Article

Journal of Political Science Studies
Vol 1: 52-79, 2019-20
Published by: Indiana Political Science Association
Available online at: https://ipsa.apsoprojects.org/journals

Voters Are Willing to Accept "Help," But Not Just Any "Help" Will Do: The Effect of *The New York Times'* Presidential Endorsement in the 2016 Election

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Abstract
We report the results of a survey experiment designed to determine how different presentations of *The New York Times'* endorsement shaped individuals' perceptions of, and intent to vote for, Hillary Clinton in the waning days of the 2016 presidential election. The only experimental condition that "moved the needle" was the one in which subjects were simultaneously exposed to the *Times'* endorsement of Clinton and its supporting editorial. This effect was conditioned by how subjects felt about the *Times* and their level of political knowledge. Endorsement presentations that were unaccompanied by a supporting editorial had no meaningful impact. We contribute by demonstrating *the kinds of* endorsement presentations matter to voters as they formulate judgments about the endorsed candidate toward the end of a high-profile campaign.

Introduction

Can newspaper endorsements sway voters at the end of a presidential campaign? There are two primary reasons this research question deserves attention. First, despite the decline of print media, newspaper endorsements enjoy wide circulation via the Internet, campaign advertisements, and social media. Second, the answer to this question remains unclear. On the one hand, last-minute endorsements in high-profile contests might mean very little because many voters have been bombarded with information for months and have already made up their minds. On the other hand, voters might turn to endorsements at the last minute to compensate for their cognitive limitations and to ease the weighty burden of informed voting. Although past studies show that endorsements matter, most extant research examines low-visibility contests, does not explore what exactly it is about endorsements that matter, and does not examine individual-level variables that might mediate endorsement effects.

We address our research question by examining the effect of the most important media presidential endorsement of all: that issued by *The New York Times*. The *Times* is the third most circulated newspaper in the United States behind *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* (Yu

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Acknowledgment: We are grateful to the Department of Political Science at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for subsidizing the data collection for this project. We are also indebted to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

2014), but it is the largest newspaper that customarily issues presidential endorsements. In 2016, the *Times* endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. Here, we examine how this endorsement shaped individuals' perceptions of Clinton. In what follows, we describe the results of a survey experiment in which we exposed one group of subjects to the fact that the *Times* endorsed, Clinton, a second group of subjects to a fictitious piece of Clinton campaign literature that does nothing more than tout the *Times'* endorsement of her, a third group of subjects to both the *Times'* endorsement *and* its corresponding editorial, and a fourth group of respondents to nothing. We then compared the four sets of subjects. We found that being simultaneously exposed to the *Times* endorsement and its accompanying editorial positively affected how voters viewed Clinton, with the effect being conditioned by the knowledge-level of our subjects and how they felt about the *Times*. We found nothing to suggest that the solitary endorsement (decoupled from the editorial) or the campaign item affected respondents.

Literature

For decades, our collective thinking about media effects was dominated by the Columbia School, which asserted that the media reinforce citizens' preexisting opinions (through selective exposure to like-minded media content) and exert only an indirect effect by persuading opinion leaders who, in turn, influence those with whom they interact (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954). Emphasizing the importance of interpersonal communication, the Columbia School reasoned that the impact of impersonal mass appeals is negligible due to competition from other agents of socialization. By the 1970s, scholars began questioning this dominant paradigm (*e.g.*, Noelle-Neumann 1973) and demonstrating media effects in narrow contexts and in the presence of certain conditions (*e.g.*, Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976; Patterson and McClure 1976). Building on this foundation, the contemporary literature avers that the media exert powerful cognitive effects by serving as agenda-setters (Shaw and McCombs 1977) and framing reality for voters (Iyengar 1991).

Media Endorsements

In sum, media matter. But do media *endorsements* matter? Relying on Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model of persuasion, Schmitt-Beck (2003, 240) says "no," reasoning that people are moved by the cumulative impact of a larger number of messages disseminated, received, and accepted over a prolonged period. Thus, "one-shot" endorsements are unconvincing. Scarrow and Borman (1979) counter that endorsements preceded by a series of one-sided editorials might be potent, while Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt (1998) argue that during presidential elections, the media present many messages rather than a singular clear message, and thus amidst all the information, mixed messages, contradictory appeals, opposing frames, and competing cues, the import of any single cue or message is likely to be nil. As for presidential endorsements specifically, their last-minute timing might hinder their effectiveness, as the vast majority of voters have already decided by the time they arrive (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Gopoian and Hadjiharalambous 1994).

Yet, there is reason to believe that one-shot newspaper endorsements might matter, even late during high-profile election contests. First, we know that people turn to affect-based heuristics such as "admiration-contempt" during presidential contests (Wang 2008) and may perform retrospective assessments as well (Healy and Lenz 2014; Woon 2012). Moreover, people resort

to cues to compensate for their cognitive limitations (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Taylor 1981) and/or their unwillingness to assume the weighty burden of informed voting (Downs 1957). Even in high-profile contests, cues save voters time, lower information costs, and reduce complexity during the voting calculus (*See generally*, Chaiken, Liberman, and Eagly 1989). Second, there is evidence that endorsed candidates have better name recognition (Goldenberg and Traugott 1981) and acquire a greater vote share than non-endorsed candidates (Krebs 1998; Mason 1973). But most studies focus on low visibility contests, do not examine how endorsements are presented to voters, and ignore individual-level variables that might mediate endorsement effects.

Messages and Cues

Several conclusions flow from the literature on the relative strength of various messages and cues. First, one-sided communications, particularly those occurring over time, are more compelling than two-sided information flows in which the opposing message streams cancel each other out (Bartels 1993, 275-276; Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998; Zaller 1992). Second, negative arguments tend to be more salient than positive arguments because they "stand out" and because of cognitive processes associated with loss aversion (Cobb and Kuklinski 1997, 90-92). Third, source cues accompanied by contextual information are potentially more effective than those lacking contextual information because they have a built-in activation mechanism that makes them accessible to voters (Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009). Finally, frames (presented to subjects through a candidate debate) may directly affect the subjects' opinions of candidates, while cues (presented to subjects as a bipartisan endorsement) have only a secondary influence. But over time, framing effects persist for online processors, while memory-based processors formulate their opinions with the help of easily remembered cues. Thus, even powerful framing effects can be fugacious for some people, while unremarkable cues can assert themselves at a later time (Druckman *et al.,* 2010).

Source Credibility

A vast body of literature across several cognate fields considers the role of source credibility in attitude change. This literature (*See*, Ladd 2010) asserts that people generally scrutinize their information sources and attach the most value to information from sources they perceive as trustworthy, like-minded, and knowledgeable. This research shows that people tend to abandon source cues when "better" information (e.g., policy information) is simultaneously available (Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2019; Mondak 1994) unless they distrust the source of this information (Nicholson 2011). Likewise, framing effects are more likely to manifest when a message's issuer is perceived as highly credible or ideologically congruent (Druckman 2001; Hartman and Weber 2009). Two recent studies of newspaper endorsements buttress the conventional wisdom by showing that endorsements are more convincing when they originate from an ideologically neutral outlet, when they contradict the newspaper's familiar ideological stance (Chiang and Knight 2011), or when the newspaper alternates its support for Democratic and Republican candidates from one election cycle to the next (Ladd and Lenz 2009).

Who is Susceptible?

It is also important to consider the recipient's level of political knowledge when exploring media effects. In an endorsement accompanied by an editorial—assuming the message is received and understood—it is the politically astute who are the most resistant to message framing, as they are more likely to have been exposed to (and inoculated against) the argument at hand, are less taken by novel information, and are more capable of refuting counter-attitudinal messages (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997, 227). The early priming literature moves along this same trajectory by assuming that the politically sophisticated can interpret messages in ways that reinforce their preexisting beliefs (Krosnick and Kinder 1990), while the minds of novices are "full just coming to terms with what was being said" (Iyengar et al. 1984, 780). More recently, Miller and Krosnick (2000) spurred a reversal in our thinking by demonstrating that priming effects are more likely to manifest among knowledgeable people who trust the source from which the message issues. These "experts," they reason (312), could easily decide on their own but purposely lean on trusted sources to help them sort through voluminous information when formulating their judgments. Conversely, Ha (2011) finds that people of moderate political sophistication are the most susceptible to priming because they are more attentive to the news than the unsophisticated yet lack the cognitive resources to resist counter-attitudinal messages like their more astute peers.

The literature on both priming and framing speaks to more elaborate messages, but what about cues that are more subtle and do not convey very much information? Here, there is virtually no consensus as to *who* is the most reliant on these cognitive shortcuts. Some scholars reason that unsophisticated voters are the most dependent on cues because they have "less to go on" than their more astute counterparts (Lupia 1994; Popkin 1991). But others note that source cues are only helpful to those who can deduce whether the cue's issuer shares their interests (Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Sniderman 2000). The third position is that people with a moderate level of political sophistication are the most reliant on source cues, presumably because they grasp the cue's significance while still being dependent on it for guidance (Converse 1962; Dragojlovic 2013; Ha 2011).

Hypotheses

Based on the extant literature, we formulated the following general hypotheses about the effects of the *New York Times* endorsement of Hillary Clinton on voters:

> Hypotheses 1a and 1b: Exposure to the full *New York Times* endorsement—the one with the accompanying narrative explaining the endorsement—leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (1a) and increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (1b).
>
> Hypotheses 2a and 2b: Exposure to the truncated *New York Times* endorsement—the one with no accompanying narrative explaining the endorsement—leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (2a) and increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (2b).
>
> Hypotheses 3a and 3b: Exposure to a fictitious Clinton campaign item touting the *New York Times* endorsement leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (3a) and

increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (3b).

We also tested these more specific hypotheses, based on the notion that the *source* of an endorsement matters:

Hypotheses 4a and 4b: Exposure to the full *New York Times* endorsement—the one with the accompanying narrative explaining the endorsement—leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (4a) and increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (4b), but only for respondents who have a positive view of the *New York Times*.

Hypotheses 5a and 5b: Exposure to the truncated *New York Times* endorsement—the one with no accompanying narrative explaining the endorsement—leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (5a) and increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (5b), but only for respondents who have a positive view of the *New York Times*.

Hypotheses 6a and 6b: Exposure to a Clinton campaign item that touts the *New York Times* endorsement leads to more positive evaluations of Clinton (6a) and increases the probability that a respondent will report that they will vote for Clinton in the 2016 presidential election (6b), but only for respondents who have a positive view of the *New York Times*.

Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a randomized, posttest-only, control group survey experiment. The subject pool comprised 496 American adults. We administered the survey via Survey Monkey during the last week of October 2016. Survey Monkey and other web-based survey tools are proven to produce data as reliable and valid as that gathered via telephone and paper (Alvarez, Sherman, and VanBeselaere 2003; Cassese *et al.* 2013; Stephenson and Crête 2011).

Survey Monkey randomly assigned participants to one of four experimental groups—*The Control Group* (n=132), *The Endorsement with Information Treatment Group* (n=114), *The Endorsement without Information Treatment Group* (n=128), and *The Campaign Item Treatment Group* (n=122). Respondents in each group completed a survey containing several items about their political attitudes and affiliations (e.g., ideology, party identification) and personal characteristics (e.g., age, family income, race/ethnicity, gender). Before completing the survey, respondents were told they were participating in a survey designed to gauge American adults' political attitudes and opinions and were required to read an informed consent form.

The Groups in Our Experiment

Respondents in The Control Group completed a survey with no experimental stimulus. For respondents in The Endorsement with Information Treatment Group, halfway through the survey (after items about personal characteristics and political attitudes and behavior), a new section

began with instructions designed to obfuscate the true nature of the experiment. These instructions were followed by a textbox that contained the *New York Times'* full endorsement of Clinton (Appendix A), which happened to focus on Clinton's qualifications and achievements rather than Donald Trump's limitations. Respondents in the Endorsement without Information Treatment Group were also given instructions designed to obfuscate the true nature of the experiment. But midway through their survey, a textbox appeared that contained the *New York Times* endorsement but nothing else. Essentially, these subjects were told nothing more than the fact that the *Times* supported Clinton's candidacy (Appendix B). Finally, respondents in the Campaign Item Treatment Group completed a different survey still. Midway through their survey, respondents in this group saw a set of instructions designed to obfuscate the true nature of the experiment, then saw a textbox that contained a faux Clinton for President flier (Appendix C) that was supposedly paid for by the "Elect Hillary Fund," which claimed to share the values and goals of the Democratic National Committee and the State Democratic Parties. Besides the partisan nature of its source, nothing about the flyer was false or misleading. It merely alerted respondents to the singular fact that the *Times* had endorsed Clinton, nothing more.

Validity

To ensure internal validity, Survey Monkey randomly assigned respondents to our experimental groups. In addition, respondents were not told about the true nature of the experiment. Also, we assured all respondents that their participation was voluntary, that their answers would remain anonymous, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

We also worked hard to maximize external validity. We did this primarily by exposing respondents to genuine information. The *New York Times* did indeed endorse Hillary Clinton for president, and we used the *Times*' own words in our endorsement with information stimulus and our endorsement without information stimulus. The only thing that was fabricated was the campaign item that advertised the *Times'* endorsement of Clinton. But even this item was designed to look like a real campaign flier. Except for the partisan nature of the flyer's sponsor, all the information contained was factually correct. Finally, we limited our sample to potential or actual voters. Specifically, if any respondents told us they were under 18 years old or lived outside of the United States, we eliminated them from the sample.

Despite our efforts to maximize external validity, our Survey Monkey sample is, after all, a convenience sample that is not completely representative of the American voting-age population. [1] It is impossible to know how closely it or any other convenience sample approximates "grounded truth" because this would require an infinite number of attributes to be measured and compared (Mullinix et al., 2015). Nevertheless, in Table 1, we examined how closely some of our experimental groups' demographic and political characteristics paralleled those in the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES), which relied on two independently drawn probability samples of the voting-age population.

As anticipated, our experimental groups diverged from the ANES in some ways because of how our sample was drawn. Women and Democrats were overrepresented; non-whites and

[1] In 2016, Survey Monkey's website (http://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-do-Academics-use-SurveyMonkey-Audience) indicated that it gives academics access to a diverse group of panelists from the millions of people who take its surveys in exchange for charitable donations. Survey Monkey randomly selects from its members and balances results "according to census data for age and gender, while location tends to balance out naturally."

Independents were underrepresented; and, our respondents were more apt to say they voted in the 2012 presidential election. But even so, our experimental groups either mirrored or were generally aligned with the_ANES in terms of age, voter registration status, political ideology, and the percentage those who self-identified as "Republican." More importantly, our Clinton Feeling Thermometer and the percentage of our respondents who claimed to have voted for Clinton closely tracked the ANES, except for the respondents in the Endorsement with Information Group. This was expected and reinforces our central claim that this treatment condition altered the opinions and behavior of our subjects. Our measures of political knowledge, pre-tax household income, and the New York Times Thermometer Rating did not lend themselves to comparison with ANES measures.[2]

Although there are limitations to the generalizability of our sample, the central thrust of our work was to detect effects of our treatment conditions rather than estimating public opinion in a broader sense. Thus, we prioritized internal validity over external validity like many other studies of heuristics, source cues, and campaign advertisements that have relied on convenience samples culled from either college students (e.g., Weber, Dunaway, and Johnson 2012; Forehand, Gastil, and Smith 2004), workers on Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform (e.g., Ahler, Citrin, Dougal, and Lentz 2017; Clark and Kastellec 2015; Dowling and Wichowsky 2015), or a combination of these aforementioned approaches (Kalmoe and Gross 2016).[3] Like others (e.g., Hennessy *et al.* 2015), we relied on an internet sampling platform over a sample drawn from the undergraduate student body because this presumably yielded a more heterogeneous sample. As Boydstun et al. (2014, 829-830) explain:

> If a treatment effect of interest is homogeneous in the population, any sample can produce an unbiased estimate. However, even if the treatment effect varies, it can be modeled as long as the sample provides variation across the relevant moderating variables. Thus, unbiased estimates of treatment effects require diverse but not representative samples.

We believe that our treatment groups have sufficient diversity based on the information presented in Table 1 and the subsequent textual descriptions of our variables. In the end, convenience samples like ours are an imperfect substitute for a national probability sample, but they "can still play a fruitful role as research agendas progress; use of such samples does not appear to consistently generate false negatives, false positives, or inaccurate effect sizes" (Mullinix et al. 2015, 111).

[2] Our pre-tax household income variable defied comparison with the ANES because it used different income categories. The ANES data, therefore, could not be recoded to match the categories we used. Neither our *New York Times* Thermometer nor our respondent knowledge questions were included in the ANES study. While we borrowed some ANES questions to create our Clinton Trait Index—"really cares about people like me" (V161160), "honest" (V161162), "knowledgeable" (V161161), and "provides strong leadership" (V161159)—we supplemented our index with queries about Clinton's competence, decisiveness, and ability to inspire. Thus, we could not construct an index from the ANES data that approximated our more comprehensive one.

[3] See also Abe (2018), who used a sample drawn from the Survey Monkey Audience to explore the relationship between various personality variables and respondents' voting intentions in the 2016 presidential election.

The Dependent Variables

To test our hypotheses, we used three dependent variables: (1) *Clinton traits*; (2) *Clinton therm*; and (3) *Clinton vote*. *Clinton traits* (range=0-21-, mean=11.08-, s.d.=6.41-) is an additive score based on responses to seven trait-based survey items. Each of these items was structured like this: Does the phrase "----------" describe Hillary Clinton extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all? We asked about seven traits in all: "really cares about people like me," "honest," "inspiring," "knowledgeable," "decisive," "provides strong leadership," and "competent." We scored responses as follows: 0 = "not well at all," 1 = "not too well," 2 = "quite well," 3 = "extremely well." *Clinton therm* (range=0-100, mean=47.3, s.d.=36.1) is based on the standard feeling thermometer survey item from the ANES. Finally, *Clinton vote* (mean=.532, s.d.=.499) is based on this survey item: "If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote?" The responses were: 0. "Hillary Clinton," 1. "Donald Trump," 2. "Someone Else _____," 3. "I prefer not to respond." Respondents who answered "Hillary Clinton" were given a value of 1 on this variable, while everyone else (who did not select the last option) was given a value of 0. Respondents who chose the last item were eliminated from the sample.

Independent Variables

The primary independent variables of interest are (1) *Endorsement with information treatment*; (2) *Endorsement without information treatment*; and (3) *Campaign item treatment*. *Endorsement with information treatment* takes a value of 1 for each respondent in the Endorsement with Information Treatment Group and a 0 otherwise. *Endorsement without information treatment* takes a value of 1 for each respondent in the Endorsement without Information Treatment Group and a 0 otherwise. *Campaign item treatment* takes a value of 1 for each respondent in the Campaign Item Treatment group and a 0 otherwise.

In some models, we considered another independent variable as well--*Political knowledge* (range = 0-6- mean = 4.61, s.d. = 1.71), based on respondents' answers to six political knowledge questions.[4] Each respondent's value on this variable indicates the number out of six that they got correct. In some models, we included this variable because there are significant differences in the distribution of values on the variable across our four experimental groups. This variable is also useful in testing the notion that endorsements affect people differently depending upon their level of political knowledge.

[4] Respondents were told, "Now I would like to see how much you know about the world of politics. Few people get all these questions correct, so if you don't know an answer, just mark "I DON'T KNOW," then move to the next question." After each question, respondents could supply a written answer or mark either "I don't know" or "I prefer not to respond." This battery of questions included the following: "Do you happen to know what political office is now held by Joe Biden?" "Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?" "How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?" "Do you happen to know what party has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives?" "Which of the parties would you say is more conservative than the other at the national level?" "How many justices (judges) are there on the U.S. Supreme Court?"

Table 1
Characteristics of Respondents by Experimental Group and Comparison with ANES Data

Characteristic	Our Full Sample (a) (n=496)[1]	Experimental Groups (a)				ANES 2016 (b)
		Control	Endorsement w/ Information	Endorsement w/out Information	Campaign Item	
		(n=132)[1]	(n=114)[1]	(n=128)[1]	(n=122)[1]	(n=4,270)[1]
Age (Mean)	48.19	47.92	50	45.90	49.16	49.58
Ideology (1-7, Mean)	3.63	3.56	3.45	3.74	3.76	4.18
Political knowledge (0-6, Mean)[2]	4.61	3.89	5.24	4.65	4.77	----
Female (%)	58.3	57.94	59.82	55.12	60.66	52.8
Pre-tax household income (Mean)	3.90	3.59	4.01	3.98	4.03	-----
Party identification (including leaners)						
• Democrat (%)	56.01	51.76	60.18	60.33	51.69	35.8
• Republican (%)	32.2	32.46	30.97	30.58	34.75	30.4
• Independent (%)	11.8	15.79	8.85	9.09	13.56	33.8
Non-White (%)	14.13	17.07	9.01	16.53	13.45	28.3
Voted in 2012 presidential elections (%)	87.3	86.55	91.82	83.33	88.03	73.3
Registered to vote (%)	94.7	95.16	96.49	93.75	93.44	85.8
New York Times Thermometer Rating (Mean)	56.05	55.85	59.32	54.76	54.36	----
Clinton Thermometer Rating (*Clinton therm*) (Mean)	47.30	45.82	56.06	43.78	44.06	42.14
Voted for Clinton (*Clinton vote*) (%)	53.25	47.41	61.06	55.12	49.59	48.4

Source: (a) Authors' data. (b) Version 20190904 of American National Election (ANES) 2016 Time Series Study accessed at https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2016-time-series-study/. The ANES data were collected between September 7 and November 7, 2016, except for "Voted for Clinton (%)," which was collected between November 9 and January 8, 2017.
Notes (superscript): 1. Ns may vary across survey items. 2. There are statistically significant differences across groups on this variable.

To test Hypotheses 4a-6b, we had to create three interaction terms. To do this, we first created the variable *NYT therm*, which is a standard thermometer rating for the *New York Times* (range = 0-100-, mean = 56.05, s.d.=31.64). From here, we created three interaction terms. They are self-explanatory: (1) *NYT therm x Endorsement with information treatment (NYTThxEWI)*; (2) *NYT therm x Endorsement without information treatment (NYTThxE)*; and (3) *NYT therm x Campaign item treatment (NYTThxCI)*.

The mediating effects of levels of information are potentially so important that we also created three knowledge-related interaction variables. They are self-explanatory: (1) *Political*

knowledge x Endorsement with information treatment x (PKxEWI); (2) *Political knowledge x Endorsement without information treatment x Political knowledge (PKxE)*; and (3) *Political knowledge x Campaign item treatment (PKxCI)*.

Findings: Endorsements Matter…Sometimes

To test Hypotheses 1a-3b, we sought to determine the effects of our treatment variables on all three of our dependent variables. The results of these analyses are found in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Table 2 contains the results of two OLS regression models in which *Clinton traits* is the dependent variable. The positive and significant coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* ($p<.05$, two-tailed test) in Model 1 indicates that exposure to the endorsement accompanied by the full *New York Times* text was positively associated with values on *Clinton traits*. The coefficient on neither *Endorsement without information treatment* nor *Campaign item treatment* is significant in Model 1. In Table 2, Model 2, we control for political knowledge. Once again, the coefficient on neither *Endorsement without information treatment* nor *Campaign item treatment* is significant. The coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* is once again significant .049 (two-tailed test). These findings support Hypothesis 1a, but not 2a or 3a.

Next, we test the effects of our treatments on the likelihood of voting for Hillary Clinton (Table 4). To do this, we cast two logistic regression models in which *Clinton vote* is the dependent variable. The positive and significant coefficient ($p<.05$, two-tailed test) on *Endorsement with information treatment* in Model 1 indicates that exposure to the full *New York Times* endorsement with accompanying text increases the likelihood that a respondent reports that they will vote for Clinton. This effect disappears (in Model 2) when we include our control variable (though the coefficient is in the expected direction). The other two treatments produce no effects.

To summarize, the results presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide strong support for Hypothesis 1a; the full *New York Times* endorsement with accompanying editorial is associated with higher ratings on two Clinton-related dependent variables, *Clinton traits,* and *Clinton therm*. In addition, there is tantalizing but limited evidence that exposure to the full endorsement increases the probability that a person will vote for Clinton. We uncover no support for Hypotheses 2a-3b. There is no evidence that being exposed to either the truncated *New York Times* endorsement or a campaign item that merely advertised the *New York Times* endorsement affects either respondents' views of Clinton or their likelihood of voting for her.

Table 2
OLS Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton traits*

Independent Variable	(1) *Clinton traits*	(2) *Clinton traits*
Constant	10.70***	9.44***
	(.634)-	(1.18)
Endorsement without information treatment	-.258	-.285
	(.865)	(.865)
Endorsement with information treatment	1.92**	1.75**
	(.878)	(.887)
Campaign item treatment	-.092	-.152
	(.872)	(.873)
Political knowledge	---	.273
		(.215)
N	441	441
R^2	.02	.02

Source: Authors' data. *Note*: OLS estimation with standard errors in parentheses; ***p<.01 (two-tailed test), **p<.05 (two-tailed test).

Table 3
OLS Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton therm*

Independent Variable	(1) *Clinton therm*	(2) *Clinton therm*
Constant	45.82***	39.06***
	(3.42)	(6.42)
Endorsement without information treatment	-2.04	-2.25
	(4.69)	(4.69)
Endorsement with information treatment	10.24**	9.25*
	(4.81)	(4.88)
Campaign item treatment	-1.76	-2.25
	(4.77)	(4.79)
Political knowledge	---	1.48
		(1.19)
N	463	463
R^2	.02	.02

Source: Authors' data. *Note*: OLS estimation with standard errors in parentheses; **p<.05 (two-tailed test).

Do Views of The New York Times Matter*?*

We next turn to Hypotheses 4a-6b. This time, however, in addition to our treatment dummies and our control variable (*Political knowledge*), we included our three *New York Times*-related interaction variables. Again, we tested the effects of our treatment variables on all three dependent variables. The results of these analyses are found in Table 5. We will start with OLS regression Model 1, the dependent variable in which is *Clinton traits*. In analyses we do not show here, we explored whether or not our endorsement without information treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of *NYT therm*. The answer is no. We also examined whether or not our campaign item treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of *NYT therm*. Again, the answer was no.

Table 4
Logistic Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton vote*

Independent Variable	(1) *Clinton vote*	(2) *Clinton vote*
Constant	-.104	-.710**
	(.186)	(.335)
Endorsement without information treatment	.309	.278
	(.258)	(.260)
Endorsement with information treatment	.553**	.442
	(.268)	(.273)
Campaign item treatment	.087	.036
	(.260)	(.263)
Political knowledge	---	.138**
		(.063)
N	477	477
Pseudo R^2	.01	.02
Log likelihood	-327.02	-324.55

Source: Authors' data. *Note*: Logistic regression estimation with standard errors in parentheses; **p<.05 (two-tailed test).

However, the endorsement with information treatment did have an effect. The coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* in Model 1 (.467) represents the treatment effect for respondents who scored 0 on *NYT therm*. To see the effects of the endorsement with information on respondents' values on *Clinton traits*, we produced Figure 1. The solid sloping line shows how the endorsement with information treatment affects the values on *Clinton traits* and how the effect of the treatment changes with a respondent's *New York Times* thermometer rating. The confidence intervals around the line indicate the conditions under which the treatment has a statistically significant (p<.05, one-tailed test) impact on values on *Clinton traits*. Figure 1 shows that for respondents who gave the *New York Times* a thermometer rating of 53-94, exposure to the endorsement with information positively impacted the value of *Clinton traits*. Moreover, the positive impact grows as a respondent's thermometer rating of the *Times* grows. In short, the endorsement with information mattered for people who positively evaluated the *Times*.

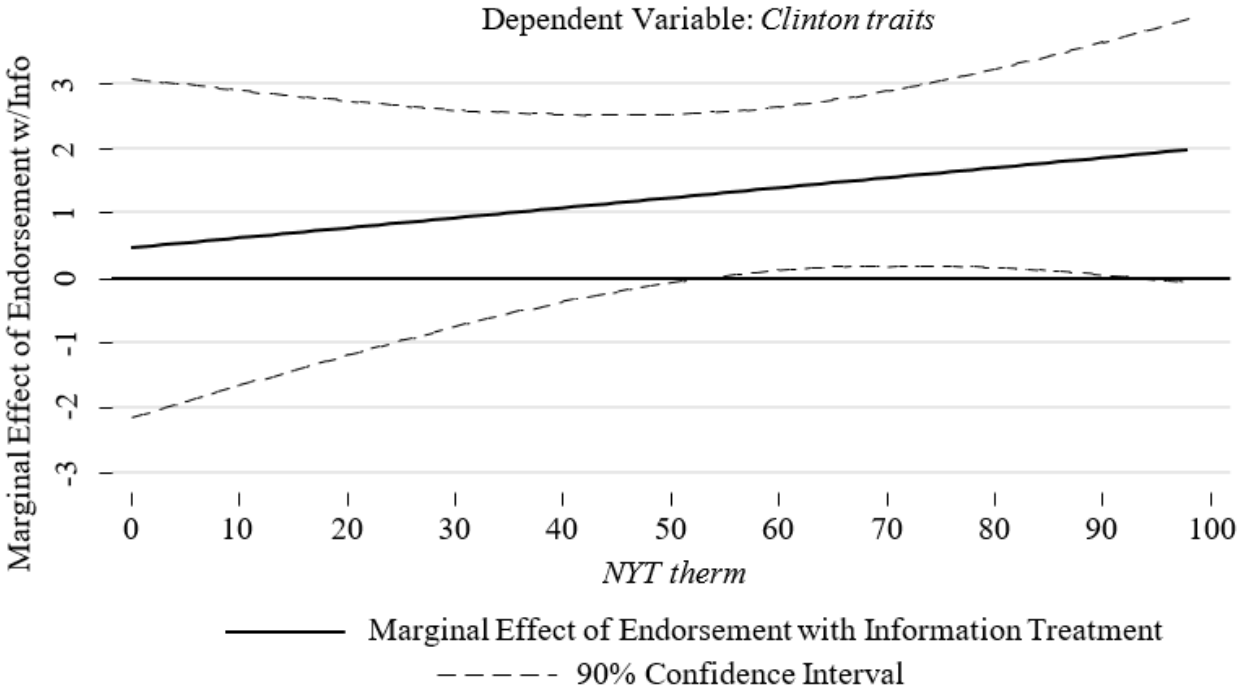
Table 5
OLS Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton traits* (Model 1) and *Clinton therm* (Model 2); and Logistic Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton vote* (Model 3)

Independent Variable	(1) *Clinton traits*	(2) *Clinton therm*	(3) *Clinton vote*
Constant	3.67***	16.75**	-2.49***
	(1.42)	(7.53)	(.720)
Endorsement without information treatment	-.330	-2.29	-.135
	(1.55)	(8.43)	(.856)
Endorsement with information treatment	.467	-2.59	-.817
	(1.58)	(8.76)	(.957)
Campaign item treatment	.255	-5.86	-.429
	(1.51)	(8.32)	(.865)
Political knowledge	.065	-1.20	.081
	(.199)	(1.11)	(.093)
NYT therm	.123***	.651***	.037***
	(.017)	(.095)	(.009)
NYTThxE	.001	.011	.006
	(.024)	(.133)	(.013)
NYTThxEWI	.015	.154	.020
	(.024)	(.133)	(.015)
NYTThxCI	.000	.077	.010
	(.023)	(.130)	(.013)
N	355	374	376
R^2	.42	.40	.26 (pseudo)

Source: Authors' data. *Notes*: Models 1 and 2, OLS estimation with standard errors in parentheses; Model 3, logistic regression estimation with standard errors in parentheses. ***p<.01 (two-tailed test), **p<.05 (two-tailed test).

We turn now to Model 2 (Table 5), an OLS regression model in which the dependent variable is *Clinton therm*. In analyses we do not show here, we explored whether or not our endorsement without information treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of *NYT therm*. The answer is no. We also examined whether or not our campaign item treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of *NYT therm*. Again, the answer is no. However, once again, we found results for the effects of the endorsement with information treatment. The coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* in Model 2 (-2.59) represents the treatment effect for respondents who scored 0 on *NYT therm*.

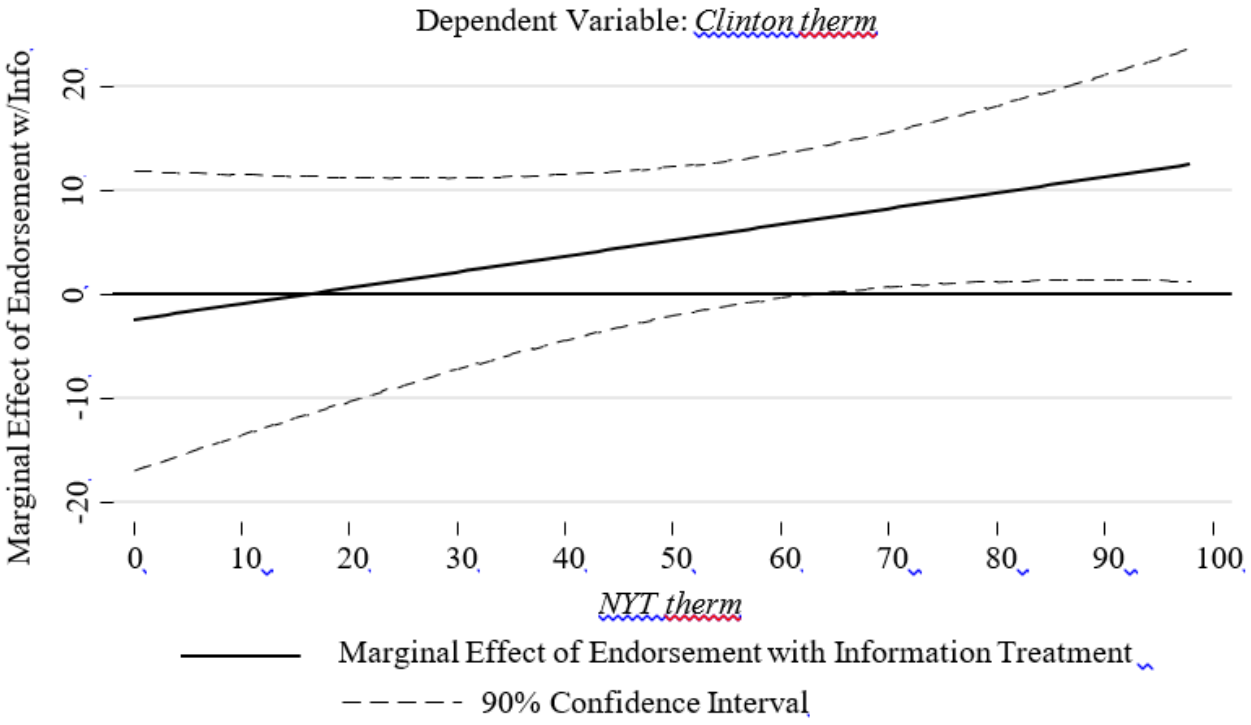
Figure 1
Marginal Effect of Endorsement with Information Treatment on *Clinton traits* as *NYT therm* Changes



To comprehend the effects of the endorsement with information on respondents' thermometer rating of Hillary Clinton, we produced Figure 2. The solid sloping line shows how the endorsement with information treatment affects values on *Clinton therm* and how the effect changes with a respondent's *New York Times* thermometer rating. The confidence intervals around the line indicate the conditions under which the treatment has a statistically significant ($p<.05$, one-tailed test) impact on values on *Clinton therm*. Figure 2 shows that for respondents who gave the *New York Times* a thermometer rating of 63-100, exposure to the endorsement with information had a positive impact on the value of *Clinton therm*. Moreover, the positive impact grows as a respondent's thermometer rating of the *New York Times* grows. Therefore, the endorsement with information mattered for people who evaluated the *Times* very positively.

Finally, we turn to the vote choice model (Model 3, Table 5). The model shows once again that the *New York Times* rating serves as a mediator, as the endorsement with information treatment "moved the needle" among respondents in a positive direction for Clinton. It does so, however, only for respondents who viewed the *New York Times* quite positively (scored 83-100 on *NYT Therm*). Furthermore, the more positively a respondent viewed the *New York Times*, the more impact the treatment had. In all, the results in Table 5 support Hypothesis 4a but fail to support Hypotheses 5a, 5b, 6a, or 6b.

Figure 2
Marginal Effect of Endorsement with information Treatment on *Clinton therm* as *NYT therm* Changes



Do Levels of Information Matter?

Do levels of political knowledge mediate the relationships between exposure to our treatments and values on our dependent variables? To see, we ran another set of models. In these models, in addition to our treatment dummies and our control variable, we included our three knowledge-related interaction variables. We initially planned to include the *New York Times*-related interaction variables as well, but this created three overfitted models and caused our standard errors to explode in size. Therefore, those variables are omitted here. The results of these analyses are found in Table 6.

We will start with Model 1 (Table 6), an OLS regression model in which *Clinton traits* is the dependent variable. In analyses we do not show here, we explored whether or not either the endorsement without information treatment or the campaign item treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of political knowledge. The answer is no. However, once again, we uncovered evidence that the endorsement with information treatment affected respondents' views of Clinton. The coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* in Model 1 (2.59) represents the treatment effect for respondents who scored 0 on *Political knowledge*. To understand the effects of the endorsement with information on respondents' values on *Clinton traits*, we produced Figure 3. This figure is interpreted like the others and shows that that for respondents who scored 5 or 6 on the political knowledge scale—that is, for the most knowledgeable respondents in the sample—exposure to the endorsement with information positively impacted the value of *Clinton traits*. In short, once again, the endorsement with information mattered.

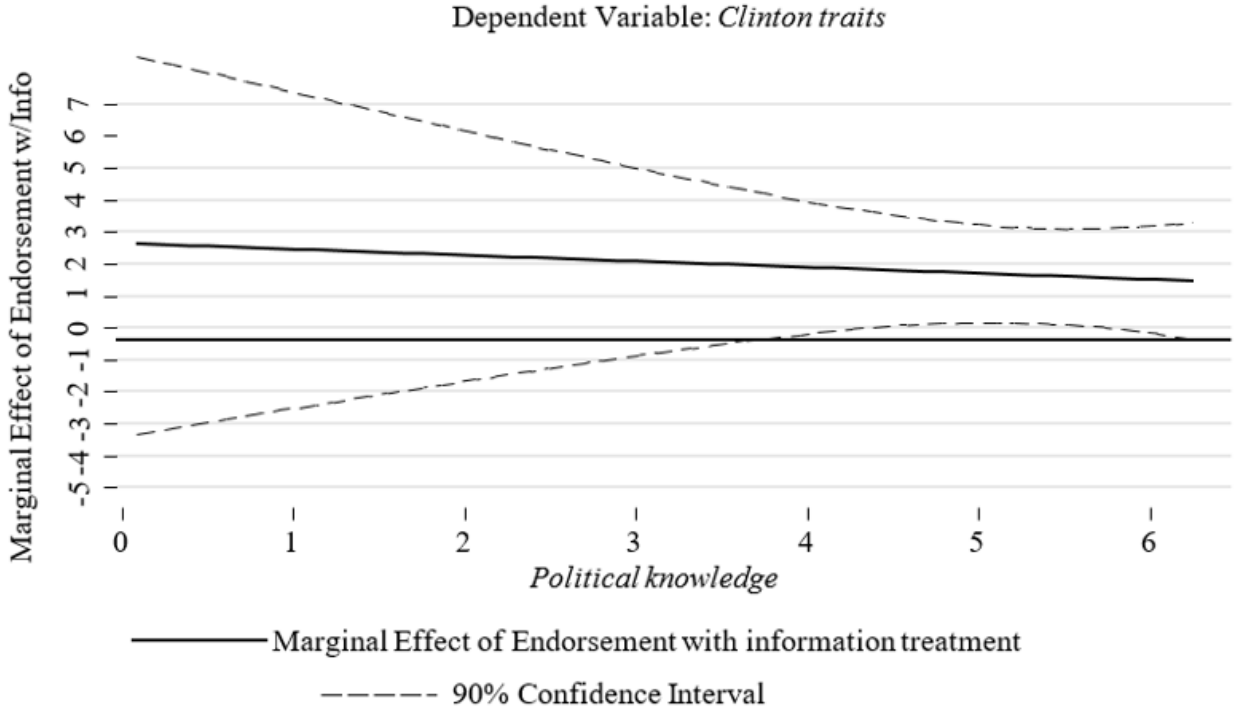
Table 6
OLS Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton traits* (Model 1) and *Clinton therm* (Model 2); and Logistic Regression Results: The Effects of the *New York Times* Endorsement on *Clinton vote* (Model 3)

Independent Variable	(1) *Clinton traits*	(2) *Clinton therm*	(3) *Clinton vote*
Constant	8.29***	31.23***	-1.10**
	(2.03)	(10.60)	(.561)
Endorsement without information treatment	.307	1.24	.808
	(2.81)	(14.89)	(.789)
Endorsement with information treatment	2.59	34.40*	.725
	(3.58)	(19.67)	(1.09)
Campaign item treatment	2.87	11.82	.755
	(2.87)	(16.27)	(.818)
Political knowledge	.523	3.20	.225*
	(.417)	(2.20)	(.118)
EWIxPK	-.191	-5.04	-.067
	(.693)	(3.81)	(.211)
ExPK	-.131	-.795	-.118
	(.575)	(3.06)	(.164)
CIxPK	-.636	-3.00	-.156
	(.579)	(3.28)	(.167)
N	441	463	477
R^2	.03	.03	.13 (pseudo)

Source: Authors' Data. *Note*: Models 1 and 2, OLS estimation with standard errors in parentheses; Model 3, logistic regression estimation with standard errors in parentheses. ***p<.01 (two-tailed test), **p<.05 (two-tailed test), *p<.10 (two-tailed test).

We turn now to Model 2 (Table 6), an OLS regression model in which the dependent variable is *Clinton therm*. In analyses we do not show here, we explored whether or not either the endorsement without information treatment or the campaign item treatment impacted the dependent variable at any level of political knowledge. The answer is no. However, we again found evidence that exposure to the endorsement with information treatment affected respondents. The coefficient on *Endorsement with information treatment* in Model 2 (34.40) represents the treatment effect for respondents who scored 0 on *Political knowledge*. This coefficient is statistically significant (p<.05, one-tailed test), and it shows that for the least informed of our respondents, exposure to the endorsement with information positively affected thermometer ratings of Clinton.

Figure 3
Marginal Effect of *Endorsement with information treatment* on *Clinton traits* as *Political knowledge* Changes



To fully understand the effects of the endorsement with information treatment on respondents' thermometer rating of Clinton, we produced Figure 4. This figure is interpreted like the others and shows that for respondents at levels of political knowledge from 0-5, exposure to the endorsement with information had a positive impact on the value of *Clinton therm*. This time, however, we see a deviation from previous findings. Specifically, the impact of the endorsement with information decreases as levels of political knowledge increase.

Discussion

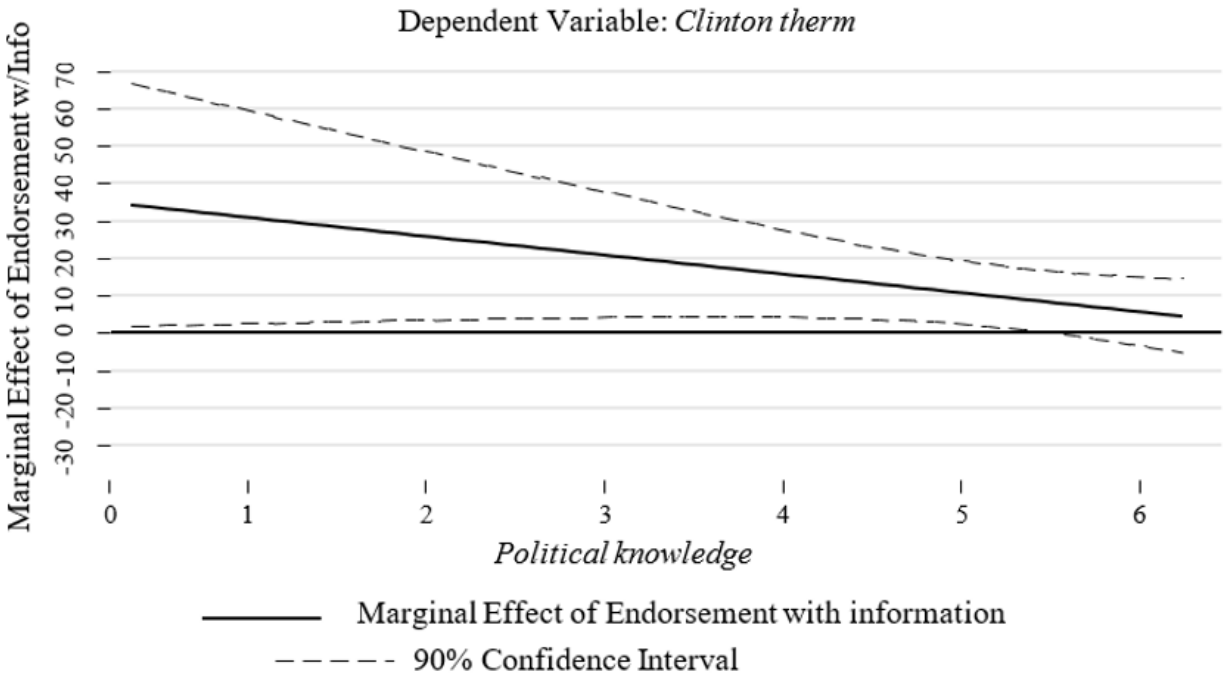
Our detection of media effects in one of the three treatment groups (endorsement plus editorial) comes as somewhat of a surprise because it contradicts the view that a large proportion of the electorate has fixed opinions and preferences toward the end of a presidential campaign. One possible explanation for our findings is rooted in the heuristics literature. Specifically, there is some evidence that cues and other judgmental shortcuts have a role to play *any time* people wish either to avoid taxing their cognitive resources or to alleviate the burdens associated with informed voting. We are confident that we did not stumble upon a "super cue" that defies Zaller's RAS model. And we do not believe that the *Times'* endorsement is the best ever written. But we do think we have uncovered a modest yet important truth—people formulating judgments in presidential contests are willing to accept a certain type of "help" even if it comes on the immediate cusp of the election. As per Zaller (1992) and Converse (1962), we suspect that all things being equal, the *Times'* endorsement/editorial would probably have gone unnoticed by our subjects if we had not provided it to them. Nonetheless, when presented with a certain type of assistance, our

subjects took full advantage of it. The implications of this are important. Newspapers and their editors are not engaging in an act of futility when they write endorsement editorials. Therefore, they should devote serious thought to how they craft their message. But there is an obvious caveat—efforts to circulate endorsement packages are absolutely essential.

So our findings demonstrate that the *Times'* endorsement matters, but only when it is coupled with an editorial. Practically speaking, this means that campaign consultants will fail if they develop advertisements that merely list who endorsed their candidate. More importantly, our results suggest that although people enthusiastically accept last-minute help in such contests, they are choosy about the kind of help they are willing to accept. Again, the heuristics literature is informative. Although people rely on judgmental shortcuts for the sake of efficiency, they also balance efficiency with the need to arrive at a choice that is consistent with their preferences, interests, and objectives (Mondak 1993). Thus, they generally prefer policy information over cues (Mondak 1994). If this interpretation explains our findings, then this is good for democracy, as it implies that to some degree, voters are contemplative, fastidious, and invested—a position at odds with several derisive critiques of American voters (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960). Likewise, it suggests that our subjects did not allow the "messenger to overwhelm the message." This problem, identified by Kuklinski and Hurley (1994, 731-733), occurs when cue takers refuse to engage the message and simply fall back on the messenger's identity to formulate their judgments.

Beyond richer information, what kind of help might an endorsement with an editorial offer compared to one without an editorial? One possibility (*See*, Miller and Krosnick 2000) is that voters—at least those who are knowledgeable and trust the source—can use messages with priming to sort through information as they formulate their judgments. Similarly, editorials that use frames may help voters process information and integrate it into their cognitive schemas by simplifying issues, candidates, and events (Scheufele 2008). This interpretation is a good fit with high-profile elections, and it is consistent with the 2016 editorial in which the *Times* both primed voters and framed the election. Essentially, the *Times* identified the issues that mattered and indicated that Clinton acquitted herself well on those issues. In addition, it explained that despite her limitations, she was the superior candidate based on her record and her perceived capacity for growth. Another possibility alluded to by Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) is that endorsements with editorials have a built-in mechanism that helps voters appreciate their significance. Perhaps the *Times'* moniker functioned as the cue, and its editorial helped voters appreciate its significance by explaining *why* the *Times* favored Clinton. Without an activation mechanism, no wonder the two truncated endorsements in our study were inconsequential. Endorsement editorials might also help voters by telling them which candidate is better or worse across a range of issue positions and character traits (Shah and Oppenheimer 2009). Although this argument has powerful, intuitive logic, the *Times* expressly refused to make such a comparison in 2016 and opted to dwell on Clinton's qualifications and achievements rather than Trump's limitations.

Figure 4
Marginal Effect of *Endorsement with information treatment* on *Clinton therm* as *Political knowledge* Changes



Perhaps our subjects were trying to reason their way to an objectively superior decision, or maybe they were unwittingly manipulated by the *Times'* editorial. According to the latter view, the endorsement/editorial may have had rhetorical qualities that our subjects could not resist—framing, priming, and one-sided messaging. We agree that these aspects of the message probably exerted powerful effects on our subjects, although our research design did not allow us to parse them out individually. However, like Miller and Krosnick (2000), we question the notion that the nature of the message overpowered our subjects. This interpretation is difficult to reconcile with our result that among subjects exposed to the endorsement/editorial, the more favorably they viewed the *Times,* the better they rated Clinton, and the more likely they were to vote for her. Once again, voters seem to be picky about the help that they accepted. Not only did they prefer richer information to simple cues, but they also scrutinized the source of the rich information they relied upon. This argument dovetails nicely with our non-finding that source cue credibility did not matter for those exposed to the two "naked" endorsements. Voters operating in an information-saturated environment do not need to consider the credibility of sources that do not factor into their calculus.

We also found that political knowledge mediated the effect of the endorsement coupled with the editorial. As the knowledge levels of our subjects increased, the greater the impact this treatment exerted on their evaluations of Clinton's traits and the lesser it affected their feeling thermometer ratings. These findings both support and contradict the position that it is the most knowledgeable who are less influenced by framing (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997, 227) and priming (Iyengar *et al.* 1984; Krosnick and Kinder 1990). The reasoning that undergirds this position—inoculation against arguments, less taken by new information, counterarguing counterattitudinal messages, and reinforcement of preexisting beliefs—does not seem to reconcile

these inconsistent findings. Perhaps the explanation for the contradiction lies in the tasks our subjects were asked to perform. Asking respondents to evaluate candidate traits, including honesty, competence, and decisiveness, is much more demanding (and fact-based) than inviting them to offer an overall impression of a candidate on a feeling thermometer. The politically well-versed may have turned to the editorial for help assessing Clinton's traits because this made the challenging task more manageable, while they did not need help formulating a *general* impression of her. In the end, these findings suggest that endorsement effects are contingent and, like Miller and Krosnick (2000), they point to purposeful voters who use information in a task-oriented way.

Conclusion

Our results showed that being simultaneously exposed to the *Times'* endorsement of Hillary Clinton and its corresponding editorial positively impacted voters' views of Clinton. This effect was conditioned by both the knowledge levels of the subjects and how they felt about the *Times*. Yet subjects were unmoved by our two truncated endorsements that lacked an editorial. These findings suggest that voters are willing to accept help making sense of the election even at a late juncture in a high-profile race. But not just any help will do. Voters prefer rich information over simplistic cues, which bodes well for the health of democracy. Even when voters encounter rich information, they scrutinize its source, which also bodes well for the health of democracy. Practically, our results suggest that it is worthwhile for editors to invest in writing and publicizing endorsement editorials, while it is ill-advised for campaign consultants to construct advertisements that merely mention which newspaper supported their candidate in high-profile races.

Of course, ours are not the final words on the subject. First, future researchers should explore the efficacy of strategies designed to disseminate endorsement editorials. Second, although we took steps to maximize external validity, others might consider conducting selective exposure experiments (*e.g.*, Arceneaux and Johnson 2010) or leveraging a process-tracing technique that makes use of a dynamic information board (Redlawsk 2004). Third, our analysis focuses on a high-visibility contest, but it says nothing about low-visibility contests. Finally, though we conducted our study the week before the 2016 election, it is possible that our cross-sectional design failed to capture changes that might have occurred within our treatment groups.

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Appendix A: The Endorsement with Information Treatment Stimulus

The New York Times

Opinion

Hillary Clinton for President

Our endorsement is rooted in respect for her intellect, experience, and courage.

In any normal election year, we'd compare the two presidential candidates side by side on the issues. But this is not a normal election year. A comparison like that would be an empty exercise in a race where one candidate — our choice, Hillary Clinton — has a record of service and a raft of pragmatic ideas, and the other, Donald Trump, discloses nothing concrete about himself or his plans while promising the moon and offering the stars on layaway. (We will explain in a subsequent editorial why we believe Mr. Trump to be the worst nominee put forward by a major party in modern American history.)

But this endorsement would also be an empty exercise if it merely affirmed the choice of Clinton supporters. We're aiming instead to persuade those of you who are hesitating to vote for Mrs. Clinton — because you are reluctant to vote for a Democrat, or for another Clinton, or for a candidate who might appear, on the surface, not to offer change from an establishment that seems indifferent and a political system that seems broken.

Running down the other guy won't suffice to make that argument. The best case for Hillary Clinton cannot be, and is not, that she isn't Donald Trump.

The best case is, instead, about the challenges this country faces, and Mrs. Clinton's capacity to rise to them.

The next president will take office with bigoted, tribalist movements and their leaders on the march. In the Middle East and across Asia, in Russia and Eastern Europe, even in Britain and the United States, war, terrorism and the pressures of globalization are eroding democratic values, fraying alliances and challenging the ideals of tolerance and charity.

The 2016 campaign has brought to the surface the despair and rage of poor and middle-class Americans who say their government has done little to ease the burdens that recession, technological change, foreign competition and war have heaped on their families.

Over 40 years in public life, Hillary Clinton has studied these forces and weighed responses to these problems. Our endorsement is rooted in respect for her intellect, experience, toughness and courage over a career of almost continuous public service, often as the first or only woman in the arena.
Mrs. Clinton's work has been defined more by incremental successes than by moments of transformational change. As a candidate, she has struggled to step back from a pointillist collection of policy proposals to reveal the full pattern of her record. That is a weakness of her campaign, and a perplexing one, for the pattern is clear. It shows a determined leader intent on creating opportunity for struggling Americans at a time of economic upheaval and on ensuring that the United States remains a force for good in an often brutal world.

Similarly, Mrs. Clinton's occasional missteps, combined with attacks on her trustworthiness, have distorted perceptions of her character. She is one of the most tenacious politicians of her generation, whose willingness to study and correct course is rare in an age of unyielding partisanship. As first lady, she rebounded from professional setbacks and personal trials with astounding resilience. Over eight years in the Senate and four as secretary of state, she built a reputation for grit and bipartisan collaboration. She displayed a command of policy and diplomatic nuance and an ability to listen to constituents and colleagues that are all too exceptional in Washington.

Mrs. Clinton's record of service to children, women and families has spanned her adult life. One of her boldest acts as first lady was her 1995 speech in Beijing declaring that women's rights are human rights. After a failed attempt to overhaul the nation's health care system, she threw her support behind legislation to establish the Children's Health Insurance Program, which now covers more than eight million lower-income young people. This year, she rallied mothers of gun-violence victims to join her in demanding comprehensive background checks for gun buyers and tighter reins on gun sales.

After opposing driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants during the 2008 campaign, she now vows to push for comprehensive immigration legislation as president and to use executive power to protect law-abiding undocumented people from deportation and cruel detention. Some may dismiss her shift as opportunistic, but we credit her for arriving at the right position.

Mrs. Clinton and her team have produced detailed proposals on crime, policing and race relations, debt-free college and small-business incentives, climate change and affordable broadband. Most of these proposals would benefit from further elaboration on how to pay for them, beyond taxing the wealthiest Americans. They would also depend on passage by Congress.

That means that, to enact her agenda, Mrs. Clinton would need to find common ground with a destabilized Republican Party, whose unifying goal in Congress would be to discredit her. Despite her political scars, she has shown an unusual capacity to reach across the aisle.

When Mrs. Clinton was sworn in as a senator from New York in 2001, Republican leaders warned their caucus not to do anything that might make her look good. Yet as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, she earned the respect of Republicans like Senator John McCain with her determination to master intricate military matters.

Her most lasting achievements as a senator include a federal fund for long-term health monitoring of 9/11 first responders, an expansion of military benefits to cover reservists and the National Guard, and a law requiring drug companies to improve the safety of their medications for children.

Below the radar, she fought for money for farmers, hospitals, small businesses and environmental projects. Her vote in favor of the Iraq war is a black mark, but to her credit, she has explained her thinking rather than trying to rewrite that history.

As secretary of state, Mrs. Clinton was charged with repairing American credibility after eight years of the Bush administration's unilateralism. She bears a share of the responsibility for the Obama administration's foreign-policy failings, notably in Libya. But her achievements are substantial. She led efforts to strengthen sanctions against Iran, which eventually pushed it to the table for talks over its nuclear program, and in 2012, she helped negotiate a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

Mrs. Clinton led efforts to renew diplomatic relations with Myanmar, persuading its junta to adopt political reforms. She helped promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an important trade counterweight to China and a key component of the Obama administration's pivot to Asia. Her election-year reversal on that pact has confused some of her supporters, but her underlying commitment to bolstering trade along with workers' rights is not in doubt. Mrs. Clinton's attempt to reset relations with Russia, though far from successful, was a sensible effort to improve interactions with a rivalrous nuclear power.

Mrs. Clinton has shown herself to be a realist who believes America cannot simply withdraw behind oceans and walls, but must engage confidently in the world to protect its interests and be true to its values, which include helping others escape poverty and oppression.

Mrs. Clinton's husband, Bill Clinton, governed during what now looks like an optimistic and even gentle era. The end of the Cold War and the advance of technology and trade appeared to be awakening the world's possibilities rather than its demons. Many in the news media, and in the country, and in that administration, were distracted by the scandal du jour — Mr. Clinton's impeachment — during the very period in which a terrorist threat was growing. We are now living in a world darkened by the realization of that threat and its many consequences.

Mrs. Clinton's service spans both eras, and she has learned hard lessons from the three presidents she has studied up close. She has also made her own share of mistakes. She has evinced a lamentable penchant for secrecy and made a poor decision to rely on a private email server while at the State Department. That decision deserved scrutiny, and it's had it. Now, considered alongside the real challenges that will occupy the next president, that email server, which has consumed so much of this campaign, looks like a matter for the help desk. And, viewed against those challenges, Mr. Trump shrinks to his true small-screen, reality-show proportions, as we'll argue in detail on Monday.

Through war and recession, Americans born since 9/11 have had to grow up fast, and they deserve a grown-up president. A lifetime's commitment to solving problems in the real world qualifies Hillary Clinton for this job, and the country should put her to work.

Appendix B: The Endorsement without Information Treatment Stimulus

The New York Times

Opinion

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Appendix C: The Campaign Item Treatment Stimulus