than is typically required for midterm balancing. In midterm elections, the identity of the president, his policy agenda, and any resulting thermostatic backlash that agenda has engendered are known and are of sufficiently high salience to overcome informa-

tional obstacles (Bafumi, Erikson and Wlezien, 2010). By contrast, anticipatory balancing requires voters to make contingent predictions: about who will win the presidency and, under a given outcome, what policies that candidate will enact depending on congressional control. In our design, we explore this dimension by priming respondents with information about conservative control of the Supreme Court and observing whether that affects their expectations of policy outcomes, and thus their preferences over congressional control. Further, by asking respondents to consider hypothetical outcomes in our final randomization, we offer a middle ground between anticipatory and midterm balancing: a case where the winner is assumed but their actual governing agenda and record have not yet been observed by voters.

While some scholars have found descriptive evidence of anticipatory balancing under certain conditions (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2004; Erikson, 2016; Lacy et al., 2019), others remain skeptical of the public's capacity to carry out such a cognitively demanding strategy (Burden and Jones, 2009). Even in Erikson (2016), support for balancing is limited to voters who are "knowledgeable, non-partisan and moderate or independent" (563). More broadly, research on strategic voting involving contingent future outcomes casts doubt on voters' ability to engage in this style of reasoning. Studies of primary elections suggest that voters struggle to integrate information about general election competitiveness into their primary choices (Corbett et al., 2022; Cohen, 2025). That said, there is also evidence that voters are capable of other complex behaviors—such as voting in the opposing party's primary (Thornburg, 2023; Markovits and Cohen, 2025) or coordinating on viable candidates in multi-party elections (Eggers and Vivyan, 2020; Eggers, Rubenson and Loewen, 2022)—suggesting some forms of strategic reasoning are within reach.

Recent elections, however, likely represent a particularly hard test for anticipatory balancing. As the general election nears, voters hold strong priors about presidential candidates, and these beliefs harden over time (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012; Broockman and

Kalla, 2023). Partisanship increasingly dominates vote choice (Smidt, 2017), and rates of ticket-splitting are at historic lows (Kuriwaki, 2024). Under such conditions, it is reasonable to doubt that partisans would shift their preferences—let alone vote against their party's congressional candidates—in response to updated expectations about the presidential race.[2] After all, many other inputs to vote choice, such as anti-democratic behavior (Graham and Svolik, 2020) or incumbency advantages (Jacobson, 2015), have shown minimal—and possibly diminishing—effects on recent electoral outcomes.

How can we empirically identify anticipatory balancing in the electorate? While midterm balancing is often invoked to explain partisan defection in congressional races, balancing behavior does *not* require deviation from party allegiances, and may even reinforce them under certain conditions. Instead, we conceive of anticipatory balancing at the individual level as a shift away from the congressional allies of a presidential candidate as a voter gains confidence that the candidate will win the general election.[3] Conversely, balancing could entail moving *toward* co-partisan congressional candidates as a voter expects their preferred presidential candidate to lose. Balancing implies a parallel response across the supporters of both major candidates: as either candidate becomes more likely to win the presidency, in the eyes of voters, more voters respond by opposing that candidate's party in congressional races. For example, a Democratic Harris supporter who would have supported a Republican Senate candidate under electoral uncertainty—but who shifts to supporting the Democratic Senate candidate upon becoming confident that Harris will lose the election—is engaged in balancing, even though this results in straight-ticket voting. This approach produces clear causal predictions, which we now proceed to test.

[2]Though these trends reinforce our confidence that none of our treatments are changing presidential vote choice.

[3]Essentially, we seek to causally test the logic of separable preferences described by Lacy et al. (2019).

Method

We conducted our test of anticipatory balancing in the 2024 general elections using an original survey with three embedded randomizations, recording outcomes after each treatment. Our full sample of 2,854 respondents was recruited by CloudResearch Connect, and the survey was fielded in the week leading up to Election Day (November 5). Because one of our key outcome measures is the respondent's vote choice in their own state's U.S. Senate race, we restricted our sample to 30 of the 32 states that held Senate contests in 2024.[4] The final sample consisted of 44% Democrats (1,263), 37% Republicans (1,063), 19% Independents (528), based on a self-ID question asked prior to treatment. We further limited the sample to respondents who passed an attention check.

Because voters' attempts to balance against the likely winner of the presidential election may manifest in different ways, we measure down-ballot preferences using three indicators of support for the respondent's party in 2024: 1) Vote choice in the real U.S. Senate election in the respondent's state, where the names of the Democratic and Republican candidates are piped in based on the respondent's self-reported state of residence;[5] 2) Preferred number of House seats held by the respondent's party;[6] 3) Preferred number of Senate seats held by the respondent's party.

The two congressional seat preference items (House and Senate) were designed with an anchoring benchmark: respondents were informed of the highest number of seats any party has held in each chamber since 2000 to reduce ceiling effects (see Figure A1 in the

[4]We did not sample from Maine or Nebraska because in both states, a major candidate ran as an Independent, rather than as a Democrat or a Republican. This would have complicated comparisons with other Senate races, given that party loyalty is central to this study.

[5]Options are also included for "Other Candidate/Third Party" and abstention.

[6]We define the respondent's party as the party of the presidential candidate they supported in the pre-treatment battery. This approach—rather than using self-reporting partisanship—avoids ambiguity in how to categorize self-identified Independents and is more directly tied to balancing theory, which typically focuses on actions taken in response to presidential outcomes. Notably, the two variables are highly correlated: among the 81% of the sample who explicitly identified with a party, 95% supported that party's nominee for president. See Appendix Figure **??** for a visual comparison.

Appendix).[7] We administered all three measures after each of the three treatment arms in order to isolate the effect of each individual treatment, rather than their cumulative impact.[8]

While respondents were always asked about the number of seats they preferred their preferred party to hold in each chamber of Congress, we recode all outcome measures to reflect their preferences for Democratic seat share, such that the higher values indicate stronger support for the Democratic Party. For the Senate vote choice question, we treat responses as binary: a value of 0 indicates support for the Republican candidate, a third-party candidate, or abstention, and a value of 1 indicates support for the Democratic Party candidate. This re-coding reflects our theoretical expectation that balancing should induce parallel movement across parties, with both Trump and Harris supporters becoming more favorable towards Democrats in Congress as they update towards a Trump victory. We used Democratic seat share as the outcome because Trump's eventual victory in the presidential election made Democratic congressional control the form of anticipatory balancing that would have prevented unified control of the federal government.

The first randomization tests whether exogenous shocks to respondents' expectations about the likely winner of the presidential election influence support for legislative candidates in 2024. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. The control group received only two pieces of neutral information: (1) the date of the election and (2) that over a billion dollars had been spent by the two presidential candidates over the course of the campaign. The two treatment groups received this same baseline information, along with an additional message indicating that either Donald Trump or Kamala Harris was favored to win the election. In crafting these treatments, we aimed to make the strongest possible case that each candidate was likely to prevail. These treatments were framed as simple summaries of aggregate political expectations, with no partisan or emotional cues.

[7]This prompt was included to discourage respondents from uniformly selecting the maximum value. Nonetheless, between 6-9% of respondents still chose the maximum at any given measurement point.

[8]We control for prior treatment assignments in all model specifications for subsequent treatment arms.

In the Harris treatment group, respondents were told that Harris is favored by national polls—including polls of voters who have already cast ballots in pivotal states—and that Democrats have historically performed well in the popular vote. In the Trump treatment group, respondents were told that Trump's chances to win the election looked strong based on: online political betting markets, battleground state polls, his over-performance of polls in past elections, and predictions from political forecasting models. The full text of both treatments is available in Figures A3 and A4 in the Appendix.

We pre-registered the following hypotheses regarding the effect of this treatment:

Hypothesis 1A: A treatment increasing perceptions that one's preferred presidential candidate will win the presidency decreases preferences for that candidate's party's control in Congress, compared to a control.

Hypothesis 1B: A treatment decreasing perceptions that one's preferred presidential candidate will win the presidency increases preferences for that candidate's party's control in Congress, compared to a control.

Collectively, these hypotheses suggest parallel movement, such that learning a candidate will win makes their supporters and opponents prefer fewer seats for that candidate's party. To assess whether the expectations shock treatment successfully shifted beliefs about the likely winner of the 2024 presidential election, we include two manipulation check measures after the first treatment: (1) the respondent's predicted number of Electoral College votes for Donald Trump,[9] and (2) the respondent's estimated probability (in percentage points) that Donald Trump will win the election.

[9]To anchor this response, we reminded respondents that 270 electoral votes are needed to win the presidency, and that Joe Biden received 305 electoral votes in his 2020 victory.

The second experiment independently tests whether reminders of institutional power structures——specifically, the partisan composition of the Supreme Court——influence voter preferences over congressional control. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The control group was told only that the Supreme Court has nine members. The treatment group, by contrast, was reminded that the Court currently holds a 6-3 conservative majority, and that this composition makes it easier for Republicans in the executive and legislative branches to enact their preferred policies. The full treatment text is included in Appendix Figure A5. This treatment is designed to heighten the salience of the existing conservative tilt in the judiciary. If voters are motivated to balance across branches of government, then respondents reminded of conservative dominance on the Court may be more inclined to support Democratic candidates for Congress, especially if they are also expecting a Republican presidential victory.

We offer pre-registered hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 2A: A treatment priming Republican control of the Supreme Court will increase (decrease) beliefs that right-wing (left-wing) policies will be enacted.

Hypothesis 2B: A treatment increasing beliefs that ideologically extreme policies will be passed if a party wins the presidency will increase ticket-splitting compared to the control.

In addition, we pre-registered that To evaluate whether the Supreme Court treatment actually heightened perceptions of Republican institutional advantage in policy-making, we included a manipulation check immediately afterward. Respondents were asked to estimate how likely it was that certain policies would be enacted if either the Republican or Democratic candidate were to win the presidency. Our expectation was that the treatment would (i) increase perceived likelihood of Republican policy enactment if Trump were to win,

and (ii) decrease perceived likelihood of Democratic policy enactment if Harris were to win.

The policies were deliberately chosen to be extreme and ideologically unilateral—scenarios in which the partisan composition of the Supreme Court could plausibly constrain or enable the executive and legislative branches, consistent with models of the Supreme Court limiting the policy space available to Congress (Segal, 1997; Segal, Westerland and Lindquist, 2011). Respondents were asked to estimate the likelihood that such policies would become federal law if their preferred presidential candidate were to win. Specifically, those who supported Donald Trump in the pre-treatment battery were asked about the likelihood of a national abortion ban and mass deportation of migrants under a Trump administration. Those who supported Kamala Harris were asked instead about the likelihood of eliminating all restrictions on abortion nationwide and fully opening the souther border under a Harris presidency. Respondents assessed the likelihood that these policies would be enacted on a 5-point Likert scale, from very likely to very unlikely.

These items were not intended to reflect actual campaign proposals, but rather to serve as a plausible illustration of ideologically extreme policies whose enactment would likely require cooperation—or at least noninterference—from a sympathetic judiciary. Importantly, each respondents was only asked about the policies plausibly associated with their *own* preferred candidate, allowing us to evaluate how reminders of institutional constraints shaped perceived policy feasibility within partisan expectations.

The third randomization is designed to isolate the role of uncertainty in balancing behavior while avoiding the challenge of shifting respondents' strong prior beliefs about the likely winner of the presidential election. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in which they were asked to imagine that either Kamala Harris or Donald Trump had already won the presidency. After reading this hypothetical outcome, respondents again reported their vote choice in their state's Senate race and their preferred level of partisan control in both chambers of Congress. Unlike the prior experiments, which required

respondents to consider balancing in the face of electoral uncertainty, this design removes ambiguity by explicitly fixing the outcome of the presidential race. In this way, the underlying hypothesis mirrors that of the first experiment but substitutes the probabilistic "odds shock" with a definitive hypothetical scenario.

Hypothesis 3A [10]: A hypothetical with the preferred candidate winning the presidency will increase ticket-splitting compared to a hypothetical with the preferred candidate losing the presidency.

We implemented the experiment in the final days of the presidential election to enhance external validity. In this final period of heightened media coverage, vote preferences are more fully crystallized and typically less responsive to standard persuasive messaging (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012; Broockman and Kalla, 2023). Moreover, the gap between stated vote intentions in surveys and real-world behavior is likely smallest at this stage, especially for the Senate vote outcome, which required respondents to choose between the actual candidates on the ballot in their state. Finally, our first two experiments were designed to update specific expectations: (1) about the likely presidential outcome and (2) about the policy consequences of that outcome. By late October and early November, these expectations were also likely to be firmly held, further motivating our decision to introduce a treatment that sidesteps belief updating altogether.

Estimation

In Equation 1, we present our main estimation strategy. Let χ_1 denote the pre-registered vector of covariates, and $Y_{ij}, j \in [1, 3]$ as the outcome for respondent i at time j, where j indexes the different survey waves corresponding to each treatment arm. The three randomized treatment conditions are denoted as τ_1, τ_2, τ_3, corresponding to the presidential expectations

[10] As mentioned earlier, we re-code the outcomes to estimate this outcome in terms of preferences for Democratic Party control, but results are robust to coding outcomes in terms of ticket-splitting.

shock, the Supreme Court priming treatment, and the presidential outcome hypothetical, respectively. All models are estimated with robust standard errors and the vector of covariates χ_i. The outcome variable is indexed by j for the period in the survey which is being assessed by the given model, outcomes include only randomizations prior that outcome being recorded, such that the first wave excludes τ_2 and τ_3 and the second wave excludes τ_3

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\tau_1 + \beta_2\tau_2 + \beta_3\tau_3 + \omega\chi_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

We note two minor deviations from the pre-analysis plan. First, we pre-registered several hypotheses in terms of ticket-splitting - that is supporting a congressional candidate of a different party than the presidential candidate. However, because our expectations applied to supporters of both candidates, they mechanically translate into the expectation that as a candidate is perceived as likelier to win their congressional allies lose support - as such we present most results in terms of movement against the party of the candidates whose probability of winning or likely policy agenda is altered. Second, while we pre-registered controlling for prior randomizations for the later outcomes, we dramatically increase precision by controlling for the prior outcomes, especially because the earlier treatments proved mostly ineffective. Results are robust to controlling only for prior randomizations, though precision suffers.

Results

For each of the three randomizations, we assess the effects of the randomized treatments—separately among Harris and Trump supporters—for (1) vote choice in the Senate race and (2) preferences for Democratic congressional control of Congress. All models involve a set of pre-registered covariates that were collected prior treatment: gender, race, political sophistication, age, education, and vote choice in the 2020 presidential election. As noted earlier, for the second and third randomizations, we additionally control for prior outcome

values to estimate treatment effects using a difference-in-differences design. In the Appendix, we report "long" models that include full treatment-by-treatment interaction terms.

Randomization 1: Odds Shock

We begin with our first—and arguably most realistic—experimental treatment. Table 1, reports the treatment effects on our two manipulation checks: (1) predictions of Trump's electoral votes and (2) perceived odds Trump will win the 2024 presidential election. In addition to the regular matrix of covariates used in model specifications to estimate effects of treatments 1-3, we also control for a pre-treatment question about the likelihood that Trump will win the election, which is measured on a 5-point Likert scale from very likely to very unlikely.

Overall, the treatment effects on respondents' perceptions of Trump's electoral prospects were statistically significant, but substantively quite modest. As shown in Table 1, the Trump-favored treatment increased respondents' estimated probability of a Trump win win about 2.7 percentage points and increased expected Electoral College (EC) votes for Trump by 11.4 votes, both of which are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level (columns 1-2). The Harris-favored treatment, as expected, moved beliefs in the opposite direction, reducing Trump's win probability by 1.8 percentage points and his expected EC votes by about 8.4, also at high levels of significance. These shifts imply that the total difference in beliefs between the two treatment groups is approximately 4.5 percentage points in subjective probability and about 19.8 EC votes, which represents roughly $\frac{1}{5}$ of a standard deviation.

Columns 3 and 4 introduce interactions by 2024 presidential vote choice, which was measured pre-treatment. On average, Trump voters in the control group are much more optimistic about Trump's chances of winning the election than Harris voters in the control group, where they give him about 9.3 percentage points higher in probability of victory and

Table 1: Manipulation Check Outcomes

	Prob. Trump Win	Expected Trump EC Votes	Prob. Trump Win	Expected Trump EC Votes
Harris Favored	−1.848***	−8.432***	−1.608*	−5.398+
	(0.560)	(2.371)	(0.763)	(3.258)
Trump Favored	2.716***	11.358***	3.622***	12.578***
	(0.546)	(2.446)	(0.764)	(3.116)
Trump Voter	8.485***	37.154***	9.318***	40.152***
	(0.871)	(3.645)	(1.061)	(4.550)
Harris Favored: Trump Voter			−0.523	−6.558
			(1.135)	(4.824)
Trump Favored: Trump Voter			−2.027+	−2.634
			(1.096)	(5.033)
Num.Obs.	2847	2846	2847	2846
R2	0.734	0.451	0.734	0.451

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

about 40 additional EC votes. The Trump-favored treatment was significant only among Harris voters, who gave him a 3.6 percentage point higher chance of winning the election and 12.6 more EC votes on average than Harris voters in the control group. While the treatment effect for Trump voters receiving the Trump-favored treatment is still positive ($b = 3.622 - 2.027 = 1.595$ for column 3, and $b = 12.578 - 2.634 = 9.944$ for column 4), it is not statistically significant. The Harris-favored treatment is significant among Harris voters to the $p < 0.05$ level for the probability that Trump will win the election, but insignificant for predicted EC votes. Among Trump voters, the Harris-favored treatment is only significant for the EC votes outcome, where they predict 11.956 fewer EC votes for Trump with a standard error of 5.823.

Despite modest magnitudes, these findings confirm that the odds shock treatments shifted beliefs in the expected directions. Among control group respondents, Harris supporters estimated Trump would receive 253 EC votes (implying a Harris win), while Trump supporters projected 318 votes (implying a Trump victory). This asymmetry reflects partisans' tendency to remain optimistic about their preferred candidate's prospects, consistent with the pre-treatment measures and prior research (Enos and Hersh, 2017).

We now report our first main set of pre-registered results. Consistent with the modest magnitude of belief updating observed in the manipulation checks, we find no evidence in

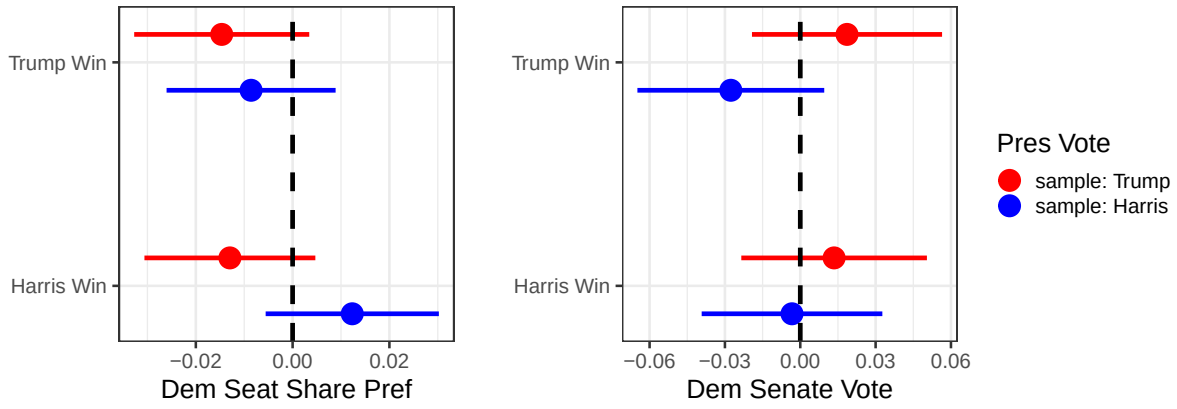

Figure 1: No Evidence of Anticipatory Balancing in Response To Odds Treatments

Figure 1 that the odds shock treatment induced anticipatory balancing for either treatment group. Results are presented separately by presidential candidate preference, and neither Hypothesis 1A nor 1B is supported. Moreover, the relatively narrow confidence intervals rule out large effects on preferences for congressional control or Senate vote choice.

Given the limited impact of the treatments, we examine descriptive patterns in the pooled sample to show the distribution of preferences between the parties. Reflecting persistently low rates of ticket-splitting, 88% of Harris supporters and only 11% of Trump supporters indicated support for a Democratic Senate candidate. Similarly, Trump (Harris) supporters consistently preferred Republican (Democratic) control of Congress. On average, Harris voters preferred 262 Democratic-held House seats and 62 Senate seats, while Trump voters expressed near-identical preferences for their own party: 260 House seats and 61 Senate seats. Only 8.5% of both Harris and Trump voters preferred that the opposing party control at least one chamber of Congress. That said, strong but not maximal co-partisan preferences were common: just 6.2% of Harris voters and 4.7% of Trump voters preferred unified, total control by their party (i.e., all seats). In sum, voters overwhelmingly supported strong co-partisan control of Congress, but few desired complete dominance.

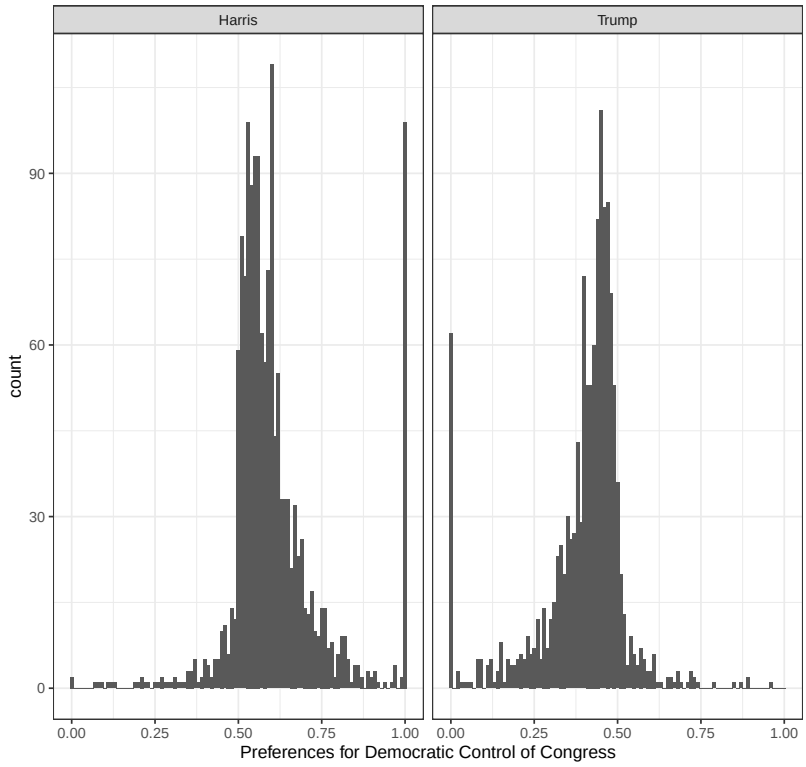

Figure 2: Preferences for Democratic Seat Share by Presidential Vote

Randomization 2: SCOTUS Balance Information Treatment

We now turn to the results of the Supreme Court priming experiment, which compares a treatment condition that reminds subjects that Republican-appointed justices hold a 6-3 majority on the Supreme Court to a control group. This randomization tests a broader version of balancing theory: if voters seek to constrain a likely incoming president's policymaking capacity, then information about the feasibility of that candidate's policy goals—given institutional constraints—should condition balancing behavior. Specifically, we examine whether increasing the salience of conservative dominance on the Court shifts beliefs about likely policy outcomes, thereby altering incentives to balance. In estimating treatment effects, we include the same demographic covariates used in the previous models, as well as the previous outcome measures from the first experiment to increase precision (though our results are stable without this control).

We begin with manipulation checks, which assess whether the Supreme Court re-

Table 2: Manipulation Check Outcomes

	Harris Voters	Trump Voters
Rep SCOTUS Reminder	−0.050	0.239*
	(0.103)	(0.112)
Num.Obs.	1557	1290
R2	0.122	0.105

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

minder influenced beliefs about the enactment of extreme policy proposals. The dependent variables are two additive indices, each ranging from 2 to 10: the Republican Enactment Index, measuring the perceived likelihood of a total abortion ban and mass deportation under a Trump presidency, and the Democratic Enactment Index, measuring the perceived likelihood of full abortion access nationwide and open borders under a Harris administration. We also control for pre-treatment attitudes towards these policies using the corresponding indices for respondents' ex ante support for these policies, measured prior to the first experiment.

As shown in Table 2, Trump voters who received the Republican SCOTUS reminder significantly updated their beliefs, indicating a higher likelihood of extreme Republican policies being enacted (estimate = 0.239, 95% CI = 0.13, 0.35). In contrast, Harris voters updated in the expected direction—perceiving extreme Democratic policies as less likely under a Harris presidency—but the effect was smaller (-0.050) and not statistically significant. That said, neither treatment effect exceeded $\frac{1}{10}$ if a standard deviation, suggesting that while statistically detectable among Trump supporters, the size of the belief update was modest overall.

Table 3 presents the main results of Experiment 2, which tested whether reminding respondents of the Supreme Court's 6–3 conservative majority would induce anticipatory balancing in congressional preferences. As in Experiment 1, we estimate heterogenous effects by pre-treatment presidential vote choice and show no evidence of balancing in either sub-group. This null result holds despite clear partisan divergence in beliefs about the likelihood that a

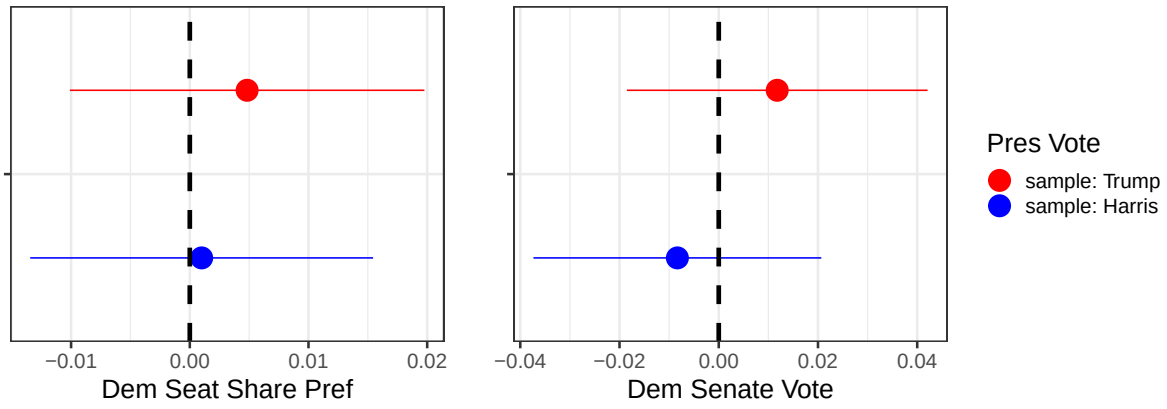

Figure 3: SCOTUS Treatments do Not Change Vote Choice or Preferences

newly elected president would successfully enact an extreme policy agenda, as shown in our manipulation checks. Disaggregating the outcomes further confirms these findings. Across all four dependent variables, the SCOTUS treatment coefficients are substantively small and statistically indistinguishable from zero for both Harris and Trump voters. Highlighting Republican dominance on the Court did not reduce support for co-partisan Senate candidates, nor did it alter preferences over the partisan distribution of seats in either chamber. These consistently null results suggest that reminders about the Supreme Court's composition did not translate into strategic balancing behavior in congressional elections.

That said, we find some suggestive evidence of heterogeneity by policy preferences. In exploratory analyses not pre-registered, ideologically moderate Republicans appear slightly more likely to favor a greater Democratic seat share in response to the SCOTUS treatment. This is broadly consistent with theoretical expectations that more moderate voters may be more responsive to cues about institutional balance and policy extremism.

Randomization 3: Hypothetical Outcomes

Having shown that experimentally altering beliefs about candidate odds and the policy environment had minimal and conditional effects on preferences for congressional control and Senate vote choice, we now turn to the most direct test of anticipatory balancing: random

assignment of hypothetical presidential election outcomes. Table 4 presents the results of Experiment 3, in which respondents were asked to imagine a scenario in which either Kamala Harris or Donald Trump had already won the presidency. Unlike the previous experiments, this design removes all uncertainty. While the manipulation check for the first randomization showed only modest effects on respondents' beliefs about the likely winner, this treatment explicit. Taking this comparison at face value, the hypothetical randomization is roughly 20 times more powerful than the odds shock in Experiment 1.[11] Moreover, because this design directly assigns the winner, the between-subjects comparison does not depend on respondents' priors about the presidential race, unlike in the odds treatment. In subsequent exploratory analyses, we examine how treatment effects vary based on how far the assigned hypothetical diverges from a respondent's priors.

Figure 4 shows that both Harris and Trump voters updated their preferences towards Democratic control of Congress in the hypothetical where Trump won the election. The magnitude of this shift is greater among Harris voters. For vote choice, results are more mixed: Trump voters became 2 percentage points more likely to vote for a Democratic Senate candidate under the Trump-win hypothetical, but the treatment effect for Harris voters is near zero. The pooled effect on Senate vote choice is only marginally statistically significant.

Across both groups of partisans, the pooled treatment effect was a 4.3 percentage point increase in preferences for Democratic control of Congress (95% CI = 4.0, 4.6) and a 2.4 percentage point increase in support for Democratic Senate candidates (95% CI = 1.4, 3.4). This latter effect is politically meaningful given the narrow margins that determine congressional control in the modern era (Lee, 2016). In 2024, three Senate races—Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin—were decided by smaller margins than this estimated effect. And while we did not ask respondents for House vote preferences, a similar shift in margin would have been sufficient to flip control of the House, denying now-President Trump the unified Republican control of government that materialized in the 2024 election.

[11] See Appendix Figure A6 for power analysis results.

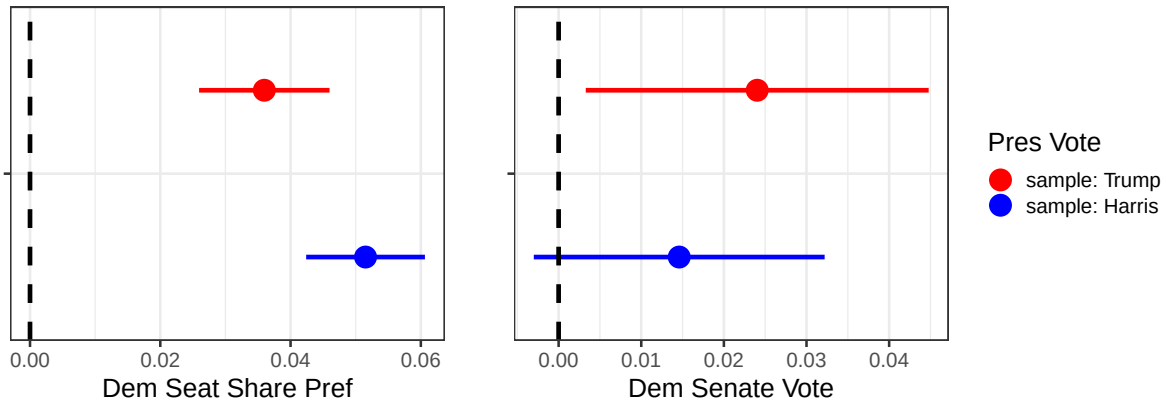

Figure 4: Effect of Trump versus Harris Hypothetical Victory

Alternate Outcome Measures

We now explore alternate outcome measures, specifically: (1) preferences for majority Democratic control, and (2) preferences for Democrats to have zero seats. This analysis reflects a broader conceptualization of anticipatory balancing, which may involve shifts across a spectrum of institutional preferences beyond direct vote choice. Table 3 presents these outcomes alongside the main dependent variables analyzed earlier.

We find that, when comparing the Trump-win to the Harris-win hypothetical, respondents became 1.7 percentage points less likely to prefer that Democrats hold zero seats in Congress, a shift driven entirely by Trump supporters. However, the treatment only increased support for Democratic majority control by 0.3 percentage points (imprecisely estimated). These findings suggest that while respondents adjusted their preferences for how many seats Democrats should hold, this shift did not translate into greater support for Democratic control of Congress as a binary outcome.

Table 3: Alternate Outcome Codings for Hypothetical Treatment

	Percentage Control	Vote Choice	0 Dem Seats	Democratic Control
Trump Win	0.044***	0.016*	−0.017**	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.011)
Num.Obs.	2747	2747	2747	2747
R2	0.823	0.860	0.210	0.662

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Heterogeneous Effects for Hypothetical Randomization

We now present a non-preregistered heterogeneity analysis by political sophistication. As shown in Figure 5, the observed treatment effects from the pooled results of Randomization 3 appear to be driven primarily by politically sophisticated voters.[12] Among this group, we observe clear shifts in both preferences for Democratic congressional control and Senate vote choice in response to the hypothetical presidential outcome treatment. In contrast, non-sophisticated voters show no meaningful response on either outcome measure.

Next, we explore heterogeneity by policy extremism. Theoretically, we might expect either single-dimension ideology, or a specific aversion to extreme policies to moderate the effect of the hypothetical treatment. After all, the policy rationale for balancing is that unified government will produce drastic swings in policy, and that some voters may seek to check those outcomes by dividing control. Individuals who support extreme policies, however, should not be dissuaded from supporting unified control of government by the party likely to enact them. In the Appendix we explore this form of heterogeneity for all three randomizations.

First, we note that in the hypotheticals experiment, we find that policy attitudes predict seat preferences as expected: individuals who favor conservative (liberal) policies prefer greater congressional control by Republicans (Democrats). However, interactions with

[12]We define these voters as those who got 2 out 2 knowledge questions correctly. We discuss in Appendix Section 1.3 how this likely over-states the sophisticated share of voters in the sample and correspondingly under-states the true heterogeneity between sophisticated and un-sophisticated respondents

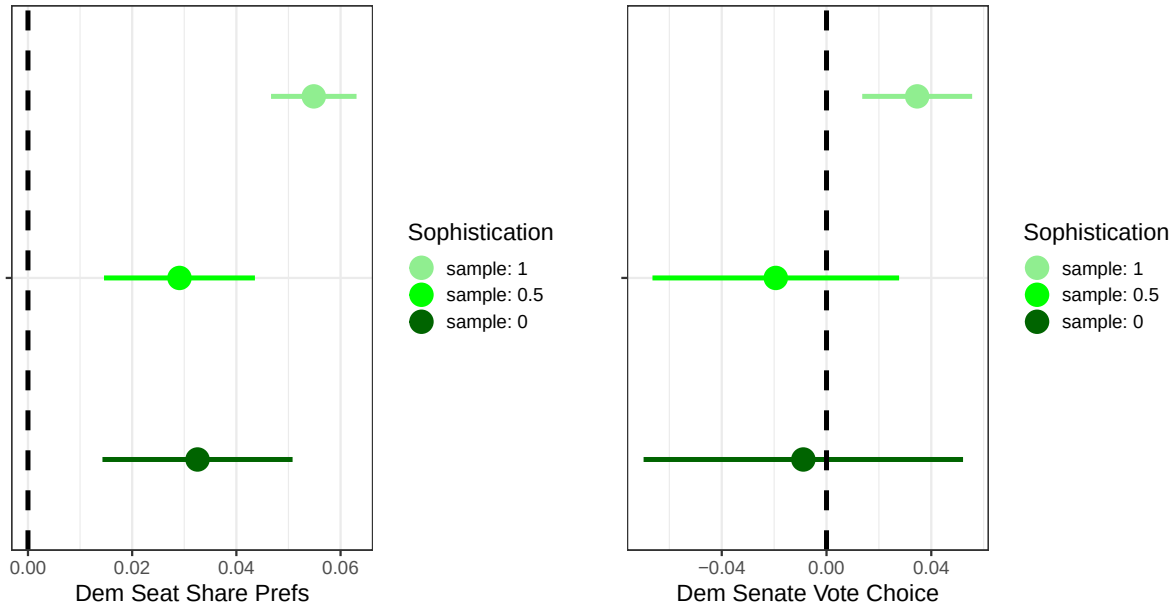

Figure 5: Effect of Hypothetical Treatment for Political Sophistication Subgroups

the hypothetical treatment do not yield consistent patterns, suggesting that extremism does not reliably moderate the balancing response in this context.

In additional analyses reported in the Appendix, we explore heterogeneity by education, Senate race competitiveness, and prior beliefs, all of which were preregistered moderators. None of these variables significantly condition treatment effects in the hypothetical experiment, even prior to multiple comparisons corrections.

Discussion

In this paper, we examined three potential mechanisms that might trigger anticipatory balancing: (1) realistic belief updating about the likely winner of the presidential election based on "horse-race" style information, (2) learning about the probable policy consequences of the election outcome, and (3) reasoning about hypotheticals where the outcome is presented as a certainty. Among these, only the final treatment, which eliminated uncertainty by assigning a hypothetical winner, produced evidence of anticipatory balancing. While the effect

sizes are modest, they are nonetheless meaningful in the modern context of tightly contested elections and strong partisan loyalties. In contrast, our first two treatments had only limited effects on their respective mediators: respondents' beliefs about the likely outcome and its policy consequences, and yielded no evidence of downstream balancing behavior.

We interpret these patterns as showing important limitations in how balancing can operate within the saturated information environment of a modern presidential campaign. Although it is possible that a stronger treatment could have shifted beliefs more substantially, our "odds shock" treatment was deliberately designed to be realistic and bundled widely available facts similar to those used in previous work to successfully shift expectations about election outcomes. The manipulation check results indicate that voters held strong prior beliefs, not only about whom they supported byt also about who was likelu to win. As detailed in our results section, our estimates are sufficiently precise to rule out large effects on vote choice or congressional preferences. These findings suggest that in practice, attempts by campaigns to invoke balancing logic—such as positioning a candidate as a "check" on a likely presidential victor—are unlikely to meaningfully shift voter preferences.

Meanwhile, our final randomization—which, assuming participants take the treatments at face value, represents the causal effect of 100% shift in a given candidate's probability of winning—allows us to benchmark the degree of belief change required for balancing to occur. A shift in expectations across the inter-quartile range of beliefs about Trump's odds (from 42% to 75%) would correspond (assuming linearity) to movement of 1.3 percentage points in preferences for Democratic congressional control and 0.7 percentage points in vote choice. While real-world shocks of this magnitude are possible—such as a candidate collapsing in support due to scandal just before Election Day—they are rare. The broader context of recent American politics, characterized by close and persistently uncertain presidential races, makes such dramatic shifts in perceived probability infrequent. As a result, neither probabilistic news coverage nor campaign messaging emphasizing a candidate's odds

of victory is likely to induce meaningful balancing behavior. This finding stands in contrast to prior concerns that the public discussion of probabilistic information could have significant demobilizing effects (Westwood, Messing and Lelkes, 2020). Crucially, this hypothetical randomization occupies a middle ground between ordinary campaign messaging and the retrospection typically associated with midterm balancing.

Our findings underscore that anticipatory balancing remains possible, but only among more politically sophisticated voters and in response to substantial changes in beliefs about presidential outcomes. Notably, the broad distribution of preferences for opposition-party control, and their responsiveness of these preferences to our final treatment, suggests that many of the psychological preconditions for balancing are indeed present in the electorate. Our hypothetical results do suggest that the mechanisms that contribute to midterm loss could operate through a forward-looking mechanism in presidential elections, but only among sophisticated segments of the population that come to hold unusual degrees of confidence in the eventual victory of a presidential candidate. Even so, our hypothetical scenario does not exactly replicate the conditions of a midterm, where partisan trifectas often follow through on unpopular legislation and face a thermostatic backlash. Instead, our treatment removes a major barrier to the shifts in public opinion that eventually contribute to the near-ubiquitous defeat of the president's party in midterm elections.

These results further clarify the nature of balancing behavior in contemporary politics. Beyond our primary outcomes, the Trump-wins hypothetical reduced preferences for Democrats holding zero seats in Congress, while having a near-zero effect on preferences for majority Democratic control. This divergence suggests that anticipatory balancing may operate through more subtle channels than explicit vote choice or binary preferences for majority control. Voters may express a desire for the opposition to wield *some* power, but not necessarily to flip control. Instead, voters might seek a counterweight, revealing a more nuanced cognitive process or non-separable preferences for majority control than traditional

models of balancing often assume.

Future research should explore whether more intensive, albeit less externally valid, treatments—such as observing the history of past legislative accomplishments resulting from the unified control of government—are more effective at inducing balancing behavior. This may be especially relevant in lower-salience contexts, such as state legislative or judicial elections, where voters have weaker priors about their preferences, potentially making them more responsive to balancing cues or institutional considerations.

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Appendix

1.1 Balance Tests

Table A1: Balance for Odds Randomization

	control (N=960)		harris_win (N=949)		trump_win (N=945)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
female	0.553	0.497	0.524	0.500	0.549	0.498
white	0.719	0.450	0.723	0.448	0.724	0.447
college	0.602	0.490	0.592	0.492	0.558	0.497
polsoph_score	0.712	0.362	0.734	0.344	0.698	0.365
age	40.394	12.888	40.902	13.683	41.255	13.713
trump_likely_1	56.057	23.889	54.568	23.540	59.769	22.404
comp_sen	0.471	0.499	0.456	0.498	0.459	0.499
policy_extreme	6.490	1.952	6.576	2.002	6.401	2.033

Table A2: Balance Test for SCOTUS Randomization

	SCOTUS Control (N=1425)		SCOTUS Treat (N=1429)			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Diff. in Means	Std. Error
Senate 1	0.536	0.499	0.518	0.500	-0.018	0.019
Percent 1	0.513	0.178	0.512	0.174	-0.001	0.007
female	0.547	0.498	0.537	0.499	-0.011	0.019
white	0.709	0.454	0.735	0.442	0.026	0.017
college	0.587	0.492	0.581	0.494	-0.007	0.018
polsoph_score	0.724	0.353	0.706	0.361	-0.018	0.013
age	40.834	13.450	40.863	13.418	0.029	0.504
trump_likely_1	56.180	23.286	57.400	23.473	1.220	0.875
comp_sen	0.447	0.497	0.477	0.500	0.030	0.019
policy_extreme	6.493	2.000	6.485	1.993	-0.008	0.075

Table A3: Balance Test for Hypothetical Randomization

	Harris (N=1399)		Trump (N=1355)			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Diff. in Means	Std. Error
Senate 1	0.513	0.500	0.516	0.500	0.003	0.019
Senate 2	0.518	0.500	0.517	0.500	-0.002	0.019
Percent 1	0.513	0.178	0.509	0.175	-0.004	0.007
Percent 2	0.514	0.180	0.511	0.179	-0.003	0.007
female	0.519	0.500	0.565	0.496	0.046	0.019
white	0.733	0.443	0.718	0.450	-0.015	0.017
college	0.575	0.494	0.587	0.492	0.012	0.019
polsoph_score	0.711	0.360	0.718	0.356	0.007	0.014
age	41.028	13.511	41.026	13.476	-0.002	0.515
trump_likely_1	57.585	23.138	56.992	23.744	-0.593	0.894
comp_sen	0.462	0.499	0.460	0.499	-0.002	0.019
policy_extreme	6.440	2.039	6.532	1.953	0.093	0.076

1.2 Regression Results with Control Group Dropped

The model below allows us to asses our manipulation checks from the first randomization while excluding the control group, this produces the maximum observable shift between expectations about the candidate's odds of winning. We can see that even in this extreme comparison, the experimentally induced shift in beliefs is modest.

Table A4: Manipulation Checks and Odds Shock Treatment Results without Control Group

	Prob Trump Win	Expected Trump EC Votes	Dem Seat Share Pref	Dem Senate Vote
Trump Favored	4.597***	19.691***	-0.012+	-0.011
	(0.563)	(2.361)	(0.006)	(0.014)
Trump Voter	8.194***	40.113***	-0.170***	-0.566***
	(1.137)	(4.602)	(0.011)	(0.036)
Num.Obs.	1892	1892	1892	1892
R2	0.727	0.457	0.402	0.648

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

1.3 Analyses of Political Sophistication Heterogeneous Effects

Our political sophistication questions are both binary answers, meaning a respondent guessing both answers would get the right answer to both $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time and would get at

least one answer 50% of the time. This means the current sophistication results are overstating the knowledge of the sample. Our best estimate is that while 56% of the sample got both answers correct, this contains a large share of respondents who did not know the true answer, but correctly guessed both answers, suggesting that the heterogeneous effects analysis understates the unique behavior of sophisticated voters, despite the already striking treatment heterogeneity of these respondents for the hypothetical treatment.

1.4 Additional Heterogenous Effects

We pre-registered additional heterogenous effects analyses that were not addressed (but were referenced) in the main text. We show these results in Table A5 below for state competitiveness, college education and prior beliefs for the final, hypothetical randomization. The reference category in Table A5 is the Harris hypothetical victory condition.

Table A5: Heterogeneous Effects

	Prefs	Vote	Prefs	Vote	Prefs	Vote
College	0.011	−0.014	0.011+	0.003	0.010	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.013)
Prior Odds	−0.002***	−0.004***	−0.002***	−0.004***	−0.002***	−0.004***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Competitive	0.003	0.005	0.012	0.024	0.002	0.005
	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.007)	(0.013)
Trump Win: College	0.001	0.035				
	(0.013)	(0.025)				
Trump Win: Competitive			−0.020	−0.037		
			(0.013)	(0.025)		
Trump Win: Prior Odds					0.000	0.000
					(0.000)	(0.000)
Num.Obs.	2747	2747	2747	2747	2747	2747
R2	0.389	0.590	0.390	0.590	0.393	0.590

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A6: Heterogeneous Effects by Demographic Characteristics

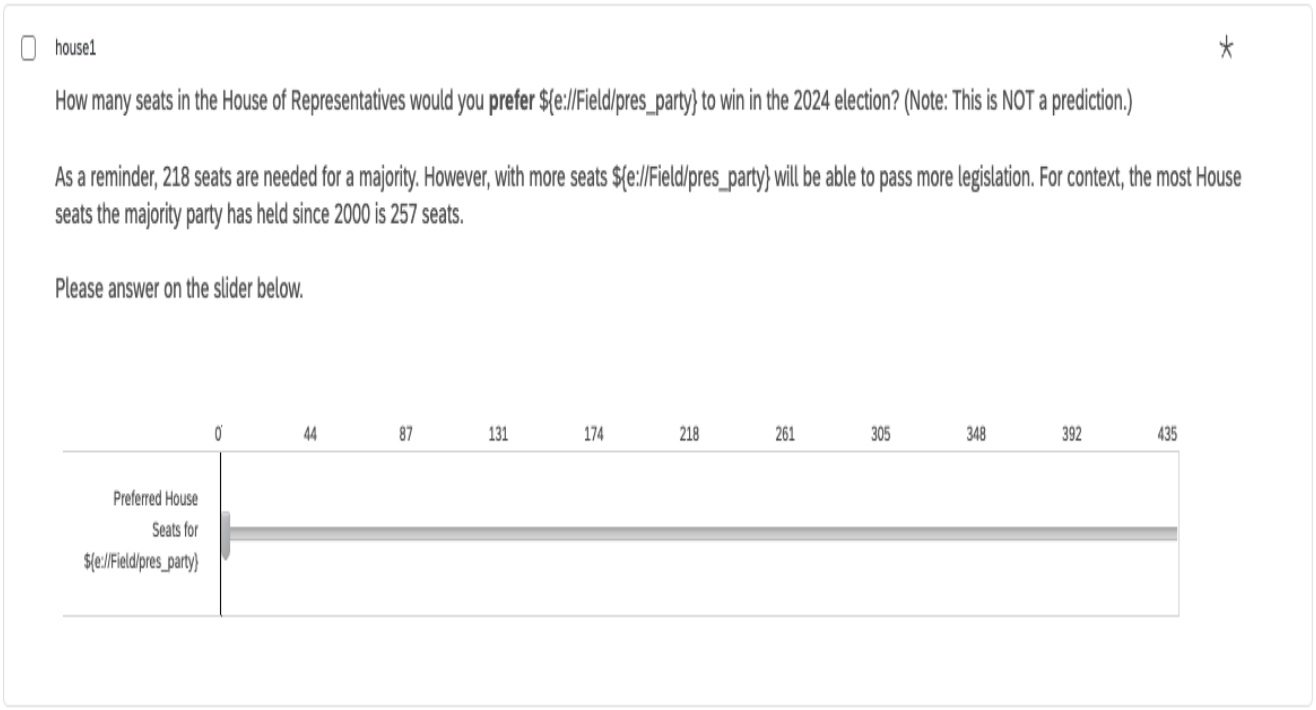
	Dem Seat Share	Dem Senate Vote	Dem Seat Share	Dem Senate Vote
Trump Win	0.004	0.002	0.052***	0.000
	(0.018)	(0.036)	(0.008)	(0.014)
Male	-0.006	-0.002	0.010	-0.009
	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.015)
Trump Win × Male			-0.032**	0.014
			(0.012)	(0.021)
Trump Win × Age (10 Years)	-0.003	-0.006		
	(0.003)	(0.006)		
Num.Obs.	2747	2747	2747	2747
R2	0.459	0.709	0.460	0.710

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Finally, we include heterogeneity by policy extremism for all three random assignments. The basic intuition of anticipatory balancing is that individuals who hold more moderate or heterogeneous policy preferences may seek to avoid one party having overwhelming control of congress, even as they want that party to control the presidency or even have a (narrow) trifecta. Broadly, we find no consistent evidence of this effect across our three randomizations.

We also test heterogeneity by demographic characteristics, such as age and gender. While we find no evidence that the hypothetical scenario treatments vary by age, we do find that the size of the treatment effect varies by gender. That is, while respondents who identified as female expressed a preference for 5.2% more Democratic seats in Congress under a Trump presidency than a Harris presidency, male respondents only prefer 2% more Democratic seats.

1.5 Experimental Materials



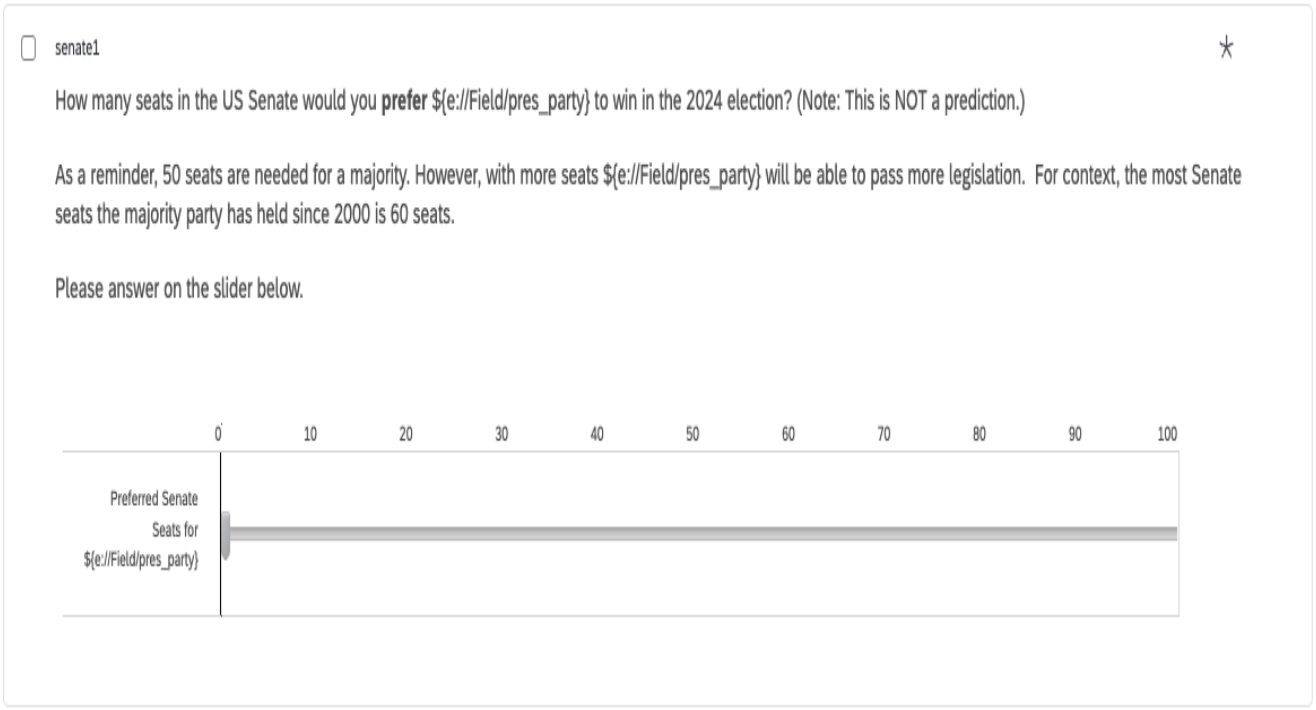


Figure A1: Question Phrasing for Congressional Seat Count Preference Questions

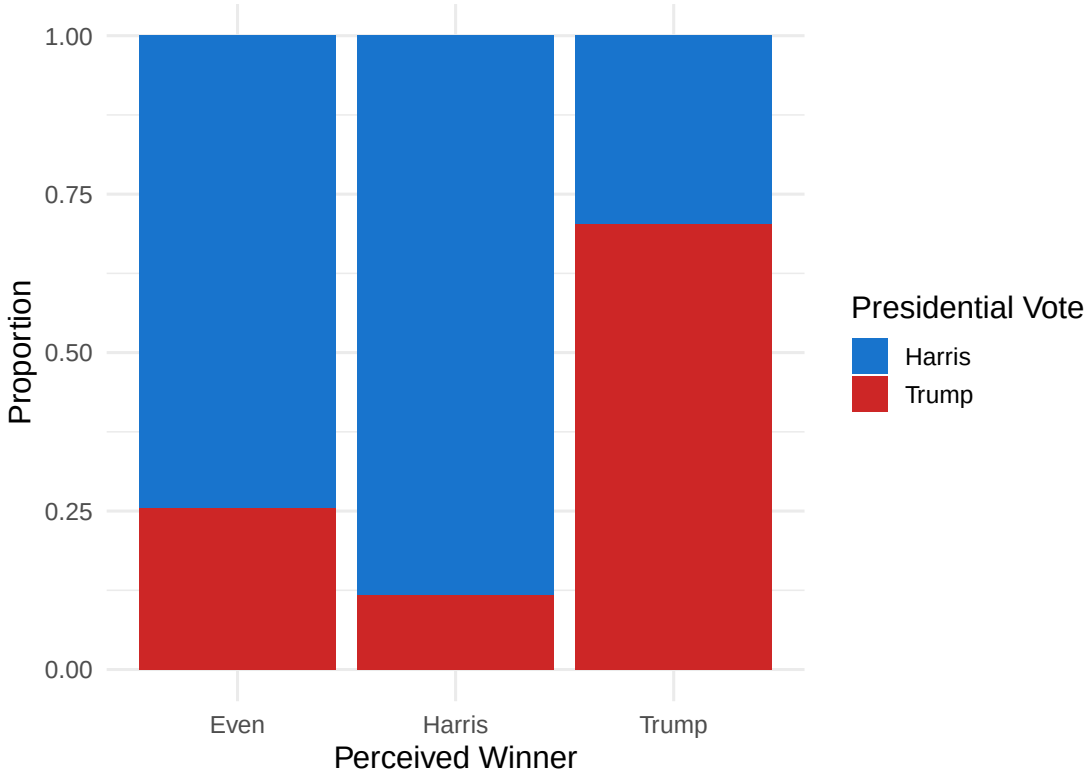


Figure A2: Presidential Vote by Perceived Winner

The 2024 presidential election will take place on November 5. The election is highly contested, and both candidates have spent more than a billion dollars campaigning in the battleground states.

Kamala Harris is favored to win the election:

- She leads in nearly all polls at the national level
- Democrats have won the popular vote in every election since 2004
- In polls of Americans who have already voted, she has a considerable lead in important battleground states

Figure A3: Harris Odds Shock Treatment

The 2024 presidential election will take place on November 5. The election is highly contested, and both candidates have spent more than a billion dollars campaigning in the battleground states.

Donald Trump is favored to win the election:

- As of ${date://CurrentDate/PT} Trump is clearly favored in the largest political betting markets
- Polls show the election is very close across the major battleground states
- However, Trump has consistently outperformed polls in the past
- Currently, most election forecasts show Trump leading in enough states to win the election

Figure A4: Trump Odds Shock Treatment

As a reminder: There are 9 justices on the Supreme Court.

- 6 of the 9 current justices were appointed by Republican presidents.
- This means that it is much easier for the Republican Party to enact the policies it wants.
- Because of its control over the court, the Republican Party has a much easier time accomplishing its goals.

Figure A5: SCOTUS Treatment

1.6 Statistical Power and the Challenge of Detecting Balancing Through Realistic Treatments

Our first randomization tests the effect of manipulating beliefs about the winner of the presidential election and finds null effects while our final randomization tests a substantively similar question but finds effects using a randomized hypothetical. A simple explanation of this discrepancy is that the modest manipulation check outcomes from the first randomization suggest that it did not move sufficiently. In order to explore this possibility, we use our final randomization of hypothetical outcomes as a benchmark resulting from a 100% shift in odds of a candidate winning (from 100% Trump winning to 0% Trump winning), and assuming linearity, we can see that shifting perceptions substantively enough to detect a statistically significant effect on preferences for congressional control would require a large shift in beliefs about the election winners. Specifically, this 100% shift translates to a 4.4% shift in preferences for control and a 1.6% shift in vote choice. The power curve for our experiment shown below suggests that, given optimistic assumptions about the prognostic value of covariates, we would have needed a treatment effect of approximately 2.5 percentage points, which would translate to a 57% shift in odds perceptions. Not only would this have required a substantively large change in beliefs, but ceiling effects limit the realistic change in preferences for many respondents, even assuming arbitrarily large persuasion effects or weak prior.

1.7 Treatment-by-Treatment Interactions

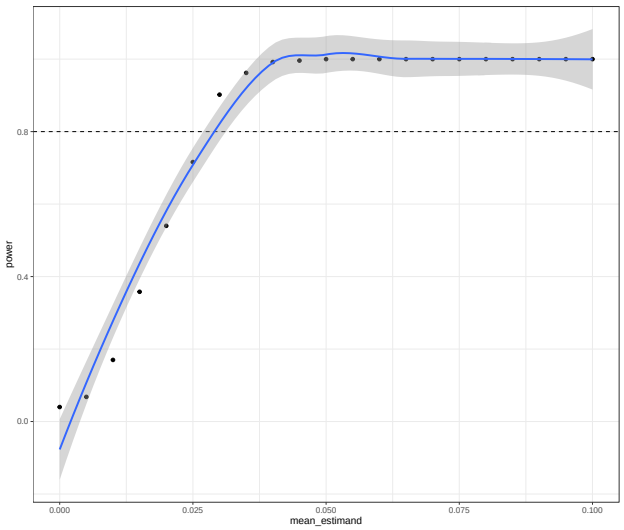


Figure A6: Power to Detect Effects on Preferences for Democratic Seat Share

Table A7: Full Set of Treatment-by-Treatment Interactions

	Wave 2 Percentage	Wave 2 Vote	Wave 3 Percentage	Wave 3 Vote
Harris Odds	−0.001	−0.004	−0.002	−0.010
	(0.004)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.027)
Trump Odds	−0.001	0.016	0.003	0.035
	(0.004)	(0.021)	(0.008)	(0.030)
Scotus	0.002	−0.012	0.004	−0.014
	(0.004)	(0.021)	(0.008)	(0.028)
Trump Hypo			0.042***	−0.009
			(0.008)	(0.028)
Harris Odds: Trump Hypo			0.010	0.022
			(0.012)	(0.040)
Trump Odds: Trump Hypo			0.003	−0.019
			(0.011)	(0.042)
Harris Odds:Scotus	−0.002	0.022	0.009	0.025
	(0.006)	(0.029)	(0.011)	(0.039)
Trump Odds:Scotus	−0.001	0.014	−0.012	−0.007
	(0.006)	(0.030)	(0.011)	(0.042)
Trump Odds:Scotus:Hypo Trump			−0.008	−0.003
			(0.016)	(0.058)
Num.Obs.	2847	2847	2747	2747
R2	0.885	0.599	0.822	0.616

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001