

Supporting Information

1. Stimulus Materials

Each participant learned that their candidate had lost the election, so there were two sets of treatment materials. One for participants voting for Brian Hastings (Republican) and one set for those voting for Rick Inslee (Democrat). We display the materials for participants voting for Brian Hastings (Republican) and hearing he lost the election.

Acceptance Conditions

The frame below represents the treatment materials for the *acceptance condition*. The losing candidate, Brian Hastings, congratulates his opponent and the vote margin is described as close. The *landslide condition* is identical; however, the underlined material reads: “The final vote margin in the House District 1 race was 114,278 votes with 247,602 votes for Rick Inslee and 133,324 votes for Brian Hastings” and “Despite the distance of the final vote”.

The Redmond Reporter

Brian Hastings Concedes House Race, Congratulates Rick Inslee

Byline: Jeremy Pelzer, staff writer for the Redmond Reporter

Brian Hastings, Republican candidate for House District 1, conceded and offered congratulations to his opponent, Democrat Rick Inslee, Tuesday evening. The Washington Secretary of State, Sam Reed, posted the final tally in the race after election officials finished counting all the remaining absentee and provisional ballots. The final vote margin in the House District 1 race was 2210 votes with 191,568 votes for Rick Inslee and 189,358 votes for Brian Hastings.

After hearing the final tally, Brian Hastings stated: “While elections can at times be divisive, I extend my sincere congratulations to Rick Inslee, and wish him the very best. He has a lot of work ahead of him and I am certain he will be sensitive and responsive to the needs of our community”.

Despite the closeness of the final vote, Brian Hastings said that he was confident that the local election officials in King, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties had done a good job in ensuring the accuracy and transparency of the election.

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Challenge Conditions

The frame below represents the treatment materials for the *irregularities condition*. The losing candidate, Brian Hastings, challenged the results of the election for non-specific reasons. The *mishandling condition* was identical; however, the underlined material read: “We have received reports that poll workers in more than a few precincts “found” boxes of ballots hours after election officials went to these precincts and collected their boxes. Such reports make us question whether incompetence or something more dishonest has occurred in this election.” The *deception condition* was also identical except the underlined material read: “We have received reports that voters in a dozen or more precincts received deceptive telephone calls in the days before the election providing them with false information that their voting places had changed. These calls are intended to confuse and discourage Washingtonians from voting”.

The Redmond Reporter

Brian Hastings Questions Results of House Race

Byline: Jeremy Pelzer, staff writer for the Redmond Reporter

Brian Hastings, Republican candidate for House District 1, questioned the victory claimed by his opponent, Democrat Rick Inslee, Tuesday evening. The Washington Secretary of State, Sam Reed, posted the final tally in the race after election officials finished counting all the remaining absentee and provisional ballots. The final vote margin in the House District 1 race was 2210 votes with 191,568 votes for Rick Inslee and 189,358 votes for Brian Hastings.

After hearing the final tally, Brian Hastings stated: “We have received reports that this election process was beset with voting irregularities. Such reports make us question whether incompetence or something more dishonest has occurred in this election”.

Despite the publication of the final vote, Brian Hastings said that he doubted that the local election officials in King, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties had done a good job in ensuring the accuracy and transparency of the election.

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2. Randomization Checks

One concern with these results is the possibility that random assignment failed to distribute participants with certain characteristics conducive to confidence in elections across the various treatment conditions. To explore this possibility, we examined whether participants in the various conditions were significantly different from each other in terms of age, sex (male vs. female), race (white vs. non-white) or aprior satisfaction with democracy. Participants did not significantly differ by age according to treatment assignment ($X^2(60)=66.24$, $p<0.27$), race ($X^2(5)=5.90$, $p=0.32$) or apriori satisfaction with democracy ($X^2(15)=16.55$, $p<0.35$), but they did differ by sex ($X^2(5)=10.89$, $p<0.10$). As a result, we examined whether sex interacted with treatment assignment to influence voter confidence.

Specifically, the results of a series of 2 (male or female) X 5 (treatment assignment) ANOVAs indicated that treatment assignment was related to the perception that votes were recorded accurately ($F_{5,148} = 11.75$, $p < 0.001$), that the election was conducted in a fair manner ($F_{5,148} = 10.48$, $p < 0.001$), that the outcome reflected the will of voters ($F_{5,148} = 4.22$, $p < 0.001$), and approval of election officials ($F_{5,148} = 4.71$, $p < 0.001$). Further, treatment assignment was also related to the open-ended responses participants provided to describe the election: positive adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 3.87$, $p < 0.01$), negative adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 5.31$, $p < 0.001$), fair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 2.66$, $p < 0.05$), and unfair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 7.38$, $p < 0.001$).

Sex was significantly related to the percpetion that votes were recorded accurately ($F_{5,148} = 4.20$, $p = 0.04$) and that the outcome reflected the will of voters ($F_{5,148} = 2.55$, $p = 0.11$), but was not significantly related to the perception that the election was conducted in a fair manner ($F_{5,148} = 0.38$, $p = 0.54$) or approval of election officials ($F_{5,148} = 1.53$, $p = 0.22$). Sex was also not related to describing the election using positive adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.14$, $p = 0.71$), negative

adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.12$, $p = 0.73$), fair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.46$, $p = 0.50$), or unfair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.22$, $p = 0.64$).

Importantly, the interaction between gender and treatment assignment was not related to the perception that votes were recorded accurately ($F_{5,148} = 0.72$, $p = 0.61$), that the election was conducted in a fair manner ($F_{5,148} = 0.96$, $p = 0.44$), that the outcome reflected the will of voters ($F_{5,148} = 0.53$, $p = 0.75$), and approval of election officials ($F_{5,148} = 0.21$, $p = 0.96$). Moreover, the interaction between gender and treatment assignment did not significantly affect the open-ended responses: positive adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 1.27$, $p = 0.28$), negative adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.66$, $p = 0.65$), fair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 1.03$, $p = 0.40$), and unfair adjectives ($F_{5,148} = 0.28$, $p = 0.93$). We also estimated regression models of the dependent variable controlling for sex and the substantive conclusions were not affected.