Crowding out the Economy: Coronavirus and Governor Approval

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Leaders are normally held accountable for economic outcomes that occur on their watch. Yet accountability for the economy may weaken when other issues compete for the public's attention. I posit that during the COVID-19 crisis, the public paid less attention to how leaders managed the economy and focused instead on how they managed the disease. I test this hypothesis using a time-series dataset of gubernatorial approval in 46 states before and during the crisis based on 10,000 aggregate measures of governor popularity. These data show that while governor approval was strongly correlated with unemployment levels before COVID-19, governors were not punished for increasing unemployment during the crisis. Instead, after an initial rally, governors were rewarded for enacting stringent policies early and then were held accountable for preventing COVID-19 deaths. Individual-level data shows, however, that Republicans diverged from the rest of the public and did not hold governors accountable for lockdown policies or for death rates. The results show the public's issue agenda is not constant and that the economy only matters when other issues are not more pressing.

As the COVID-19 crisis unspooled in the United States and elsewhere, leaders faced a series of policy dilemmas: what measures were necessary to stop the spread of the virus, how should those measures be enforced, when should lockdown orders or mask mandates be lifted, and how could governments help struggling businesses and workers withstand the economic fallout of the disease and the necessary policy responses? Some leaders faced criticism for not acting swiftly to enact quarantine measures while others faced protests for the strength and duration of their lockdowns. While the disease raged, many locations saw unemployment rates spike to levels not seen for generations. Leaders faced these challenges under the watchful eye of the electorate who were likely to hold them accountable for the choices that they made and their effects.

The open question, however, is what the public held leaders accountable for as they faced these policy tradeoffs. Traditional models of accountability posited that "in order to ascertain whether the incumbents have performed poorly or well, citizens need only calculate the changes in their own welfare" (Fiorina 1981, 5). Yet COVID-19 created a unique situation in which multiple crises were occurring simultaneously and where some leaders intentionally accepted an economic crisis as a cost of fighting the disease while other leaders accepted rising case counts to minimize damage to the economy. Which of these outcomes did the public prefer and what did they sanction?

The traditional existing literature on economic voting provides a potential answer to this question: the public was likely to respond negatively to the weakening economy and reward politicians who protected jobs. This belief was widely shared during the pandemic. One observer hypothesized, for example, that "After the "rally around the flag" effect of the pandemic, economic conditions are likely to return to a traditional pattern where they exercise a crucial

influence on presidential popularity and voting behavior" (Murillo 2020) while other observers argued that in the 2020 election the Republican Party would "lose in a landslide because of the economy" because "every incumbent president facing a recession in the lead-up to reelection has lost" (Egan 2020). A larger literature shows that the public is particularly likely to sanction governments for failing to prevent a recession (e.g. Bloom and Price 1975; Lau 1982; Clarke and Whiteley 1990; Nannestad and Paldam 1997; Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck 2014; Costa Lobo and Pannico 2020) and COVOD-19's recession was historic in its magnitude.

I argue, however, that a different dynamic occurred in 2020. Most economic-based models on the effect of recessions have focused on how the economy's effect varies in good and bad economic times but have not studied how the public's agenda is set when there are multiple crises. Yet the public has a hierarchy of attention and weighs performance issues accordingly. Previous work, for example, has found that while the public dislikes scandals, public reactions to them are muted when the economy is good (Manzetti and Wilson 2006, Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colugna 2013, Carlin et al. 2015). This implication is that the public, on average, does not weigh governance and the economy equally but instead prefers a strong economy to good governance, so they prioritize the former. Then while leader approval is generally responsive to economic fluctuations, the effect of the economy is reduced when the country is involved in a war (Wilcox and Allsop 1991; Edwards 1995; Lebo and Box-Steffensmeier 2008; c.f. McAvoy 2006). Instead, during war times the public usually will initially rally to the support for leaders as press coverage focuses on their leadership and crises create opportunities for decisive action but then, after the initial rally, will hold leaders accountable for the effectiveness of their policies in achieving stated goals and in minimizing soldier casualties (see Aldrich et al. 2006 for a review). The implication is that security dilemmas are more pressing for the average member of the

public than economic management is. These dynamics remind us that the public's agenda can and does change with changing circumstances.

I argue that the public responded to the COVID-19 pandemic like they would have responded to a war. Despite the historic recession, the public's response to the economy was minimal because the economy was not the most pressing problem-minimizing the risk of death was. Instead of focusing on the economy as they do in normal times, the public held leaders accountable for their attempts and successes in minimizing casualties from the disease. The result was a rally effect for leaders who acted decisively early in the pandemic and then an eventual retrospective evaluation of leader performance in fighting the disease.

To test this argument, I focus on American governors who were at the front line of shaping policy responses to the pandemic. The large number of governors provides variation in the size of the pandemic, policy choices made, and economic outcomes that allow us to separate out the effects of these different dimensions of performance. To study their popularity and how it fluctuated during the pandemic, I use data from the State Executive Approval Dataset (SEAD) v. 1.0. These unique times series data on governor popularity allow us to compare the dynamics of leader approval before and during the first year of the pandemic and to see how the effect of performance changes over time.

These data show that governor approval was reshaped dramatically by the pandemic. Consistent with other recent studies on other political leaders (Yam et al. 2020, Bol et al. 2021, Schraff 2021, Johansson et al. 2021), I find that many governors received a boost in approval early in the pandemic. More importantly, however, the pandemic also changed the basis on which governors were evaluated. While governor approval was strongly connected to the unemployment rate before the pandemic, there was no punishment for rising unemployment

during it despite the spike in unemployment. Instead, the public was focused primarily on the steps that governors were taking to limit the disease's spread, rewarding governors who initially enacted stringent policies and rallying to support governors in areas where the initial breakout was strongest but holding governors accountable for deaths that occurred in their state after the initial wave.

Beyond the specific question of how the public responded to the pandemic, these results have important implications for models of accountability. While scholars are starting to recognize that leaders can be held accountable for multiple areas of performance (Edwards 1995; Singer 2011, 2013; De Vries and Giger 2014, Cavari 2019), little attention has been given to modeling how the public's agenda systematically changes or how the public divides its attention between competing accountability frames. The results presented here confirm that the public's agenda systematically varies as new challenges emerge and evolve and that the public focuses on the most pressing threat.

The Evolving Public Agenda

Many studies of political accountability take the public's agenda for granted. For example, the idea that the public holds leaders accountable for their management of the economy is nearly a political truism. The implication is that "the way in which the public rewards or punishes the president for economic performance [is] steady over time" (McAvoy 2006, 81), that "the economy is the clarifying issue… this issue is always important to voters in presidential elections" (Vavreck 2009, 31) or that "[t]he economy is always an important issue to voters" (Wlezien 2005, 556). Yet in recent years, evidence has emerged showing that the public's agenda is multidimensional and that the economy's salience can and does vary (Edwards et al. 1995; Singer 2011; Devries and Giger 2014) and that there are periods when the economy does

not matter as a driver of leaders' political support (Singer 2011, Cavari 2019). This raises the question of how the public agenda is formed and evolves as circumstances change.

Two sets of considerations seem to shape the public's agenda. First, the public tends to focus its attention on issues that are easily accessible. Issues that have received coverage in the press or that are widely discussed in campaigns tend to be given greater weight by the public than are issues that are not being talked about (e.g. Krosnick and Kinder 1990, Zaller 1992, Hart 2016). When a single issue is being covered a lot its importance tends to rise whereas when the public agenda is fragmented the public's reaction to any one issue is minimized. Second, the public also tends to focus on issues that are personally important to them and that they believe will personally affect them (Young et al. 1987, Krosnick 1988). The public agenda is thus not merely a function of elite framing events but is anchored by considerations of how issues shape the public welfare.

These two explanations for a shifting public agenda explain why the economy is often an important driver of presidential approval. Economic fluctuations are important to large swaths of the electorate who value economic opportunities and are negatively affected by economic dislocations. As a result, economic performance is prominently featured in media coverage and campaigns, further heightening their salience. The convergence of personal impact and accessibility make the economy a frequently important issue.

These two dynamics also imply that the economy's salience will tend to rise when the economy is poor. The public has a loss aversion that makes them more responsive to threats (e.g. Weyland 2000, Soroka 2014) and media coverage of the economy increases when it is bad (Fogarty 2005, Soroka 2012). If the economy's salience indeed varies with importance and accessibility, then recessions should raise the economy's importance relative to normal times.

Changes in issue salience and perceived personal impact also explain why the economy seems to trump good governance and why security issues can reduce political reactions to the economy. Scandals are highly accessible, although they may be minimized by elites and media with ties to the ruling party. Yet their personal impact is comparatively minimal-for most people, the personal impact of a corruption scandal is smaller than the personal impact of economic fluctuations are. The result is that scandals' effect can be minimized if the economy is good even as the scandal's accessibility is relatively high. In contrast, wars are both highly accessible and seen as highly important. Fear shift's the public's priorities as security crises create demands for strong leadership as the public feels unsafe (Zechmeister and Merolla 2009) and death is the ultimate outcome to be avoided. The wars are accessible; they shift the media agenda away from domestic politics toward foreign affairs and the debates often focus on the leadership choices being made. The combination of a demand for leadership and media coverage focused on the executive can create conditions for a rally effect where public support for leaders surges (e.g. Mueller 1973, Brody 1991, Krosnick and Brannon 1993, Hetherington and Nelson 2003). This rally effect fades eventually, however, as the effects of those choices become more apparent and the public can evaluate leaders based on the effects of their actions in achieving goals or in preventing casualties, both of which are widely reported (Aldrich et al. 2006). While the public is focused on foreign affairs, concern about domestic issues thus becomes muted as the public prioritizes more existential threats and as the media is focused on the evolving security situation and leader actions.

Thus we may have reason to believe that the public will change their priorities when issues emerge that are widely covered in the press/political discourse and that threaten the public's core interests. Yet there are debates around whether the public's agenda is as malleable

as these theories imply. For example, while many studies have found that recessions tend to focus the public's attention on the economy (e.g. Bloom and Price 1975; Lau 1982; Clarke and Whiteley 1990; Nannestad and Paldam 1997; Singer 2011, 2013; Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck 2014; Costa Lobo and Pannico 2020), many others do not find differences in how the public responds to good and bad economic performance (e.g. Tufte 1978, Kiewiet 1983, Lewis-Beck 1988, Fiorina and Shepsle 1989, Sanders and Carey 2002, MacAvoy 2006, Van der Brug et al 2007, Duch and Stevenson 2008). Similarly, while studies have found that wars reduce the economy's salience(Wilcox and Allsop 1991; Edwards 1995; Lebo and Box-Steffensmeier 2008; Ostrom et al. 2018; Cavari 2019), McAvoy (2006) does not find a reduced effect for the economy during war times. Thus the degree to which issue salience varies is an open empirical question with implications for how we understand the nature of political accountability. The COVID-19 pandemic thus presents a unique opportunity to see if the public's agenda changes away from economics when other issues compete for the public's attention.

Issue Importance and Accessibility in a Pandemic

Several studies have argued that wars and terrorist attacks are agenda reshaping events. The COVID-19 pandemic was, I argue, also an agenda-reshaping event. Like wars and terrorist attacks, COVID-19 created fear of death for yourself and your loved ones. This fear was not equally distributed throughout the public (e.g. Kushner Gadarian et al. 2021, Kaushal et al. 2022), but it motivated many people to stay home even before lockdown policies were announced. The COVID-19 pandemic was also highly accessible. Media coverage focused on the growing unemployment rate but also focused on health outcomes like infection rates and deaths, debates about the best ways to keep yourself safe, and leaders' policy responses (Krawczyk et al. 2020). Then political actors at the national, state, and local levels shifted their

attention to press briefings outlining and justifying policy steps they were taking. The likely result, I argue, was a resetting of the public agenda.

Preliminary evidence that COVID-19 reshaped the political agenda comes from the rally effects that many leaders experienced. Rally effects stem from public demands for decisive leadership and greater media coverage of leaders in action. Several studies have documented that the outbreak generated support for both national leaders and for governors as it occurred (Yam et al. 2020), although there are debates over whether that rally was strongest for leaders who were aggressive in limiting mobility in an attempt to slow the virus (Bol et al. 2020) and more limited for those who were less decisive (Shino and Binder 2020) or instead simply reflected the depth of the crisis in an area (Schraff 2021). Although rally effects are temporary (Johansson et al. 2021), they demonstrate that the type of information the public is receiving and what they are paying attention to has changed.

The question then becomes what the public pays attention to once the rally effect fades. I argue that while the economic crises that the public experienced in the early stages of the recession were historic and would normally generate a large public response, just as war drowns out the economy, so too does a pandemic. In the face of a new disease, the average person was afraid of dying and many people voluntarily changed their behavior. As a result, leader performance in managing the disease is likely to be closely monitored and highly salient and many people will give less priority to protecting the economy than they do to fighting the disease. The public may not know the specific policies that candidates and leaders proposed (Gunterman and Lenz forthcoming), but they are likely to know broadly how strict they are and also know how fast the disease is spreading in their communities.

If health concerns trumped economic ones, then accountability dynamics should have shifted during the pandemic in two ways. First, the political impact of economic fluctuations should be more muted during the pandemic than it was previously. Moreover, if the public was not focused on economic harm then there should not be a sanction for enacting lockdown policies despite these policies contributing to high unemployment. Second, the public should hold leaders accountable for their actions in fighting the disease. There should be a rally effect during the pandemic, but it should be tied to policy actions enacted by leaders. Then after the initial rally has faded and policy learning has occurred, leaders will be held accountable for the results of their choices, with leaders being punished for failing to contain death rates.

If the above argument is not true, there are two alternative possibilities. The first is that traditional economic voting considerations continued to dominate during the pandemic. If this occurred, then we should see that leader support during the pandemic remained connected to economic outcomes like in previous periods and a sanction for lockdown policies (especially after any early rally effects). The other possibility is that while the public generally was focused on health, there are subsets of the population that are not. If the shift to health-based accountability is driven by media and elite emphasis on the pandemic and feelings that the disease is a threat, then this shift should be less pronounced for any subsets of the population where the elite messaging minimizes the threat of the pandemic or where individuals are less concerned about getting sick. In the context of the United States, for example, Republican officials and conservative media outlets tended to downplay the threat of the virus (e.g. Bursztyn et al. 2020, Simonov et al. 2020) and Republicans were much less likely to report being corned about being sickened (e.g. Kushner Gadarian et al. 2021, Kaushal et al. 2022). Similar polarizing effects occurred in other countries as well (e.g. Calvo and Ventura 2021, Ayala-Cantu et al.

2021), although polarization over pandemic policies was not universal (e.g. Pennycook et al. 2021). Thus while we may see a shift in accountability patterns in the aggregate, these patterns may also diverge within the public, with them being less pronounced among groups that have downplayed the virus' importance.

Some preliminary evidence suggests that the economy's salience may have been reduced during the pandemic. Singer (2021) shows that the connection between long-run unemployment levels and Trump's approval ratings weakened after the pandemic started and also that individuals who said that they had lost their job during the pandemic did not differ in their approval of President Trump from those who had not been economically displaced. Schraff (2021) shows that political trust became less connected to individual-level perceptions of economic outcomes as deaths increased in the Netherlands. Yet Wu and Huber (2021) find that newly unemployed individuals were less supportive of President Trump than were those who had not lost their job during the pandemic and Neundorf and Pardos-Prado (2022) find that individuals who were primed of the pandemic's economic costs were significantly less likely to support President Trump. These last two studies raise the possibility that economic issues remained salient despite the health crisis and that the effect of the economy is indeed relatively constant. Thus the effect of the pandemic on the public's agenda remains an open question that merits further exploration.

The Context: Accountability in the American States

To look at the effect of the pandemic on political accountability, I focus on support for American governors. While President Trump and other national leaders made many key policy decisions on travel, vaccine development and deployment, and providing financial support for the displaced, governors were at the front line of decisions about lockdowns and mask mandates

and testing. As a result, states took divergent paths regarding policies that voters can potentially hold them accountable for (Hallas et al. 2021, Adolph et al. 2021). States also differed in the depths of the economic and health crises they faced, both as a function of exogenous factors the timing of virus waves in different areas and underlying demographics and also ones that were under the governor's controls like their specific policy choices. This divergence allows for variation in performance that I can model. Finally, governors were often aggressive in their communication strategies, holding press conferences that placed their leadership firmly in the public eye. This creates both the possibility for rally effects and for the public then laying the outcomes of their choices at governors' feet.

Traditional models of state politics also would suggest that governors will be held accountable for economic outcomes that occur on their watch. The public believes that governors can affect the economy and weigh economic issues heavily when describing governors' priorities (see Cohen 2020). As a result, governors emphasize economic policies and outcomes heavily in their speechmaking and campaigning. Many studies find that governor support rises when the economy is strong and falls when it is weak (Niemi et al. 1995, Atkeson and Partin 1995, Carsey and Wright 1998, Orth 2001, King and Cohen 2005, Newman and Johnson 2012, Cohen forthcoming), although others find no connection between economic outcomes and governor support (Peltzmen 1987, MacDonald and Sigelman 1999, Adams and Squire 2001) or find it only in some states and contexts (Chubb 1988, Crew and Weiher 1996, Hansen 1999, Crew et al. 2002, Ebeid and Rodden 2006). Yet there is enough evidence that governors are held accountable for the economy that we might have expected that rising unemployment rates that stemmed directly from their choices (in this case to enact lockdowns) would drive the public's evaluation of their performance if traditional models of behavior held during the pandemic. Yet I

might find that different dynamics emerged in 2020 if the pandemic shifted the agenda to other areas of governors' responsibilities.

Data

I start by looking at how the public in the aggregate evaluated governors before and during the pandemic. Analyzing whether the pandemic changed the basis of governor support requires having data from before and during the pandemic. Ensuring that the effects are not limited to one or two particularly visible governors also requires having data from as many states as possible. The State Executive Approval Database (SEAD) meets these criteria. This database collects data from survey questions that ask about the governor's "approval", "favorability", or "ratings" of their "management", "job", "performance", or "image." The assumption is that these survey questions all tap into a general underlying latent level of governor approval. It excludes questions about how the governor has managed the economy or how they have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic because these domain-specific questions are less likely to be comparable over time or to tap into a general latent dimension. For governors who were in office before 2009, much of the data comes from the U.S. Officials' Job Approval Ratings (JAR) Database (Beyle et al. 2002).[1] That database has 5115 unique measurements of governor popularity. I have then collected another 5213 popularity measurements, with some coming from polls that were conducted before 2009 and were not included in the JAR and others occurring between 2009 and the present. All measurements are from surveys that were conducted in and designed to be

[1] This database has been maintained by Jennifer Jensen (https://jmj313.web.lehigh.edu/node/6); I am grateful for the original data collector's efforts to compile the data and her work to maintain it public.

representative of a single state. In each survey I record, as available, the percentage of respondents who gave a positive evaluation or a negative evaluation. For questions with an even number of responses, values above the midpoint are coded as positive and those below are coded as negative. For questions with an odd number of responses, the midpoint category is not coded as either positive or negative.

Yet once these survey data are compiled, they cannot be analyzed in their raw form. Producing a valid, reliable, and continuous measure of governor approval from these various questions that is amenable for time-series analysis[2] raises several methodological challenges. One of these is "house effects": differences in measures of approval unique to each polling firm. House effects may occur if firms have a systematic tilt in their polls but also can reflect different sampling frames, response modes, response categories, or question-wording. Moreover, these differences may not be limited to between-house effects, but also within firms using differing response categories, question frames (approval versus favorability), or sampling frames over time. If one were to simply pool all questions without acknowledging and addressing these issues, the resulting measure of approval may be significantly biased and unreliable.

To create a continuous latent measure of executive approval while controlling for house effects, I follow Carlin et al. (2018) and use the dyads-ratio algorithm, developed by Stimson (1991), to extract the underlying common variance from a series of related but independent questions. The algorithm is built on the idea that if a given time series is a valid measure of approval, then the ratio between any two values in the series is a relative measure of approval.

[2] Some studies have used the raw data from Beyle et al. (2002) but did not have a method to combine it into a continuous measure that could account for lagged values or autocorrelation.

The approach converts all series in ratios between each observation in each series and then the algorithm assesses the common variance among all of the series. From this reliability measures for each series are produced and used to weight each series in the resulting latent measure of approval. In each state, data collected by the same firm using the same question wording are treated as an input series.

An additional, and relatively minor, issue in creating comparable and continuous measures of approval across states is temporal gaps in the survey data, particularly in states where polling is less frequent. To facilitate coverage, I analyze the data at the quarterly level instead of monthly. Yet there are many quarters where no surveys are conducted inside a state. Where gaps are long, there is nothing to be done but to exclude certain periods. But for shorter temporal gaps of input data, it is possible to generate an approval series via interpolation. In analyzing the series, I exclude any periods where 3 quarters in a row were interpolated. I also exclude interpolated estimates from the first three quarters when a governor is in office because the interpolation is likely to miss the honeymoon effect as ratings of the new governor diverge from the previous trend. The supplemental materials contain analyses excluding all interpolated data and the substantive conclusions are identical.

After using the dyads ratio algorithm, the resulting time series contains 5,294 quarterly estimates of governor approval from 46 states through the end of 2020.[3] While several of these

[3] Hawaii, Idaho, North Dakota, and Oklahoma did not have sufficient overlap across survey series to produce valid series for the indicator of governor approval used here. While I could have simply used the Morning Consult approval ratings in those states for the 2016-2019 period, those series have not been corrected for house effects in the ways that the other series have been.

series are long (data from Minnesota and California become fairly frequent in the 1960s), state-specific surveys become much more common in the 1980s and 1990s, and the period between 2015 and 2019 where Morning Consult made their governor approval data publicly available for all 50 states is particularly richly covered. Unfortunately, however, Morning Consult stopped publicly releasing their data just as the pandemic was starting and so coverage for 2020 is slightly thinner than it was in 2019. A lack of data on other variables (e.g. state unemployment levels before 1976) further restricts the sample analyzed below. Yet I am still left with an extensive set of approval series to analyze. The median state has 118 quarters of valid data, with the shortest series (Louisiana) having 36 quarters and the longest (California) having 178.

The dependent variable is the share of the public that has a favorable opinion of the governor among all those that have an opinion. Specifically, it divides the percentage of the public who approved of the governor by the percentage that gave a positive or negative evaluation of the governor (i.e. excluding those that gave a neutral response or did not have an opinion). This measure of relative approval allows for greater comparability within a governor's term as levels of awareness of the governor change.

The main independent variable is the strength of the economy in the state. Previous work shows that governors are held accountable for the level of unemployment in their state, with a debate over whether the public is more strongly attuned to the absolute level of unemployment or the degree to which state unemployment levels deviate from national trends (Crew et al. 2002, Cohen and King 2004, King and Cohen 2005). My analysis (not shown here) suggests that national unemployment trends do not have a significant negative effect on governor approval when state-level trends are controlled for and that results are similar when the raw unemployment levels are used to when the relative unemployment levels are used. I thus focus

on the raw unemployment levels in the analysis presented below, using non-seasonally adjusted data from the Bureau for Labor Statistics.[4] The average for the three months of the quarter is used to generate the quarterly measure and I include both the unemployment rate in the quarter of the survey and its lag to capture a potential delay in how the public learns about and responds to the economy.

The fundamental question in this article is whether the COVID-19 pandemic changed the dynamics of governor approval. To examine this, I code the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2020 as being during the pandemic. While COVID-19 cases had started to appear in January 2020 and the Trump administration declared a public health emergency in February, infection numbers and government shutdowns started in March and that is when the pandemic likely became the most salient. Yet those actions are close enough to the end of the quarter that most measures of governor approval would not capture their effect until the next quarter; only 5 states had surveys conducted in the last few weeks of March after the first shutdown order was issued in California. Thus, I estimate the start of the pandemic as being in the second quarter of 2020 even if this risks missing the start of the rally effect in some states. This pandemic dummy variable allows us to test if governor approval received a sustained bump during the pandemic in an average state. Then by interacting it with the measure of state unemployment I can test if the public's response to the economy was affected by the pandemic.

In addition to the economy, I control for the electoral cycle and some simple characteristics of the governor. Previous work on presidents suggests that there is a consistent popularity cycle whereby executives start with higher support and also often get a bump at the

[4] https://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.toc.htm

end of their term (Mueller 1973, Stimson 1976), although there is less evidence that governors experience honeymoons: Crew and Weiher (1996) only find a honeymoon in one of the three states they study and Beyle et al. (2002) find that governors' honeymoons are weaker than presidents' are. I thus add dummy variables for the first, second, and third quarters the governor is in office and also for the last quarter of their term. Because the honeymoon is likely to be larger for new governors than for ones the public is familiar with, I differentiate the starts of first terms from the start or second/third terms. While there has been no systematic study of whether governor approval differs for male and female governors, female presidents see lower levels of support than do male presidents (Carlin, Carreras, and Love 2020) and so I include a dummy variable for female governors. I include a dummy variable for non-elected governors who took over after a governor was impeached, resigned, or died and also a dummy variable that designates the quarter that the governor was impeached/resigned or died. In other models, I have controlled for the governor's partisanship but I did not find consistent differences by partisanship nor did their inclusion/exclusion affect the results and so I do not include those variables here.[5]

I estimate the basic economy models using a generalized least-squares estimator. An Im-Pesaran-Shin[6] test indicates that all panels do not have a unit root and so I do not first difference the data. The Woolridge test confirms, however, that there is substantial autocorrelation in these

[5] Crew et al. (2002) suggest that there are few political events that affect the governor's approval and so I do not include other events in these analyses.

[6] The test statistic of the null that all approval rating panels have a unit root is -12.4716 ($p<0.001$). The test statistic of the null that all unemployment panels have a unit root is -16.0169 ($p<0.001$).

series that needs to be adjusted for.[7] To account for heterogeneity in the autocorrelation structure across states, I use a panel-specific AR(1) correction (Beck and Katz 1995). The estimated autocorrelation correction varies substantially across states, suggesting that a single pooled time correction such as a lagged dependent variable or pooled AR(1) term would not capture the serial correlation in these data.

Results

Model 1 in Table 1 first estimates a model of governor opinion before 2020 to create a baseline set of pre-pandemic dynamics. In contrast to some previous work, I find that the average governor experiences honeymoon effects, with the size and duration of the bump being much larger in their first term than in their subsequent term where that bump is limited to the first quarter and is less than a percentage point. There is no evidence, however, that governors experience an increase in support at the end of their term. Looking at the other controls, female governors are not systematically more or less popular than male governors. Non-elected governors are, however, more popular than their predecessors and they receive an extra bump in support in the quarter than they take office, although the rarity of governors dying in office makes that be imprecisely estimated.

(Table 1 about here)

Our primary interest, however, is in the economy. While previous work that focused on election outcomes or a limited number of states found mixed evidence that governors were held accountable for the economy, this new dataset provides strong evidence that governor approval in an average state is tied to unemployment levels both in the quarter of the survey and in the

[7] The test statistic that there is no autocorrelation is 256.269 ($p<0.001$).

previous quarter. In normal, non-pandemic periods governors are held accountable for economic outcomes that occurred on their watch.

Yet when I add available data from 2020 in column 2, we see that while all the other dynamics remain roughly the same, the effect of the economy across the entire sample is weakened by simply including those additional 4 quarters. In particular, governor approval is no longer significantly associated with unemployment outcomes in the quarter the survey was conducted and the coefficient for the lagged unemployment, while significant at conventional levels, is reduced. This remains true even when a dummy variable for the pandemic is added in model 3. The significant positive coefficient for the pandemic shows that the average governor received a bump during the pandemic of roughly 2.4 percent, which suggests that there was a rally effect for many governors during the crisis. Yet even when this bump is controlled for, the effect of the economy looks to be very different when 2020 is included than when it is excluded from the model.

To formally test whether the pandemic changed the effect of the economy, in model 4 I interact the dummy variable for the pandemic with the economic performance measures. Unemployment and its lag had significant negative effects on approval in the pre-pandemic period. The interaction terms, however, are positive, showing that governors are not being punished for high unemployment during the pandemic. The estimated effect of contemporaneous changes in unemployment generated by combining the interaction coefficient with the pre-pandemic measure is positive (the estimated slope is 0.48 with a standard error of 0.18) and statistically significant, which suggests that when unemployment spiked, governor approval actually increased! Inasmuch as higher unemployment rates reflected more stringent lockdown policies, this suggests that the public rewarded the most aggressive governors for taking steps

that shut down the economy even as unemployment spiked in their state.[8] The coefficient for the interaction of the pandemic and the lagged unemployment is roughly the same as the pre-pandemic effect, meaning that lagged unemployment has no effect at all on governor support in the pandemic. That implies that the public did not punish governors for unemployment even as it lingered past the initial lockdown. These results are not a function of the public's reduced responsiveness to economic fluctuations over time (Donovan et al. 2019); model 5 looks only at opinion dynamics since 2017 to focus only on the Trump period. While the contemporaneous effect of unemployment from 2017-2020q1 is not quite significant at conventional levels, the interaction terms again show that the effect of the economy is substantially reshaped by the pandemic and that governors were significantly less likely to be punished for high unemployment during the crisis than they had been for the first 13 quarters Trump was in office.

The results in Table 1 focus on trends in an average state. However, one might wonder if these dynamics differ by partisanship. Inasmuch concerns about the seriousness of the disease were lower in states governed by Republicans and pandemic responses tended to be less strict in states with Republican governors (Adolph et al. 2021), one could hypothesize that Republican governors would be rewarded for falling unemployment numbers in ways that Democratic governors who were focused more on disease prevention were not. Yet the economic dynamics

[8] The coefficient for the pandemic variable is nonsensical because unemployment never equals 0, but the negative sign is consistent that the public in an average state was likely to reward governors who shut down the economy. In states where unemployment remained low in the pandemic, their approval tended to fall.

in states governed by Republicans and Democrats in Appendix 3 look very similar to each other.[9] Before the pandemic, the approval of Republican governors was slightly more strongly tied to unemployment levels than that of Democratic governors, but not significantly so. Then both groups of governors had their approval dynamics change during the pandemic such that contemporary unemployment was positively associated with their approval and lagged unemployment did not have a significant connection to approval. The marginal positive rally effect of rising unemployment during the pandemic was slightly larger for Democrats (the estimated coefficient was 0.581 for Democrats and 0.465 for Republicans), but again that difference is marginal and not significant. For both Democratic and Republic governors, the pandemic created a rally effect and shifted their electorate's focus away from the economy for most of 2020.

Health Instead of the Economy? Correlates of Governor Approval in 2020

The results in Table 1 demonstrate that governors were not held accountable for unemployment levels during the pandemic. The question is what the public was focused on if not the economy. Because our governor approval data is available at only the quarterly level there are limited amounts of variation to isolate the specific factors that the public was focused on, but they do allow us to probe a couple of factors. On the one hand, the public may have shifted their attention from economic outcomes to health outcomes. While the outbreak of the pandemic may have created a rally effect, at some point we might expect the public to reward governors who kept the number of deaths or infections low and to punish those who failed to prevent the spread

[9] While dynamics for non-elected governors differ between the two samples, this is based on a very small number of governors.

of the disease. We also might expect, however, that the public would react to the specific policies that governors implemented as they, unlike most government policies, were tangible and visible. In particular, there is evidence from Europe (Bol et al. 2020) and Florida (Shino and Binder 2020) that the public generally rewarded leaders who were aggressive in implementing quarantine policies in their states. However, those studies look only at the initial wave of the pandemic and do not explore whether the public continued to support aggressive policies or if support for them faded, particularly in areas where infection rates were low.

To test whether leader approval during the pandemic was correlated with either the health outcomes that occurred on their watch or the steps they took to fight the disease, I model governor approval as a function of COVID-19 deaths and how stringent state policies are, using data from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT).[10] The death data is the number of individuals who died from COVID-19 in that quarter, normalized by state population. The policy stringency index records the strictness of 'lockdown style' closure and containment policies in each state. Specifically, the index tracks policies on school closings, workplace closings, the cancelation of public events, restrictions on gathering sizes, closing of public transport, stay at home requirements, restrictions on internal movement, and restrictions on international travel (see Hallas et al. 2021 for details). Higher values represent greater policy restrictions. Because these measures only have non-zero values in 2020, I restrict the sample to the fourth quarter of 2019 (to create a baseline) and all of 2020. This smaller sample has very limited degrees of freedom but provides a conservative test of whether policy and health

[10] OxCGRT gets their data on deaths from Johns Hopkins University's Covid-19 tracking (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data).

outcomes were salient in 2020.[11] Because the time series are very short (max t=5) I do not adjust for autocorrelation but model the data using random effects for each state. Because I have reason to believe that the public's response to deaths and policy might not be constant over time, in Table 2 below I enter the values of each variable separately for the quarter. Then I do not control for honeymoon effects as only three states had elections in 2019 (Mississippi, Louisiana, and Kentucky) and Kentucky did not have any valid surveys in 2020 looking at governor approval. Nor do I need to control for the death or resignation of any governors in 2020, although there are a handful of non-elected governors in the sample, to avoid overfitting the model.

(Table 2 about here)

I start first by looking at whether the public was responsive to the choices that governors made. While policy stringency had a large but inconsistent effect in the first quarter as the outbreak started, by the second quarter there was clear evidence that governors who enacted strongly stringent measures were rewarded with greater popularity whereas those who did not enact similar policies did not receive as large of a bump from the pandemic.[12] Yet the public's

[11] In the supplemental materials I embed these policies into the more extensive time series model from Table 1 and the results confirm that deaths and policy stringency generated a rally effect early in the pandemic while deaths increasingly became negatively associated with governor approval as the pandemic continued, but differ somewhat from Table 2 in when the sanctioning for deaths occurred.

[12] If both the deaths and stringency variables are included in the same model, deaths and stringency both have a significant ($p<0.05$) and positive effect in quarter 2 and then deaths have a negative effect in quarter 3 while stringency has a positive effect. These are based on relatively

reaction to stringency had begun to change by the third quarter: while the estimated coefficient is roughly the same as in the second quarter, the variance in reactions across states was greater. Then in the fourth quarter there is no positive bump associated with stringency in and of itself. So while the public never punished governors for stringent policies in the average state, as the pandemic continued they shifted their attention away from the policies that governors were enacting to the results of those policies. Yet the public never punished governors for policy stringency.

Further evidence that the rally effect induced by COVID-19 was filtered by the public's reaction to the policies that politicians enacted is provided by the results for unemployment. When policies are not controlled for in model 2, unemployment has a positive association with governor approval just as was observed in Table 1. Yet the effect of unemployment is insignificant when policy stringency is controlled for in model 1, which implies that the rally effect was not due to high unemployment but was for governors who enacted strict policies. This also confirms that the public supported strict policies even though they resulted in rising unemployment and otherwise did not focus on the economy during the first year of the pandemic.

The large rallies for governors who enacted strict lockdowns early like New York's Cuomo (whose approval increased by 16 points from the last quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020) or New Jersey's Murphy (11 points) have been widely commented on. In contrast, Utah's Herbert did not issue a statewide lockdown in the early stages of the pandemic

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few observations, but they suggest again that there is a rally effect early tied to both deaths and policy but that governors are held accountable for deaths that occurred after the initial spike.

and he then saw no jump in his approval even while most governors experienced gains. Then the largest fall in quarter 1 and quarter 2 was experienced by Florida's DeSantis, whose approval fell by nearly 10 percentage points while his lack of lockdown policies were widely criticized by Democrats (Shino and Binder 2020). While the efficacy of the early lockdowns remains debated, voter preferences for aggressive action are clearly evidence in the approval data.

The results in the second model demonstrate that the public's response to death changed over the course of the pandemic. Because deaths were rare until the end of the first quarter of 2020, there is a huge positive coefficient that is consistent with a rally effect but also a large standard error for it that captures both the paucity of post-pandemic data within the quarter and the uncertainty of the public's reaction, such that the estimated effect is not quite significantly different from 0 at conventional levels. In the second quarter, however, governors where the outbreak was severe were not punished for it but instead experienced a rally effect and a jump in their popularity. That rally effect faded quickly, however. Instead, in the third and fourth quarters of 2020 governors were held accountable for deaths as they occurred, such that places where the outbreak continued to be strong saw governor approval fall after the initial rally effect faded. While the first wave of the outbreak did not generate sanctions, states where it continued late in 2020 saw public displeasure grow. While the public was not punishing governors for high unemployment, they punished them for failing to contain the virus.

Arizona illustrates the sanction governors who failed to contain the virus received. Governor Ducey's popularity had remained above 62 percent in the first two quarters of 2020. However, Arizona had a widespread and deadly outbreak in the third quarter of 2020, resulting in the second highest per capita death rate in the country. His popularity subsequently fell more than 12 points that quarter as voters grew dissatisfied with his performance. This contrasts with

the experience of Washington's Inslee, who saw falling death rates in the third quarter of 2020 generate a 6-point increase in his approval rating, although that approval rating fell by the same amount when Washington State had an outbreak in the next quarter.

Taken together, the results in Table 2 provide evidence that the public was actively monitoring and evaluating governors as they responded to the pandemic. The crisis shifted public attention initially to policies and then, as they could observe the effect of these policies, to outcomes. In particular, governors who enacted strict policies early were rewarded as were those who prevented deaths from surging as the crisis lingered at the end of 2020.

Did Everyone Hold Governors Accountable for Health Policies and Outcomes? Individual-Level Data

The aggregate time-series data suggest that during the pandemic governors were not held accountable for the deteriorating economy but instead were rewarded for early enactment of policy lockdowns and were punished for deaths in the second half of 2020. Yet we have reason to believe that sectors of the population diverged in their priorities and in the kind of messaging that they were receiving. While we did not find different dynamics for Republican and Democratic governors in Appendix 3, we may see individual-level accountability patterns diverge by partisanship if Republicans tended to see the health threat differently from Democrats.

Testing this intuition requires that I shift from aggregate data presented above to individual-level data. The 2020 Cooperative Election Study conducted from September 29-November 2, 2020 provides the data to test this. Respondents were asked "Do you approve of the way each is doing their job... the governor of [state]?" on an ordered scale (strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, strongly disapprove). This survey contains

respondents from all 50 states and I can model whether governor popularity differs according to the contextual variables identified in Tables 1-2: the unemployment rate at the time of the survey, the initial level of stringency the governor adopted, the stringency before the survey, and the COVID-19 death rate in the state before the survey. After looking at these patterns on average, I then interact them with individual-level measures of respondents' partisanship to see if there was partisan polarization in accountability. For simplicity, I use a continuous three-point measure of the respondents' partisanship (0=Democrat, 1=Independent, 2=Republican); in Appendix 4 I use separate dummy variables for each party and the results are comparable to those presented below. I also interact the respondent's partisanship with the partisanship of the governor of the state to control for basic differences in baseline support for the incumbent governor and also add controls for demographic factors like gender, income, religiosity, and race; full question wording and results for the demographic variables are in Appendix 4.

The first model in Table 3 confirms that the basic patterns in the aggregate model replicate in the individual-level ones. Again, I find no evidence that the public in the aggregate was holding the governor accountable for the economy; unemployment in the month of the survey is not significantly associated with governor approval. Then the survey shows that the benefits of early policy stringency lingered even in November; higher policy stringency levels in the first 3 months of the pandemic were correlated with higher approval ratings for governors. Yet the importance of policy seemed to fade over time, such that there was no significant correlation between the state's policy stringency in the months leading up to the survey and support for the governor. Finally, the average respondent tended to disapprove of the governor if death rates from the pandemic were high in the period leading up to the survey. These results

confirm that the aggregate-level results reported above were not biased due to missing approval data from some states.

(Table 3 about here)

Model 2 then tests whether the patterns in model 1 differ by partisanship by interacting each of the contextual variables with a 3-point measure of the respondent's partisanship. Surprisingly, reactions to unemployment did not differ by partisanship; the correlation between unemployment and governor support was insignificant even for Republicans. Nor did Republicans have lower levels of approval of governors whose states had high levels of stringency in the period before the survey. Reactions to earlier policy choices and to death rates were, however, divided along partisan lines. The negative interaction between partisanship and early policy stringency, for example, implies that the rally effect for taking aggressive steps early had its largest/longest lasting effects on Democratic respondents, had a smaller (albeit still statistically significant) effect on Independents, and then had no significant effect on how Republicans evaluated their governors. Then the positive interaction effect between partisanship and deaths shows that responses to deaths are also divided along partisan lines. Democrats and independents were each significantly less likely to approve of governors in states where deaths were high, with Democrats responding more forcefully than independents did. Republicans, in contrast, are predicted to give *higher* approval to governors in states where deaths were high, even after controlling for the governor's partisanship.

Taken together, the results in Table 3 show that the patterns in Tables 1-2 above are driven by Democrats and independents but are not true for Republicans. While Democrats and independents rewarded governors for enacting stringent policies early and punished them for failing to prevent deaths after the initial months of the pandemic, Republicans did not reward

stringency nor sanctioned governors for deaths. While the pandemic shifted accountability dynamics in the United States, it did so differently according to how different groups perceived the new threat that COVID-19 posed.

Conclusion

Popular and academic coverage of leader popularity often focuses first and foremost on the economy. Often that attention is justified; the results presented in this paper confirm that the popularity of American governors was connected to economic fluctuations in their states before the COVID-19 outbreak. Yet it is a mistake to assume that these dynamics are always true. A growing body of comparative research shows that there is temporal variation in the salience of the economy, and this paper provides further evidence that the public is simply not always attuned to economic fluctuations. The COVID-19 pandemic brought widespread economic pain, but the public did not punish governors for instituting policies that caused it-if anything, governors in states where unemployment had increased the most tended to be more popular than were governors in those states where unemployment had not spiked. Nor did governor approval improve as unemployment levels improved later in 2020. Instead, the electorate focused their attention initially on the kinds of policies that governors enacted and then focused on whether or not those policies were successful in reducing the spread of disease and death. The electorate does not blindly hold the government accountable in the same way all the time but instead shifts its focus to the most pressing issues and problems of the moment.

The results in this paper remind us that theories about leader popularity need to pay more attention to the question of how the effect of government performance varies across eras and is systematically affected by unfolding events. Further attention also should be given to identifying the kinds of events that can reshape the public agenda; while we have reason to suspect that wars

and scandals can have this effect, greater attention to theorizing about and modeling the variation in the public's agenda is needed.

The results in this paper also show that rally effects are not random or haphazard. While high unemployment and high deaths early in the pandemic generated rally effects, those effects were concentrated in states where leaders were most aggressive in enacting lockdown policies. Part of a crisis-induced rally is that it creates opportunities for leaders to enact vigorous leadership; governors who are seen as passive in their response are thus unlikely to gain support in the early stage of a crisis.

The results presented here also have implications for how leaders might have responded differently to the pandemic. On the one hand, these results suggest that governors who opened up the economy in the hopes of lowering unemployment or lowering restrictions on the public received very little political reward and instead may have been sanctioned if those policies lead to higher infection rates. On the other hand, Republican governors faced a base that was not going to reward them for either policy stringency or for low death rates and so they faced pressure from their base even while Democrats and independents seem to have wanted governors to pursue an aggressive policy response to the pandemic.

While the analysis in this paper is based on an unprecedented amount of aggregate governor approval ratings, there are additional limits to what we can know with existing data. The quarterly nature of the data does limit the leverage one can have to see how the importance of different factors shifts as the agenda evolves. More fine-grained data, even for a limited number of states, might be able to identify those changes more precisely. Finally, work needs to be done to document when the public will shift its attention back to the economy and "normal"

politics will have resumed again-as we start the third year of the COVID-19 outbreak, is the public still focused on deaths and forgiving of lockdowns or has attention returned to economics?

Yet even with these caveats, the data presented here show that during the pandemic the famous dictum “it’s the economy stupid” was simply not true for the average person. Leaders were not held accountable for negative economic outcomes. The implication is that leaders did not face a trade-off between fighting the disease and opening the economy if they wanted to remain popular: the public wanted leaders to stamp out the disease. The public, or at least Democrats and independents, held leaders accountable for the results of those efforts.

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Table 1: Unemployment and Relative Governor Approval Before and During the Pandemic

	Before 2020	Including 2020			Starting in 2017
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Unemployment in the State$_t$	-0.205*	0.042	-0.077	-0.187*	-0.352
	(0.068)	(0.045)	(0.055)	(0.068)	(0.263)
Unemployment in the State$_{t-1}$	-0.385*	-0.293*	-0.309*	-0.402*	-1.054*
	(0.068)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.068)	(0.264)
Covid-19 Pandemic			2.446*	-5.670*	-7.427*
			(0.646)	(1.562)	(1.967)
Pandemic* Unemployment in the State$_t$				0.663*	0.741*
				(0.134)	(0.281)
Pandemic* Unemployment in the State$_{t-1}$				0.405*	1.012*
				(0.102)	(0.271)
Quarter 1, First Term	4.810*	4.383*	4.493*	4.603*	5.505*
	(0.296)	(0.293)	(0.294)	(0.296)	(0.757)
Quarter 2, First Term	1.813*	1.651*	1.683*	1.749*	1.951*
	(0.273)	(0.273)	(0.273)	(0.273)	(0.743)
Quarter 3, First Term	1.147*	1.010*	1.056*	1.083*	0.758
	(0.260)	(0.263)	(0.263)	(0.262)	(0.614)
Quarter 1, Second+ Term	0.711*	0.517	0.614*	0.681*	2.224*
	(0.309)	(0.309)	(0.309)	(0.310)	(0.785)
Quarter 2, Second+ Term	0.343	0.218	0.259	0.335	1.670*
	(0.302)	(0.305)	(0.304)	(0.304)	(0.788)
Quarter 3, Second+ Term	-0.034	-0.068	-0.048	-0.026	0.551
	(0.289)	(0.294)	(0.293)	(0.292)	(0.658)
Elections Quarter	0.016	-0.014	-0.014	0.001	0.311
	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.468)
Female	0.212	0.055	0.092	0.146	-1.857
	(0.491)	(0.492)	(0.492)	(0.490)	(1.046)
Non-Elected Governor	2.670*	2.566*	2.605*	2.633*	3.097*
	(0.461)	(0.467)	(0.468)	(0.463)	(1.202)
Governor Resigned that Quarter	1.851*	1.835*	1.840*	1.865*	5.846*
	(0.549)	(0.557)	(0.556)	(0.550)	(1.320)
Governor Died that Quarter	2.522	2.486	2.463	2.480	
	(1.453)	(1.446)	(1.447)	(1.438)	
Constant	59.116	57.150	57.822	59.005	61.768
	(0.593)	(0.514)	(0.547)	(0.588)	(1.543)
N Observations	4,672	4,817	4,817	4,817	697
N Quarters Per State	33-172	34-176	34-176	34-176	12-16
N States	46	46	46	46	46

Generalized least squares estimates with panel-specific AR(1) corrections and heteroskedastic consistent standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 2: COVID-19 Policies/Outcomes and Governor Approval, 2019Q4-2020

	[1]	[1]
Unemployment in the State$_{t-1}$	-0.142	0.349*
	(0.228)	(0.127)
Stringency of State Policies, Quarter 1	0.094	
	(0.059)	
Stringency of State Policies, Quarter 2	0.053*	
	(0.014)	
Stringency of State Policies, Quarter 3	0.051	
	(0.036)	
Stringency of State Policies, Quarter 4	0.012	
	(0.026)	
COVID-19 Deaths, Quarter 1		59.660
		(31.517)
COVID-19 Deaths, Quarter 2		6.665*
		(1.664)
COVID-19 Deaths, Quarter 3		-13.100*
		(4.498)
COVID-19 Deaths, Quarter 4		-4.929*
		(1.830)
Female	-4.657	-4.288
	(2.997)	(3.094)
Not Elected	-2.887	-2.027
	(8.028)	(8.303)
Constant	56.348	55.314
	(1.687)	(1.540)
N Observations	195	195
N States	46	46
χ^2	21.97*	31.04*
Random Effects Model, Standard Errors in Parentheses * p<0.05 (two-tailed)		

Table 3: COVID Outcomes and Governor Approval, 2020 Cooperative Elections Survey

	[1]	[2]
Unemployment Rate in Oct 2020	-0.043	-0.037
	(0.030)	(0.061)
Partisanship*Unemployment Rate		-0.013
		(0.040)
Initial Policy Stringency (March-May 2020)	0.038*	0.060*
	(0.010)	(0.016)
Partisanship*Initial Stringency(March-May 2020)		-0.029*
		(0.011)
Late Stringency (90 Days Before Survey)	-0.004	-0.015
	(0.007)	(0.016)
Partisanship* Late Stringency(90 Days Before Survey)		0.012
		(0.011)
Deaths Per Capita from COVID-19(90 Days Before Survey)	-0.471*	-1.817*
	(0.229)	(0.497)
Partisanship*Deaths Per Capita		1.397*
		(0.334)
Partisanship (0=Democrat, 1=Independent, 2=Republican)	-1.511*	-0.530
	(0.053)	(0.912)
Republican Governor	-2.239*	-1.863*
	(0.252)	(0.273)
Partisanship*Republican Governor	2.532*	2.116*
	(0.169)	(0.173)
Cut Point 1	-0.519	0.013
	(0.573)	(1.219)
Cut Point 2	0.339	0.889
	(0.579)	(1.230)
Cut Point 3	2.119	2.690
	(0.592)	(1.256)
N	47,544	47,544
χ^2	1613.2*	2638.2*

Ordered Logit, Standard Errors Adjusted for Clustering by State in Parentheses, * $p<0.05$ (two tailed test). Includes controls for gender, religiosity, income, and race (see Appendix 4 for full results)