

Appendix D: Supplementary analyses (other political items)

Table D1 displays partisan gaps in the unincentivized survey conditions for the other political items included in the survey, analogous to what Table 1 in the main text does for the COVID-19 information items. Replicating previous work, there are large partisan differences on these topics in the unincentivized conditions of the surveys.

Table D1. *Partisan information divides in unincentivized conditions.*

Topic	Share Correct (Dem)	Share Correct (Rep)	Partisan Divide
Immigrant Crime	0.92	0.44	0.48
Voter Fraud	0.86	0.41	0.45
Climate Change	0.92	0.58	0.33
Firearms	0.37	0.60	0.24
Unemployment	0.82	0.71	0.11

Table D2 displays news choices on the other political items in the unincentivized conditions of the survey. Similar to news selection about COVID-19, there are large gaps between Republicans and Democrats in their reliance on right-leaning media and mainstream news sources for information.

Table D2. *News choices in unincentivized conditions (other political items).*

Source Type	Share Selected (Dem)	Share Selected (Rep)	Partisan Divide
Right-Leaning Media	0.12	0.44	0.32
Mainstream Media	0.48	0.25	0.23
Expert Source	0.27	0.23	0.04
Left-Leaning Media	0.12	0.08	0.04

Table D3 displays the regression table showing the effects of incentives on correct answers to the other political knowledge questions included in the survey. Here both the low and high incentive treatments produce a detectable increase in the probability a respondent provided a correct answer to the political knowledge questions.

Table D3. *Effect of incentives on pr(correct answer).*

Other Political Information	
(Intercept)	0.68* (0.01)
Low Incentive	0.05* (0.02)
High Incentive	0.04* (0.02)
N	7235

Robust standard errors, clustered by Respondent, in parentheses
Model includes Topic Fixed Effects

Table D4 examines how the availability of incentives altered information search preferences for the items that did not cover COVID-19. The lone statistically significant effect was that the low incentive treatment reduced reliance on out-party news sources. Otherwise, the patterns conform to the results in Table 2 in the main text, where incentives similarly did not produce shifts in how respondents selected the news articles regarding COVID-19 information.

Table D4. Effect of incentives on information source selection.

	Copartisan News	Expert	Mainstream News	Out-Partisan News
(Intercept)	0.22*	0.24*	0.44*	0.11*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Low Incentive	-0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.03*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
High Incentive	0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
<i>N</i>	7235	7235	7235	7235

Robust standard errors, clustered by Respondent, in parentheses

Models include Topic Fixed Effects

For purposes of comparison, we also consider the scale of the partisan divide for a series of other political information items used in previous work. This analysis is presented in the right column of Table D4. Unlike the items addressing the pandemic, there is clear evidence the partisan divide on information for these items is inflated by partisan cheerleading. Specifically, the availability of incentives shrinks the partisan divide on the other political information by 9 percentage points in the low incentive condition (a 23 percentage point partisan divide remains, 95% CI [19, 27]) and 6 percentage points in the high incentive condition (a 26 percentage point partisan divide remains 95% CI [0.22, 0.30]), though sizeable partisan divisions remain even when incentives are available for correct answers.

Table D5. Effect of incentives on partisan information divide.

	Other Political Information
(Intercept)	0.59*
	(0.02)
Democrat	0.32*
	(0.02)
Low Incentive	0.09*
	(0.03)
High Incentive	0.07*
	(0.03)
Democrat × Low Incentive	-0.09*
	(0.03)
Democrat × High Incentive	-0.06*
	(0.03)
<i>N</i>	7235

Robust standard errors, clustered by Respondent, in parentheses

Model includes Topic Fixed Effects

In this section, we report a test of whether the COVID-19 items were differentially responsive to the availability of incentives compared to the set of political information items included in the study. This is presented in Table D6.

Table D6. Heterogeneity in incentive effects by topic.

	Model 1
(Intercept)	0.68* (0.01)
Low Incentive	0.05* (0.02)
COVID-19 Item	0.04* (0.01)
High Incentive	0.04* (0.02)
Low Incentive \times COVID-19 Item	-0.03* (0.02)
High Incentive \times COVID-19 Item	-0.00 (0.02)
<i>N</i>	14470

Robust standard errors, clustered by Respondent, in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

This model pools the COVID-19 items together with the political items and tests for heterogeneity in the effect of incentives on changes in information. Here the coefficients for the interaction terms are negative, indicating partisans were less responsive to incentives on the COVID-19 items than on the other topics. For the low incentive treatment this heterogeneity reaches statistical significance (-.03, 95% CI [-.07, -.01]), while for the high incentive treatment there is no detectable heterogeneity in the effects across the different items (-.00, 95% CI [-.04, 0.03]). Based on this, we describe our results as showing that information about COVID-19 appears susceptible to a similar degree of partisan cheerleading as a set of hyper-partisan information items that have generally proved resilient to incentives in past work.