

Beyond Double Disability: Dehumanization and the Cognitive Burden of Physical Disability

Abstract: Physical disability is remarkably common among Americans, with more than one in four affected, yet candidates with physical disabilities remain rare. Prior work suggests disability compounds with other marginalized identities to produce a "double disability." Using a large visual conjoint experiment crossing candidate disability, race, and gender, I find no evidence of this pattern, as disability does not reliably compound racial or gender disadvantage. I argue instead that disability imposes a distinct cognitive burden, activating competing schemas of competence, deservingness, and health, and that dehumanization functions as a burden-resolving mechanism converting this ambiguity into electoral penalty. This effect is selective. Dehumanization predicts reduced support for disabled candidates specifically, not for female or Black candidates, even among voters who dehumanize those groups. The penalty also holds consistently across ideology despite ideological differences in dehumanization's prevalence, suggesting disability occupies a distinct position in political cognition.

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Former New York Governor David Paterson was a trailblazer in many ways. After losing nearly all vision as an infant, he was forced to leave New York City's school district because it would not guarantee him an education without placing him in special education classes. He went on to graduate law school but could not pass the New York bar exam due to insufficient accommodations for his visual impairment. He was elected to the state Senate at 31, re-elected ten times, and in 2002 became the first non-white state legislative leader in New York history. In 2008, following Eliot Spitzer's resignation, Paterson became the state's first nonwhite, and first blind, governor.

Despite a record that included managing a \$1.4 billion budget crisis and expanding civil rights, Paterson's legacy is remembered very differently. Between 2009 and 2010, Saturday Night Live repeatedly portrayed him as "disoriented and buffoonlike," mocking his disability rather than his job performance (Haller and Becker 2014). As his approval declined during the financial crisis, members of his own party weaponized his blindness directly: Democratic state senator Diane Savino told reporters that Paterson relied on staff to read him newspapers and briefing tapes, implying he could not function independently (Honan 2009), while Rupert Murdoch claimed publicly that Paterson "doesn't really know what's going on" (Honan 2009). Paterson was ultimately pressured to abandon his re-election campaign and left office with the lowest approval rating of any governor in New York history.

Paterson's case is instructive because it resists a simple stereotype-based explanation. His record was substantive, and even his critics rarely attacked his competence directly. What was weaponized instead was his humanity, reduced by colleagues and media figures alike to a man who could not read, could not know, could not be trusted to function, a pattern of erasure not

unlike the extremes to which Franklin Roosevelt and Senator Bob Dole went to minimize or conceal their own disabilities on the campaign trail (Scotch and Friedman 2014). This article argues that this distinction, between being stereotyped and being denied full human status, is central to understanding why candidates with physical disabilities continue to struggle electorally even as public attitudes toward disability have grown more favorable on their face.

Drawing on Link and Phelan's (2001) model of stigma, I argue that disability's electoral penalty operates independently of stereotype content, through a process of dehumanization that resolves the cognitive ambiguity disability introduces into candidate evaluation. Using a two-study design, I first demonstrate that dehumanization of persons with physical disabilities is real, psychologically distinct from stereotype content, and patterned by ideology. I then test this account against Hanna and Rogovsky's (1991) "double handicap" hypothesis using a large conjoint experiment, finding that disability does not compound with candidate race or gender to produce an additive penalty, that dehumanization's electoral consequences are selective to disability rather than generalized across marginalized identities, and that the penalty dehumanization produces holds consistently across the ideological spectrum even as the prevalence of dehumanization itself does not. Together, these findings suggest that disability occupies a distinct position in political cognition, one in which candidates like Paterson can be judged capable, sympathetic, and by many measures exceptional, and still be denied the basic presumption of humanity that electoral viability requires.

Political Candidates and Physical Disabilities

Despite more than one in four Americans today claiming to have a disability or work impairment (CDC 2025), people with disabilities remain one of the most underrepresented groups in American politics (Schur and Kruse 2017). Such underrepresentation has significant

consequences for descriptive and substantive representation as politicians with disabilities are most likely to represent disability issues and champion disability policies (Scotch and Friedman 2014).

One explanation for the political underrepresentation of disability in the political sphere has been the negative stereotypes toward persons with disabilities. Physical disability has long been demonstrated to be associated with increased social avoidance, negative stereotyping, and discrimination (Bogdan and Taylor 1989; Kleck 1969; Kleck, Ono, and Hastorf 1966). At the root of this stereotyping is the categorization of disability itself as a marker of difference from a nondisabled norm, a difference disability theory has long treated as inseparably physical and socially constructed (Koch 2001), and one that lends itself readily to the kind of group-based generalization voters apply to unfamiliar or infrequently encountered social categories. This generalization appears remarkably consistent across impairment types: Nario-Redmond (2010) finds broad consensus, among disabled and nondisabled respondents alike, on a cross-impairment stereotype of disabled people as dependent, incompetent, asexual, weak, and passive, alongside more favorable traits such as warmth and heroism, an early demonstration of the mixed stereotype content this article's theoretical account depends on. This ambivalence is not merely how disability is perceived by others; disabled individuals themselves recognize and actively contest it, with social identity research showing that disabled people distinguish illegitimate discrimination from more paternalistic or ambiguous treatment in ways that shape their own political and social identification (Dirth and Branscombe 2019).

In theory, this stereotyping should carry negative consequences for candidates with physical disabilities specifically. Physical appearance is one of several low-information cues voters rely on to evaluate candidates, alongside partisanship, behavior, gender, and race (Funk

1996), cues that shape perceptions of desired leadership traits such as competence and warmth (Funk 1996; Kinder et al. 1980; Todorov et al. 2005). Voters tend to prefer candidates who fit their ideal image of a leader, including perceptions of competence, strength, and dominance (Burrell 2008; Funk 1996; Nichols 2016), and are more likely to support candidates who both embody these traits and resemble themselves through descriptive representation (Hayes and Hibbing 2017; Pitkin 1967).

Despite not fitting this prototypical image, recent research has found the opposite: candidates with physical disabilities appear exceptional in many respects, with voters actually more likely to support a disabled candidate than a nondisabled one (Hull 2026; Reher 2025). Running for office appears to help persons with physical disabilities overcome negative group stereotypes, instead being perceived as more competent, warm, compassionate, and hardworking (Hull 2026; Reher 2021). While ideological differences in these perceptions persist, along with the influence of how a candidate became disabled (Hull 2026), and barriers to running for office remain (Evans and Reher 2022), voters nonetheless appear not just willing but eager to elect more candidates with physical disabilities to office (Smith 2026). This apparent advantage, however, sits alongside a more complicated stereotype profile than a simple positive versus negative framing suggests. Ableism itself takes hostile, benevolent, and ambivalent forms, the latter two often manifesting as paternalistic pity or diminished expectations rather than open hostility (Nario-Redmond 2019). Most disability categories are rated higher in warmth than competence, consistent with a paternalistic "pity" stereotype, and this warmth coexists with negative behavioral intentions even as explicit ratings remain favorable (Canton, Hedley, and Spoor 2023), a pattern that foreshadows the divergence between stereotype content and electoral consequence this article investigates directly.

Disability Dehumanization

If candidates with physical disabilities are able to overcome negative stereotypes, and voters are receptive to supporting them, why do so few candidates with physical disabilities get elected? And why do these candidates continue to conceal their disabilities from the public (Scotch and Friedman 2014)? One possible explanation is that extant literature has missed the correct psychological process underlying disability stigmatization.

Those with physical disabilities are particularly susceptible to stigmatization because of the process of categorization, and disability plays a foundational role in the academic development of stigma research. Defined as "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (Goffman 1963, p. 1), Goffman first categorized stigma in social life into three types: tribal identity (such as race or gender), physical abnormalities of the body (such as physical disability), and blemishes of individual character (such as mental illness). While stereotyping often follows categorization as a means of rationalizing stigmatized attitudes, stigmatization does not require stereotyping to operate (Biernat and Dovidio 2000). Link and Phelan's (2001) influential model treats stereotyping as only one component of a broader stigma process that also includes labeling, separation into in-group/out-group status, and status loss or discrimination - and it is separation and status loss, rather than stereotype valence, that drive differential treatment toward the stigmatized. A group may therefore be stereotyped favorably while still losing status, autonomy, or opportunity on the basis of a stigmatized attribute. This possibility is consistent with candidates with physical disabilities: positively stereotyped, yet electorally scarce and disability-concealing.

Yet Link and Phelan's model leaves open a question central to this article: what, precisely, is lost when a stigmatized group experiences status loss in the absence of negative stereotype content? I argue that the answer lies not in the valence of the stereotypes voters hold toward candidates with physical disabilities, but in the cognitive burden that disability imposes on the evaluation process itself. Unlike many stigmatized identities, physical disability rarely activates a single, internally consistent schema; instead, it simultaneously implicates competing considerations of social identity, moral deservingness, health status, and leadership competence, forcing voters to weigh whether a candidate is a sympathetic figure overcoming adversity or a liability incapable of doing the job, whether their condition is evidence of resilience or grounds for suspicion about capacity. Because these schemas rarely converge on a single evaluative signal, disability complicates the kind of fast, low-effort judgment voters typically rely on when evaluating candidates (Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995), a burden that is not merely a theoretical abstraction imported from social psychology but one with demonstrated behavioral consequences in electoral contexts, where increases in the informational demands of candidate evaluation have been shown to alter vote choice itself (Cunow et al. 2021).

I argue that dehumanization functions as a burden-resolving mechanism for voters confronted with this ambiguity. By denying a candidate full human status, dehumanization strips away the moral protections that would otherwise obligate a voter to weigh these competing considerations, collapsing an effortful and ambiguous judgment into a simple one. This is not simply the familiar claim that cognitive strain increases reliance on stereotypes, an account complicated by evidence that stereotype application does not straightforwardly track cognitive load and may instead reflect a search for meaning in qualitatively ambiguous stimulus environments (Nolan et al. 1999); the argument here is that dehumanization performs a specific

resolving function for a specific kind of ambiguity, one that stereotype content, whatever its valence, cannot supply for disability.

This account draws on Haslam's (2006) dual model of dehumanization, which distinguishes animalistic dehumanization, the denial of uniquely human traits such as civility and rationality, from mechanistic dehumanization, the denial of human nature itself, including agency, emotionality, and depth of inner life. Haslam suggested people with disabilities were dehumanized, but little work has explored this possibility with mixed results showing potential blatant dehumanization (Sitruk, Summers, and Lloyd 2023). However, the stereotype research (particularly the stereotype content model) has largely argued that those with physical disabilities are not dehumanized as the group was stereotyped as being higher in warmth despite low competence (Harris and Fiske 2006). Humanness perceptions, moreover, appear to carry independent weight in political judgment specifically: Sainz, Moreno-Bella, and Torres-Vega (2021) find that perceived human nature, distinct from warmth or competence, drives voter preference between candidates precisely in ambiguous evaluative contexts, lending direct support to the claim that humanity attribution operates as its own dimension of political judgment, one that becomes especially consequential when other evaluative signals fail to converge. This distinction between dehumanization and general prejudice is well established in the broader literature: blatant dehumanization is only moderately correlated with outgroup prejudice and uniquely predicts hostile attitudes and behavior beyond what prejudice alone explains, a distinction borne out even at the neural level, where dehumanization and dislike judgments activate dissociable brain regions (Kteily and Bruneau 2017).

This account also carries an empirical implication: if dehumanization resolves burden specific to disability's schema ambiguity, its electoral consequences should be selective rather

than generalized. Because the evaluative schemas attached to identities like race and gender are comparatively more consistent, dehumanization should not extend to these groups in the same way it does to candidates with physical disabilities. Disability, in this sense, occupies a distinct position in political cognition, not simply one stigmatized identity among others, but one whose penalty operates through a process of burden resolution that other identities do not require.

Double Disability Reconsidered

The intersectional consequences of disability have received strikingly little empirical attention given how long the question has been on the table. Hanna and Rogovsky's (1991) concept of the "double handicap" predicted that disability disadvantage would compound with the disadvantage already faced by women and people of color, producing an additive penalty rather than an offsetting disadvantage for candidates who hold multiple marginalized identities simultaneously, such as for a candidate with a disability who is also a woman or a person of color. Termed the **Double Disability Hypothesis**, this expectation follows naturally from stereotype content models in which competence and warmth judgments are cued by distinct, largely independent social categories (Fiske et al. 2002): a disabled Black candidate, for example, would be expected to accumulate the stereotype-driven penalties associated with disability and those associated with race, resulting in a more negative overall evaluation than either identity alone would produce.

Hypothesis 1a - The Double Disability Hypothesis: Candidates with physical disabilities who also hold an additional marginalized identity (race, gender) will experience a compounded electoral penalty relative to candidates holding only one marginalized identity.

But the burden-resolution account developed above implies something different.

Dehumanization does not penalize candidates by adding stigma to stigma; it penalizes them by resolving ambiguity that disability specifically introduces into the evaluation process, a process race and gender do not independently trigger. Race and gender, whatever bias they carry, tend to

activate stereotype content that is comparatively stable and internally consistent, and voters generally are not confronted with the same competing signals about competence, deservingness, and health status that disability introduces. Termed the **Single Disability Hypothesis**, this expectation follows from treating dehumanization as a response to a burden specific to disability rather than as a marker of general out-group prejudice: if dehumanization is doing the work of resolving disability's unique ambiguity, disability's effects should not simply stack with the effects of other marginalized identities, but should instead operate largely on their own terms, independent of whatever penalty or advantage a candidate's race or gender already carries.

Hypothesis 1b - The Single Disability Hypothesis: Disability will not produce a consistent additive penalty when combined with candidate race or gender.

If dehumanization functions as expected by resolving the ambiguity disability specifically introduces into candidate evaluation, then its electoral consequences should not generalize to other stigmatized identities whose evaluative schemas are comparatively stable and do not require the same resolution. Termed the **Selective Resolution Hypothesis**, the expectation that follows is that dehumanization's effect on vote choice should be concentrated on candidates with physical disabilities specifically, regardless of which group bears dehumanization along the race and gender dimensions: a voter who dehumanizes on the basis of race or gender is not necessarily resolving the same cognitive problem as a voter who dehumanizes candidates with physical disabilities, even though both attitudes could be described as prejudiced in a general sense.¹ Only disability, on this account, reflects a burden in need of resolution, and only

¹ This hypothesis is stated in group-neutral terms with respect to race and gender deliberately: while stigma research typically anchors dehumanization to conventional out-group status, whether blatant dehumanization on a given identity dimension tracks that conventional pattern is an empirical question this article treats as open rather than assumed, particularly on the gender dimension, where the scale employed here has rarely been applied with mixed results (Elderkin and Todd 2026; Salmen and Dhont 2021).

dehumanization of candidates with physical disabilities should therefore predict reduced electoral support.

Hypothesis 2 - The Selective Resolution Hypothesis: Blatant dehumanization will predict reduced support for candidates with physical disabilities regardless of candidate race or gender, while dehumanization by race or gender will not reliably predict reduced support for those respective candidates.

Whether ideology moderates disability's electoral effect is itself an open theoretical question, and this article considers two competing possibilities. The first draws directly on a pattern already established across recent work: liberal voters tend to extend more favorable treatment to candidates from underrepresented and stigmatized groups, including candidates with physical disabilities, while conservative voters do not, or do so to a lesser degree (Hull 2026; Reher 2021, 2025). This asymmetry has been attributed to ideological differences in how underrepresented identity is processed as a candidate cue: liberals appear more inclined to treat marginalized status itself as a positive signal, consistent with broader ideological differences in intergroup attitudes and social dominance orientation (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009), while conservatives show no comparable tendency to reward it and, on some measures, penalize it. If this same ideological gradient extends to the mechanism this article proposes, disability's electoral effect should track it directly. **Termed the Ideological Moderation Hypothesis**, this expectation holds that candidate disability will be evaluated more favorably by liberal voters than by conservative voters, with moderates falling between the two, mirroring the ideological gradient this article's own prior work and Reher's have documented for disability and other marginalized candidate identities.

Hypothesis 3a - The Ideological Moderation Hypothesis: Candidate disability will show an ideological gradient in electoral support, with liberals showing the most favorable evaluations, conservatives the least favorable, and moderates falling between the two.

The second possibility follows from treating dehumanization, rather than ideology, as the proximate mechanism driving disability's electoral penalty. If dehumanization is what resolves the ambiguity disability introduces, then whatever ideological gradient might otherwise emerge in candidate support should be suppressed wherever dehumanization is present, since dehumanization operates by removing the moral considerations that ideological predispositions would otherwise shape. As such, any variation in *how many* voters within an ideological group dehumanize is distinct from variation in *what dehumanization does* once it occurs. If dehumanization functions as a burden-resolving mechanism rather than an ideologically inflected one, its effect on candidate support should be uniform across ideological groups even if its prevalence is not. Termed the **Dehumanization Suppression Hypothesis**, this expectation holds that among voters who dehumanize candidates with physical disabilities, the ideological gradient predicted by Hypothesis 3a should not hold: the electoral penalty for disability should be consistent across liberal, moderate, and conservative dehumanizers alike, since dehumanization, once present, resolves disability's ambiguity the same way regardless of the ideological lens a voter otherwise brings to candidate evaluation.

Hypothesis 3b - The Dehumanization Suppression Hypothesis: Among voters who dehumanize candidates with physical disabilities, the electoral penalty for disability will not vary significantly by ideology, even though dehumanization's prevalence may differ across ideological groups.

These two hypotheses are not offered as equally plausible on a priori grounds; they are genuine competitors precisely because each follows naturally from a different piece of this article's theoretical apparatus, and the analyses below are designed to adjudicate between them rather than assume one. H3a is the expectation carried over from this article's own prior work and Reher's, in which favorable treatment of candidates with physical disabilities concentrates among liberal voters and fades or reverses moving rightward. H3b follows instead from treating

dehumanization as the proximate mechanism specific to disability's evaluative ambiguity: if that mechanism does its work by removing the moral considerations ideology would otherwise shape, its downstream effect on candidate support should hold steady across ideological groups even where the underlying prevalence of dehumanization does not. Testing H3a and H3b together therefore does more than determine whether ideology moderates disability's electoral effect; it distinguishes between a general account of identity-based candidate evaluation and an account specific to the cognitive burden this article argues disability uniquely imposes.

Study 1: Demonstrating Disability Dehumanization

Given that previous tests of disability dehumanization have been remarkably limited in scope with conflicting results, the first step toward testing the hypotheses developed above is to empirically demonstrate that disability dehumanization occurs at all. Data were collected over three semesters from a midwestern university's undergraduate research pool between January 2021 and May 2022 (N = 834). The sample was majority female (52%) and predominantly white, skewed liberal (49% liberal, 37% conservative, 14% moderate), and overwhelmingly nondisabled (98%).

In the first wave, all participants completed a political candidate Implicit Association Test measuring automatic associations between candidate disability status and humanizing versus dehumanizing evaluative concepts (built using iatgen, Carpenter et al. 2018; Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji 2003), randomly assigned to an animalistic or mechanistic dehumanization condition. In later waves, a job candidate condition was added, with participants randomized between the political and job candidate IAT before being further randomized into the animalistic or mechanistic condition. All participants then completed a randomized battery of explicit

measures, including the Blatant Dehumanization Scale (Kteily et al. 2015), the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al. 2002), a battery of individual trait items corresponding to the animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization dimensions (Kteily et al. 2015), and a modified World Values Survey item asking whether participants would want a person from various groups as their representative in Congress or as a coworker, depending on IAT condition (Inglehart et al. 2014). Full procedural and stimulus detail is reported in the Appendix.

Results

Implicit dehumanization was pronounced: participants showed a significantly stronger association between candidates with physical disabilities and negative evaluative words than positive words (mean D-score = 0.543, SD = 0.385; $t(534) = 32.58$, $p < .001$), with roughly 58% of participants scoring at or above the threshold for moderate-to-strong bias.² This bias varied by ideology, with conservatives showing significantly stronger implicit preferences for able-bodied candidates than liberals (0.602 vs. 0.493, $p < .01$). Participants also showed significantly stronger mechanistic than animalistic implicit dehumanization (0.595 vs. 0.494, $t(533) = -3.05$, $p < .01$), consistent with Haslam's (2006) distinction between the two forms and suggesting disability dehumanization may operate predominantly through denial of human nature rather than denial of uniquely human refinement.

² Analyses in this study are restricted to participants who completed the political-candidate dehumanization measures. A combined IAT D-score analysis across both conditions (political and job candidates, $N = 767$) confirmed significant implicit dehumanization overall [$D = 0.556$, $t(766) = 39.80$, $p < .001$], and political and job candidate conditions did not differ significantly in implicit dehumanization [$t(763) = -1.60$, $p = .111$], suggesting the pattern observed here is not unique to the political domain.

Table 1. Implicit and Explicit Dehumanization of Political Candidates with Physical Disabilities

Measure	M	SD
Implicit dehumanization (D-score)	0.543**	0.385
Animalistic	0.494**	0.376
Mechanistic	0.595**	0.389
Blatant dehumanization, student sample	3.07**	14.27
Blatant dehumanization, adult sample	4.70**	22.65
Stereotype Content Model		
Competence	4.04	0.68
Warmth	4.00	0.68
Trait dispersion (disabled – abled)		
Animalistic dimension	-2.78**	9.56
Mechanistic dimension	1.08*	8.87

Note. Implicit dehumanization measured via the standard IAT D-score algorithm (Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji 2003); higher scores indicate stronger implicit preference for able-bodied over disabled candidates. Blatant dehumanization measured via the Blatant Dehumanization Scale (Kteily et al. 2015); higher scores indicate the disabled target is rated as less human than the able-bodied ingroup. Stereotype Content Model competence and warmth measured on a 1–5 scale (Fiske et al. 2002). Trait dispersion reflects the difference in within-respondent standard deviation across trait ratings for disabled versus able-bodied candidates on animalistic- and mechanistic-dimension traits (Kteily et al. 2015; Haslam 2006).

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

This dimensional asymmetry is corroborated by an independent analysis of explicit trait ratings. Using the same trait items underlying the animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization composites, within-respondent rating dispersion, the standard deviation across a respondent's ratings of a given candidate on the traits comprising each dimension, was compared for disabled and able-bodied political candidates. On animalistic-dimension traits, respondents showed significantly lower dispersion when rating disabled candidates than able-bodied candidates (mean difference = -2.78, $t(564) = -6.91$, $p < .001$), indicating more internally consistent judgments on this dimension. On mechanistic-dimension traits, the pattern reversed: respondents showed significantly higher dispersion when rating disabled candidates (mean difference = 1.08, $t(564) = 2.91$, $p = .004$), indicating less internally consistent, more evaluatively unsettled

judgments on traits related to agency, emotionality, and human nature. Together with the implicit results, this pattern suggests that disability dehumanization in this sample operates predominantly through the mechanistic pathway: judgments of disabled candidates are not simply lower or more negative on human-nature traits, but measurably less coherent, consistent with this article's broader claim that disability introduces evaluative ambiguity along dimensions bearing directly on the perceived humanness of the candidate rather than uniform stereotype devaluation across the board.

Explicit dehumanization followed a similar pattern: candidates with physical disabilities were rated as significantly less "evolved" than able-bodied candidates on the Blatant Dehumanization Scale ($M = 3.07$, $t(802) = 6.09$, $p < .001$), a result that replicates in the independent adult sample used in Study 2 ($M = 4.70$, $t(1,782) = 8.76$, $p < .001$).

What makes these findings theoretically important is what happened on the Stereotype Content Model: candidates with physical disabilities were rated as high in both competence and warmth ($M_s = 4.04$ and 4.00), a profile Harris and Fiske (2006) do not associate with dehumanization. Yet the same participants who rated these candidates favorably on stereotype content also showed strong implicit and blatant dehumanization of them, providing the empirical anchor for this article's central theoretical claim: dehumanization operates on a dimension distinct from stereotype valence. Notably, this stereotype content was itself politically patterned only in the political domain: ideology significantly predicted competence and warmth ratings of disabled political candidates (Competence: $F(6,766) = 5.50$, $p < .001$; Warmth: $F(6,766) = 2.93$, $p = .008$) but had no relationship to either dimension for disabled job candidates (Competence: $p = .132$; Warmth: $p = .657$), suggesting the mechanism under investigation is specific to political evaluation rather than disability attitudes generally. This divergence is consistent with the

broader shifting-standards literature, in which subjective trait ratings, such as the Likert-type competence and warmth items comprising the SCM, are vulnerable to within-category comparison standards that more absolute, cross-category measures are not: a target may be judged favorably relative to others presumed similar to them, even while an unambiguous, common-rule measure like the Ascent of Man scale reveals a very different evaluation (Biernat, Kobrynowicz, and Weber 2003).

The relationship between implicit and explicit dehumanization reinforces this political specificity. Blatant dehumanization was significantly correlated with greater implicit dehumanization, whether animalistic ($r = .149, p < .05$) or mechanistic ($r = .146, p < .05$), but only among participants in the political candidate condition; blatant dehumanization showed no relationship to implicit dehumanization of job candidates. A parallel pattern held for dehumanization's downstream consequences: blatant dehumanization significantly predicted reduced preference for a person with a physical disability as a congressional representative, net of competence ratings and ideology, but had no relationship to preference for a disabled coworker in the same model.

Study 1 establishes that dehumanization of candidates with physical disabilities is real across implicit and explicit measures, psychologically distinct from stereotype content, patterned by ideology, and consequential specifically in the political domain, converging across independent measurement approaches in a way that argues against the divergence being an artifact of any single instrument. It cannot establish whether this dehumanization operates selectively relative to other stigmatized identities, or whether it produces a penalty under actual candidate choice. Study 2 addresses both questions directly.

Study 2: Consequences of Disability Dehumanization

Study 2 turns to the two questions Study 1 could not answer: whether dehumanization's electoral consequences are selective to disability relative to other stigmatized identities, and whether dehumanization produces a measurable penalty under actual candidate choice rather than an abstract attitude measure. To test these questions, Study 2 uses an original conjoint survey experiment examining the effects of candidate disability, alongside race, gender, and dehumanization, on electoral support. The online survey was distributed via Dynata Insights and collected in June 2023. All participants indicated their political ideology before being presented with pairs of political candidates described as sharing similar political beliefs to their own and competing in a legislative primary. Placing candidates in this competitive context allowed participants to evaluate a candidate with a physical disability positively in the abstract while still forcing a choice against a similar candidate who differed by disability, race, gender, or veteran status, providing a more rigorous test of disability's electoral consequences than evaluation alone.

Participants. Quotas were set to ensure a balance of liberals, moderates and conservatives. Of the 1,784 participants who completed the study, 712 people identified as liberal, 359 as moderate, and 712 as conservative.³ The majority of all liberals and all conservatives identified as relatively strong ideologues, and near-equivalent shares of the moderates indicated they would lean slightly more conservative (50.4%) if forced to choose. The sample was predominantly female (55%), white (81%), nondisabled (87%), and exactly 50% of the participants were 45 years old or younger.

³ One respondent could not be assigned to a valid ideological subgroup classification and was excluded from all analyses, yielding the analytic sample of 1,783 respondents (10,698 profile observations) reported throughout.

Conjoint Survey Experiment. Participants were first asked their ideological position and were told they were going to see the profiles of three pairs of candidates competing in primary races who shared similar ideological views to themselves (party was held constant in the conjoint table).⁴ They then saw a series of three pages, each with a conjoint table featuring the two hypothetical political candidates (examples of the conjoint tables are displayed in the Appendix). In conjoint survey experiments, participants are presented with multiple options and attributes which are themselves collections of attributes (Bansak et al. 2023). This design is well suited to study biases against candidates from disadvantaged groups while being able to estimate the differences in causal effects across other randomly assigned variables.

In this study, disability, race, and gender were randomized by candidate image, and veteran status was simply labeled and randomized as was their education (Bachelor's, Master's, or J.D. degree). Age was randomly shown and inserted by Qualtrics between the ages of 40 and 52, a range previously shown to have no significant effect on candidate evaluation but could be used to enhance the profiles (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). Partisanship was shown but held constant for both candidates as it was a primary context, and all candidates were also shown as married to control for any possible effects of marital status. The images of the hypothetical candidates feature the same set of individuals for respective left and right columns, two men and two women, each of whom were white or Black and were either portrayed as nondisabled or physically disabled. These three characteristics were not labeled, leaving the categorization of the candidate to the participant rather than priming them.

⁴ Moderates were forced to choose whether they'd lean slightly more liberal or conservative to assign them to a pair of candidates who were either Democrats or Republicans. Participants also indicated partisanship in the study and the results are virtually identical when using partisanship instead of ideology. Just 43 liberals indicated they identified with the Republican Party, and although a slightly higher number of conservatives identified with the Democratic Party, the design of the study in a primary without other partisan-related features should minimize any concern about the role of partisanship.

Very little work has explored the intersectionality effects of disability, race, and gender on political support, and the work that does exist, including the most directly comparable study on candidate disability (Reher 2025), has simply used labels rather than visual images of the candidates. This is not merely a difference in naturalism. Recent conjoint work demonstrates that visual and text-based designs are not interchangeable, producing systematically different, and at times opposite, patterns of discrimination for the same underlying candidate attributes (López Ortega and Radojevic 2025; Vecchiato and Munger 2025). The visual representation of identity can therefore be critically influential in the evaluative process, as there are separate cognitive pathways for visual and textual cues of identities (Brewer 1988; Read 2020). Indeed, the impact of visual versus labeled cues has been demonstrated to be influential in relation to political behavior and race (Abrajano, Elmendorf, and Quinn 2018; Kaufman, Celaya, and Grumbach 2026), as well as gender (Norman, White, and Chen 2025), and appearance-based inferences generated automatically from a candidate's image, independent of any explicitly labeled identity, have themselves been shown to shape electoral choice (Ahler et al. 2017).

Furthermore, the impact of a visual cue can have the equivalent impact on judgments as text labels when subjects already hold some degree of knowledge, and stereotypes, about the target (Brewer 1988), such as with race (Bowker and Tuffin 2002) and specific forms of disability (Reher 2025). But most people hold relatively little knowledge about disabilities, including how to distinguish between most forms of disability, and tend to instead categorize those with physical disabilities into a broad “disability” category regardless of the type and degree of disability (Cahill and Eggleston 1995; Gervais 2011). People also “see” identities differently, such that the visual translation of text-based labels often results in very different images despite similar labels provided, but also that people with those different identities also

have different needs regarding descriptions which images can overcome (James Edwards et al. 2021). Presenting disability visually through a candidate image rather than a text label is also substantively important given how candidates with physical disabilities often choose to manage disclosure of their disability. A text label would impose the stereotypes associated with that label while stripping candidates, even within an experimental design, of control over self-disclosure (Bowker and Tuffin 2002). A design relying on text labels to convey disability status, race, and gender simultaneously would therefore not simply be a less naturalistic version of the present study; it would plausibly produce different substantive results, and would come at a cost to the disclosure agency the visual design is intended to preserve.

Blatant Dehumanization. Dehumanization was measured through the Blatant Dehumanization Scale as described and reported in Study 1 (Kteily et al. 2015). Respondents were sorted into four categories reflecting the strength of dehumanization by disability, race, and gender. Because the sample mean itself reflected a statistically significant level of dehumanization relative to zero for disability and race, categorization for these two dimensions was anchored to the mean rather than to standard deviation bands alone: No Dehumanization (scores at or below 0), Weak Dehumanization (scores above 0 up to the sample mean), Moderate Dehumanization (scores from the mean up to one standard deviation above the mean), and Strong Dehumanization (scores exceeding one standard deviation above the mean).

For gender-based dehumanization, the same mean-anchored approach proved unworkable: the sample mean for women fell below zero, reflecting that respondents' blatant dehumanization on this measure ran toward men rather than women, and an unadjusted mean-anchored cutoff for men produced a Weak Dehumanization threshold too close to zero to meaningfully distinguish respondents (a mean of only 1.44 points above zero). Categorization for

both men- and women-directed dehumanization was therefore calculated using only respondents scoring above zero on the relevant measure, preserving the same weak/moderate/strong logic among respondents who directed meaningful dehumanization toward the group in question. This tiered categorization allows the analysis to move beyond a binary dehumanized/not-dehumanized distinction and test whether the electoral penalty for disability scales with the intensity of the underlying cognitive process, consistent with the burden-resolution mechanism proposed.

Results

The effect of candidate attributes is estimated based on average marginal component effects (AMCE), which test how different attribute values affect the likelihood of election. The AMCE is calculated as an average over the distribution of other attributes, and is interpreted as the effect of the treatment (e.g., disabled, Black, female, veteran) relative to the control (e.g., abled, white, male, civilian), with the remaining attributes held constant in the model.

Prior research has found some degree of "disability exceptionalism," in which candidates with physical disabilities experienced a boost in electoral support that was also conditioned by political ideology (Hull 2026; Reher 2025). However, as shown in Figure 1, when candidates are visually presented and vary simultaneously by race, gender, and disability, this disability benefit fails to appear: candidates with physical disabilities were not punished by voters, but they were also no more likely to receive a vote, mirroring the pattern for candidates who were women. The probability of voting for a candidate who was Black increased significantly by just over 3 percentage points relative to the white candidate, and serving in the military increased vote share by roughly 4.5 percentage points over civilian candidates.

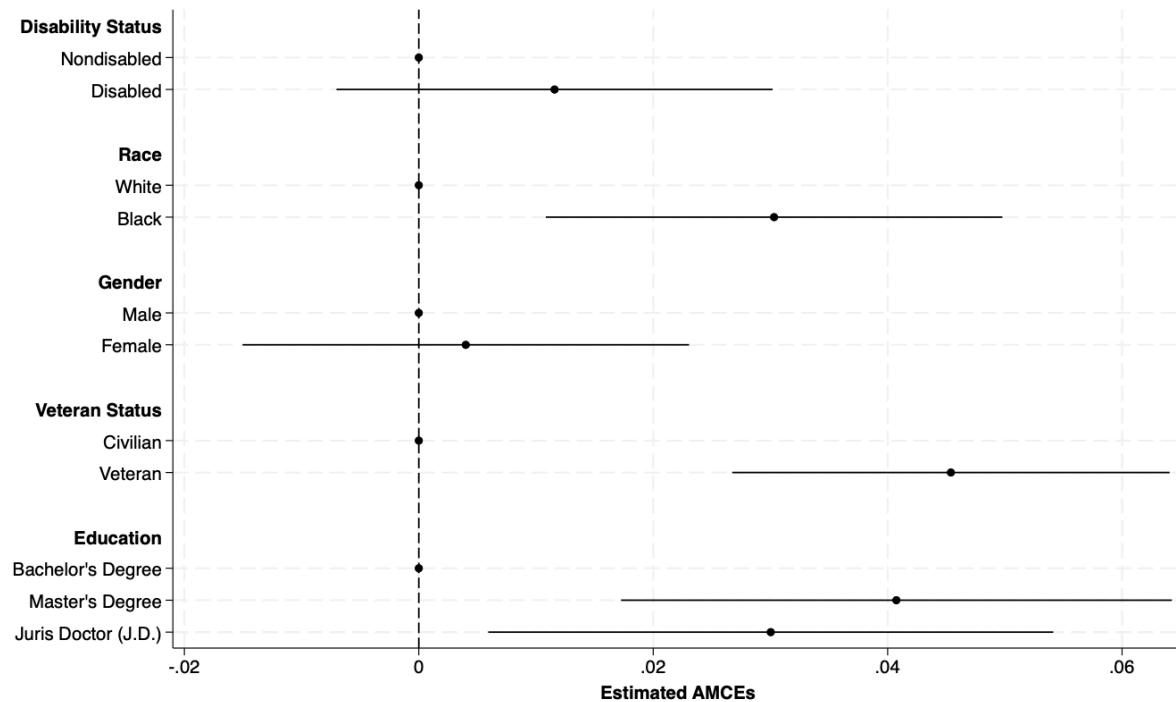


Figure 1. Average Marginal Component Effects of Candidate Attributes on Vote Choice

Note. Points represent estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) on the probability of candidate selection, with horizontal bars indicating 95% confidence intervals. Estimates derived from a linear probability model with standard errors clustered by respondent (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents). Reference categories: Nondisabled, White, Male, Civilian, Bachelor's Degree.

Testing the Double Disability

Thus far, disability provides no clear boost to candidates on its own, but does it create an additive penalty when intersecting with race or gender? Hypothesis 1a, the Double Disability Hypothesis, predicts that it should; Hypothesis 1b, the Single Disability Hypothesis, predicts that it should not. A formal test interacting candidate disability with candidate race and gender finds no evidence of compounding: the two-way interactions between disability and race ($F(1,1782) = 0.12$, $p = .727$) and between disability and gender ($F(1,1782) = 0.34$, $p = .557$), as well as the full three-way interaction ($F(1,1782) = 0.08$, $p = .782$), were all statistically indistinguishable from

zero.⁵ Disability's effect on vote choice does not significantly vary depending on a candidate's race or gender, providing clear support for Hypothesis 1b over Hypothesis 1a.

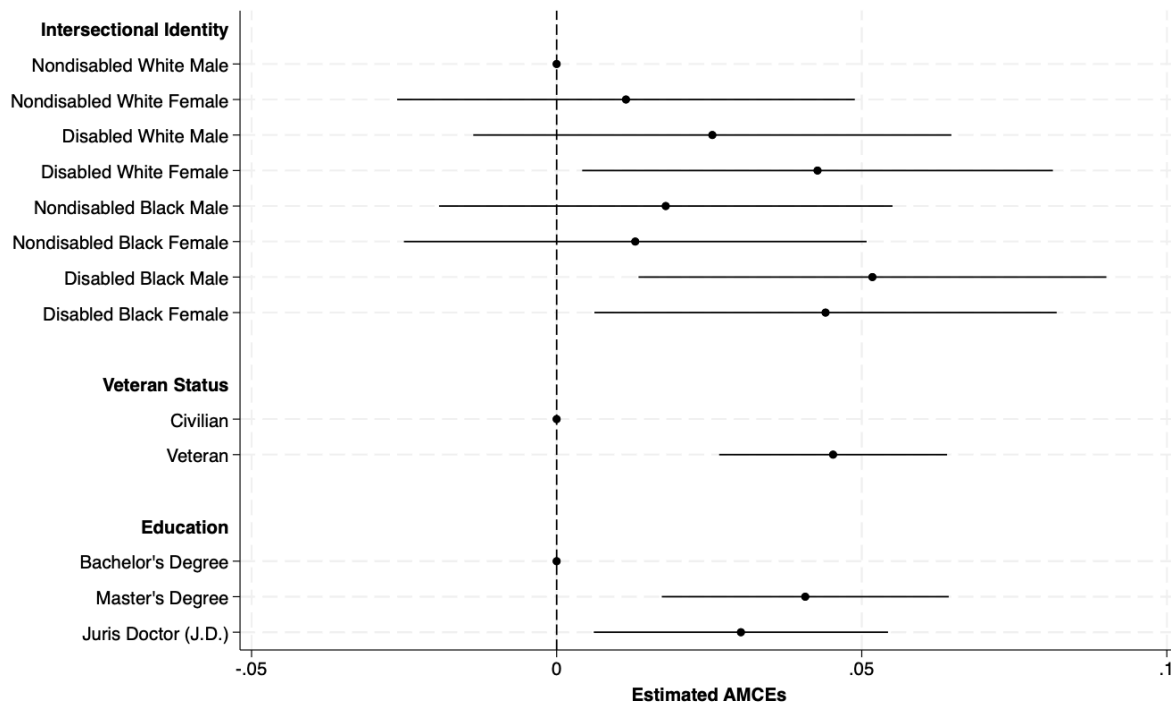


Figure 2. Average Marginal Component Effects of Candidate Disability, Race, and Gender
Note. Points represent estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) on the probability of candidate selection for the full intersection of candidate disability, race, and gender, with horizontal bars indicating 95% confidence intervals. Estimates derived from a linear probability model with standard errors clustered by respondent (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents). Reference category: Nondisabled White Male.

Figure 2 illustrates this pattern using the full intersection of candidate disability, race, and gender, with the nondisabled white male candidate as the baseline for comparison. Every disabled candidate category outperformed its nondisabled counterpart of the same race and gender: disabled Black men were 5.2 percentage points more likely to receive a vote than nondisabled white men ($p = .008$), disabled white women were 4.3 points more likely ($p = .030$), and disabled Black women were 4.4 points more likely ($p = .023$), while disabled white men

⁵ The full interaction model, including all two- and three-way interaction coefficients and joint significance tests, is reported in Appendix Table A6.

showed a similar though non-significant pattern (2.6 points, $p = .202$). By contrast, none of the nondisabled candidates holding a single marginalized identity, nondisabled white women, nondisabled Black men, or nondisabled Black women, reached statistical significance on their own. Rather than compounding disadvantage as the double disability framework predicts, disability appears to do more of the electoral work than race or gender alone in this sample, with no formal evidence of an additive penalty for holding multiple marginalized identities simultaneously.⁶

Disability Dehumanization and Vote Choice

Thus far, the evidence has suggested support for the Single Disability Hypothesis, in that disability does not create an additive penalty for political candidates when intersecting with race and gender. However, as demonstrated in Study 1, people tend to dehumanize persons with physical disabilities in a way that appears unique to disability, which should carry electoral consequences as argued in Hypothesis 2. To test this hypothesis, vote choice was modeled as a function of each candidate identity attribute, respondents' dehumanization tier on the corresponding dimension, and their interaction, using the four-tier categorization described above. Each of the four sets of results is shown in Figure 3.

⁶ This pattern is not unique to the present design. A reanalysis of Reher's (2025) publicly archived US/UK conjoint dataset, which includes candidate disability, gender, and ethnic minority status as separate manipulated attributes but does not report their interaction, finds the same result: neither the two-way interactions between candidate disability and gender ($F(1,5274) = 0.78$, $p = .377$) or minority status ($F(1,5274) = 0.18$, $p = .674$), nor the three-way interaction among all three ($F(1,5274) = 0.21$, $p = .646$), reach statistical significance. The non-additivity of disability's electoral effect thus appears to hold across at least two independently collected datasets, researchers, and candidate presentation formats.

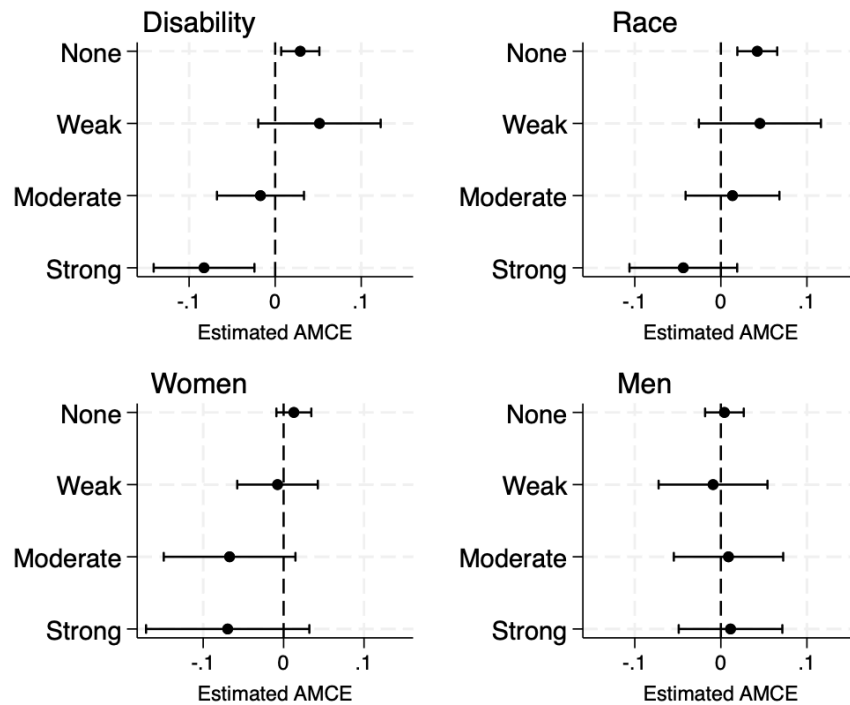


Figure 3. AMCEs of Candidate Identity Attributes by Degree of Dehumanization

Note. Panels display estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of the candidate attribute indicated in each panel title, conditional on respondents' blatant dehumanization of the corresponding target group, with horizontal bars indicating 95% confidence intervals. Each panel reflects a separate regression model in which vote choice is regressed on the candidate attribute, dehumanization tier, and their interaction, with controls for the remaining candidate attributes and standard errors clustered by respondent. Panel (a): Disability Status, moderated by disability dehumanization. Panel (b): Race, moderated by race dehumanization. Panel (c): Gender, moderated by dehumanization directed at women. Panel (d): Gender, moderated by dehumanization directed at men. Joint interaction tests: Disability, $F(3, 1782) = 4.93$, $p = .002$; Race, $F(3, 1782) = 2.31$, $p = .074$; Gender (women dehumanization), $F(3, 1782) = 1.91$, $p = .126$; Gender (men dehumanization), $F(3, 1782) = 0.08$, $p = .970$.

The results demonstrate clear consequences for disability dehumanization: greater dehumanization of persons with physical disabilities produces a significant decline in support for candidates with physical disabilities. A formal test interacting candidate disability with dehumanization tier confirms this pattern is not attributable to chance ($F(3,1782) = 4.93$, $p = .002$). Respondents who did not dehumanize persons with physical disabilities were approximately 2.9 percentage points more likely to vote for a candidate with a physical disability than for a nondisabled candidate ($p = .010$). That advantage disappeared among weak and

moderate dehumanizers, neither of whom showed a statistically distinguishable disability effect, before reversing among the strongest dehumanizers, who were 8.3 percentage points less likely to vote for a candidate with a physical disability than for a nondisabled candidate ($p = .006$). Dehumanization of persons with physical disabilities, in other words, does not merely erode disability's electoral advantage; among the most severe dehumanizers, it converts that advantage into a significant penalty.

The consequences of race-based dehumanization do not follow the same pattern. Respondents who did not dehumanize Black Americans were significantly more likely to vote for candidates who were Black (4.2 percentage points, $p < .001$) than for white candidates. That advantage eroded steadily as race-based dehumanization increased, falling to statistically null among weak and moderate dehumanizers and turning numerically, though not significantly, negative among the strongest dehumanizers (-4.4 points, $p = .172$). The interaction between candidate race and dehumanization tier fell just short of conventional significance ($F(3,1782) = 2.31$, $p = .074$), consistent with a real but comparatively modest moderating role for race-based dehumanization relative to disability. Unlike disability, race-based dehumanization erodes an existing advantage toward null rather than reversing it into a significant penalty.

Because the blatant dehumanization measure revealed significant dehumanization directed at men rather than women, tests of H2's gender-specificity claim consider both directions. Dehumanization directed at women showed a similar, if weaker, erosion pattern to race: candidates who were women received no significant advantage among non-dehumanizers to begin with (1.3 points, $p = .250$), and the estimate drifted numerically negative, though not significantly so, among the strongest dehumanizers (-7.0 points, $p = .179$); the interaction did not reach significance ($F(3,1782) = 1.91$, $p = .126$). Dehumanization directed at men, the

direction actually observed as significant in this sample, showed no relationship to female candidate support whatsoever: the interaction was flat and null at every tier ($F(3,1782) = 0.08$, $p = .970$), with AMCEs hovering near zero and showing no directional trend regardless of dehumanization strength. Taken together, neither form of gender-based dehumanization produced the sign-reversing penalty observed for disability, providing further support for the selectivity Hypothesis 2 predicts.

Ideology, Disability, and Dehumanization

Having established that disability does not compound with candidate race or gender, and that dehumanization's electoral consequences are selective to disability, this section turns to the role of political ideology. Hypothesis 3a, the Ideological Moderation Hypothesis, predicts that candidate disability should show the same ideological gradient long documented for other marginalized candidate identities: more favorable evaluation among liberal voters, less favorable evaluation among conservative voters, with moderates falling in between.

Table 2 tests this prediction directly, estimating the AMCE of each candidate attribute separately by respondent ideology. Race and gender both show the pattern Hypothesis 3a anticipates. Candidates who were Black received a significant boost in support from liberal voters (6.6 percentage points, $p < .001$) and moderate voters (4.8 points, $p = .030$), with that advantage disappearing among conservative voters (-1.5 points, $p = .325$). Candidates who were women followed a similar, more pronounced pattern: a significant boost among liberal voters (3.7 points, $p = .017$), a smaller, non-significant estimate among moderates (2.9 points, $p = .185$), and a significant reversal into a penalty among conservative voters (-4.3 points, $p = .004$).

Table 2. Average Marginal Component Effects of Candidate Attributes by Respondent Ideology

Attribute	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Disability	.020 (p = .198)	-.0002 (p = .991)	.010 (p = .482)
Race (Black)	.066*** (p < .001)	.048* (p = .030)	-.015 (p = .325)
Gender (Female)	.037* (p = .017)	.029 (p = .185)	-.043** (p = .004)

Note. Cell entries are average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of the listed candidate attribute on vote choice, estimated separately within each ideological subgroup, with controls for the remaining candidate attributes and standard errors clustered by respondent. Unlike disability, race and gender show a clear ideological gradient, providing the baseline evidence against which Hypothesis 3a (Ideological Moderation Hypothesis) and Hypothesis 3b (Dehumanization Suppression Hypothesis) are evaluated.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Disability shows no such gradient. The AMCE of candidate disability was small and statistically indistinguishable from zero among liberal voters (2.0 points, p = .198), moderate voters (-0.02 points, p = .991), and conservative voters (1.0 points, p = .482). Where race and gender each track the ideological pattern Hypothesis 3a predicts, disability's electoral effect is flat across the ideological spectrum, providing no support for Hypothesis 3a as applied to disability specifically. This null gradient is not, on its own, evidence for Hypothesis 3b; it is equally consistent with disability simply mattering little to vote choice regardless of dehumanization. The section that follows tests Hypothesis 3b directly by examining whether this same flat pattern holds specifically among voters who dehumanize candidates with physical disabilities, and whether it diverges from a pattern of dehumanization-driven suppression once ideology and dehumanization are considered jointly.

To test H3b, AMCEs for candidate disability were estimated across the twelve cells formed by crossing respondent ideology (liberal, moderate, conservative) with disability dehumanization tier, using a formal three-way interaction of candidate disability, ideology, and dehumanization tier. None of the three-way interaction terms reached statistical significance (all

$p > .26$), indicating that ideology does not significantly moderate the relationship between disability dehumanization and vote choice (shown in Figure 4). Among moderate dehumanizers, the disability AMCE was small and statistically indistinguishable from zero across all three ideological groups: liberals ($-.020$), moderates ($-.018$), and conservatives ($-.014$). Among the strongest dehumanizers, the disability penalty grew substantially in magnitude while remaining strikingly consistent across ideology: liberals ($-.083$, $p = .087$), moderates ($-.092$, $p = .164$), and conservatives ($-.078$, $p = .088$). Although none of these individual estimates reach conventional significance given reduced cell sizes at this level of dehumanization, their consistency in direction and magnitude across ideologically distinct groups, combined with the non-significant three-way interaction, provides direct support for H3b: the electoral penalty associated with disability dehumanization intensifies as dehumanization increases but does not appear to be conditional on respondent ideology.

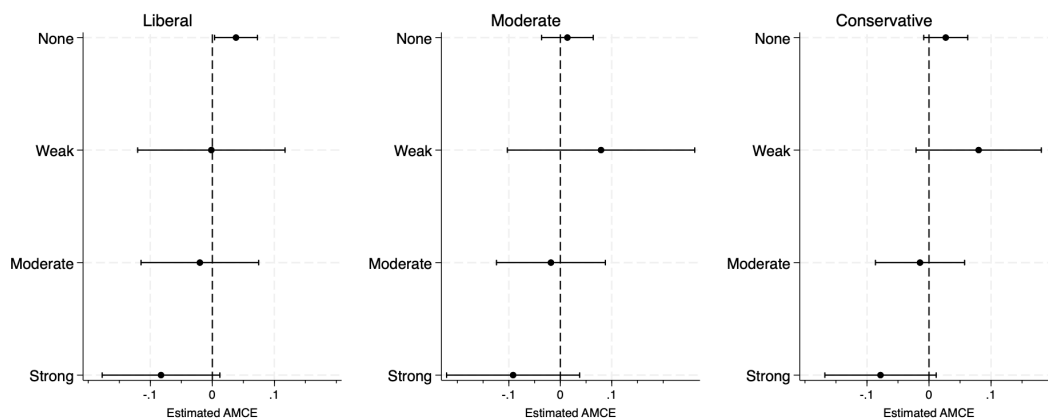


Figure 4. Average Marginal Component Effects of Candidate Disability by Degree of Dehumanization, Conditional on Respondent Ideology

Note. Panels display estimated average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of candidate disability at each level of disability dehumanization, estimated separately within each ideological subgroup, with horizontal bars indicating 95% confidence intervals. Estimates derived from a single regression of vote choice on candidate disability, respondent ideology, dehumanization tier, and their full interaction, with controls for the remaining candidate attributes and standard errors clustered by respondent. None of the three-way interaction terms reached conventional significance (all $p > .26$), indicating that ideology does not significantly moderate the relationship between disability dehumanization and vote choice.

Discussion

This project set out to answer a puzzle posed at its outset: why do candidates with physical disabilities continue to struggle electorally with significant underrepresentation in American politics even as the empirical record on voter attitudes toward disability grows increasingly favorable? The answer this research offers is that existing frameworks have been asking the wrong question. Stereotype content models predict that favorable trait attributions should translate into electoral advantage, and by that logic, the positive stereotypes disabled candidates now regularly receive should have resolved the underrepresentation puzzle rather than deepened it. What this project demonstrates instead is that disability's electoral fate is not determined by stereotype content at all, but instead by the distinct psychological process of dehumanization which resolves the cognitive ambiguity disability introduces into candidate evaluation independent of whether that ambiguity is resolved in the candidate's favor or against them.

Three sets of findings support this account. First, disability does not produce the additive intersectional penalty long predicted by the double handicap framework (Hanna and Rogovsky 1991). Across every combination of candidate race, gender, and disability tested here, physically disabled candidates outperformed their nondisabled counterparts, and no formal interaction between disability and either identity dimension reached significance. This result, formalized as the Single Disability Hypothesis, suggests that disability's electoral consequences are not simply one more stigma layered onto an existing evaluative deficit, and that models treating marginalized identities as additively combining penalties may be poorly suited to disability specifically.

Second, dehumanization's electoral consequences are selective rather than generalized, as the Selective Resolution Hypothesis predicted. Among the strongest dehumanizers, disability's

baseline electoral advantage did not merely disappear; it reversed into a significant penalty. Race-based dehumanization produced only the milder pattern of an advantage eroding toward null, and gender-based dehumanization, whether directed at women or men, produced no reliable relationship to candidate support at all. This pattern, from sign reversal to erosion to null, is difficult to explain under a model in which dehumanization functions as a generalized marker of prejudice, since a generalized account offers no reason for disability to behave differently from race or gender rather than similarly to them. This is consistent with a broader body of evidence that dehumanization is not merely a proxy for outgroup dislike: blatant dehumanization is only moderately correlated with prejudice and uniquely predicts attitudes and behavior beyond what dislike alone explains, a distinction evident even at the neural level (Kteily and Bruneau 2017). It is considerably easier to explain the pattern observed here under this article's account, in which dehumanization does the specific work of resolving an evaluative burden that disability introduces and that race and gender, whatever bias they separately carry, do not.

Third, the electoral penalty associated with disability dehumanization holds remarkably steady across the ideological spectrum among dehumanizers, even though the prevalence of dehumanization itself, per Study 1, is not evenly distributed across ideology. Liberals, moderates, and conservatives who dehumanized candidates with physical disabilities did so with strikingly similar consequences for their vote choice, despite starting from very different baseline rates of dehumanization and very different treatment of disabled candidates among non-dehumanizers. This pattern, consistent with the Dehumanization Suppression Hypothesis, argues against a purely ideological account of disability bias and toward a cognitive one. Whatever a voter's political predispositions, dehumanization appears to resolve disability's ambiguity in much the same way once it takes hold. This pattern echoes evidence from a very different

operationalization of burden, in which increased cognitive demands during candidate evaluation eliminated liberal voters' otherwise reliable preference for Black candidates (Cunow et al. 2021), suggesting that when burden shapes electoral judgment, it does so by overriding ideological predisposition rather than operating through it.

These findings also offer a more precise account of what happened to David Paterson than "he was stereotyped" or "voters were biased against him" would suggest. Paterson was not, by most contemporaneous accounts, perceived as incompetent; his early standing, his consensus-building record, and his substantive achievements in public office were not disputed even by critics. What was attacked instead was his standing as a full moral and cognitive agent. Critics and commentators alike questioned, without basis, his capacity to know, to read, to function independently, claims that bear directly on humanness rather than on competence as conventionally measured. The account developed here suggests this was not incidental to Paterson's downfall but close to its mechanism, a candidate whose disability introduced genuine evaluative ambiguity, resolved by some voters and commentators not through stereotype but through the denial of the basic presumption of capable personhood.

This account carries implications beyond disability politics narrowly construed. For stigma theory, it extends Link and Phelan's (2001) insight that stigma need not operate through stereotype content by specifying a mechanism, specifically dehumanization as burden resolution, through which status loss can occur even amid favorable stereotyping, and by showing that this mechanism need not operate uniformly across stigmatized categories. For the dehumanization literature, it offers evidence that dehumanization's political consequences depend on the specific evaluative work a target's stigma requires, complicating any assumption that dehumanization functions as a single, generalizable form of prejudice applicable in comparable degree across

social groups. And for scholarship on candidate evaluation and intersectionality more broadly, it suggests that additive models of compounding disadvantage, however intuitive, may not travel well to identities whose electoral consequences are governed by qualitatively different cognitive processes.

Several limitations to the current study should be acknowledged. Most centrally, the cognitive burden and ambiguity this article argues disability introduces are inferred primarily from downstream patterns, dehumanization's selective and reversing effects on vote choice, rather than measured directly at the point of judgment. Study 1 offers partial evidence on this front: within-respondent dispersion in trait ratings of disabled candidates was significantly lower on animalistic-dimension traits but significantly higher on mechanistic-dimension traits relative to able-bodied candidates, suggesting that evaluative inconsistency, a plausible signature of the ambiguity this article theorizes, is concentrated specifically on traits bearing on agency, emotionality, and human nature rather than appearing uniformly across all evaluative dimensions. This finding is consistent with, though not dispositive of, the burden-resolution account, and it does not extend to Study 2 where no comparable measure of evaluative ambiguity was collected alongside the conjoint task. Neither study captures response latency during candidate evaluation or self-reported judgment difficulty, measures that would more directly establish that disability complicates candidate judgment in the moment rather than being inferred from a rating battery collected after the fact.

Future work incorporating such measures directly into the choice task itself, rather than relying on a separately administered trait battery, would allow a more direct test of the mechanism proposed here. Relatedly, the application of the Blatant Dehumanization Scale to candidate race and gender, undertaken here for the first time to this article's knowledge, means

the comparative claims in Hypothesis 2 rest on genuinely novel ground rather than an established body of prior findings; the asymmetric pattern observed for gender, dehumanization directed at men rather than women, in particular merits replication before being treated as a stable feature of political cognition rather than a feature of this sample.

The design also cannot speak to how these dynamics might shift outside a same-party primary context. Because candidates in the conjoint experiment shared partisanship with respondents, this design isolates disability's consequences from the cross-cutting pressures of a competitive general election, in which partisan loyalty might dampen, or ideological stakes might sharpen, the dehumanization-driven penalty identified here. A natural extension of this work would field a comparable design in a cross-partisan general election context, where the willingness to dehumanize an out-party's candidate, and the electoral stakes of doing so, may differ considerably from the co-partisan environment studied here.

A further limitation concerns the operationalization of disability itself. I treated physical disability broadly throughout this project, in part because we know relatively little about how accurate people are at categorizing disability to produce disability-specific stereotypes, and because most voters possess limited ability to distinguish among specific forms of disability, tending instead to categorize physical disability broadly rather than by type (Cahill and Eggleston 1995; Gervais 2011). Visibility of the disability is an important factor because it serves as a visual heuristic of the disability, which is why I grouped physical disabilities together into a broad disability category and why the visual representation of disability in this study was consistently related to mobility impairment, with candidates shown in a wheelchair or on crutches, rather than labeled by type.

Voters could plausibly see these mobility disabilities as less related to the competence of candidates, since the candidates could still perform the essential functions of being an elected official, in contrast to an impairment like blindness or deafness. More severe, readily visible physical disabilities could produce more negative perceptions, such as disabilities resulting from burns, with visible scarring, or spinal disorders resulting in someone needing more assistance. Reher (2025) includes blind, deaf, and wheelchair-using candidates in her experimental design, demonstrating similar positive voter evaluations across these impairment types, though some nuanced differences emerge, such as deaf candidates being particularly favored by left-wing voters for perceived authenticity in representing marginalized groups. Whether the dehumanization mechanism proposed here operates similarly across these different forms of physical disability, and whether it extends to non-visible, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities, remains an important direction for future research. Voters have been shown to specifically penalize politicians disclosing psychiatric conditions such as depression (Loewen and Rheault 2021), and using the same Blatant Dehumanization Scale employed here, Boysen and colleagues (2020) find that people with mental illness are rated as significantly less human than other commonly dehumanized social groups, while Kim, Cheon, and Kim (2025) similarly document both blatant and subtle dehumanization of autistic individuals across cultural contexts, suggesting the mechanism proposed here may generalize, and perhaps intensify, well beyond physical disability alone.

None of these limitations undermine the central claim this article advances: that disability occupies a distinct position in political cognition, not simply one stigmatized identity among several vying for electoral advantage, but one whose fate depends on whether voters can resolve the ambiguity it introduces without denying the candidate's basic humanity in the process. David

Paterson's collapse in New York was not merely the fate of one government confronting one financial crisis, or even the fate of one candidate whose blindness made him an easy target for a particular season's political theater. It is, this project contends, a pattern general enough to be predicted, measured, and, potentially, understood well enough to be addressed.

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APPENDIX

Study 1: Demonstrating Disability Dehumanization

Full Procedure

The goal of the study was to test whether, and if so, how people dehumanized people with physical disabilities by incorporating a series of both implicit and explicit dehumanization measures. In the first wave of data collection (Spring 2021), all participants were randomly assigned to either an animalistic or mechanistic dehumanization Implicit Association Test (IAT) focused on political candidates, followed by the same explicit measures regardless of IAT condition. In subsequent waves (Fall 2021 through Spring 2022), a job candidate condition was added alongside the political candidate condition, with participants randomly assigned to one before being further randomized into the animalistic or mechanistic IAT.

Participants who agreed to complete the online study (on their own personal computers) were first presented with an Implicit Association Test to measure automatic associations between candidate disability status and humanizing versus dehumanizing evaluative concepts. The test, which takes approximately 10 minutes to complete, was created using iatgen (Carpenter et al. 2018).

The Disability Dehumanization IAT categorization tasks used four sets of stimuli: 1) five words with a positive (humanizing) evaluative connotation (e.g., human, culture), presented in text format; 2) five words with a negative (dehumanizing) evaluative connotation (e.g., animal, robotic), presented in text format; 3) four photos of physically disabled candidates; and 4) four photographs of able-bodied candidates. The positive and negative stimulus words were drawn from previously published dehumanization IAT studies (Goff et al. 2008). The animalistic dehumanization IATs used human and animalistic words as the target stimuli, drawing the terms

from previous animalistic dehumanization IATs including humanizing terms such as human, logic, rational, culture, and reason and animalistic terms of animal, paw, snout, tail, and nature (Rudman & Mescher 2012). The mechanistic dehumanization IATs used the same set of human target words, and included mechanistic terms of cold, robotic, superficial, inanimate, and rigid. The images used were stock photos of four different models each presented in both an abled and disabled pose. See below for a full list of the stimuli words and images used. Upon completion of the Disability Dehumanization IAT, the participants completed a survey to measure explicit attitudes. Finally, participants responded to a battery of questions regarding their personal background.

The Disability Dehumanization IAT. Participants who agreed to participate in the study began by completing the Disability Dehumanization IAT. The IAT follows the procedures outlined by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003) and was built using iatgen. The test consists of seven blocks of trials. In each block, a target concept (e.g., physically abled candidate or physically disabled candidate), an evaluative concept (e.g., human or animal/robot), or both were assigned to the left-hand and right-hand key response for categorization. Participants pressed the E and I keys on the keyboard with their forefinger for left- and right- hand responses, respectively. Participants were instructed to respond as quickly as possible without making too many mistakes. Before each block began, instructions regarding the categorization task and the mapping of key responses to concepts appeared on the screen, and participants were reminded to respond as quickly as possible. During the task, reminders of which stimuli were assigned to which response key remained on the computer screen (e.g., if positive words were assigned to the I key response, the label “Human” remained on the screen in the upper right-hand corner throughout the task, and if physically disabled candidates were assigned to the I key, the label

“Disabled Candidate” remained in the upper right-hand corner). An example of a single trial within a test block that included both the target and evaluative concepts (Blocks 3, 4, 6, and 7) can be found below.

Within each trial, the stimulus words and images appeared in the center of the screen. Iatgen builds the IAT to be used in a survey measure program, such as Qualtrics, through JavaScript coding. The program then recorded the response latency in milliseconds from the time the stimuli appeared on screen to the time the participant responded correctly. If an error was made, a red X appeared on the screen, prompting the participant to select the correct response. Participants were required to enter the correct response before moving to the next trial, as per Greenwald et al. (2003). Because the JavaScript coding is used, the capture of reaction time does not require data to be transmitted through the internet but instead captures it through data transmission between Qualtrics and the IAT blocks themselves. This use of JavaScript has been validated not only from the developers of Iatgen (Carpenter et al., 2018) but also in other psychological research (de Leeuw, 2015; Reimers & Stewart, 2015).

Participants began with a practice block of the target images, categorizing the photos into abled or disabled candidate categories (20 trials). The second block was a practice block of the positive and negative words which were sorted into the human and dehumanizing categories (20 trials). The next two blocks were a combination of the target and evaluative categories, where participants would see either an image or word and have to categorize it to the combined pairing (such as disabled candidate + human, or abled candidate + animal). The third block consisted of 20 trials, and the fourth target block was 40 trials. The fifth block is another practice block that helps “wash out” the associations learned in the prior blocks and consists of 40 trials. The final two blocks are again combined blocks of the target and evaluative concepts with the positions

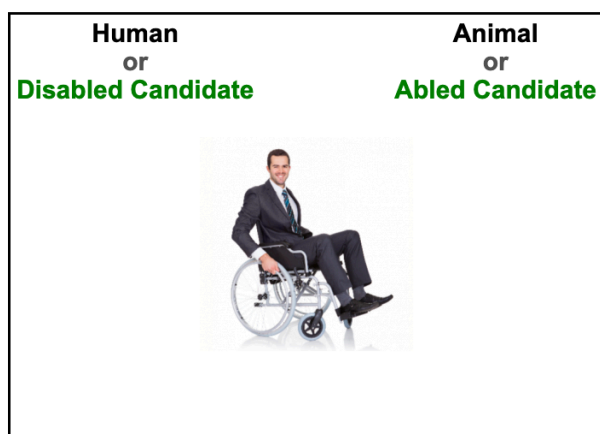
reversed (for example, whereas the early combined blocks may have disabled candidate + human, this would be reversed in these last blocks to disabled candidate + animal and abled candidate + human). The sixth block was again 20 trials and the final block was 40 trials. The left/right assignments of the categorized items were also randomized to counterbalance the responses of the participants. Response latencies and errors were recorded in the program.

Animalistic Dehumanization IAT Example.

Implicit Association Task

You will press the 'E' (left response key) and 'I' (right response key) to categorize items into groups as fast as you can. These are the four groups and the items that belong to each:

Category	Items
Human	Human, Logic, Rational, Culture, Reason
Animal	Animal, Paw, Snout, Tail, Nature
Disabled Political Candidates	
Abled Political Candidates	

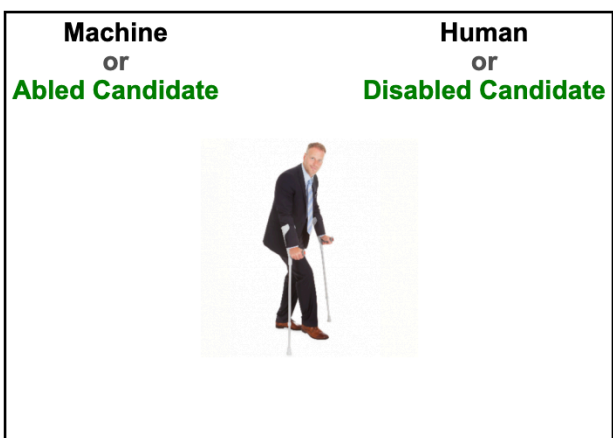


Mechanistic Dehumanization IAT Example.

Implicit Association Task

You will press the 'E' (left response key) and 'I' (right response key) to categorize items into groups as fast as you can. These are the four groups and the items that belong to each:

Category	Items
Human	Human, Logic, Rational, Culture, Reason
Machine	Cold, Robotic, Superficial, Inanimate, Rigid
Disabled Political Candidates	
Abled Political Candidates	



Explicit Measures. Once participants had finished the IAT they had been assigned to, they then completed a series of explicit dehumanization measures which were randomly ordered.

Blatant Dehumanization. The most direct form of explicit dehumanization was measured through the Blatant Dehumanization Scale (Kteily et al. 2015). This scale utilizes the Ascent of Man diagram (shown in the example below). Several groups are listed below the diagram that is displayed, with a single slider bar next to each anchored at either side of the 5-silhouette ‘Ascent of Man’ image. The groups listed included: Men, Women, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Able-Bodied, Physically Disabled, Young, Old. Responses on the continuous slider were converted to a rating from 0 (least “evolved”) to 100 (most “evolved”), and a dehumanization score is calculated by subtracting the Ascent rating of the target outgroup (Physically Disabled People) from the Ascent rating of the ingroup (Nondisabled People). The presentation order of the multiple groups was randomized across participants.

People can vary in how human-like they seem. Some people seem highly evolved whereas others seem no different than lower animals. Using the image below as a guide, indicate using the sliders how evolved you consider the average member of each group to be.



Stereotype Content Model. Harris and Fiske’s (2006) model of dehumanization is dependent on perceptions of competence and warmth captured through the Stereotype Content Model (SCM). They argue that groups perceived as being both cold and incompetent, the “lowest

of the low,” are the groups who are most likely to be dehumanized as they are associated with disgust. The SCM (Fiske et al. 2002) originally included persons with physical disabilities, identifying the group to be higher in warmth but low in competence while eliciting feelings of pity and sympathy. In their follow-up study focused on dehumanization (2006), they included “disabled persons” as a group and found it not to be dehumanized, but Harris and Fiske did not separate persons with physical and mental disabilities, and they reported that the results of the pity group were similar to that of disgust. Thus, I included the SCM as a measure specifically focused on political candidates with physical disabilities.

Directions: On a scale from 1-5 (1=not at all; 5=extremely), please indicate how you think about the group below.

Scale 1: Competence

How competent are persons with physical disabilities?
How confident are persons with physical disabilities?
How independent are persons with physical disabilities?
How competitive are persons with physical disabilities?
How intelligent are persons with physical disabilities?

Scale 2: Warmth

How tolerant are persons with physical disabilities?
How warm are persons with physical disabilities?
How good natured are persons with physical disabilities?
How sincere are persons with physical disabilities?

Dehumanization Trait Attribution. Beyond broader trait measures of competence and warmth captured in the SCM, I also measured the extent people attribute dehumanizing traits to both candidates with and without physical disabilities. Participants responded to the general question, “To what extent do you think the following traits describe [political candidates with no disabilities/political candidates with a physical disability], in general, as a group” for 16 traits drawn from Kteily et al. (2015) by using a slider scale (0 = not at all; 100 = to a very great

extent). Participants assessed the Uniquely Human (UH; Animalistic Dehumanization) and Human Nature (HN; Mechanistic Dehumanization) trait attribution toward Nondisabled and Physically Disabled targets. The 16 traits that vary on valence as well as on Animalistic (Ambitious, Imaginative, Passionate, Humble, Irresponsible, Reserved, Rude, and Stingy) and Mechanistic (Active, Friendly, Ambitious, Imaginative, Shy, Nervous, Irresponsible, and Reserved) dehumanization. The order of the nondisabled and disabled scales was randomized.

World Value Survey Item. One modified scale was drawn from the World Value Survey (Inglehart et al. 2014). The item was a measure of which groups participants would like to have as their representative in Congress or as their coworker. Participants who completed a dehumanization IAT with political candidates answered whether they would like to have the different groups as their representative, and those who completed a dehumanization IAT with job candidates answered whether they would like to have the different groups as their coworker. The groups listed were primarily those that are included in the WVS (including drug addicts, people of a different race, immigrants, homosexuals, people of a different religion, people who have a different political view, etc.) as well as people who have a physical disability and people who have a mental disability. Responses were captured through indication of whether they would like someone from that group (coded as 1) or would not (coded as 0). See below for an example.

On this list are various groups of people. Could you please indicate any that you would or would not like to have as an elected representative in Congress?

	Like	Would not like
Drug addicts	☐	☐
People of a different race	☐	☐
People who have a physical disability	☐	☐
Immigrants	☐	☐
Homosexuals	☐	☐
People of a different religion	☐	☐

Demographics. At the end of the survey, participants responded to questions regarding their personal background. These items were relatively standard, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and ideology. Gender was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female. Race was recoded as 0 for white and 1 for another race/ethnicity. Ideology was coded on a 7-point scale of strongly liberal to strongly conservative (1 indicated strong liberal, 4 indicated moderate or middle of the road, 7 indicated strong conservative), as well as partisanship on the same scale with 1 being strong Democrats, 4 as Independents, and 7 being strong Republicans. A simplified variable for ideology condensed the Ideology variable to just three points (-1 for liberal, 0 for moderates, 1 for conservatives).

Additional Results

Appendix Table A1. OLS Regression Predicting Willingness to Support a Political Candidate with a Physical Disability

Predictor	B	SE	β	t
Constant	.821***	.065		12.661
IAT D-score	-.025	.022	-.049	-1.151
Competence	.045**	.017	.148	2.652
Warmth	.006	.017	.021	.379
Blatant Dehumanization	-.002*	.001	-.103	-2.385
Ideology	-.017***	.005	-.158	-3.614
Gender	.007	.016	.020	.450
Age	.002	.003	.037	.872
Self-Disabled	-.008	.062	-.006	-.135

Note. Dependent variable is willingness to support a political candidate with a physical disability, restricted to respondents in the political candidate condition (N = 532). Model: $R^2 = .092$, Adjusted $R^2 = .079$, $F(8, 523) = 6.66$, $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Appendix Table A2. Correlations Among Study 1 Measures

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. IAT D-score	—								
2. Candidate condition	.06	—							
3. Dehumanization IAT condition	.13**	.00	—						
4. Competence	-.11**	-.07*	-.02	—					
5. Warmth	-.02	.12**	.01	.64**	—				
6. Blatant dehumanization	.06	.04	.01	-.20**	-.13**	—			
7. Support for candidate	-.05	-.05	.03	.25**	.18**	-.19**	—		
8. Ideology	.16**	-.02	-.01	-.18**	-.09**	.10**	-.17**	—	
9. Gender	-.11**	.04	-.06	.17**	.16**	-.06	.05	-.27**	—
10. Age	.01	-.02	.00	-.01	-.08*	.00	.03	-.01	-.09*

Note. N ranges from 765 to 803 across pairwise correlations due to missing data. Candidate condition is coded 0 = job candidate, 1 = political candidate. Dehumanization IAT condition is coded 0 = animalistic, 1 = mechanistic. Gender is coded 0 = male, 1 = female.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

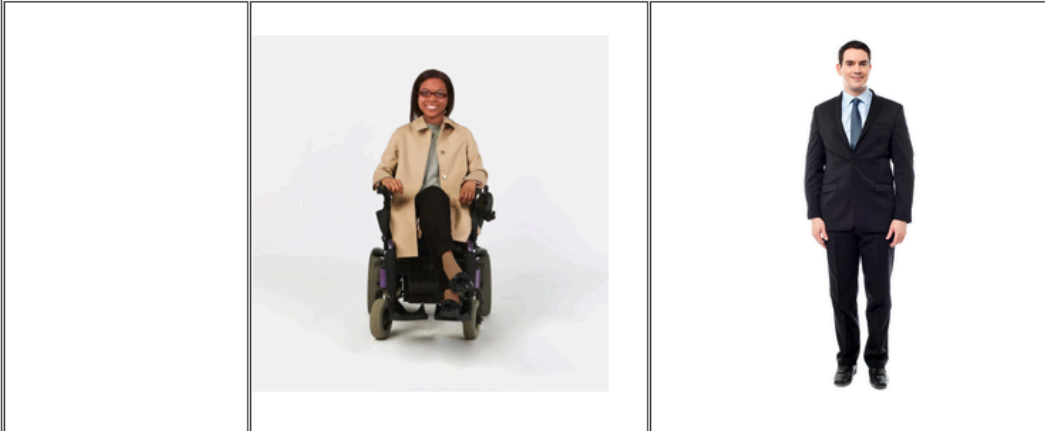
Study 2: Consequences of Disability Dehumanization

Appendix Table A3. Candidate Attributes and Levels in the Conjoint Experiment

Attribute	Levels
Disability Status	Nondisabled; Disabled
Race	White; Black
Gender	Male; Female
Veteran Status	Civilian; Veteran
Education	Bachelor's Degree; Master's Degree; Juris Doctor (J.D.)
Age	Randomly assigned between 40-52 (Qualtrics inline randomization)
Party	Held constant within each respondent's pair (Democratic or Republican, assigned by respondent ideology)
Marital Status	Held constant across all candidates (Married)

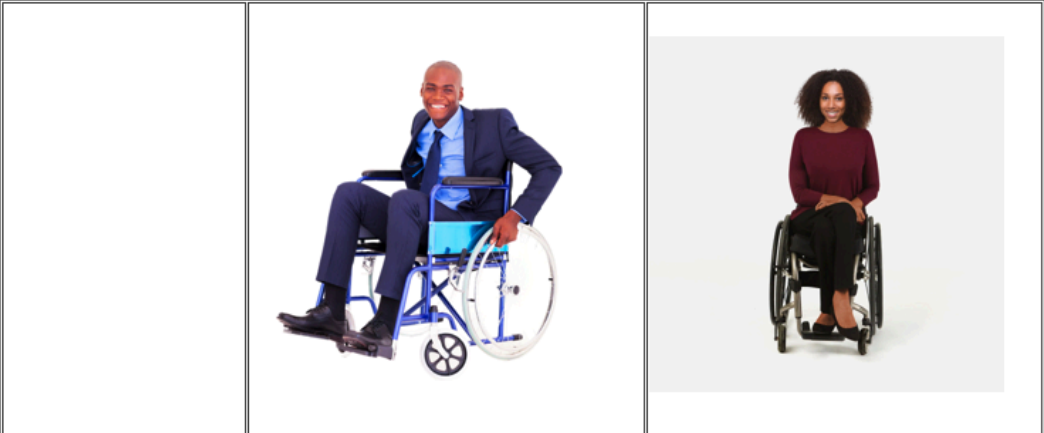
Note. Disability status, race, and gender were conveyed through candidate images rather than text labels and were not explicitly identified to respondents; veteran status and education were shown as text labels. Age was inserted via Qualtrics randomization and does not vary systematically across the disability, race, and gender attributes. Party and marital status were held constant to isolate the effects of the attributes of theoretical interest.

Figure A1. Sample Democratic Conjoint Profile Display.

		
Personal Information		
Name	Candidate E	Candidate F
Party	Democratic	Democratic
Age	43	49
Marital Status	Married	Married
Military Experience	Veteran	None
Education	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree

Note. This example illustrates the visual format of the conjoint task as presented to respondents in the Democratic condition; candidate attribute combinations shown here are for illustration only and do not reflect the balance of the full randomized design (see Appendix Table A3).

Figure A2. Sample Republican Conjoint Profile Display.

		
Personal Information		
Name	Candidate A	Candidate B
Party	Republican	Republican
Age	47	47
Marital Status	Married	Married
Military Experience	None	None
Education	Juris Doctor (J.D.)	Master's Degree

Note. This example illustrates the visual format of the conjoint task as presented to respondents in the Republican condition; candidate attribute combinations shown here are for illustration only and do not reflect the balance of the full randomized design (see Appendix Table A3).

Additional Results

Table A4. Average Marginal Component Effects of Candidate Attributes on Vote Choice

Attribute	AMCE	SE	p	95% CI
Disability Status				
Nondisabled (referent)				
Disabled	.012	.010	.222	−.007, .030
Race				
White (referent)				
Black	.030**	.010	.002	.011, .050
Gender				
Male (referent)				
Female	.004	.010	.680	−.015, .023
Veteran Status				
Civilian (referent)				
Veteran	.045***	.010	<.001	.027, .064
Education				
Bachelor's Degree (referent)				
Master's Degree	.041***	.012	<.001	.017, .064
Juris Doctor (J.D.)	.030*	.012	.015	.006, .054

Note. Cell entries are average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of each candidate attribute on the probability of candidate selection, with standard errors clustered by respondent. Estimated via the conjoint package's AMCE routine (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents). This table corresponds to figure 1 in the main text.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table A5. AMCEs for the Full Intersection of Candidate Disability, Race, and Gender

Candidate Type	AMCE	SE	p	95% CI
Nondisabled White Male (referent)				
Nondisabled White Female	.011	.019	.552	−.026, .049
Disabled White Male	.026	.020	.202	−.014, .065
Disabled White Female	.043*	.020	.030	.004, .081
Nondisabled Black Male	.018	.019	.345	−.019, .055
Nondisabled Black Female	.013	.019	.505	−.025, .051
Disabled Black Male	.052**	.020	.008	.013, .090
Disabled Black Female	.044*	.019	.023	.006, .082

Note. Cell entries are average marginal component effects (AMCEs) for the full intersection of candidate disability, race, and gender on the probability of candidate selection, relative to the Nondisabled White Male referent category, with standard errors clustered by respondent. Estimated via the conjoint package's AMCE routine (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents), controlling for veteran status and education. This table corresponds to figure 2 in the main text.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table A6. Interaction Model of Candidate Disability, Race, and Gender on Vote Choice

Predictor	Coefficient	SE	p	95% CI
Disability (Disabled)	.017	.019	.358	−.020, .055
Race (Black)	.025	.020	.214	−.014, .064
Gender (Female)	.011	.019	.567	−.027, .048
Disability × Race	.009	.027	.727	−.044, .063
Disability × Gender	−.016	.027	.557	−.068, .037
Race × Gender	.007	.027	.808	−.047, .060
Disability × Race × Gender	−.010	.038	.782	−.084, .063
Veteran Status	.045***	.010	<.001	.027, .064
Education	.015*	.006	.015	.003, .027
Constant	.422***	.019	<.001	.385, .458

Note. Cell entries are OLS coefficients from a linear probability model regressing vote choice on candidate disability, race, gender, and their full two- and three-way interactions, with controls for veteran status and education (entered as a single ordinal term) and standard errors clustered by respondent (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents). Joint tests of the interaction terms: disability × race, $F(1, 1782) = 0.12$, $p = .727$; disability × gender, $F(1, 1782) = 0.34$, $p = .557$; disability × race × gender, $F(1, 1782) = 0.08$, $p = .782$. None of the interaction terms reach conventional significance, indicating that disability's effect on vote choice does not significantly vary by candidate race or gender. This table corresponds to the interaction tests reported in note 4 of the main text.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table A7. Full Dehumanization Moderation Results by Identity Dimension

Dimension	NoDehum AMCE	WeakDehum AMCE	ModDehum AMCE	StrongDehum AMCE	Joint F-test
Disability	.029* (.011)	.051 (.036)	-.017 (.026)	-.083** (.030)	F(3,1782)=4.93, p=.002
Race (Black candidate × Black dehumanization)	.042*** (.012)	.045 (.036)	.014 (.028)	-.044 (.032)	F(3,1782)=2.31, p=.074
Gender (Female candidate × women dehumanization)	.013 (.011)	-.008 (.026)	-.067 (.042)	-.070 (.052)	F(3,1782)=1.91, p=.126
Gender (Female candidate × men dehumanization)	.004 (.011)	-.009 (.032)	.009 (.032)	.011 (.031)	F(3,1782)=0.08, p=.970

Note. Cell entries are average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of the treatment attribute at each level of blatant dehumanization, with standard errors in parentheses, estimated via margins following a regression of vote choice on the treatment attribute, dehumanization tier, and their interaction, with controls for the remaining candidate attributes (education, veteran status, and the other two identity attributes) and standard errors clustered by respondent. Tier cell sizes: Disability (NoDehum n=7,308; WeakDehum n=732; ModDehum n=1,416; StrongDehum n=1,242); Race (NoDehum n=7,650; WeakDehum n=576; ModDehum n=1,404; StrongDehum n=1,068); Gender/women dehumanization (NoDehum n=8,424; WeakDehum n=1,470; ModDehum n=492; StrongDehum n=312); Gender/men dehumanization (NoDehum n=7,740; WeakDehum n=1,068; ModDehum n=924; StrongDehum n=966).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table A8. AMCEs of Candidate Disability by Degree of Dehumanization, Conditional on Respondent Ideology

Dehumanization Tier	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
No Dehumanization	.038* (.018) p=.030	.014 (.026) p=.590	.027 (.018) p=.136
Weak Dehumanization	-.002 (.061) p=.979	.079 (.093) p=.394	.080 (.051) p=.120
Moderate Dehumanization	-.020 (.048) p=.678	-.018 (.054) p=.735	-.014 (.037) p=.692
Strong Dehumanization	-.083 (.048) p=.087	-.092 (.066) p=.164	-.078 (.046) p=.088

Note. Cell entries are average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of candidate disability at each level of disability dehumanization, estimated separately within each ideological subgroup, with standard errors in parentheses and standard errors clustered by respondent. Estimates derived from a single regression of vote choice on candidate disability, respondent ideology, dehumanization tier, and their full interaction, with controls for the remaining candidate attributes (N = 10,698 profile observations; 1,783 respondents). None of the three-way interaction terms (candidate disability × ideology × dehumanization tier) reached conventional significance (all $p > .26$), indicating that ideology does not significantly moderate the relationship between disability dehumanization and vote choice. This table corresponds to figure 4 in the main text.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table A9. Reanalysis of Reher (2025) Replication Data: Disability × Gender × Minority Status Interaction Model

Predictor	Coefficient	SE	p	95% CI
Disability	.035**	.013	.006	.010, .060
Gender (Female)	.027*	.013	.041	.001, .054
Disability × Gender	−.016	.018	.377	−.050, .019
Minority Status	.016	.018	.346	−.018, .051
Disability × Minority Status	−.010	.023	.674	−.055, .036
Gender × Minority Status	−.008	.025	.744	−.056, .040
Disability × Gender × Minority Status	−.015	.032	.646	−.078, .048
Respondent Age	−.001**	.0004	.008	−.002, −.0003
Number of Children	.031***	.003	<.001	.025, .037
Candidate Occupation				
Factory Worker	−.058***	.012	<.001	−.081, −.036
Lawyer	−.087***	.012	<.001	−.110, −.064
Small Business Owner	−.026*	.011	.022	−.049, −.004
Teacher	−.028*	.012	.016	−.051, −.005
Years of Experience	.004***	.001	<.001	.002, .005
Held Prior Office	.060***	.007	<.001	.046, .074
Candidate Set				
Set 2	−.036*	.014	.012	−.065, −.008
Set 3	−.034**	.010	.001	−.053, −.015
Set 4	−.003	.011	.789	−.024, .018
Country (US)	−.0002	.001	.793	−.002, .002
Constant	.468***	.027	<.001	.414, .521

Note. Cell entries are OLS coefficients predicting candidate vote share, with robust standard errors clustered by respondent (N = 18,780 candidate evaluations; 5,275 clusters). Data and covariates are drawn from Reher's (2025) publicly archived replication dataset; models include candidate set and country fixed effects as specified in the original study. Joint tests of the interaction terms: disability × gender, $F(1, 5274) = 0.78$, $p = .377$; disability × minority status, $F(1, 5274) = 0.18$, $p = .674$; disability × gender × minority status, $F(1, 5274) = 0.21$, $p = .646$. None of the interaction terms reach conventional significance, indicating that disability does not significantly interact with candidate gender or minority status in this independently collected dataset. This table corresponds to the reanalysis reported in note 5 of the main text.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.