

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0047-2727(17)30151-2
DOI: doi:[10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.09.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.09.008)
Reference: PUBEC 3813

To appear in: *Journal of Public Economics*

Received date: 16 January 2017
Revised date: 5 September 2017
Accepted date: 15 September 2017



Please cite this article as: Robbett, Andrea, Matthews, Peter Hans, Partisan Bias and Expressive Voting, *Journal of Public Economics* (2017), doi:[10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.09.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.09.008)

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Partisan Bias and Expressive Voting*

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August 2017

Abstract

We conduct an experiment to characterize the “expressive” voting behavior of political partisans. We find that participants who are asked to *vote* on the answer to factual questions tend to offer more partisan responses than those who must answer as decisive individuals. We further test whether voters exploit corrective information that sometimes challenges their partisan views. When information is available, we observe smaller partisan gaps and more correct responses, especially when the information is free. When information is costly to acquire, we find that voters generally choose to remain uninformed, consistent with the Downsian theory of rational ignorance.

JEL Classifications: D72, D83, C92

Keywords: Experiment, Voting Behavior, Expressive Voting, Information Aggregation, Rational Ignorance, Rational Irrationality.

*We thank Jeff Carpenter, Carolyn Craven, Emiliano Huet-Vaughn, and Meghan Robbett, as well as seminar participants at the Canadian Economic Association conference, the New England Experimental Economics Workshop, Middlebury College, the NYU-CESS Experimental Political Science Conference, the Catholic University of Lille, the University of Massachusetts, Warwick University, the Analytical Political Economy conference, the Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium, the Economic Science Association World Meeting, and the 2017 Biennial Social Dilemmas Conference for their feedback. We also thank Middlebury College for financial support. The paper was finished while the second author was visiting the Hanken School of Economics, with support from Fulbright Finland. We alone are responsible for whatever errors remain.

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