Do People Actually Learn From Fact-Checking?
Evidence from a longitudinal study during the 2014 campaign

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Abstract

Though fact-checking’s prominence has grown in recent years, little is known about public attitudes towards the format or how fact-checking exposure affects the accuracy of people’s beliefs about controversial political issues. In the current political environment, it is especially important to understand whether fact-checking can effectively counter incorrect and misleading claims made by politicians. To assess fact-checking’s influence on factual beliefs, we randomly exposed a representative panel of Americans to receive fact-checking or placebo content over multiple survey waves during the 2014 campaign. Our findings indicate that fact-checking exposure significantly increases the accuracy of people’s beliefs, especially among individuals with high political knowledge. We find only limited evidence that these effects vary by whether the fact-check is politically congenial to respondents. While Republicans feel less positively about fact-checking than Democrats, fact-checking improves belief accuracy among Republicans and Democrats for both belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items.

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Concern continues to grow about the role of facts in public debate after the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom and the 2016 presidential election in the United States. The Oxford Dictionaries, for instance, named “post-truth” their word of the year for 2016. Can fact-checking effectively counter the false and misleading claims that politicians so frequently make? While this new form of political media coverage has become increasingly widespread in the U.S. and has begun to attract large audiences, we know little about what people think of or learn from it. Observational research suggests that exposure to fact-checking increases belief accuracy, but these findings may reflect self-selection into the format. Similarly, the findings from experimental research are mixed. Though some studies conclude that fact-checks and other forms of corrective information can be effective at changing people’s beliefs, other research suggests that corrections are not always successful in reducing false or unsupported beliefs about controversial issues, especially among groups who may predisposed to believe in these myths. Moreover, previous studies typically focus on one issue or controversy during a single brief session, preventing us from estimating the long-term effects of fact-checking across topics. Given the risks that widespread misinformation poses to the quality of democratic debate and the accuracy of public opinion, it is essential to understand public perceptions of fact-checking and to evaluate how well it works.

We focus on two specific aspects of fact-checking in this study. First, we provide evidence that Americans view fact-checking favorably and want the press to engage in the practice. Second, we present evidence from a randomized controlled trial showing that exposure to fact-checking can have positive long-term effects on the factual accuracy of people’s beliefs. Our data about attitudes toward fact-checking and its effects on the accuracy of people’s factual beliefs come from the first nationally representative multi-wave panel study examining the effects of repeated exposure to the format. Respondents from the YouGov panel were surveyed during the 2014 general election campaign. Re-
spondents were first interviewed in a panel wave administered at the beginning of the fall campaign (September 2014). They were subsequently randomly assigned to receive three brief “mini-waves” that each contained either three political fact-checks (the treatment condition) or three recent press releases (the placebo condition). Finally, participants were surveyed during a second full panel wave in November 2014. By comparing respondents who were randomly assigned to receive fact-checks or placebo content, we provide the first causal estimate of the over-time effects of fact-checking exposure during a political campaign. Our survey measures also allow us to provide the most comprehensive account to date of the correlates of interest in and favorability toward fact-checking.

Our results demonstrate that exposure to fact-checking during a campaign increases the accuracy of people’s beliefs about contested political claims, especially among respondents with high levels of political knowledge. Contrary to expectations, the effect for the sample as a whole did not differ by whether the findings of the fact-checks in question were belief-consistent or belief-inconsistent. We also find that interest in fact-checking is generally higher among more educated and politically sophisticated individuals and that Democrats have more favorable attitudes towards fact-checking than Republicans, particularly among partisan identifiers who are most knowledgeable about politics. However, we find no evidence that exposure to fact-checking affects people’s attitudes toward the practice, trust in politicians, or feelings of political efficacy.

The effects of fact-checking

Fact-checking has become a prominent format in media coverage of politics, especially during election campaigns. In light of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, it is easy to see the appeal of this form of journalism, which builds on prior innovations like “ad watch” segments in television journalism during the 1990s (Frantzich 2002; Glowaki, Johnson,
and Kranenburg 2004). Fact-checking first started to take off in American political journalism during the 2004 campaign with the launch of the website FactCheck.org and played a more prominent role in the 2008 campaign after the launch of PolitiFact (which won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage) and the Washington Post Fact Checker. These dedicated fact-checking outlets have become highly visible at the national level and were frequently cited in the press during the 2012, 2014, and 2016 election campaigns, but many more local, state, and national outlets now engage in some form of the practice as well, including a network of state PolitiFact affiliates.

Despite its prominence, relatively little is known about how the public views fact-checking and whether it improves belief accuracy — a highly salient topic given widespread concern about misinformation and the accuracy of public beliefs. Observational research and anecdotal evidence suggests that political news consumers find the format helpful. During the 2012 presidential campaign, for instance, PolitiFact at one point exceeded one million visitors per day (Adair 2012). Similarly, a survey by National Public Radio found that listeners rated fact-checking higher than any other type of political news (Schumacher-Matos 2012). Some survey evidence suggests that this public interest may produce more accurate beliefs. Gottfried et al. (2013) find that people who reported reading fact-checks were more likely to hold accurate beliefs about the 2012 presidential candidates than people who do not read fact-checks even after controlling for other factors. Similarly, Weeks and Garrett (2014) conclude that people who reported being exposed to rebuttals of rumors about the 2008 presidential candidates were less likely to believe in them conditional on other observable factors.

However, there are reasons for doubt about the appeal and effectiveness of fact-checking. First, the audience for fact-checking is relatively small and largely self-selected. Given inequalities in interest in and knowledge about politics (e.g., Prior 2005) and distrust of the media (e.g., Ladd 2011), it is possible that positive views of fact-checking are concentrated
among a subset of highly informed people and that many Americans have more neutral or negative views, especially among Republicans, who have more negative attitudes toward the press than Democrats (e.g., Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2012). A broader sample of Americans might thus report different views toward the practice and react differently if they encountered fact-checks.

Second, the positive correlation that Gottfried et al. (2013) and Weeks and Garrett (2014) find between fact-checking and belief accuracy could also be spurious. Politically knowledgeable people might instead be more likely to seek out fact-checks or to report reading them at higher rates even after we condition on observable covariates. In other words, the identification of a positive fact-checking effect on belief accuracy depends on a selection on observables assumption that may not hold in practice.

Finally, any positive correlation we observe between fact-checking consumption and belief accuracy might mask tendencies toward motivated reasoning (e.g., Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979; Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006), which are known to be most common among the politically sophisticated individuals who are most likely to read fact-checks (Zaller 1992). There is significant evidence that people tend to process information in a biased fashion, giving greater scrutiny to counter-attitudinal information and uncritically accepting pro-attitudinal information. People might therefore be disproportionately likely to accept the conclusions of attitude-consistent fact-checks while resisting or rejecting those that are less politically congenial. If fact-checking were found to reinforce people’s predispositions in this manner, our evaluation of its civic benefits might change.

Experimental research can better estimate the effects of exposure to fact-checks and other corrective information, but the findings from relevant studies are still unclear. Some studies suggest that well-designed fact-checks and corrections can reduce misperceptions (e.g., Berinsky 2015; Fridkin, Kenney, and Wintersieck 2015; Nyhan and Reifler 2015; Weeks 2015), but others suggest that exposure to corrective information is often ineffect-
tive or even counterproductive at changing factual beliefs, especially among individuals who are predisposed to reject the corrective information in question due to their political preferences or social identity (e.g., Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Garrett, Nisbet, and Lynch 2013; Garrett and Weeks 2013). In addition, these studies typically focus on only one issue or topic and are conducted during a single session. Previous experimental studies have not considered the over-time effects of fact-checking or what effects it has across a range of issues and topics. We therefore conducted a panel study that measures the over-time effect of fact-checks on a nationally representative sample of Americans during a general election campaign.

Hypotheses

To rigorously estimate the effects of fact-checking under more realistic conditions, we conducted a survey experiment with a nationally representative panel of YouGov panel members in the U.S. during the 2014 general election campaign. Using this design (which is described further below), we test the following hypotheses, which were preregistered before we had access to study data.

Interest in and attitudes toward fact-checking (survey data)

Interest in and capacity to consume political news varies widely (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). We expect that more sophisticated people and those with greater political interest and efficacy will be more interested in fact-checks and more likely to read them:

H1: Interest in reading a hypothetical fact-check and self-reported fact-checking consumption will be highest among respondents with higher political knowledge, education, political interest, political efficacy, and trust in politicians
than among those with correspondingly lower levels of the trait in question.\textsuperscript{1}

Fact-checking has also become controversial as it has become more prominent within politics and political journalism. Given that GOP identifiers tend to have more negative views of the media (e.g., Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2012; Rifkin 2016), we expect that Republicans will have more negative perceptions of fact-checking, especially among those with high political knowledge.

H2a: Republicans will express less favorable views toward fact-checkers and fact-checking than Democrats (including greater perceptions of bias).

H2b: The favorability gap between Democrats and Republicans in their perceptions of fact-checkers and fact-checking will be greater among respondents with high political knowledge than those with less knowledge.

**Effects of fact-checking exposure (experimental data)**

How does randomized exposure to real world fact-checks affect citizen attitudes towards fact-checking and the accuracy of their beliefs about of contested political claims? We list our hypotheses and research questions below.

Given the semantic complexity of fact-checks and the cognitive effort that is likely required to process them, we expect that the informational benefits of exposure to fact-checking will be concentrated among respondents with high levels of political knowledge, while others will find the content of the fact-checks difficult to parse (Zaller 1992):

\textsuperscript{1}H1 is slightly reworded from the preregistration. In the original wording, we listed epistemic political efficacy and general efficacy as separate variables, but we now use wording that corresponds with Table 1 in describing a single political efficacy variable.
H3: We expect exposure to fact-checking content will increase belief accuracy among more politically sophisticated people (those with high levels of pre-existing political knowledge) but not among less sophisticated people (those with less political knowledge).

Based on previous research on selective acceptance of corrective information (e.g., Nyhan and Reifler 2010) and media content (e.g., Jerit and Barabas 2012), we also expect people to be more likely to accept and successfully recall information that is consistent with their partisanship, especially among those with high levels of political knowledge who might be more likely to hold attitude-consistent beliefs or to infer them to be true (Dancey and Sheagley 2013):

H4: We expect partisans to be more likely to accurately recall belief-consistent facts they were exposed to during fact-checking, especially those with high political knowledge.

We are uncertain whether exposure to fact-checking will widen existing disparities in favorability toward the format and therefore list it as a research question. One possibility is that people’s views of fact-checking will become more polarized as a result of exposure to so much fact-checking content, which could stimulate motivated reasoning about fact-checking itself. Under this scenario, people who have favorable views of fact-checking should come to like it even more; those who have unfavorable views it should like it even less. Alternatively, however, exposure might demystify the format or undermine objections, particularly among respondents who have had little exposure to it or expect a less balanced set of findings than what was presented.

RQ1: Will exposure to fact-checking polarize people’s views of the practice?
A second research question is how fact-checking affects trust in politicians. Reading a number of articles about candidates and elected officials making misleading claims may cause people to feel less trust in politicians, especially for those who are already highly distrustful. There may also be reasons that trust could increase or at least not change in response to exposure to fact-checks, however. First, a number of stimulus articles state that the claims being made are accurate. Given how little trust Americans report in elected officials, the frequency of accurate statements may actually exceed some respondents’ expectations. Also, observing public monitoring of candidates and elected officials may actually make people more trusting by increasing their sense that politicians are being held accountable for the accuracy of their statements.

RQ2: Does fact-checking decrease trust in politicians? Will these effects be strongest among people who are already highly distrustful?

Finally, we are uncertain how exposure to fact-checking will affect respondents’ feelings of political efficacy. The fact-checks provide a great deal of specific information about political disputes. Receiving this information could make people feel like they are informed about politics and have the skills necessary to participate effectively in politics. Alternatively, however, presenting people with complex information about disputes they are not familiar with could also make people feel less knowledgeable (either by not knowing about the dispute or by having difficulty understanding it).

These responses could also differ based on respondents’ prior levels of political knowledge. One possibility is that fact-checking could help people with lower levels of knowledge make sense of politics and thus disproportionately increase their feelings of efficacy. It is also possible, though, that people with higher knowledge will be better able to decode the fact-checks they encounter and therefore more likely to feel an increased sense of political efficacy than people who struggle to make sense of the content.
RQ3: How does fact-checking affect political efficacy? Do these effects vary by prior political knowledge?

Experimental design

Our study was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 YouGov panel members in the U.S. The panel design consisted of two survey waves that were fielded at the beginning and end of the 2014 general election campaign. In between these waves, participants completed three mini-waves in which they were randomly assigned to either receive three fact-checks or placebo content (press releases).

Respondents were first surveyed during wave 1 of the study, which was fielded on September 22, 2014. This wave included questions about respondents’ interest in and attitudes toward fact-checking; general political knowledge, political efficacy, and interest; and demographic characteristics. Participants who subsequently accepted an invitation to a followup “mini-wave” survey were block-randomized by YouGov to a treatment or placebo condition (50% probability for each) in a between-subjects design based on their

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2 All respondents consented to participate; YouGov determines eligibility and exclusion criteria. The final sample size was determined by YouGov following contract language stating that the firm will make “best efforts...to get 1,000 respondents in the final wave.” The researchers played no role in the determination of the final sample size and inclusion or exclusion was made without respect to outcomes. The researchers did not discuss the hypotheses or goals of the study with YouGov, which was instructed not to deliver data until the preregistration was filed.

3 We therefore also contribute to an emerging quantitative literature that seeks to provide credible estimates of over-time media effects (e.g., Ladd and Lenz 2009; Hopkins and Ladd 2014; Lelkes, Sood, and Iyengar 2015).
responses to questions about their familiarity with and favorability toward fact-checking.4

The three mini-waves were fielded on October 3, October 14, and October 25, respectively. Respondent treatment status remained the same in each mini-wave. In each mini-wave, respondents in the treatment condition were shown images of three short fact-checks. After each fact-check, respondents were asked to demonstrate that they had read the article by correctly answering a basic question about its content, ensuring that the treatment had been received. Those that failed to answer the question correctly (which we define as failing to receive the treatment) were shown this article up to twice more before proceeding. The median treatment group respondent correctly answered every question about the six fact-checks that each treatment group member read on their first try; 84% answered all six correctly on their first or second try. Respondents in the placebo condition were instead shown three non-political press releases and went through a similar process to verify that they read the placebo content.5 Figure 1 provides a sample of the stimulus materials in the treatment and placebo conditions. (See Online Appendix A for further details.)

The fact-checks we showed respondents in the treatment condition were selected ac-

4There was a typo in the fact-checking favorability scale on Waves 1 and 2 (see Online Appendix A); the fifth option was “Somewhat favorable” rather than “Somewhat unfavorable.” However, participants appear to have answered it normally — in both waves, we are unable to reject the null of no difference in one-sided tests that respondents who selected the incorrect “Somewhat favorable” option on the unfavorable side of the scale have more positive perceptions of fact-checking accuracy and fairness than those who selected “Slightly unfavorable” or “Very unfavorable” (details available upon request).

5The median control group respondent correctly answered eight of the nine questions they were asked on the first try.
Thom Tillis claims Kay Hagan didn’t attend half the Armed Services Committee hearings this year

By Steve Contento on Thursday, October 2nd, 2014 at 3:11 p.m.

The rise of the terrorist group known variously as ISIS, ISIL, or the Islamic State has increased the role of national security in the political conversation just a month before the midterm elections.

In North Carolina, state House speaker and Republican U.S. Senate candidate Thom Tillis released an ad that blames his Democratic opponent Sen. Kay Hagan for being missing in action as the ISIS threat grew.

“In January, President Obama refers to the Islamic State as a ‘JV team,’ ” the narrator says. “Days later the Armed Services Committee holds a hearing on new global threats. Sen. Kay Hagan? Absent. In fact, Hagan’s missed half the Armed Services Committee hearings this year.”

“We’ve already checked whether Obama referred to the Islamic State as a ‘JV team (the Did). Here, we’ll review Tillis’ characterization of Hagan’s attendance record on the Senate Armed Services Committee.”

We went through all the committee’s meeting manuscripts for 2014 to see which lawmakers were in attendance for each hearing.

In compiling the information, we ran into an obstacle.

Because the Senate Armed Services Committee often reviews confidential national-security information, it sometimes meets behind closed doors. Minutes for those meetings are not released to the public. Therefore, we’re not able to determine attendance for those meetings.

In 2014, it appears there have been 11 closed hearings by the full committee. However, the committee has also held 22 open meetings this year, so we limited our calculations to those.

Our ruling

Tillis said that Hagan “has missed half of the (Senate Armed Services) Committee’s hearings in 2014.”

We don’t know the number of closed meetings she attended, so it’s more accurate to say that Hagan missed half of the committee’s public hearings.

Still, Tillis has a point — in 2014, Hagan attended nine of the 22 open hearings, which is not only below half but also ranked near the bottom among committee members.

The comment is accurate but needs clarification or additional information, so we rate it Mostly True.

According to the following procedure:

1. Three articles were chosen.

2. Each had to be a fact-check of a claim by or about a U.S. Senate or gubernatorial candidate in the 2014 election or a current elected official who is a national political figure. This criterion excludes claims about pundits, companies, charities, non-elected officials or candidates, non-specific references to “Congress,” compilation articles with roundups of fact-checks or previews of debates, state legislative
and mayoral candidates, etc. We also excluded flip-flop ratings or evaluations of campaign promises; only accuracy ratings were considered.

3. First, we selected the qualifying fact-check with the most retweets in the PolitiFact Twitter feed (or the sum of all retweets if tweeted more than once) in the relevant period (9/23–10/1 [9 AM], 10/1 [9 AM]–10/10 [6 PM], 10/10 [6 PM]–10/22 [9:30 AM]). These had to be tweets from PolitiFact, not retweets of tweets by affiliates or others, though PolitiFact tweets about fact-checks written by PolitiFact affiliates were eligible.

4. We then selected the most retweeted fact-check of a political figure in the relevant content period that was (a) not the one selected above and (b) not of the same partisan valence as above (e.g., if the first selection was a critique by Democrats that was found to be false, we would pick a false Republican critique or a true Democratic critique). ⁶

5. In states with a PolitiFact affiliate, we chose the third fact-check by selecting the most recent fact-check from that affiliate if more than one was available regardless of party (excluding any that were selected under the above criteria). If no new fact-check was produced during the content period, we selected the most recent qualifying fact-check. In states without a PolitiFact affiliate, the most recent tweet of a qualifying fact-check from national PolitiFact was instead selected as the third article.

Finally, a second full wave was fielded on November 2, 2014. This wave repeated many of the questions from wave 1 while also asking a series of questions about accuracy of statements that corresponded to the content of the fact-checks provided in the treatment condition and the press releases in the placebo condition. For instance, all participants

⁶Half true was considered neutral and could be paired with another half true only.
in the treatment group were shown a fact-check of Florida Governor Rick Scott’s claim that electricity rates declined while he was in office, which was rated false. Respondents were therefore asked to evaluate whether the statement that “Electricity rates have declined while Rick Scott has been governor of Florida” on a four-point accuracy scale that included a don’t know option.

**Results**

As noted above, we test these hypotheses using an analysis plan that was preregistered before data was available, an emerging scientific best practice that distinguishes exploratory from confirmatory findings and discourages questionable research practices (e.g., Miguel et al. 2014). All observational survey results are analyzed using OLS with robust standard errors and survey weights provided by YouGov. All experimental results are analyzed using OLS with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights to account for the block randomization procedure described above (Gerber and Green 2012, 116–120). All deviations from the preregistration are labeled below; unless otherwise noted, the results we present were estimated using the analysis plan we specified.

The final sample consisted of 1,000 respondents provided by YouGov. The sample was constructed using the firm’s sample matching approach, which seeks to approximate a random probability sample using a matched and weighted group of respondents drawn from a large opt-in Internet panel (Rivers and Bailey 2009). By construction, the sample is diverse and closely resembles the U.S. population on key demographic and political characteristics. Tests for experimental imbalance indicate that the randomization was suc-

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7Preregistration URL omitted for peer review.

8This approach avoids the potential biases induced by using survey weights to try to estimate population average treatment effects (Franco et al. N.d.).
cessful and that the treatment did not induce differential attrition. (See Online Appendix B for details.)

In general, almost half of our respondents indicated they were unfamiliar with fact-checking (49%, including 29% who say they are “very unfamiliar with it”). However, 84% report having favorable attitudes toward the practice after hearing a brief description of it, including 37% who say their attitudes are “very favorable.” These positive attitudes are more prevalent among people who report being familiar with fact-checking (94%) than those who say they are not (73%, \( p < .01 \)).

**Hypothesis 1**

Our first hypothesis (H1) predicts that interest in reading fact-checks will be positively associated with political knowledge (respondents’ score on an eight-question true/false battery), education (a five-point scale from no high school degree to a post-graduate degree), political interest (self-reported interest in the 2014 campaign during wave 1), political efficacy, and trust in public officials\(^9\) as measured during wave 1 of the study.

To test these expectations, we consider three outcome variables. The first is a question from wave 1 where respondents were asked to choose which article they would most like to read from among four recent news headlines. The dependent variable is coded 1 if the respondent chose the PolitiFact article and 0 otherwise. We also directly asked respondents how interested they would be in reading a PolitiFact article with the headline “PolitiFact:

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\(^9\)Per our preregistration, we created a combined measure of epistemic political efficacy (Pingree 2011) and internal political efficacy as well as a measure of political trust that is specifically focused on the need for monitoring of public officials and the accuracy of their statements. These subscales did not scale together so per the preregistration we consider them separately in Table 1.
Top 5 fact-checks and reports from August” on a five-point scale ranging from “not at all interested” (0) to “Extremely interested” (4). Finally, a third outcome measure analyzes self-reported consumption of fact-checks using answers to branching questions asked during wave 2. Respondents who said they “use[d] the Internet to research or fact-check claims made during the campaign” and then specifically reported visiting a fact-checking website in a followup question were coded as 2, those who did not report visiting a fact-checking website but said they used the Internet to research or fact-check claims were coded as 1, and all others were coded as 0. Answers to these questions scaled together in a principal components factor analysis and were thus combined into a single factor score. (See Online Appendix A for exact question wordings.)

Due to likely collinearity between the predictors, Table 1 reports OLS models of the composite outcome variable measuring interest in and consumption of fact-checking in which we enter each predictor separately as well as a combined omnibus model.10 Each model also includes preregistered control variables for sex, age, and race. Other than our measure of trust in public officials, each predictor has a positive and statistically significant relationship with our composite measure of interest in and consumption of fact-checking (columns 1–5 of Table 1). The omnibus model indicates that the strongest predictors of fact-checking interest and consumption are political knowledge, political interest, and political efficacy (column 6; p < .01). By contrast, trust in public officials and education are not significantly associated with fact-check interest and consumption conditional on other covariates of interest.

These findings are illustrated in Figure 2, which shows that interest in and consumption

10The preregistration states that we will also consider whether the relationship between these predictors and the outcome variable changed between waves. However, due to space constraints, the wave 1 outcome measures were not asked again during wave 2.
Table 1: Correlates of interest in reading fact-checks

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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>0.17**</td>
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<td>0.48**</td>
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<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
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<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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\[ R^2 \]

\[ N \]

\[ 998 \]

\[ 998 \]

\[ 992 \]

\[ 987 \]

\[ 994 \]

\[ 978 \]

\[ * p < 0.05, ** p < .01 \text{ (two-sided). OLS models with survey weights provided by YouGov.} \]

of fact-checking is much more common among people with high levels of political knowledge. Just 24% of people with low political knowledge indicated they were “extremely” or “very interested” in reading a sample fact-check article compared with 46% of those with high levels of political knowledge. Similarly, 44% of high-knowledge respondents reported visiting a fact-check website during the fall 2014 campaign compared to only 13% of those with low political knowledge.
**Figure 2: Differences in fact-checking interest/exposure by knowledge**

(a) Interest (Sept. 2014)  
(b) Consumption (Nov. 2014)

YouGov surveys conducted September 21–27 and November 6–18, 2014, respectively.

**Hypotheses 2a and 2b**

Our second hypothesis predicts that Republicans will express less favorable views toward fact-checking than Democrats (H2a) and that these differences will be greater among respondents with high political knowledge than those with less knowledge (H2b). We test these predictions using OLS regression on the wave 1 data, which were measured prior to the experimental manipulation.\(^{11}\)

For this analysis, we examine several outcome variables measured during wave 1 that we combine into a single measure capturing positive views of fact-checking. These variables measure general favorability towards fact-checking, demand for additional fact-checking, 

\(^{11}\text{Per our preregistration, we estimated the same models for a composite measure of fact-checking favorability collected during wave 2 and found substantively identical results (see Online Appendix B). We therefore focus on the wave 1 results here.}\)
and attitudes about the fairness and accuracy of fact-checkers. The favorability question asks respondents their view of fact-checking on a six-point scale ranging from “Very favorable” to “very unfavorable.” The demand question asks respondents whether there should be more, the same, or less fact-checking than there is today. The accuracy and bias questions ask respondents whether fact-checkers “get the facts straight” or are “often inaccurate” and whether fact-checkers “deal fairly with all sides” or “tend to favor one side.” (See Online Appendix A for exact wording.)

Our key independent variable for hypothesis H2a is partisanship. We use two dichotomous variables to indicate whether a respondent is a Democrat or Republican (including leaners) based on the standard American National Election Studies branching party questions. Hypothesis H2b requires a measure of political knowledge, which we compute by summing correct answers to eight true/false questions. The analysis is presented using a median split on political knowledge. We also include indicator variables for sex, age, and for black respondents (we exclude education as a control variable as it is likely to be strongly correlated with knowledge).

We find empirical support for both hypotheses. Per Hypothesis 2a, Democrats have more positive views of fact-checking than Republicans (see the model estimate of the difference).

---

12 We also asked standard feeling thermometer questions about two of the most prominent fact-checking organizations, PolitiFact and Factcheck.org. We deviate slightly from our preregistration by excluding the feeling thermometer questions from our composite measure because of high levels of missing data. The two composite fact-checking measures (one including the feeling thermometers and one excluding the feeling thermometers) correlate at .86.

13 This question has a previously discussed typo in one of the answer categories.

14 To discourage guessing, respondents could choose “True,” “False,” or “Don’t know.” Don’t know responses were counted as incorrect.
Table 2: Partisan differences in fact-checking favorability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>Low knowledge</th>
<th>High knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.87**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30–44</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45–59</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 60+</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats-Republicans</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.83**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with survey weights provided by YouGov.

The partisan difference between the Democratic and Republican views near the bottom of Table 2). We also find that these partisan differences are greatest among high knowledge respondents, which is consistent with Hypothesis 2b.¹⁵

Contrary to expectations, these partisan differences seem to be driven more by Demo-

¹⁵We present separate results here for clarity, but demonstrate in Online Appendix B that the differences we observe in partisan favorability between high and low knowledge respondents are statistically significant in interactive models using a high political knowledge indicator or the full political knowledge scale.

democratic fondness for fact-checking rather than Republican antipathy to the practice as we expected. Within the sample as a whole, Democrats have more positive views of fact-checking than both Republicans and independents. By contrast, there is no significant difference between Republicans and independents. Similarly, though there are no statistically significant differences in fact-checking favorability between partisan groups among low knowledge respondents, high-knowledge Democrats have far more positive views of fact-checking than either Republicans or independents.

Figure 3 illustrates these findings using responses to a wave 2 question about attitudes toward fact-checking groups that is part of the composite measure analyzed above — specifically, the proportion of respondents who indicated their opinion of the fact-checking movement was “very favorable.” The prevalence of very favorable perceptions of fact-checking were not significantly different between low-knowledge Republicans (29%) and
Democrats (36%). However, the partisan gap widens to 25 percentage points for respondents with more political knowledge — 34% of high-knowledge Republicans reported “very favorable” views of fact-checking versus 59% of high-knowledge Democrats.

Hypotheses 3 and 4

We now turn to analysis of the results of our experiment, which estimates the effects of repeated fact-checking exposure during the fall 2014 general election campaign on belief accuracy and other outcomes of interest. Our first experimental hypothesis (H3) predicts that exposure to fact-checking content will increase the accuracy of factual beliefs among people with high political knowledge but not those with low political knowledge.

Our outcome variable for this hypothesis is the proportion of accurate answers provided by respondents to the questions about the content of the fact-checks that were asked during wave 2. Each respondent received a total of six questions — three that were received by all respondents and three that were state-specific as described above. Each question offered a statement for respondents to evaluate on a six-point scale ranging from “very accurate” to “not accurate at all.” We coded each of these questions as either correct (1) or incorrect (0) using the following procedure:16

- If PolitFact rated a statement or claim as “True” or “Mostly true,” we coded answers of “very accurate” or “somewhat accurate” as correct and all others as incorrect.

- If PolitFact rated a statement or claim as “Half true,” we coded answers of “somewhat accurate” or “not too accurate” as correct and all others as incorrect.

16PolitiFact evaluates claims on a six-point scale it calls the Truth-o-Meter: “True”, “Mostly True”, “Half True”, “Mostly False”, “False”, and “Pants On Fire.” The ratings of each statement shown to respondents are provided in Online Appendix A, which includes all stimulus materials.
• If PolitiFact rated a statement or claim as “Mostly false,” “False,” or “Pants on fire,” we coded answers of “Not too accurate” and “Not accurate at all” as correct and all others as incorrect.

We also test a second experimental hypothesis (H4), which predicts that partisans are more likely to correctly answer questions about belief-consistent fact-checks (Jerit and Barabas 2012), especially those with high political knowledge (Dancey and Sheagley 2013). The outcome variables we use to test H4 are thus the proportion of accurate answers provided by partisans to the subset of questions that we coded as belief-consistent and the proportion of accurate answers to items that we coded as belief-inconsistent.\textsuperscript{17}

Our key independent variable of interest is whether respondents were randomly assigned to a treatment condition in which they read a number of fact-checks or to a placebo condition in which they read a number of non-political press releases. Because our analyses examine whether political knowledge moderates this treatment effect, other key independent variables are our indicator for high political knowledge (derived from a median

\textsuperscript{17}We coded “True”/“Mostly true” critiques of the opposite party, “Mostly false”/“False”/“Pants on Fire” critiques of the respondent’s party, and positive claims by/about the respondent’s party that were “True”/“Mostly true” as belief-consistent. Conversely, we coded “True”/“Mostly true” critiques of the respondent’s party, “Mostly false”/“False”/“Pants on Fire” critiques of the opposite party, and positive claims by/about the opposite party that were “True”/“Mostly true” as belief-inconsistent. Ambiguous findings that both sides could potentially find (un)congenial were omitted from these outcome measures (details available upon request).
Table 3: Effects of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy

(a) Overall treatment effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>All partisans</th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.136**</td>
<td>0.135**</td>
<td>0.165**</td>
<td>0.205**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.018)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.042*</td>
<td>0.041*</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.086**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.323**</td>
<td>0.329**</td>
<td>0.384**</td>
<td>0.211**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.013)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Differences by political knowledge levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>All partisans</th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.108**</td>
<td>0.096**</td>
<td>0.132**</td>
<td>0.154**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.022)</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High political knowledge</td>
<td>0.211**</td>
<td>0.209**</td>
<td>0.299**</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.022)</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.035)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure×high knowledge</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.078*</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.106*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.035)</td>
<td>(0.053)</td>
<td>(0.054)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.081**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.230**</td>
<td>0.236**</td>
<td>0.251**</td>
<td>0.183**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure: High knowledge</td>
<td>0.167**</td>
<td>0.174**</td>
<td>0.195**</td>
<td>0.260**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights.

We also include an indicator variable for respondents who live in a PolitiFact state to address the possibility that respondents in those states may have higher baseline knowledge about some of the factual disputes in question.

Table 3 presents both simple main effects model (Table 3a) and models that estimate...
how the treatment effects vary by respondent political knowledge (Table 3b).\(^{19}\) Turning first to the main effects of fact-checking exposure in the first column of Table 3a, we find that the treatment increases the proportion of accurate answers by approximately fourteen percentage points (\(p < .01; 95\% \text{ CI: } 10.2–17.1\)), an effect that is nearly identical among partisan identifiers (second column).\(^{20}\) This effect is relatively large given that the mean proportion of accurate answers in the control condition was only 33\% and that respondent belief accuracy was collected in a separate wave conducted long after respondents read the initial fact-check.\(^{21}\) An exploratory analysis of individual knowledge questions reported in Table B7 of the Online Appendix demonstrates that this pattern of positive and significant effects on belief accuracy holds across items (though effect sizes vary). These results provide strong evidence of the lasting effect of our treatments in increasing belief

\(^{19}\)All models reported in Table 3 as well as those reported in Table 5 below use inverse probability of treatment weights to account for the use of block randomization in our survey design (Gerber and Green 2012). In each case, we estimate OLS models with robust standard errors. (We exclude the ordered probit models that were listed as planned robustness checks in our preregistration because the number of correct answers is a count.)

\(^{20}\)We did not offer a prediction for the main effect of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy. Also, we deviate from the preregistration in presenting a partisan-only estimate in this table to provide a baseline for the belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent item results in Table 3a and 3b, which are estimated only among partisans.

\(^{21}\)The mini-waves were fielded on October 3, 14, and 25, 2014 and the second wave was fielded on November 2, 2014. The interval between exposure and the outcome variable was thus either 8, 19, or 30 days (for the mini-waves of October 25, 14, and 3, respectively).
accuracy.\textsuperscript{22}

In addition, the effect of the treatment on the proportion of correct answers remains positive and significant and has similar magnitudes for the proportion of correct answers provided to both belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent factual questions ($p < .01$ in both cases). These results suggest that the improvements in accuracy we observe as a result of fact-checking exposure do not clearly vary by political valence of the fact in question. Notably, the treatment effect estimates reported in Table 3 do not vary significantly by whether participants lived in a state with a PolitiFact affiliate at the time or whether the respondent lives in the state of the politician in question for the state-specific items asked of all respondents.\textsuperscript{23}

To better understand these results, we conducted an exploratory analysis testing for partisan differences in the effect of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy by item type. We find that treatment condition increases the number of questions answered correctly for both Democrats and Republicans across belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items. However, the results, which are reported in Table 4, also provide some evidence of partisan differences. The treatment effects we observe for Republicans are broadly consistent with H4 — exposure to fact-checking leads to a greater increase in belief-consistent

\textsuperscript{22}We find no indication that our experimental design, which gave respondents up to three chances to correctly answer a basic comprehension question about each fact-check, inflated our treatment effect estimates. To the contrary, an exploratory analysis in which we instrument for respondents answering every comprehension question correctly (i.e., seeing each fact-check only once) with random assignment to treatment results in a \textit{larger} point estimate for the effect of exposure on belief accuracy than the one reported in Table 3 (details available upon request).

\textsuperscript{23}These results are available upon request.
questions answered correctly compared with the increase observed for belief-inconsistent questions. By contrast, fact-checking exposure unexpectedly increases the number of belief-\emph{inconsistent} questions Democrats answer correctly compared to belief-consistent questions.\footnote{Table B9 in the Online Appendix shows a significant interaction between treatment and GOP identifiers, but the marginal effect of assignment to treatment is positive and significant for GOP identifiers for both belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items. Additional exploratory analysis shows that the three-way interaction between fact-checking exposure, GOP identification, and belief inconsistency is negative and significant at the \( p < .01 \) level in a model of belief accuracy including each factor and all possible two-way interactions (details available upon request).}

We next consider whether the effects of fact-checking exposure vary by political knowledge levels. Table 3b shows that the effects of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy differ between high- and low-knowledge respondents (first column; \( p < .07 \)), including among partisan identifiers (second column; \( p < .05 \)). Though exposure to fact-checking increases the proportion of accurate answers for both high- and low-knowledge respondents, the statistically significant interaction term (\( p < .05 \)) indicates that this effect is larger among high-knowledge respondents (16.7 percentage points; 95\% CI: 12.1–21.4) than among low-knowledge respondents (10.8 percentage points; 95\% CI: 6.6–15.1). We thus find support for H3.\footnote{As noted above, we did not expect that our treatment would also increase knowledge among low-knowledge respondents.} However, we find no support for H4. The point estimates for the estimated effects of the treatment on individuals with low political knowledge (represented by the coefficient for “Fact-checking exposure”) and those with high political knowledge (an auxiliary quantity presented at the bottom of the table) are similar between belief-
Table 4: Effects of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy by party

(a) Overall treatment effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief-consistent</td>
<td>Belief-inconsistent</td>
<td>Belief-consistent</td>
<td>Belief-inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.157**</td>
<td>0.280**</td>
<td>0.175**</td>
<td>0.106**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>0.110**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.047)</td>
<td>(0.052)</td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.340**</td>
<td>0.189**</td>
<td>0.448**</td>
<td>0.239**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Differences by political knowledge levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief-consistent</td>
<td>Belief-inconsistent</td>
<td>Belief-consistent</td>
<td>Belief-inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.113**</td>
<td>0.204**</td>
<td>0.154*</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.049)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High political knowledge</td>
<td>0.329**</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.253**</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
<td>(0.071)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure⇥high knowledge</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.171*</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.059)</td>
<td>(0.082)</td>
<td>(0.096)</td>
<td>(0.065)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>0.105**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
<td>(0.049)</td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.211**</td>
<td>0.150**</td>
<td>0.316**</td>
<td>0.239**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.053)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure: High knowledge</td>
<td>0.189**</td>
<td>0.375**</td>
<td>0.203**</td>
<td>0.141**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.046)</td>
<td>(0.064)</td>
<td>(0.063)</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights.

consistent and belief-inconsistent items in the third and fourth columns, respectively.\(^{26}\)

Finally, though our preregistration made no prediction about the relationship between general political knowledge and belief-consistent versus belief-inconsistent outcomes, we observe that high political knowledge is a significant predictor of belief-consistent correct outcomes.

\(^{26}\)As Table 4 suggests, the moderating effect of political knowledge on the treatment does not vary significantly by party for either belief-consistent or belief-inconsistent questions (results available upon request).
answers \( p < .01 \), but is not for belief-inconsistent correct answers.\(^{27}\)

To illustrate these findings, Figure 4 presents the proportion of correctly answered questions for both treatment and placebo conditions among respondents with either low and high levels of general political knowledge. Assignment to treatment results in significantly more correct answers than assignment to the placebo condition, but the increase in correct answers was greater among high-knowledge respondents (17 percentage points) than among those with low political knowledge (11 percentage points). Again, these treatment effects are relatively large given both the low baseline levels of belief accuracy observed in the placebo condition and the elapsed interval between fact-checking exposure and outcome measurement.\(^{28}\)

**Research questions**

The results above indicate that exposure to fact-checking increases how much people know about contemporary political controversies and debates. In our preregistration, we iden-

\(^{27}\)As specified in our preregistration, alternative results to Table 3 using a stricter approach for defining accuracy are presented in Online Appendix B. The magnitude of the estimated treatment effects are smaller (the proportion of correct answers is necessarily lower), but the findings are similar except in one instance (the effect of fact-checking exposure on the accuracy of belief-inconsistent items is not statistically significant for high-knowledge respondents).

\(^{28}\)The improvements in belief accuracy we observe as a result of the experimental randomization were consistent across conditions. Results provided in Online Appendix B demonstrate that participants in the placebo condition also correctly answered questions about the content they saw at higher rates, suggesting that respondents in both conditions paid attention to the stimuli provided.

tified three questions where we did not have strong theoretical priors. In this section, we consider whether the treatment affects these other outcomes of interest, and whether the treatment effect is moderated by attitudes measured in wave 1 of our study. We find that exposure to fact-checking does not appear to create polarized views of the practice or affect trust in politicians or political efficacy. The results of these analyses, which are described below, appear in Table 5.

One concern is that exposure to fact-checking could polarize views of the practice, making people with favorable views view it more positively but turning those off with more unfavorable attitudes (RQ1). To assess this concern, we regress a composite measure of fact-checking favorability measured in wave 2 on the wave 1 measure and the assignment
Table 5: Exposure effects on fact-checking favorability, politician trust, and efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RQ1: Fact-check favorability</th>
<th>RQ2: Politician trust</th>
<th>RQ3: Political efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.089 (0.046)</td>
<td>0.090 (0.046)</td>
<td>-0.026 (0.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior fact-checking favorability</td>
<td>0.525** (0.031)</td>
<td>0.546** (0.039)</td>
<td>-0.026 (0.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure × prior favorability</td>
<td>-0.040 (0.060)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior trust in politicians</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.641** (0.026)</td>
<td>0.638** (0.039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure × prior trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005 (0.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior political efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.733** (0.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.078** (0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure × knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.027 (0.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.049 (0.031)</td>
<td>-0.050 (0.031)</td>
<td>0.014 (0.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights.

to treatment variable.29 As a baseline, we first estimate the effect of fact-checking exposure on favorability towards fact-checking and find that it has no significant effect (column 1 of Table 5). Not surprisingly, we find that fact-checking favorability in wave is strongly associated with fact-checking favorability in wave 2. To examine whether the size of the treatment effect depends on one’s pre-treatment favorability towards fact-checking, we then test for an interaction between exposure and prior favorability. However, we find no evidence that fact-checking exposure polarizes people’s views of the practice (column 2

29As with the composite wave 1 favorability measure used to test Hypothesis 1, the composite wave 2 favorability variable is a factor score combining responses on fact-checking favorability, demand for fact-checking, and perceptions of the fairness and accuracy of fact-checking.
of Table 5).\textsuperscript{30}

A second research question asks whether exposure to fact-checking information affects trust in politicians. Exposure to evidence that politicians are truthful could improve trust, whereas learning about dissembling and misstatements could decrease trust, especially among those who are already distrustful. To assess these competing expectations, we measured trust in politicians using a two-item measure (see Online Appendix A for question wording). As with the previous research question, we predict wave 2 values of the measure using a treatment indicator and a pre-treatment measure collected during wave 1 before considering an interaction model. In this case, we again find no evidence of a main effect or heterogeneous treatment effects — we cannot reject the null hypothesis that exposure to fact-checking has no effect on trust in politicians or the null that the effect of exposure is not moderated by prior politician trust (columns 3 and 4 of Table 5).\textsuperscript{31}

Our final research question considers the effects of fact-checking on efficacy. It is plausible that exposure to detailed explanations of complicated political claims could make people feel better informed and more capable to participate in politics, especially among people with high political knowledge. However, exposure to such content could instead decrease feelings of efficacy by showing people how little they actually know, especially among people with low levels of political knowledge. To see if fact-checking has either

\textsuperscript{30}Specifically, the marginal effect of the treatment is not statistically significant over the observed range of the moderating variable. This finding (and the one below for trust in politicians) also holds when we relax the linearity assumption and estimate an exploratory model that interacts the treatment with indicators for terciles of the moderating variable per Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (N.d.).

\textsuperscript{31}Correspondingly, we find that the marginal effect of fact-checking exposure is not statistically significant over the observed range of prior politician trust.
of these effects, we predict wave 2 efficacy using a treatment indicator and controls for prior political efficacy and knowledge.\textsuperscript{32} As with the two previous research questions, we find that exposure to fact-checking content does not have a main effect on political efficacy (column 5 of Table 5). Moreover, this effect is not significantly moderated by prior political knowledge (column 6 of Table 5).\textsuperscript{33}

\section*{Conclusion}

Can fact-checking improve the accuracy of people’s beliefs? Despite the gloomy conclusions many observers have reached, our study finds that exposure to fact-checking during the 2014 general election campaign improved belief accuracy and that this effect was strongest among politically knowledgeable people. These findings represent the first over-time estimates of the effects of fact-checking on a nationally representative sample of Americans. This effect did not differ in the full sample by whether the factual beliefs in question were consistent or inconsistent with respondent partisanship, though an exploratory analysis suggest that these results varied somewhat by party. In addition, we find that Americans have generally positive views of fact-checking, but that interest in the format is greatest among more educated and politically sophisticated people. Democrats

\textsuperscript{32}Wording for the political efficacy and political knowledge scales are provided in Online Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{33}The marginal effect of fact-checking exposure does significantly increase efficacy at the $p < .10$ level for people with who answered only 0 or 1 question correctly, but this finding does not hold for the lowest third of the sample when we estimate an exploratory model that interacts the treatment with indicators for the second and third terciles, which suggests that it is an artifact of the linearity assumption. We therefore do not discuss it further.
also have more favorable views of fact-checking than Republicans, particularly among individuals with high political knowledge. However, we find no evidence that people’s views of the practice became more polarized as a result of fact-checking exposure. It also had little or no measurable effect on trust in politicians or perceptions of political efficacy.

Our finding of large, positive effects of fact-checking on belief accuracy contrast sharply with many previous studies, especially in not observing differential responsiveness by party. Why do these results differ from previous research? It is not possible to answer this question definitively, but several differences in the study design and context seem especially relevant. First, the manipulation check procedure described above may have led people to read the fact-checks unusually carefully. Second, the fact-check format presents information in a more one-sided manner than the news reports that are often used as stimuli in studies of corrective information.

In addition, the topics and context we tested were possibly less salient to participants than those in past studies. We conducted the study during a low-salience midterm election, a time when people are likely to be less interested in news about politics and less likely to engage in motivated reasoning than in a presidential election year like 2016. The incentive to engage in motivated reasoning may also have been decreased because participants largely read fact-checks of state-level politicians rather than controversial national figures like George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, or Donald Trump. Fourth, it is possible that taking part in repeated waves of a study made respondents more likely to recall the fact-checks to which they were exposed than in a more naturalistic context. Finally, the issues discussed in the fact-checks we tested were often less salient than previous studies as well (e.g., state electricity rates). Future research should continue to investigate how responses to fact-checks and other types of corrective information vary based by election type, timing within the election cycle, the target of the fact-check, and issue salience.

Our design also explicitly compares fact-checking to non-political placebo content
from press releases. Future studies should explore more directly how fact-checking content affects belief accuracy compared to standard “he said, she said” political coverage that does not adjudicate the accuracy of politicians’ claims.

It is also worth discussing the existence of possible partisan differences in treatment effects. For the sample as a whole, we did not observe a difference in the magnitude of the treatment effect for belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items. However, it is conceivable that there may be a partisan asymmetry in this regard. That is, Democrats and Republicans may be different in how fact-checking affects belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items. Among Republicans, fact-checking increased belief accuracy more for belief-consistent items than belief-inconsistent items as we expected. By contrast, exposure to fact-checking increased accuracy among Democrats more for belief-inconsistent items. However, it is important to stress that these partisan differences concern the magnitude of the increase in the proportion of questions answered correctly after assignment to treatment compared to placebo — the treatment condition increased the number of questions answered correctly for both Democrats and Republicans across both belief-consistent and belief-inconsistent items. Future research should examine whether this partisan difference is an idiosyncrasy of the fact-check stimuli and knowledge questions tested in the current study or is observed in other contexts as well.34

As with any research, this study has limitations that should be noted. Some of these are related to our use of an Internet panel generally and YouGov specifically. First we cannot be sure that participants read each fact-check carefully or thoroughly. To encourage closer reading of the fact-checks, subjects were advanced in the mini-waves once they answered a

34 Specifically, the partisan differences we observe could reflect subtle differences in the nature of the fact-checks chosen by our selection protocol rather than systematic differences in how Democrats and Republicans are affected by fact-checks.
basic comprehension question about each fact-check correctly after they read it (or failed to answer it correctly three times in a row). Data from those questions provided above suggest that most readers grasped at least the topic of the article. Still, our estimates should be interpreted as representing the effect of assignment to the fact-checking condition, not the effect of reading each article carefully. Second, the fact that respondents remain in the panel sends at least an implicit message of trust in YouGov. Treatments delivered within the platform may be more trusted than if they were received through typical web browsing. Finally, the YouGov sample may be more politically interested and knowledgeable than a true probability sample (e.g., Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2014). However, we note that we still observe considerable heterogeneity in these measures. It is unclear why the difference between high and low knowledge respondents would be different in a YouGov sample compared to other platforms.

While our experimental design allows us to estimate the effect of randomized exposure to fact-checking, we are also forced to rely on self-reports in our observational analysis of the correlates of fact-checking consumption. These measures may be somewhat overstated due to social desirability bias or measurement error, including both failures of memory and differences in how people interpret question wording.\textsuperscript{35} Future research should assess the validity of these self-reports using objective measures.

Ultimately, these findings provide credible evidence that fact-checking can promote more accurate beliefs about disputed factual claims under realistic conditions. Though the format may be most relevant and helpful to people who are politically engaged and knowl-

\textsuperscript{35}For instance, Smith (2011) found that 28\% of respondents in 2010 indicated that they “use[d] the Internet to research or ‘fact check’ claims made during the campaign in the months leading up to the election” compared to 44\% in our 2014 sample. However, fact-checking had become more prominent in the intervening time period.
edgeable, these are the groups to whom politicians are often most responsive (Erikson 2015). Fact-checking may thus have broader effects than the size of its audience suggests.
References


Fridkin, Kim, Patrick J. Kenney, and Amanda Wintersieck. 2015. “Liar, Liar, Pants on


Online Appendix A

Wave 1

Here are some headlines from recent news articles. Which would you be most interested in reading?
- Nicole Kidman: Emmy dress was hubby’s choice
- Smartphone battery life: Problems and fixes
- PolitiFact: Top 5 fact-checks and reports for August
- Independent now a real contender in the Kansas Senate race

How interested would you be in reading this article compared with other news you could choose to read online?

PolitiFact: Top 5 fact-checks and reports for August
- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested

How interested would you be in reading this article compared with other news you could choose to read online?

Smartphone battery life: Problems and fixes
- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested

Fact-checking is a new development in journalism that seeks to improve political discourse by holding politicians accountable when they make false or misleading statements. How familiar or unfamiliar are you with the fact-checking movement in journalism, which includes websites such as PolitiFact and Factcheck.org?
- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Slightly unfamiliar
- Somewhat unfamiliar
- Very unfamiliar

In general, how favorable or unfavorable is your overall opinion of the fact-checking movement in journalism?
- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Very favorable
Thinking about the amount of fact-checking that you see being performed today by journalists, do you think there should be more fact-checking, do you think the current amount of fact-checking is about right, or do you think there should be less fact-checking?
- There should be more fact-checking
- The current amount of fact-checking is about right
- There should be less fact-checking

In general, do you think fact-checkers get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?
- Get the facts straight
- Often inaccurate

In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that fact-checkers deal fairly with all sides or do they tend to favor one side?
- Deal fairly with all sides
- Tend to favor one side

In general, would you say fact-checkers tend to be liberal, neutral, or conservative?
- Liberal
- Neutral
- Conservative

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I feel confident that I can find the truth about political issues.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what’s going on.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
Most public officials can be trusted to do what is right without our having to constantly check on them.

When government leaders make statements to the American people on television or in the newspapers, they are usually NOT telling the truth.

How much attention have you been able to pay to the 2014 election campaign?

We would like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer.

Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person.

-Barack Obama
-John Boehner
-Democratic Party
-Republican Party
-PolitiFact
-FactCheck.org
Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like.

Please indicate if you think that the following statements are true or false. If you don't know, please select “Don’t know.”

- David Cameron is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- The term of office for a Member of the United States Senate is four years.
- The Republican Party holds a majority of seats in the US House of Representatives.
- The Republican Party holds a majority of seats in the US Senate.
- Overriding a presidential veto requires a three-quarters vote of the US Senate and House of Representatives.
- John Kerry is the current US Secretary of State.
- Antonin Scalia is the current Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court.
- China has the largest economy in the world.

(randomize order)

- True
- False
- Don’t know

**Mini-wave 1**

[For all mini-waves, respondents were allowed to proceed after answering an attention check question correctly after viewing a stimulus article. If they answered incorrectly, they were looped back to the article and asked to read it again. This procedure repeated until the third failure. Any respondents who failed to answer correctly on their third attempt were allowed to proceed with the survey.]

[Treatment condition – order of stimuli randomized]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)
Health insurance costs are skyrocketing under Obamacare, Republican Party says

By Amy Sherman on Monday, September 29th, 2014 at 11:26 a.m.

Got a beef with Obamacare? The Republicans want to remind voters that Democrat Charlie Crist thinks the president’s health care law is "great."

A TV ad by the Republican Party of Florida features anecdotes from people making claims about how the health care law has hurt them in the pocketbook or made it harder to find doctors:

"I think Obamacare harms doctors and patients."

"It increased my health policy, personal health policy, 30 percent."

"I’m disabled and I can’t find doctors that will help me."

"My family’s medical costs have doubled."

"Many doctors are losing their patients, and patients are losing their doctors. I was one of them."

"Obamacare hurts my ability to create jobs."

The ad soon pivots to Crist saying of Obamacare "I think it’s been great," comments he made in a TV interview with CNN’s Candy Crowley in March 2014. Crist has
campaigned in favor of the federal health care law while his opponent Republican Gov. Rick Scott has been a major critic.

The ad doesn't identify the various men and women complaining about Obamacare making it impossible to verify each individual's experiences. State GOP spokesperson Susan Hepworth's only reply to our questions about the people and their insurance woes: "They are not actors."

But we can research the ad’s overall message that the Affordable Care Act has inflated Floridians’ health care costs anywhere from 30 percent to twice as expensive.

Our ruling

The Republicans’ ad shows several unidentified people saying that health insurance costs for Floridians are up 30 percent or more.

Many reports that cite big double-digit premium increases are based on individual or small-group plans and omit large group plans, the type of coverage many people have through work. The Kaiser Family Foundation, a leading health policy research center, concluded that in large-group plans, the largest segment in the market, premiums will rise 3 percent.

The Republicans’ ad takes anecdotal experiences about cost increases that would be rare but potentially true and creates the impression that the federal health care law is just one big heap of problems for patients without any benefits. Then it tells voters that despite that morass, Crist supports it.

People may see increases to their health care costs under the law, but the typical experience is nowhere near what the ad suggests. Indeed, other Floridians will see their costs go down. We rate the claim Mostly False.

Which issue was in dispute in the fact-check you read?
- Federal budget deficit
- Job losses
- Health insurance costs
- Social Security

Next please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Lizza says Obama has bombed more nations than Bush

By Jon Greenberg on Thursday, September 25th, 2014 at 10:47 a.m.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) launches Tomahawk cruise missiles on Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2014, from the Red Sea against Islamic State group targets in Syria. (AP/U.S. Navy)

The irony of President Barack Obama, Nobel Prize winner and putative anti-war candidate, launching extensive airstrikes in Syria, quickly led to comparisons with his predecessor, President George W. Bush.

Ryan Lizza, Washington correspondent for the New Yorker summed it up in one tweet.

"Countries bombed: Obama 7, Bush 4."

We asked Lizza for his list and he sent us this:

Bush: Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia.

Obama: Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and Syria.

As we fact-checked Lizza’s statement, we found little reason to challenge the nations he named. If anything, he shortchanged both presidents.

Our ruling

Lizza said that Obama has bombed seven countries to Bush’s four. Depending on your view of Bush’s reported drone strike into Yemen, he may have slightly undercounted Bush’s tally. Both presidents also may have bombed the Philippines.

But it’s hard to fault Lizza for the numbers we use.

We rate his claim True.

Which issue was in dispute in the fact-check you read?
-Bombing of foreign countries by U.S. presidents
-How to most effectively reduce energy usage
-How well the Secret Service protects the president
-A recent Supreme Court decision on guns

Finally, please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Crist says Scott pleaded Fifth 75 times 'to avoid jail'

By Joshua Gillin on Thursday, September 25th, 2014 at 2:09 p.m.

Governatorial campaign commercials have been digging up each candidate’s past for months, but now Gov. Rick Scott and Charlie Crist are pretty much calling each other criminals.

The Republican Party of Florida, working on Scott’s behalf, had a Fort Lauderdale investor say in a TV ad that he was “swindled” by Crist. The man had invested with Scott Rothstein, who was later convicted of a Ponzi scheme. We rated that Pants on Fire!, because Crist had nothing to do with the plot to defraud investors.

Now Crist is going after Scott’s past as the CEO of hospital chain Columbia/HCA, which in 1997 was busted by the federal government for bilking Medicare. Crist referred to the Rothstein attack in a Sept. 19, 2014, commercial, saying Scott lied to voters “4,000 times,” the number of times the Rothstein ad had aired on Florida TV stations.

"We shouldn’t be surprised,” the narrator said. "Scott pled the Fifth 75 times to avoid jail for Medicare fraud."

That’s referring to a deposition Scott gave in 2000 for an unrelated civil case. To further muddy the waters, the commercial shows footage from a deposition for yet another unrelated case in 1995.

This attack should sound familiar, because it came up in the 2010 campaign, when Scott’s Republican primary opponent Bill McCollum said Scott “barely escaped imprisonment,” which we rated False. PolitiFact Florida wanted to revisit this angle and see if Scott, who was never charged with wrongdoing in the federal fraud case, gave vague testimony to avoid time in the cooler.

Our ruling

Crist said Scott "pled the Fifth 75 times to avoid jail for Medicare fraud."

If you haven’t heard by now, Scott did invoke his Fifth Amendment rights 75 times in a Medicare fraud case. But Crist’s ad is pushing the envelope to say he did it to avoid jail.

No one went to prison for the Medicare fraud debacle, nor did Scott actually face the rigors of a grand jury or even federal investigators. The commercial seems to imply Scott was in the thick of the raids, when he was actually sent packing as soon as it became apparent the company faced a major punishment for defrauding the U.S. government.

It’s impossible to say if Scott would have gone to jail if he had answered those deposition questions, but experts say he was certainly avoiding possible legal trouble by asserting the Fifth Amendment. We rate the statement Half True.
According to the fact-check you read, who was criticized in a recent ad about Medicare fraud?
- Rick Scott, the Republican governor of Florida
- Charlie Crist, the Democratic candidate for governor in Florida
- Barack Obama, the president
- Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida
PAC ad misleading on claim about Perdue

By Nancy Badertscher on Wednesday, October 1st, 2014 at 12:00 a.m.

As election day draws closer and the push for votes intensifies, the airwaves are being flooded with political attack ads.

One new ad for Michelle Nunn, the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, makes a claim about her Republican opponent, businessman David Perdue, that piqued our interest.

Perdue "proposes rolling back the clock on women's health care," the ad states.

The Nunn camp has already been trying to turn female voters against Perdue with ads about a lawsuit filed during his tenure as CEO of discounter Dollar General. The lawsuit accused Dollar General of paying male managers more than female managers for the same work.

The new ad from super PAC Georgians Together opens talking about the wage discrimination lawsuit, which was settled by Dollar General’s parent company for $18.75 million several years after Perdue left the company.

The ad closes with these lines: "David Perdue -- Georgia women just can’t trust him. Michelle Nunn -- Georgia women can always trust her."

Our ruling

The super PAC, Georgians Together, makes a claim that contains some truth. Some women could be hurt by repeal or replacement of the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, which has expanded some benefits for some women.

But the ad never mentions Obamacare. That’s a major omission.

Voters also need to know what Perdue is proposing -- repeal and replacement of Obamacare -- others have tried to do and failed.

And you could argue that almost any group helped by Obamacare could be hurt with its repeal.

There is a lot of missing context in this attack ad.

We rate it Half True.
In the fact-check you read, whose campaign made the claim that was being evaluated for its accuracy?

- Jason Carter, the Democratic candidate for governor in Georgia
- Nathan Deal, the Republican governor of Georgia
- David Perdue, the Republican candidate for senator in Georgia
- Michelle Nunn, the Democratic candidate for senator in Georgia
Jeanne Shaheen says 'Wall Street' gave Scott Brown more money than any other candidate

By Louisa Jacobson on Friday, September 19th, 2014 at 4:08 p.m.

As the race between Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen and Republican challenger Scott Brown heats up, the attacks are growing more intense. In a recent radio ad, Shaheen accused Brown of being too friendly with Wall Street when serving as a senator from neighboring Massachusetts from 2010 to 2012.

Here’s the 60-second ad’s narration:

"Wonder why Scott Brown lost re-election in Massachusetts? Well, he was working for Wall Street, not the people. Scott Brown blocked a major financial reform bill until he could water it down and save Wall Street $19 billion. Scott Brown really delivered for Wall Street, said the Boston Globe. Even after the bill passed, news reports show Brown was ‘secretly serving the interests of Wall Street, working behind the scenes to help the big banks, not consumers.’


That’s a lot to chew on.

PolitiFact New Hampshire already checked a claim by a pro-Shaheen group that Brown’s actions had saved "big banks $19 billion in taxes," rating it Mostly False.

But what about the ad’s claim that "Wall Street" gave him "more campaign contributions than any other candidate -- $5.3 million"? We decided to take a closer look.

Our ruling

Shaheen’s ad said that in 2012, "Wall Street" gave Scott Brown "more campaign contributions than any other candidate -- $5.3 million."

If you put together six categories that might reasonably be considered "Wall Street," Brown received about $4.2 million in all, and he finished first among Senate candidates in four of those six categories. However, the total amount is short of the $5.3 million claimed in the ad.

The statement is generally accurate but needs clarification or additional information, so we rate it Mostly True.

In the fact-check you read, who made the claim that was being evaluated for its accuracy?
- Jeanne Shaheen, the Democratic senator in New Hampshire
- Scott Brown, the Republican candidate for senator in New Hampshire
- Mitt Romney, the former Republican presidential candidate
- Maggie Hassan, the Democratic governor of New Hampshire
"Social Security has never contributed one cent to the deficit. Not one cent."

— Jeff Merkley on Thursday, August 7th, 2014 in a roundtable discussion with senior citizens

Has Social Security never contributed one cent to the federal deficit?

By Dana Tims on Monday, September 8th, 2014 at 4:25 p.m.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., running for re-election against Republican challenger Monica Wehby, addressed Social Security during a meeting with about a dozen Bend-area senior citizens in August.

The claim:

Just in case PolitiFact Oregon had forgotten about that roundtable, Wehby’s campaign seized on the opportunity to remind us by sending along a video clip in which Merkley defended Social Security’s fiscal soundness.

"Social Security has never contributed one cent to the deficit," he said. "Not one cent."

We decided to check.

The ruling:

Merkley told a gathering of seniors that "Social Security has never contributed one cent to the deficit." Until 2010, that was true. However, the program has chalked up increasingly large deficits each year since, requiring money to be taken from its bonds to make up the difference.

The senator argues, reasonably, both that Social Security is by law a closed system, and that its trust fund is sufficient for now to cover the current gap. It’s also true, however, that these gaps do affect other parts of the federal government because they require borrowing elsewhere to make up the difference. We rate Merkley’s claim Half True.
Which issue was the fact-check you read about?
- Social Security
- Medicare
- Welfare
- The Syrian civil war
Taxpayers paid for a secret no-bid contract that benefited Gina Raimondo’s firm, Angel Taveras says

By C. Eugene Emery Jr. on Sunday, September 14th, 2014 at 12:01 a.m.

A TV commercial that ran before the Sept. 9 primary showed two well-dressed men carrying briefcases, approaching each other. They meet in the shadows of a stairwell to shake hands. The implication: they don’t want anyone to see what they’re doing. The word "SECRET" appears in large green letters, followed by the words "No-bid Contract."

A narrator talks about General Treasurer Gina Raimondo, then one of four Democrats running in a primary for governor, a race she ultimately won.

"Her venture capital firm secured a secret no-bid contract funded by taxpayers," the narrator says.

The commercial was for Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, one of Raimondo’s opponents. It didn’t say what the contract was about, but it sure sounded shady.

Even though the primary is over, we decided to examine the commercial’s claim because the issues it raises may well come up again as Raimondo runs against Cranston Mayor Allan Fung, who won the Republican gubernatorial primary.

Our ruling

Angel Taveras said Gina Raimondo’s "venture capital firm secured a secret no-bid contract funded by taxpayers," citing a newspaper story that deals with the terms of Point Judith’s deal with Providence.

Some elements of the deal remain secret.

But the ad’s clear implication that the contract was approved in secret is wrong. It wasn’t. It was voted on in an open session.

To call it a no-bid contract is technically correct, but that phrase suggests something improper. The reality is that many such investment decisions never go out for bid because the investments have been vetted by a financial consultant.

Because the statement in Taveras’ commercial contained some element of truth but ignored critical facts that would give a different impression, we rate it Mostly False.
Who ran the commercial that was examined in the fact-check you read?

- Angel Taveras, the mayor of Providence and a former Democratic gubernatorial candidate in Rhode Island
- Gina Raimondo, the Treasurer and the Democratic nominee for governor of Rhode Island
- Lincoln Chafee, the independent governor of Rhode Island
- Allan Fung, the Republican nominee for governor of Rhode Island
Greg Abbott blames Wendy Davis for limit on settlements put into law before she was a senator

By W. Gardner Selby on Tuesday, September 30th, 2014 at 5:39 p.m.


Given an opportunity, Democratic gubernatorial nominee Wendy Davis pressed Republican Greg Abbott, the Texas attorney general, about his office continuing to battle school districts in court despite a state district judge ruling the school finance system to be both underfunded and unconstitutional.

"The only thing right now coming between our children and appropriate funding of their schools today is you," Davis asserted in the pair’s Sept. 19, 2014, debate in the Rio Grande Valley. "On behalf of the 5 million children of this state, will you agree tonight that you will drop your appeals and allow our schools to be appropriately funded?"

Abbott responded by blaming legislators, including Davis, a Fort Worth state senator, for limiting his options. "Sen. Davis," Abbott replied, "there is actually another thing coming between me and settling that lawsuit. And that is a law that you voted on and helped pass in 2011 that removes from the attorney general the ability to settle lawsuits just like this."

Did legislators including Davis move to keep the attorney general from settling lawsuits?

Our ruling

Abbott said Davis voted for a 2011 measure that removes the attorney general’s ability to settle lawsuits like the school funding case.

That’s not so; a 2007 law created the legislative hurdle for major settlements -- and, significantly, Davis wasn’t a senator then.

Still, this claim has an element of truth because Davis joined nearly every other lawmaker in tightening the limit in 2011 by reducing the threshold for settlements the attorney general may reach without legislative sign-off to those costing the state $10 million or less.

Given how Abbott characterized the law at issue, we rate his claim Mostly False.
Which of these people was targeted with a “mostly false” claim according to the fact-check you read?

- Greg Abbott, the Republican candidate for governor of Texas
- Wendy Davis, the Democratic candidate for governor of Texas
- Rick Perry, the Republican governor of Texas
- George W. Bush, the former governor of Texas and U.S. president
Gillespie ad falsely tags Warner with PolitiFact's 'Lie of the Year' award

By Warren Plake on Sunday, September 28th, 2014 at 12:00 a.m.

A TV ad by Ed Gillespie, the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate, indicates incumbent Mark Warner has received PolitiFact’s most ignoble rating: "The Lie of the Year."

The commercial starts with footage from a videotape Warner posted on Aug. 10, 2009, laying out his qualified support for health care reform. At the time, Congress was considering Obamacare -- also known as the Affordable Care Act -- and there was loud debate over whether the bill would strip people of health insurance policies they liked and wanted to keep.

"Let me make clear, I’m not going to support a health care reform plan that’s going to take away health care that you’ve got right now or a health care plan that you like," Warner said in the 2009 video.

While Warner is saying this, the words 'LIE OF THE YEAR' appear in red capital letters and, underneath them, in black caps, is the attribution to "POLITIFACT, 12/12/13."

The Lie of the Year is awarded each December by our colleagues at PolitiFact National. Gillespie’s claim that Warner took the title last year was news to us because the dubious distinction went to President Barack Obama’s statements that under that ACA, "If you like your health care plan, you can keep it." Obama had repeated that vow at least 37 times since 2009, including during his re-election campaign in 2012.

Our ruling

Gillespie’s ad indicates PolitiFact National branded Warner with the "Lie of the Year" in 2013 for promising four years earlier that he wouldn’t vote for health care reforms that took away insurance plans people like.

PolitiFact National never mentioned Warner in handing out the award. In articles and videos, our colleagues focused the award on Obama’s insistence over the years that under the ACA, "If you like your health care plan, you can keep it."

The statements and the circumstances behind them are not clones. The president had far greater power in shaping the law that bears his name than the senator. Warner didn’t repeat his pledge after he voted for the ACA in 2009. Obama continued to make his vow long after he added regulations to the law in mid-2010 that guaranteed the ACA would end some pre-existing insurance plans.

The clear implication of Gillespie’s ad -- that PolitiFact cited Warner for telling the Lie of the Year -- is simply False.
What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that Mark Warner told PolitiFact’s “Lie of the Year”?
- True
- Half true
- False
- Pants on Fire
Scott Walker was elected governor on a promise not to take campaign contributions "from the date of his inauguration until the signing of the state budget," but broke it by taking nearly $5.6 million.

— One Wisconsin Now on Friday, September 26th, 2014 in a news release

Scott Walker broke 2010 promise not to take campaign money during state budget process, group says

By Tom Keitscher on Monday, September 29th, 2014 at 2:49 p.m.

Scott Walker made a promise about not taking campaign contributions during budget season as part of his brief 2006 run for governor, but not during his successful 2010 campaign.

A liberal advocacy group is accusing Republican Gov. Scott Walker of breaking a campaign promise by accepting millions of dollars in campaign contributions while he crafted the state budget.

One Wisconsin Now made the attack Sept. 26, 2014, less than six weeks before the election between Walker and Democrat Mary Burke.

The Madison-based group began its news release with this:

"In an ‘Ethics Reform Plan’ Scott Walker proposed while running for governor, he promised he would not accept contributions from the date of his inauguration until the signing of the state budget.

"A review of Governor Walker's campaign finance records by One Wisconsin Now shows that for each budget he introduced between Jan. 1 and the date the budget was signed into law, he raised nearly $5.6 million from 54,000 contributions."

Our Walk-O-Meter tracks 65 promises Walker made during the 2010 campaign for governor. But none like the one described by One Wisconsin Now.

Did we miss one? No.

It turns out the pledge is actually from eight years ago, part of an ethics reform plan Walker issued during his brief 2006 run for the GOP nomination for governor.

Our ruling

One Wisconsin Now said Walker was elected governor on a promise not to take campaign contributions "from the date of his inauguration until the signing of the state budget," but broke the promise by taking nearly $5.6 million in contributions.

Walker made such a promise during his failed campaign for governor in 2006, specifically noting the period would begin Jan. 3, 2007.

But he did not make it again during his successful run in 2010.

We rate the claim False.
What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim made by One Wisconsin Now about Scott Walker?
- True
- Half true
- False
- Pants on Fire
Braley, Ernst debate anti-abortion legislation impact

By Lauren Carroll on Tuesday, September 30th, 2014 at 4:04 p.m.

In a Sept. 28 debate in Des Moines, Senate candidates Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, and Republican Joni Ernst disagreed about the potential impact of anti-abortion legislation that Ernst sponsored.

Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, says his opponent in the Senate race, Republican state Sen. Joni Ernst, introduced legislation that would have severely limited abortion rights in Iowa. Not so, Ernst countered in a recent debate.

Braley and Ernst -- who are vying to succeed retiring Democrat Tom Harkin in one of the nation’s tightest and most-watched Senate contests -- butted heads over core issues, including women’s rights, in the Sept. 28, 2014, debate in Des Moines.

At one point, the candidates were asked if they would pursue abortion-related legislation at the federal level. Braley responded first. (Video here.)

"What I won't do," Braley said, "is support the type of legislation that Sen. Ernst introduced in Iowa that would have banned all forms of abortion, that would have prevented certain forms of contraception from being available to Iowa women, that would have prevented in vitro fertilization and would have prosecuted doctors for performing what are now legal procedures."

Ernst responded, "The amendment that’s being referenced by the congressman would not do any of the things that he stated it would do. That amendment is simply a statement that I support life."

This debate has come up before: Earlier this month, Braley released an ad that attacked Ernst on the same grounds.

We decided to take a closer look to see whose portrayal was more accurate.

Our ruling

Ernst said personhood legislation she sponsored would not have restricted access to reproductive services and was "simply a statement that I support life."

Both Braley and Ernst have exaggerated here. Ernst has a point that the legislation does not literally call for the restrictions on reproductive rights Braley cited, but it’s more than just a "statement" of principle -- it would change the Iowa Constitution in a way that could, at some point, enable many or all of the consequences Braley foresees to be enacted.

We rate Ernst’s claim Half True.
In the article you just read, whose record was being scrutinized on the issue of abortion?
- Bruce Braley, the Democratic candidate for senator in Iowa
- Tom Harkin, the Democratic senator in Iowa
- Chuck Grassley, the Republican senator in Iowa
- Joni Ernst, the Republican candidate for senator in Iowa

Which article did you enjoy most?

[FL]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Rick Scott

[GA]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on David Perdue

[NH]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Scott Brown

[OR]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Claim by Jeff Merkley

[RI]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Gina Raimondo

[TX]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Wendy Davis

[VA]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Mark Warner

[WI]
Fact-check: Health insurance costs
Fact-check: Who bombèd more nations?
Fact-check: Attack on Scott Walker
Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)
OKLAHOMA CITY, Sept. 30, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- As part of its "Year of the Flavor" campaign, Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt, America's fastest growing frozen yogurt concept[1], is introducing its new sweet and spiced Cinnamon Roll froyo flavor for a limited time during the month of October. The flavor will be available at participating Orange Leaf locations across the country until Oct. 28.

Cinnamon, one of the world's oldest[2] spices, is a main ingredient in the gooey, rich pastries that were first created in Sweden and are the inspiration for Orange Leaf's newest fall flavor. Orange Leaf's Cinnamon Roll froyo can be enjoyed in store with or without warm icing as a topping at participating locations or packed in a To-Go pint and shared with others on World Cinnamon Roll Day (Oct. 4), World Teacher's Day (Oct. 5), or Sweetest Day (Oct. 18).

As with all other Orange Leaf flavors, customers are invited to invent their own froyo combinations with the new Cinnamon Roll flavor by mixing, swirling, dividing or building the frozen yogurt with any combination of fruit, nuts, candy and other healthy or decadent treats from the do-it-yourself toppings bar. This also allows customers to control their portion size and nutritional value to fit their dietary needs and taste preferences. To inspire customers' creations, Orange Leaf suggests the following "recipe" idea that customers can make at Orange Leaf stores:

**The Ultimate Cinnamon Roll**: top new Cinnamon Roll froyo with pieces of baked cinnamon rolls and sprinkle with a touch of cinnamon. Drizzle with warm icing.

The new Cinnamon Roll froyo joins the ranks of other Orange Leaf "Year of the Flavor" flavors such as Salted Caramel, Chocolate made with Ghirardelli®, Pistachio, Banana, Pink Lemonade and Blackberry Greek. Customers become the chef when creating their own froyo treats, choosing from their local store's customer-driven selection of 16 flavors, taken from the menu of 70-plus flavors. These flavors include no-sugar-added, gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan alternatives. These flavors are blended in proprietary machines that create a richer and creamier product than other frozen yogurt brands.

Orange Leaf customers can check their local store's web page, or download Orange Leaf's iPhonex or Android app, to check the other flavors available at stores in October before they visit.

**About Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt**

Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt is a self-serve, choose-your-own-toppings frozen dessert franchise with more than 300 locations in the U.S. and Australia. Orange Leaf offers a multitude of delicious traditional and original flavors, including no-sugar-added, gluten-free, and dairy-free and vegan alternatives. Customized with a generous selection of do-it-yourself toppings, Orange Leaf provides an innocent indulgence, "self served" in a stimulating atmosphere. In 2014, Orange Leaf was recognized for its growth by top media and institutions including Entrepreneur (ranked Orange Leaf as one of the top three new franchises), Inc. (listed the company on its annual Inc. 5000 which ranks the nation's fastest-growing private companies), Nation's Restaurant News (ranked Orange Leaf 8th on its "Next 20" list of top 20 chains in America that are on the rise) and Technomic (ranked the company as one of the top five fastest-growing chains). Orange Leaf's pro-franchisee culture offers some of the lowest fees in the industry and encourages owners to become a part of their communities. For more information, visit the company's website, "like" Orange Leaf Yogurt on Facebook, or follow on Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest.


Which company was the press release about?

-Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt
- Dairy Queen
- TCBY
- Baskin Robbins

Next please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
The Car Care Month Checklist was issued by which organization?

-NASCAR
Finally, please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
According to the press release, which artist is going on tour?
-Kenny G
- Barry Manilow
- James Taylor
- Neil Diamond

Which article did you enjoy most?
- Neil Diamond tour
- Car care tips
- New frozen yogurt flavor
Mini-wave 2

[Treatment condition – order of stimuli randomized]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)
Obama: Health care is driving down the deficit

By Lauren Carroll on Wednesday, October 8th, 2014 at 2:09 p.m.

President Barack Obama addressed the economy in a speech at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., on Oct. 2, 2014. We checked one of his claims.

Since the Affordable Care Act was first proposed, policymakers have been debating its potential effect not just on health care but on the economy as a whole. The bill effectively increases some types of spending, reduces other types and increases some taxes.

President Barack Obama considers the health care legislation one of his economic success stories.

"Partly because health care prices have been growing at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years, the growth in what health care costs the government is down," Obama said in a speech about the economy last week at Northwestern University. "Health care has long been the single-biggest driver of America’s future deficits. It’s been the single-biggest driver of our debt. Health care is now the single-biggest factor driving down those deficits."

We wondered: Is it true that "health care is now the single-biggest factor driving down" the federal budget deficit? We found that the claim is pretty well supported.

To put it simply: A few years ago, economists predicted that net federal spending on health care would get very high, very fast -- fast enough to drive the deficit out of control. Now, by contrast, they predict that net federal spending on health care will grow, but not quite as fast as originally thought, making the deficit at least a little more manageable.

Our ruling

Obama said the cost of "health care is now the single-biggest factor driving down" the federal budget deficit.

The Congressional Budget Office recently lowered its projection for long-term deficits and specifically cited health care costs as the main reason, though the Affordable Care Act is not necessarily the primary cause of that calculation. That said, even though projections are lower than they were years ago, health care spending is rising in the short term and will keep adding to the deficit. We rate Obama’s claim Mostly True.

According to the fact-check you read, what did President Obama claim was having the most significant effect on reducing the federal deficit?
- The cost of military operations in the Middle East
- The cost of health care
- Reductions in subsidies to oil companies
- Tax revenues from technology companies

Next please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Thom Tillis claims Kay Hagan didn’t attend half the Armed Services Committee hearings this year

**By Steve Contorno on Thursday, October 2nd, 2014 at 5:11 p.m.**

The rise of the terrorist group known variously as ISIS, ISIL or the Islamic State has increased the role of national security in the political conversation just a month before the midterm elections.

In North Carolina, state House speaker and Republican U.S. Senate candidate Thom Tillis released an ad that blames his Democratic opponent Sen. Kay Hagan for being missing in action as the ISIS threat grew.

"In January, President Obama refers to the Islamic State as a ‘JV team,’ " the narrator says. "Days later the Armed Services Committee holds a hearing on new global threats. Sen. Kay Hagan? Absent. In fact, Hagan’s missed half the Armed Services Committee hearings this year."

We’ve already checked whether Obama referred to the Islamic State as a JV team (he did). Here, we’ll review Tillis’ characterization of Hagan’s attendance record on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

We went through all the committee’s meeting transcripts for 2014 to see which lawmakers were in attendance for each hearing.

In compiling the information, we ran into an obstacle.

Because the Senate Armed Services Committee often reviews confidential national-security information, it sometimes meets behind closed doors. Minutes for those meetings are not released to the public. Therefore, we’re not able to determine attendance for those meetings.

In 2014, it appears there have been 11 closed hearings by the full committee. However, the committee has also held 22 open meetings this year, so we limited our calculations to those.

**Our ruling**

Tillis said that Hagan "has missed half of the (Senate Armed Services) Committee's hearings in 2014."

We don’t know the number of closed meetings she attended, so it’s more accurate to say that Hagan missed half of the committee’s public hearings.

Still, Tillis has a point — in 2014, Hagan attended nine of the 22 open hearings, which is not only below half but which also ranked near the bottom among committee members.

The comment is accurate but needs clarification or additional information, so we rate it Mostly True.

According to the fact-check you read, what did North Carolina Senate candidate Thom Tillis criticize about Senator Kay Hagan?
- Her attendance record at town halls
- Her attendance record at roll call votes
- Her attendance record at committee hearings
- Her attendance record in college

Finally, please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Would raising the minimum wage cost 500,000 jobs?

By Katie Sanders on Friday, October 10th, 2014 at 5:45 p.m.

The minimum wage has long been a dividing line in the race between Republican Gov. Rick Scott and Democrat Charlie Crist in the governor’s race, so it’s not surprising that it emerged during the first of three televised debates.

During the Oct. 10, 2014, debate hosted by the Spanish-language network Telemundo, a panelist asked Scott if he favors keeping Florida’s minimum wage at $7.93 or raising it.

After bringing up his family’s money problems growing up, the multimillionaire governor said he does not support raising the minimum wage because he wants more jobs in the state. He cited a study by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

"I want more jobs. And that’s why I ran on 7 steps to 700,000 jobs. The CBO says that if we raise the minimum wage the way Charlie wants to do it, it would lose 500,000 jobs," Scott said. "I don’t want to lose those jobs."

Our ruling

Scott said, "The CBO says if we raise the minimum wage the way Charlie wants to do it, it would lose 500,000 jobs."

Scott is referencing the CBO’s rough estimate for the effect of Obama’s plan to lift the federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour on employment. It’s not necessarily what would happen, as he said, but what could happen. In other words, a loss of 500,000 jobs is the agency’s best guess, and other possibilities include a slight effect on jobs to about 1 million lost jobs.

More importantly, its analysis pertained to the country as a whole. Scott's comments came in a discussion about Florida jobs, which means the number is being taken out of context.

The average Floridian may not know that the CBO report does not apply to "the way Charlie wants" to raise the minimum wage in Florida. Florida’s minimum wage is slightly higher at $7.93 in 2014.

The statement is partially accurate but leaves out important details or takes things out of context. We rate it Half True.
According to the fact-check you read, what does Governor Rick Scott say would happen if the minimum wage were raised as his opponent Charlie Crist has proposed?

- The economy would gain 50,000 jobs
- The economy would lose 50,000 jobs
- The economy would lose 500,000 jobs
- The economy would lose 5,000,000 jobs
Perdue off base with agriculture claim

By April Hunt on Friday, October 10th, 2014 at 12:00 a.m.

Candidate references to the family farm and toting watermelons are far more than folksy. Agriculture is Georgia’s top industry, pumping more than $71 billion a year into the state economy.

In that context, talking farms is political calculus, especially in farm heavy Middle Georgia.

That math was on display in its full glory at the state fair this week in Perry, where U.S. Senate hopefuls Michelle Nunn and David Perdue debated for the first time.

"How do you justify to the farmers that in your list of priorities there are 17 items more important than the farmers in this state?" Perdue, the Republican asked his Democratic opponent.

Nunn appeared confused by the question and called the claim untrue.

"There is no plan that has that listed," Nunn said.

Considering that the winner of the race will replace retiring U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss, a former agriculture lawyer who spent his Congressional career on agriculture committees, PolitiFact Georgia decided to look into the facts behind the political theater.

Perdue’s criticism against Nunn’s agriculture credentials is based on two pages out of 144 pages of Nunn campaign memos that were produced in December 2013 and leaked this summer.

Starting on page 61 are several policy issues that call for background memos for the candidate and her staff to review.

Listed in order of need for completion, agriculture ranks 18, after issues as varied as the budget and the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

"It is absolutely clear that’s how she ranks agriculture on her list of priorities on what to discuss," Perdue spokesman Derrick Dickey said.

The memo appears to contradict that interpretation, however. The document holds the word ‘agriculture,’ a sign from the authors that the policy paper on the issue is either done or near completion.

Our ruling

It is accurate that agriculture is listed as 18 out of 22 policy memos that need completing, according to leaked internal campaign documents.

But there is no evidence to support the idea that the list is a ranking of Nunn’s priorities.

Perdue’s statement ignores critical facts and is misleading on its face.

We rate it Mostly False.
What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that Michelle Nunn placed agriculture as the 18th most important issue facing the state?
- True
- Half true
- Mostly false
- False
Jeanne Shaheen says Scott Brown wanted to force women to look at photos of fetuses before abortions

By Jonathan Van Fleet on Friday, October 10th, 2014 at 2:11 p.m.

As the 2014 New Hampshire Senate race veers toward a conclusion, the state’s next senator needs the support of women voters.

Incumbent Jeanne Shaheen underscored that point when she targeted Republican challenger Scott Brown’s record supporting women’s reproductive rights during his tenure as a state senator from Massachusetts. Her aim was to undercut Brown’s assertion that he is a pro-choice politician.

An ad with a female narrator released on Oct. 7 said, "In Massachusetts, Scott Brown pushed for a law to force women considering abortion -- force them -- to look at color photographs of developing fetuses."

The ad, titled "Force," drew a swift response from Brown. He held a press conference the same day the ad was released, calling it a lie and adding that it was "not only insensitive, it is also deeply offensive."

"I have always been a pro-choice, independent Republican and have a strong record of supporting women's health care," Brown said in Derry, N.H., with his wife Gail by his side.

Brown demanded that Shaheen pull the ad, and the next day he launched his own ad calling Shaheen's commercial a "smear campaign."

More than ever in this hotly contested Senate race, this seemed like a job for PolitiFact.

Our ruling

Shaheen’s ad says that "in Massachusetts, Scott Brown pushed for a law to force women considering abortion -- force them -- to look at color photographs of developing fetuses."

The measure backed by Brown nine years ago made sure that women were provided photos of developing fetuses, along with a lot more information. It certainly forced doctors and their representatives to provide this information to women seeking abortions -- except in cases of emergency -- and it ensured women received the information both through verbal questions and a signed consent form.

Brown has a point that the bill wouldn't have "forced" them to look at color photographs -- but it did just about everything else it could possibly do up to that line.

This statement is accurate but needs clarification, so we rate it Mostly True.
Who claimed U.S. Senate candidate Scott Brown “pushed for a law to force women considering abortion…to look at color photographs of developing fetuses”?

-U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen
-New Hampshire governor Maggie Hassan
-President Barack Obama
-Former President Bill Clinton
Has Oregon's unemployment rate been above the national average for the past 17 years?

*By Dana Tims on Monday, August 4th, 2014 at 4:04 p.m.*

Year in and year out, the economy plays a significant role in deciding important political races. That’s especially true now, as Oregon shakes off the lingering doldrums of the Great Recession.

**The claim:**


"It’s been 17 years that we’ve had unemployment higher than the national average in Oregon," said Richardson, a state representative from Central Point. "When is that going to change?"

Oregon’s unemployment rate hasn’t dipped below the national rate since 1997? [PolitiFact Oregon](https://www.politifact.com) checked.

**The ruling:**

Richardson, in a recent debate with Kitzhaber, claimed that Oregon’s unemployment rate has hovered above the national rate for 17 years.

It’s actually been 18 years, but that covers the time frame of Richardson’s claim. Also, though a state economist said Oregon’s rate was sometimes statistically even with the national average, that feels like splitting hairs. Anyone looking up Oregon Employment Department statistics would find Oregon’s rate higher for the period Richardson cites.

Though Richardson implied that Kitzhaber was at fault, he didn’t say so directly at the debate, so we didn’t evaluate that as part of Richardson’s claim.

We find Richardson’s claim True.
Who said Oregon has had unemployment above the national average for 17 consecutive years?
- Republican gubernatorial candidate Dennis Richardson
- Democratic governor John Kitzhaber
- U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley
- Republican Senate candidate Monica Wehby
Gina Raimondo says Providence's pension fund has remained critically underfunded under Angel Taveras

By C. Eugene Emery Jr. on Sunday, August 31st, 2014 at 12:01 a.m.

Public employee pensions have been a hot topic in the 2014 primary race for governor because two of the Democratic candidates have had to deal with underfunded plans.

During the Aug. 26, 2014 Providence Journal - WPRI debate between Democrats Clay Pell, General Treasurer Gina Raimondo and Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, Raimondo and Taveras swapped barbs about who has administered their respective pension funds most effectively.

Taveras, who got concessions from the city's unions, said the state pension fund is underperforming and paying excessive fees.

Raimondo, whose changes in the state fund sparked a lawsuit that remains unresolved, countered that "we have great returns with lower risk," and she fired back at Taveras.

"The pension fund in the city of Providence is only 30-percent funded, about the same level as when he [Taveras] took office," she said. "I fixed a system for the long term. He made small changes and the pension system in Providence is still in crisis."

(The U.S. Government Accountability Office recommends that public pension plans should be at least 80 percent funded.)

We were curious about what the trend has been in Providence and whether the funding has gone down. We asked the Raimondo campaign for its evidence.

Our ruling

When Raimondo said, "The pension fund in the city of Providence is only 30 percent funded, about the same level as when he [Taveras] took office," she was only off by one percentage point, according to the most recent audit of the fund. That funded ratio has not increased since Taveras was sworn in on Jan. 3, 2011.

But that percentage was on a downward spiral at the time, so having it stabilize at 31 percent doesn't necessarily reflect "small changes," as Raimondo claimed in the debate. And the changes negotiated between Taveras and the city’s unions are intended to gradually increase the funding ratio.

Because the statement is accurate but needs clarification or additional information, we rate it Mostly True.
What was the PolitiFact rating of Gina Raimondo’s claim that Providence’s pension fund remains critically underfunded?
-True
-Mostly true
-Half true
-Mostly false
Unsupported: Greg Abbott says he helped prosecute terrorist ISIS member

By Dylan Baddour on Friday, October 3rd, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.

Republican Greg Abbott let fly a statement of seeming international significance in the Sept. 19, 2014, gubernatorial debate in the Rio Grande Valley. Abbott, the state attorney general, defended his decision not to ease public knowledge of where explosive fuels are stored before saying: "We’ve seen the rise of terrorism. I’ve been involved in prosecuting a terrorist member of ISIS."

Democrat Wendy Davis didn’t challenge his prosecutorial claim. But we wondered.

The Islamic State group, believed to have tens of thousands of fighters, wants to see the Middle East cleaned of Western influence and put under ultra-conservative religious law. Since June 2014, it’s beheaded hostages (including journalists) on camera, conducted mass executions, captured American weapons caches, demolished ancient shrines and laid deadly siege to ethnic communities.

Our look into Abbott’s actions led us through his state office to a federal indictment, news stories and an interview of the wife of the Austin-area suspect at issue.

Ultimately, Abbott’s statement struck us as lacking in factual footing -- including whether the cited individual can reasonably be judged a terrorist.

Abbott’s backup information

By email, Abbott’s state spokesman, Jerry Strickland, told us Abbott was referring to 23-year-old Michael Todd Wolfe of Round Rock, who was arrested at a Houston airport on June 17, 2014, as he boarded a flight to Toronto, Canada. Ten days later, Wolfe pleaded guilty to charges he’d concealed a plot to provide resources to terrorists. According to a June 27, 2014, FBI press release, Wolfe had admitted in court "he planned to travel to the Middle East to provide his services to a foreign terrorist organization, namely, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham/Syria (ISIS)." As of early October 2014, he was imprisoned and awaiting sentencing.

Our ruling

Abbott said he helped prosecute "a terrorist member of ISIS."

Given Abbott’s silence on what exactly he or state lawyers did in connection with this case, we have no evidence to back up his declaration aside from a press release crediting a range of agencies including the attorney general and extending to the Killeen Police Department and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. That release doesn’t say any of the agencies prosecuted Wolfe.

Abbott’s statement also relied on a broad definition of "terrorist" and "ISIS member." The federal complaint suggests that Wolfe may have sought to be those things but does not offer evidence that he had become either a terrorist or ISIS member.
According to the fact-check you read, who said they were involved in prosecuting a member of ISIS?
- Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Abbott
- Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis
- Republican governor Rick Perry
- Attorney General Eric Holder
NRA says Warner backed restrictions on veteran gun rights

By Nancy Madsen on Monday, October 6th, 2014 at 1:20 p.m.

The National Rifle Association says U.S. Sen. Mark Warner is soft on two issues dear to many Virginians -- guns and veterans.

"Mark Warner has supported restrictions on veterans’ second amendment rights," the NRA wrote in a flyer that hit mailboxes in September.

We wondered if the NRA is on target.

Our ruling

The NRA says Warner "has supported restrictions on veterans’ second amendment rights."

As proof, it cites the senator’s 2013 vote against an amendment that would have ended a VA policy of submitting the names of veterans it deems mentally unstable to the the FBI for inclusion on a national list of people barred from buying guns. People who didn’t serve in the military, by contrast, can only be declared mentally unfit to buy a gun by a judge.

So there’s a basis for the NRA’s claim: Warner voted against abolishing a restriction on buying guns that only affects veterans.

What the NRA ignores is that Warner voted for a different amendment that would have opened a appeals route for veterans outside of the VA -- to judges or an independent board. While Warner did not back the change desired by the NRA, he did support a policy change.

The NRA’s statement is accurate but needs additional information. We rate it Mostly True.

What issue was in dispute in the fact-check that you read of a claim about Senator Mark Warner’s record?
-Gun control
- Taxes
- Abortion
- Education
Walker sticks to claim on Midwest jobs growth

By Dave Umhoefer on Thursday, October 9th, 2014 at 5:00 a.m.

On Aug. 25, 2014 the Scott Walker campaign launched a TV ad that featured the governor saying this about the July employment numbers:

"Well, the latest job numbers are in and Wisconsin created more private-sector jobs than Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Ohio, and Illinois. That means we ranked third in the Midwest."

We rated that Mostly True. The ranking among the 10 states was right, but only if you use the raw number of jobs added instead of the more revealing percentage growth.

Well, now that summer has turned to fall, there’s a new batch of monthly jobs numbers out, with August being the latest month available.

And a new Walker TV ad makes the same claim comparing midwestern states over the last 12 months:

"The truth? In the last year, Wisconsin ranked third in Midwest job growth."

Is the ranking still right?

No.

Our rating

In a new TV ad, Walker says "the truth" is that "in the last year, Wisconsin ranked third in midwest job growth."

That’s old news. The updated ranking is fourth, closer to middle of the pack, something the governor knew before his ad aired.

We rate the claim False.

What was the subject of the claim that Governor Scott Walker made that was scrutinized in the fact-check you read?
- Job growth in Wisconsin
- Education in Wisconsin
- Border security in Wisconsin
- Tax policy in Wisconsin
Pants on Fire: Duncan Hunter makes unconfirmed claim Border Patrol caught at least 10 ISIS fighters

By Dylan Baddour, W. Gardner Selby on Friday, October 10th, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.

U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter this week declared terrorists have been crossing the Rio Grande.

The California Republican, speaking to Greta Van Susteren on Fox News Oct. 7, 2014, said he’d learned from the U.S. Border Patrol that Islamic State fighters had been nabbed trying to enter the country from Mexico. "ISIS is coming across the southern border," Hunter said, adding a moment later: "I know that at least 10 ISIS fighters have been caught coming across the Mexican border in Texas."

Border Patrol agents "caught them," Hunter also said, but "you know there's going to be dozens more that did not get caught by the Border Patrol."

Our eyebrows were raised. We sought detail.

Our ruling
Hunter said "at least 10 ISIS fighters have been caught coming across the Mexican border in Texas" and there are "dozens more that did not get caught by the Border Patrol."

No government agency confirms anything remotely close to the idea that at least 10 ISIS fighters have been caught coming across the Mexican border. Notably, too, the lead Texas agency entrusted with public safety alerted legislators of its own lack of confirmation. Similarly, the idea there are "dozens more that did not get caught by the Border Patrol" is missing a factual basis.

All told, this statement strikes us as incorrect and ridiculous. Pants on Fire!

According to the fact-check you read, who did Rep. Duncan Hunter say were caught at the U.S./Mexico border?
- ISIS fighters
- Child migrants
- Cuban refugees
- Drug smugglers

Which article did you enjoy most?

[FL]
-Fact-check: Health care is driving down the deficit
-Fact-check: Hagan missed half of Armed Service Committee hearings this year
-Fact-check: Raising minimum wage would cost 500,000 jobs

[GA]
-Fact-check: Perdue off base with agriculture claim

[NH]
-Fact-check: Scott Brown wanted to force women to look at photos of fetuses

[OR]
-Fact-check: Oregon’s unemployment rate above the national average for 17 years

[RI]
-Fact-check: Providence’s pension fund has remained critically underfunded under Taveras

[TX]
-Fact-check: Greg Abbott helped prosecute terrorist ISIS member

[VA]
-Fact-check: Warner backed restrictions on veteran gun rights

[WI]
-Fact-check: Walker claims Wisconsin is third in Midwest job growth

[other states]
-Fact-check: US Border Patrol caught at least 10 ISIS fighters
Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)
NEW YORK, Oct. 10, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- The Knot, the number one online wedding resource, is giving brides an exclusive peek into the latest trends at New York Bridal Fashion Week—the biggest annual event for bridal fashion—with online and mobile live-streaming of runway shows, including Claire Pettibone, Kelly Faetanini, Reem Acra, JLM Couture, Amsale, Maggie Sottero, Kenneth Pool, Christos and Rivini.

Brides on TheKnot.com can get a sneak preview of the newest collections from top bridal designers, featuring thousands of dresses that will be shown for the first time, months before they hit retail stores. Additionally, The Knot will be hosting COUTURE: New York, the premier bridal market destination for the industry at New York Bridal Fashion Week, where retailers will view the newest collections from top designers in an intimate setting.

Coverage of New York Bridal Fashion Week on TheKnot.com will conclude with the only live red-carpet show recap, "The Knot Gala LIVE," from the New York Public Library on Monday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Carley Roney, prominent TV wedding personality and cofounder of The Knot, and featuring a who's who of the wedding world.

With approximately 1,000 attendees, The Knot Gala is a culmination of New York Bridal Fashion Week and will feature celebrities including Daniel Boulud, Marcy Blum, Nicole Miller, Ines di Santo, Randy Fenoli and The Bachelorette's Desiree Hartsock, who will be showcasing her new collection for Maggie Sottero. The fifth anniversary of The Knot Gala, sure to be the biggest and most luxe gala yet, will be a feast for the five senses, according to top event planner Jes Gordon of properFUN, who is creating this year's event with The Knot. For updates on New York Bridal Fashion Week, COUTURE and The Knot Gala, follow The Knot on Twitter, Instagram and TheKnot.com.

**About The Knot**
The Knot is the nation's leading wedding resource, reaching couples in America through the #1 wedding website, TheKnot.com; mobile apps, The Knot Ultimate Wedding Planner App and Wedding LookBook by The Knot; The Knot national and local wedding magazines; The Knot book series; and syndicated columns in newspapers nationwide. The Knot is the flagship brand of XO Group Inc. (NYSE: XOXO; http://www.xogroupinc.com), the premier consumer internet and media company devoted to weddings, pregnancy and everything in between, providing couples and new parents with the trusted information, products and advice they need to guide them through the most transformative events of their lives. Follow The Knot on Twitter @TheKnot.

What event is being live-streamed by The Knot?
-Project Runway
NEW YORK, Oct. 10, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Spire, a wearable personal health-tracking device, took home the trophy for the 2014 People's Design Award at Cooper Hewitt's National Design Awards gala in New York Oct. 9. National Design Awards jury member Bruce Mau announced the winning design and presented the award to Spire CEO Jonathan Palley and designer Zhao Zhao. Spire analyzes an individual's emotional and physical state with the goal of improving people's daily lives through greater health, balance and productivity.

"With an emphasis on transforming people's lives through regular feedback about their health, Spire truly captures the essence of the People's Design Award—revolutionizing our everyday experiences through innovative design," said Caroline Baumann, director of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. "Increasingly, the noise and distractions of daily life have the potential to keep us from being productive and healthy, and the selection of Spire by the American public shows the importance of keeping stress levels in check while also inspiring new ways of maintaining a healthy balance."

Designed by Zhao Zhao, Spire is worn on the hip or torso and determines patterns of breathing, movement and activity through a group of sensors that provide feedback in real time to a user's smartphone. Based on set personal goals and the data it collects, the device sends messages throughout the day to shift one's state of mind to improve mood and reduce stress, or inspire activity if one is sedentary. Described as a "mini yogi in your pocket," Spire was introduced to the market in October 2014 after three years in development with a team from Stanford University's Calming Technology Lab.

This year's contest, organized by Cooper Hewitt and Smithsonian.com, invited the public to vote for their favorite design from a pool of 20 works. From Sept. 10 to Oct. 6, more than 20,000 votes were cast from across the country. Nominees included inventive consumer products (Drift Light, Lumio, Soma Water Bottle), medical devices (Cue, Stick-On Circuit Board), eco-friendly construction materials (Mushroom Building Blocks), emergency tools (SAM Junctional Tourniquet) and design solutions for improving human and environmental problems (Deka Arm, Ecozoom Stove). Previous winners include Pack H2O Water Backpack; Marianne Cusato, designer of the Katrina Cottage; Toms Shoes; the Zôn Hearing Aid; the Trek Lime Bicycle; the Braille Alphabet Bracelet; and Design Matters, a show about design and culture.

What award did Spire win?
- German Design Award
- EcoChic Design Award
- People's Design Award
COLUMBIA, S.C., Oct. 9, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- As fans continue to cheer on the South Carolina Gamecocks this season, the University of South Carolina is announcing a delicious new addition to its game day roster. Kayem, the Official Frank and Sausage of the Atlanta Falcons and Georgia Dome, signed a new multi-year partnership with the University of South Carolina Athletics to manufacture and distribute Kayem Franks and Bratwurst at Williams-Brice Stadium, Colonial Life Arena and Carolina Stadium during football, basketball and baseball games. With the agreement, Kayem is now the Official Franks and Sausage of the University of South Carolina Gamecocks.

Kayem Franks, at the University of South Carolina sports venues, feature Kayem's special all-beef recipe, offering a unique blend of spices for a distinct flavorful kick. Kayem Bratwurst offers a distinct hearty flavor and all of Kayem's plump and juicy franks and brats have no fillers and are MSG and gluten free.

"We're thrilled to partner with the University of South Carolina to bring Kayem's signature high-quality taste to Gamecock fans and guests visiting Williams-Brice Stadium, Colonial Life Arena and Carolina Stadium," said Matt Monkiewicz, Vice President of Marketing at Kayem. "Our partnership with the University reinforces Kayem's efforts to expand our offerings throughout South Carolina and enables sports fans and hot dog lovers to enjoy our renowned franks and bratwurst while rooting for their beloved hometown teams."

"We are excited to introduce Kayem, a strong brand that produces quality products, to our Gamecock fans," said Charles Bloom, Senior Associate Athletic Director – External Affairs with the University of South Carolina. "We constantly strive to find new ways to enhance the experience for fans and offering a trusted brand like Kayem at home games and events is another step in fulfilling our promise."

Kayem Foods, founded in 1909, is the largest meat processor in New England and is expanding its presence throughout the east coast. Owned and operated by the same family for more than 100 years, the company manufactures Kayem Franks, the #1 brand of franks sold in New England. Best known for its Old Tyme Natural Casing franks, Kayem produces over 100 varieties of hot dogs and 300 varieties of deli meats, sausage and dinner hams under the Kayem, al fresco, Schonland’s, McKenzie, Triple M, Genoa, Jordan's, Deutschmacher, Kirschner and Essem brands. For more information, follow @KayemFranks on Twitter, "like" Kayem on Facebook or visit www.Kayem.com.

What changed at University of South Carolina football games?
- New official franks and sausage sponsor
- New beer sponsor
- New soda sponsor
- New halftime sponsor

Which article did you enjoy most?
- University of South Carolina to sell Kayem products at sporting events
- The Knot, the #1 brand in weddings, live-streams Bridal Fashion Week
- Personal Health Device Spire wins the 2014 People's Design Award
Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)

What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that electricity rates increased 30 percent while Charlie Crist was governor and decreased 11 percent under governor Rick Scott?

- Mostly true
-Half true
-Mostly false
-False

Next please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Scott Brown says Jeanne Shaheen voted with the president 99 percent of the time

By Jonathan Van Fleet on Tuesday, October 21st, 2014 at 10:22 p.m.

It’s become a go-to line of Scott Brown’s campaign to win a New Hampshire seat in the U.S. Senate -- so much so that he repeated it several times during an hour-long debate on Oct. 21, the first televised face-off of the campaign.

Shaheen, Brown said just seven minutes into the debate in Concord, "has in fact voted with the president over 99 percent of the time. What does that mean to people in New Hampshire? It means she was the deciding vote for Obamacare. … She’s also voted to put in place policies where we have more and more gridlock by voting with her party over 99 percent of the time."

Brown has delivered variations of this claim so frequently over the past few months that anyone in New Hampshire who’s been plugged into an electronic device has surely heard it. It’s been a mainstay of Brown’s ads in a frenzied air war -- so far in the race for U.S. Senate, more than 10,000 ads have aired costing, more than $7 million.

PolitiFact New Hampshire looked into a version of this claim last March, after the New Hampshire Republican Party released a web video titled "99 Percent." It claimed that Shaheen consistently supports the president and "votes with Obama 99 percent of the time." The ad was launched before Brown had officially declared himself a candidate in the race.

Here, we’ll look at Brown’s claim that Shaheen has "voted with the president 99 percent of the time." (Last year PolitiFact New Hampshire checked the claim that Shaheen was the deciding vote for Obamacare and ruled that Mostly False.)

Our ruling

Scott Brown said Shaheen votes with Obama 99 percent of the time.

Brown has credible support for this claim -- in 2013, Shaheen took the same position as the president 99 percent of the time when Obama outlined a clear position, based on analysis by Congressional Quarterly. That wasn’t much different than earlier years in the Senate -- overall, her votes have aligned with Obama’s 98 percent of the time since she took office.

Still, the CQ ratings address a fraction of all issues facing Congress. Obama only took a clear position in about one third of the Senate votes, and in some issues that didn’t come to a vote, Shaheen broke with the President.

Still, Brown’s claim about Shaheen isn’t far off. We rate it Mostly True.

What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that New Hampshire Senator Jeanne Shaheen “voted with the president 99 percent of the time”?
- True
- Mostly true
- Mostly false
- False

Finally, please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
Rick Scott says he supported in-state tuition for Dreamers while Charlie Crist opposed it

By Amy Sherman on Tuesday, October 21st, 2014 at 10:04 p.m.

Gov. Rick Scott and former Gov. Charlie Crist argued about immigration reform during their third and final debate.

Scott defended his record in the debate, arguing that he had helped out a certain group of illegal immigrants afford college -- "dreamers."

"Dreamers," named for the as-yet unpassed DREAM Act, are illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. After Congress failed to pass the bill, President Barack Obama in June 2012 announced a two-year moratorium on the deportation of some children who had been brought to United States illegally by their parents.

"Let’s look at what I did do that Charlie said was the wrong thing to do," Scott said. "I said if you grow up in our state, you should get the same in-state tuition as your peers. Charlie said when the Legislature didn’t pass it before, that they did the right thing. So Charlie was against that, but we did the right thing, because whatever country you grew up in, if you live in Florida you ought to have the same right (to) in-state tuition as your peers."

However, Scott is omitting part of his own record -- and part of Crist’s record -- about "dreamers" and in-state tuition.

Our ruling

Scott said he supported in-state tuition for "dreamers" while Crist was against it. There’s some truth to that claim, but the reality is that both candidates have flip-flopped on the issue, making such a clear-cut comparison problematic.

In reality, Scott was against in-state tuition for "dreamers" in 2011 but came out for it in 2014. Crist opposed it in 2006 but voiced his support during this current campaign. On balance, we rate the claim Half True.
According to the fact-check you read, the candidates in Florida’s gubernatorial campaign were clashing over their records on what issue? [randomize order of options]
- offering in-state college tuition to illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children
- weakening restrictions on trade with Cuba
- the use of more restrictive security measures along the U.S.-Mexico border
- providing vouchers for children in Florida to attend private schools
Does David Perdue want to eliminate the U.S. Education Department?

By April Hunt on Wednesday, October 22nd, 2014 at 12:00 a.m.

A new ad from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee wants to paint GOP Senate hopeful David Perdue as an extremist when it comes to education.

Education has already been a hot issue in the tight governor’s race. The ad, "Help," sounds the alarm for the topic in the closely watched Senate battle between Perdue and Democrat Michelle Nunn.

The main claim: Perdue wants to abolish the federal Department of Education, which would jeopardize $1 billion for Georgia public schools already struggling with tight budgets.

"That would devastate Georgia schools," the ad narrator says. "A billion dollars cut from K through 12. Eliminate all federal student loans."

Republicans have called for eliminating the federal department since Ronald Reagan first pledged to do so in his 1980 presidential campaign.

The issue has lived on in some conservative circles, even amid stiff Congressional opposition for decades. Reagan himself switched positions in 1983, after a federal report warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity" in American schools.

The son of two teachers, Perdue has talked at length about the need for more local control. But does that translate into eliminating the federal department? And would the cut mean such a dramatic loss to school funding in Georgia?

PolitiFact Georgia decided to check it out.

Our ruling

Our research finds there is reason to believe Perdue does support abolishing the department and transferring funding to the local level.

But it is alarmist to suggest the end of the department would be the end of all K-12 money. And suggestions that it would mean the end of student loan programs ignores the history that has already shuffled their administration.

For that reason, we rate the claim Half True.
Who claimed that “David Perdue wants to abolish the U.S. Department of Education”?
[randomize order of options]
- Jason Carter, the Democratic candidate for governor in Georgia
- The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
- Zell Miller, a former Democratic governor of Georgia
- Michelle Nunn, the Democratic candidate for senator in Georgia
Jeanne Shaheen says Scott Brown backed bill to let employers use religious opt-out on mammograms

By Louis Jacobson on Friday, October 10th, 2014 at 11:25 a.m.

The U.S. Senate race in New Hampshire has been awash in claims about abortion and women’s health issues in recent days. One claim by incumbent Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen caught our eye. Shaheen is facing a challenge from former Republican Sen. Scott Brown.

In a news release from her campaign, Shaheen said:

"I have always supported a woman’s right to choose because I know women should be making health care decisions in consultation with their doctors and their families, not their employer. Scott Brown’s record is clear: When it counts, he doesn’t stand up for women’s reproductive rights and economic security. He co-sponsored legislation to let employers deny women coverage for birth control or even mammograms. New Hampshire women can’t trust Scott Brown, and his record is more evidence that he is wrong for New Hampshire."

We noticed two claims that are related, but distinct enough to analyze separately. First, would the legislation in question have allowed employers deny women coverage for birth control? And would it have allowed employers to deny coverage for mammograms?

We’ve heard of controversies over birth control, but not mammograms. So we decided to check it out. (We’ve addressed birth control in a separate fact-check.)

Our ruling

Shaheen said Brown co-sponsored legislation to let employers deny women coverage for mammograms.

The amendment, which Brown supported, was written loosely enough to allow a religious-conscience opt-out for almost any conceivable form of preventive care. But it didn’t target mammograms, as Shaheen implied. And while the amendment would have protected religious-conscience objections, we failed to uncover any evidence that mammograms have inspired religious opposition, either now or in the past.

The claim contains an element of truth but ignores critical facts that would give a different impression. We rate the claim Mostly False.
According to the fact-check you just read, what did Jeanne Shaheen criticize about Scott Brown? [randomize order of options]
- Supporting a bill that would allow employers to deny insurance coverage for mammograms
- Supporting a bill that would raise the number of hours required to receive overtime pay
- Supporting a bill that would reduce government subsidies for farmers
- Supporting a bill that would require people without health insurance to pay a fine
Did Sen. Jeff Merkley vote 'six times for more debt'?

By Dana Tims on Friday, August 15th, 2014 at 3:51 p.m.

Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley and his Republican challenger, newcomer Monica Wehby, are trading barbs as they head toward their November showdown.

Wehby is now the beneficiary of a new television advertising campaign mounted by a group called Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce -- a political arm of conservative billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch.

The claim:

A new 30-second advertising spot just launched this month as part of an estimated $3.6 million effort on Wehby’s behalf takes Merkley to task on spending issues.

Merkley, according to the narrator "voted six times to raise the debt limit." While the narrator is speaking, though, red letters appear next to a screen shot of Oregon’s junior senator, proclaiming: "VOTED 6 TIMES FOR MORE DEBT."

Did Merkley, as the screen words assert, vote half a dozen times "for more debt?" PolitiFact Oregon checked.

The ruling:

An ad campaign supporting candidate Monica Wehby, includes words on the screen saying that Sen. Jeff Merkley voted six times "for more debt."

However, the U.S. Treasury, and a prior PolitiFact check, note that a vote to raise the debt ceiling does not, by itself, authorize new spending. All it does is authorize the federal government to borrow sufficient funds to pay for debt that has already been incurred.

Merkley’s six votes to raise the debt ceiling were not, in other words, votes "for more debt." We rate the claim False.

Who ran the ad that said Jeff Merkley “voted six times for more debt”? [randomize order of options]

-Freedom Partners
- Citizens United
- American Crossroads
- Congressional Leadership Fund
American LeadHERship ad ignores the three years Allan Fung didn't raise taxes

By C. Eugene Emery Jr. on Tuesday, October 14th, 2014 at 12:01 a.m.

He’s the only candidate in the race for Rhode Island governor who has been in a position to raise taxes. So it’s not surprising that Allan Fung, the Republican mayor of Cranston, has come under attack for -- wait for it -- raising taxes.

A new ad titled "Allan Fung - An Insider's Insider" by the American LeadHERship PAC, a political action committee that is focused on electing Democrat Gina Raimondo, asks, "What do we really know about Allan Fung?" The ad calls him "a career politician" and says, "as mayor, he raised taxes three times."

Fung became mayor in 2009. He has repeatedly acknowledged that he raised taxes three times during his six years in office.

But he also inherited a huge pension problem, a budget that had $1.5 million in phony savings, and a school committee that had spent about $8 million it didn't have. His first year in office was marked by a massive cut in state aid that rocked cities and towns.

And, with the Great Recession in full swing, it didn't get easier for him or other mayors. For example, early in his term, general revenue sharing, where the state gave about $55 million from sales and income taxes to municipalities, was eliminated.

But he and the city ultimately stabilized the budget and during the last three of his six years in office, the city has not raised taxes.

In the end, the statement in the American LeadHERship commercial is accurate. But because it leaves out the important context of the three most-recent years in which he did not raise taxes, we rate it Mostly True.

What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that Allan Fung “raised taxes three times” as mayor? [randomize order of options]
- True
- Mostly true
- Mostly false
- False
Wendy Davis says Greg Abbott fielded $250,000 donation weeks before opposing victims of surgeon

By W. Gardner Selby on Wednesday, October 15th, 2014 at 5:22 p.m.

In a TV ad, Wendy Davis said Greg Abbott took a hefty campaign donation before siding with a hospital against patients injured and killed by a drug-taking surgeon.

Davis, the Fort Worth state senator and Democratic gubernatorial nominee, consistently depicts Abbott, the state attorney general and Republican choice for governor, as an unethical insider beholden to powerful interests.

The narrator of the ad, titled "Operation," says: "He was a Texas surgeon, performing operations while reportedly using cocaine. Two people died, others were paralyzed. Doctors spoke out," the narrator says, "but the hospital did nothing to stop him. Families and victims sued the hospital.

"Then, weeks after accepting a quarter-million-dollar campaign contribution from the hospital's chairman, Greg Abbott got involved, using his office to go to court -- against the victims."

Abbott solicited and accepted the donation, we confirmed, and the state intervened in lawsuits pitting patients against the hospital, though he got involved to defend a state law.

Our ruling

Davis said that weeks "after accepting a quarter-million-dollar campaign contribution" from a hospital board chairman, Greg Abbott went to court against victims of a drug-taking neurosurgeon.

Davis’ statement needs clarification – that Abbott’s intervention was limited to defending the constitutionality of Texas’ tort-reform laws.

That makes this statement Mostly True.
Who claimed that “weeks after accepting a quarter-million-dollar campaign contribution” from a hospital board chairman, Greg Abbott went to court against victims of a drug-taking neurosurgeon? [randomize order of options]
- Ron Kirk, a former mayor of Dallas and former Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate
- Wendy Davis, the Democratic candidate for governor of Texas
- Rick Perry, the Republican governor of Texas
- George W. Bush, the former governor of Texas and U.S. president
Warner embellishes PolitiFact finding on Gillespie ad

By Nancy Madsen on Monday, October 13th, 2014 at 12:27 p.m.

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner is airing a TV ad accusing Ed Gillespie, his Republican opponent, of running deceptive campaign commercials.

Warner cited two of our Truth-O-Meters as proof.

"Ed Gillespie … is attacking Mark Warner with false ads experts call misleading, completely made up," the narrator of ad says.

While those words are being spoken, the written words "SIMPLY FALSE" and "MISLEADING" pop up on the screen with citations from PolitiFact this year -- the first from Sept. 28 and the second from April 25.

Let’s take a look at what we actually said about the Gillespie claims that Warner denounces.

Our ruling

A Warner TV commercial says PolitiFact Virginia has frowned upon two negative claims that have aired in Gillespie ads.

Warner’s right that we labeled as "simply false," the indication in one Gillespie ad’s that the Warner was awarded the "Lie of the Year" by our colleagues at PolitiFact National.

But the senator is wrong in suggesting we labeled as "misleading" another attack by his opponent -- that Warner has voted with the president 97 percent of the time. In fact, we rated the statistic True. In the article, we quoted a political scientist who said it would be "misleading" to conclude from the statistic that Warner is a yes-man to the president.

Warner tries to walk a fine line on the ad by having the moderator say "experts call" the ads misleading. But the bold letters on the screen saying "POLITIFACT VIRGINIA" put the words in our mouth. In one case, that’s so; in one case, it’s not. All together, Warner’s ad statement is Half True.
Who claimed that PolitiFact has ruled that Ed Gillespie’s ads are false and misleading?
[randomize order of options]
-U.S. Senator Mark Warner
-Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe
-President Barack Obama
-Former President Bill Clinton
Did Sen. Jeff Merkley vote 'six times for more debt'?

By Dana Tims on Friday, August 15th, 2014 at 3:51 p.m.

Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley and his Republican challenger, newcomer Monica Wehby, are trading barbs as they head toward their November showdown.

Wehby is now the beneficiary of a new television advertising campaign mounted by a group called Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce -- a political arm of conservative billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch.

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Merkley, according to the narrator "voted six times to raise the debt limit." While the narrator is speaking, though, red letters appear next to a screen shot of Oregon’s junior senator, proclaiming: "VOTED 6 TIMES FOR MORE DEBT."

Did Merkley, as the screen words assert, vote half a dozen times "for more debt?" PolitiFact Oregon checked.

The ruling:

An ad campaign supporting candidate Monica Wehby, includes words on the screen saying that Sen. Jeff Merkley voted six times "for more debt."

However, the U.S. Treasury, and a prior PolitiFact check, note that a vote to raise the debt ceiling does not, by itself, authorize new spending. All it does is authorize the federal government to borrow sufficient funds to pay for debt that has already been incurred.

Merkley’s six votes to raise the debt ceiling were not, in other words, votes "for more debt." We rate the claim False.

What did Wisconsin governor Scott Walker say about the next state budget? [randomize order of options]
-There will be a large budget surplus
- There will be a large budget deficit
- More investments need to be made in education
- Taxes need to be cut to help the economy grow
Amid Ebola cases, Cory Gardner blasts CDC spending on 'jazzercise,' 'urban gardens'

By Louis Jacobson on Monday, October 20th, 2014 at 11:32 a.m.

As fears over Ebola reached a crescendo, Rep. Cory Gardner, R- Colo., took a shot at the federal government’s handling of the disease during a debate with Democratic Sen. Mark Udall.

Gardner has been gaining ground in the closely watched Colorado Senate race, and that contest is just one of many around the country in which Ebola has become an issue.

Gardner, referring to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said, "Perhaps the CDC should quit spending money on things like jazzercise, urban gardening and massage therapy and direct that money to where it's appropriate in protecting the health of the American people."

We wondered if it was true that the government is spending money on jazzercise, urban gardening and the like at the expense of funding for Ebola.

Our ruling

Gardner said the CDC is "spending money on things like jazzercise, urban gardening and massage therapy" that could be redirected to Ebola.

We weren’t able to document such expenditures, but given the agency’s spending parameters, it’s certainly possible they’ve been made. However, by cherry-picking three chuckle- (or outrage-) inducing spending items, Gardner presents a misleading description of what the fund does. Those efforts almost certainly represent a tiny fraction of spending from the prevention fund, which is dominated by efforts to attack diseases that kill more than 1.4 million people every year, rather than one so far with Ebola.

The claim contains some element of truth but ignores critical facts that would give a different impression, so we rate it Mostly False.

What was the PolitiFact rating of the claim that the CDC is "spending money on things like jazzercise, urban gardening and massage therapy" that could be redirected to Ebola?
- True
- Mostly true
- Mostly false
Which article did you enjoy most?

[FL]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Which candidate supported in-state tuition for Dreamers?

[GA]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Effects of abolishing the U.S. Department of Education

[NH]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Bill would let employers use religious opt-out on mammograms

[OR]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Voted “six times for more debt”?

[RI]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Ad ignores years that taxes weren’t raised

[TX]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Donation received weeks before opposing victims of surgeon

[VA]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: PolitiFact finding on ad embellished

[WI]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Next state budget will begin with a surplus

[other states]  
- Fact-check: Electricity rates in Florida lower, below national average  
- Fact-check: Senator voted with the president 99 percent of the time  
- Fact-check: Amid Ebola cases, CDC spending on “jazzercise,” “urban gardens”
Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. Please read the article below carefully. (You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.)
ELTON JOHN Extends "The Million Dollar Piano" Residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace and Announces January, March and April 2015 Performance Dates

LAS VEGAS, Oct. 21, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Caesars Entertainment and AEG Live have announced that ELTON JOHN will extend his original three year contract at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace and will return with his critically acclaimed show, "The Million Dollar Piano," for three more years. Tickets for the following January, March and April 2015 performances will go on sale Sunday, Oct. 26 at 10 a.m. PT:

January 16-17 Friday, Saturday

January 19-20 Monday, Tuesday

January 23-24 Friday, Saturday

March 18, 20, 21 Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

March 23-24 Monday, Tuesday

March 27-28 Friday, Saturday

March 30-31 Monday, Tuesday

April 3-4 Friday, Saturday

April 6-7 Monday, Tuesday

April 10-11 Friday, Saturday

April 13-14 Monday, Tuesday

World-renowned singer, songwriter and performer Elton John made a triumphant return to The Colosseum at Caesars Palace with his all new show, "The Million Dollar Piano" in Sept. 2011. At the centerpiece of the performance is the show's namesake piano, an engineering marvel featuring more than 68 LED video screens created by Yamaha.

Elton is accompanied by his band, which includes Davey Johnstone on guitar, Matt Bissonette on bass, John Mahon on percussion, Nigel Olsson on drums and Kim Bullard on keyboards, with a special appearance by percussionist Ray Cooper.

"The Million Dollar Piano" features iconic hits and classic album tracks from throughout Elton's incredible five decade career, including a selection of songs from his highly-acclaimed 16 times platinum remastered album "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The monumental career of international singer/songwriter and performer Elton John spans five decades. He is one of the top-selling solo artists of all time, with 35 gold and 25 platinum albums, 29 consecutive Top 40 hits, and he has sold more than 250 million records worldwide. Elton holds the record for the biggest selling single of all time, "Candle in the Wind '97," which sold 37 million copies. Since his career began in 1969 he has played almost 3,500 concerts worldwide.

What was the topic of the press release you read? [randomize order of options]

-The release of Elton John’s new album
- Elton John’s upcoming performances in Las Vegas
- The new Britney Spears show in Las Vegas
- Carrot Top’s upcoming performances in Las Vegas

Next please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 21, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Yosemite Grant, which established the nation's first protected wilderness, the California Historical Society, 36 Views, and Yosemite Conservancy have released a new enhanced, multimedia eBook, *Yosemite: A Storied Landscape*, designed to offer readers and enthusiasts the opportunity to explore Yosemite in a whole new way.


*Yosemite: A Storied Landscape*, created by award-winning digital publisher 36 Views, a San Francisco-based company that helps enrich people's experiences of art, nature, travel and history through multimedia publishing, is like no other book about the beloved landmark.

This unique, multimedia eBook with interactive discovery features and games brings to life the surprising, poignant, revealing, and sometimes tragic stories that inhabit the park as densely as its waterfalls and trees.

"From the Ahwahneechee to the artists and photographers inspired by Yosemite's scenery, to the climbers who scaled its granite peaks, this amazing, innovative eBook looks behind Yosemite's rocks and trees to add new dimensions to the experience of the beloved national park," said California Historical Society executive director & CEO Dr. Anthea Hartig.

*Yosemite: A Storied Landscape* is based on the same titled exhibition at CHS, which runs through January 15, 2015. The eBook includes essays by Kenneth Brower, Rebecca Solnit and other noted authors, including art critic Susan Landauer, historian Jeffrey Lee Rogers, and eBook editor and co-curator Kerry Tremain.

Compelling narratives unite storytellers across this celebrated landscape, including the artist who found inspiration during a six-week trip to Yosemite's high country; the basket weaver who discovered her Native family through a basket she made for Queen Elizabeth; the chef who cooked extraordinary back-country meals for influential visitors; the stagecoach driver who shuttled presidents, generals, and other famous Americans through the park; the Yosemite rock climber who established an environmentally responsible clothing company.

"With work by the park's leading artists and photographers included, the eBook chronicles the remarkable tales of the people who made Yosemite National Park what it is today," said Yosemite Conservancy president & CEO Mike Tollefson. "Those stories are told through artifacts and imagery as well as with words, sounds, and music, bringing a freshness, energy, and intimacy to an American icon bathed in myth."

*Yosemite: A Storied Landscape* is available for purchase on the iTunes bookstore for $9.99. Forty percent of the proceeds from each eBook purchased will support ongoing public education and programming at the Yosemite Conservancy and the California Historical Society. The eBook will also be available for purchase on Amazon as a standard Kindle eBook this fall.

According to the press release you read, what was released in honor of the anniversary of the land grant that created Yosemite National Park? [randomize order of options]
- A multimedia e-book
- A hardcover book of Ansel Adams photographs
- A CD of music inspired by Yosemite
- A discounted visitor pass for returning guests

Finally, please read the article below carefully. You’ll need to answer a question about it correctly to successfully complete the survey.
SEATTLE, Oct. 21, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Krusteaz, maker of premium baking, pancake and waffle mixes, introduces today its first line of gluten free products. Available at most grocery chains nationwide, each of the four new baking mixes deliver big on flavor without the gluten. In fact, Krusteaz is so confident that its new mixes taste just like their traditional counterparts that it is offering a Good Food, Great Flavor Gluten Free Guarantee*, which will provide a refund to any consumer who is not entirely satisfied with the mixes.

"We created our gluten free line because we believe that if you don't eat gluten, you shouldn't have to sacrifice taste and quality," said Andy Heily, SVP Sales & Marketing, Krusteaz. "We believe these products are so good that consumers will be shocked they are eating gluten free."

Gluten free bakers will be excited to try the line's new mixes, which all bear the Whole Grains Council's Whole Grain Stamp, guaranteeing a half serving of whole grains per serving.

- Gluten Free Buttermilk Pancake Mix featuring real sweet cream buttermilk
- Gluten Free Blueberry Muffin Mix including a can of real wild blueberries
- Gluten Free Honey Cornbread & Muffin Mix made with real honey
- Gluten Free Double Chocolate Brownie Mix combining rich, fudge-like texture with loads of chocolate chips

Consumers can visit www.krusteaz.com/gluten-free for additional information, gluten free baking and cooking inspiration, and unique recipes featuring the new gluten free line, including Spicy Garden Cornbread Muffins, Brownie Crackle Cookies, Apple Ham Pancake Strata and Blueberry White Streusel Coffee Cake. Krusteaz gluten free mixes are located in the baking and pancake mix aisles and retail for approximately $4.49 each.

About Krusteaz® The Krusteaz story began in 1932 when a group of women from a Seattle bridge club created a just-add-water pie crust that was an industry first. Today, Krusteaz remains a family-owned business that stands for innovative products, premium ingredients and easy-to-make mixes to fit every occasion. The product line includes pancakes, waffles, muffins, quick breads and flatbreads, cookies, dessert bars, cornbread, crumb cakes and a line of Gluten Free products. Every box invites consumers to *Seize the What If...™ and have fun in the kitchen, get a little messy, fuel their creativity and enjoy the possibilities Krusteaz mixes bring to the table.

About Continental Mills, Inc. Continental Mills, Inc. is a privately held manufacturer and marketer of baking and beverage mixes, snacks and other high-quality food products. Located in Tukwila, WA, the family-owned company has strong branded products sold under its Krusteaz®, WildRoots®, Kretschmer® Wheat Germ and Alpine® Cider lines as well as several licensed product extensions. Continental Mills' products are sold through retail, food service, and club store channels throughout the United States.
- Gluten free mixes
- Low sodium mixes
- Sugar free mixes
- Frozen waffles
- New halftime sponsor

Which article did you enjoy most?
- Elton John’s upcoming performance in Las Vegas
- Book honoring land grant that created Yosemite national park
- Krusteaz gluten free mixes
Wave 2

In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. Which of the following statements best describes you?
- I did not vote in the election this November
- I thought about voting this time, but didn’t
- I usually vote, but didn't this time
- I am sure I voted

There are many different activities related to the campaign and the elections that a person might do on the Internet. Below is a list of things you may or may not have done online in the months leading up to the November (2014) elections. Please indicate whether or not you did each of these activities [Yes/No].
- Used the Internet to research or fact-check claims made during the campaign
- Took part in an online discussion about political issues or the campaign
- Looked for information online about candidates' voting records or positions on the issues
- Watched video online about the candidates or the election

[If yes to fact-checking item]
Which of the following did you do to research or fact-check claims made during the campaign? Please indicate all that apply. [randomize order of options]
- Visited a fact-checking website such as PolitiFact.com, FactCheck.org, or the Washington Post Fact Checker
- Visited a candidate website
- Visited a blog or opinion website
- Visited a news website

Fact-checking is a new development in journalism that seeks to improve political discourse by holding politicians accountable when they make false or misleading statements. In general, how favorable or unfavorable is your overall opinion of the fact-checking movement in journalism?
- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Very unfavorable

Thinking about the amount of fact-checking that you see being performed today by journalists, do you think there should be more fact-checking, do you think the current amount of fact-checking is about right, or do you think there should be less fact-checking?
- There should be more fact-checking
- The current amount of fact-checking is about right
- There should be less fact-checking
In general, do you think fact-checkers get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?
- Get the facts straight
- Often inaccurate

In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that fact-checkers deal fairly with all sides or do they tend to favor one side?
- Deal fairly with all sides
- Tend to favor one side

In general, would you say fact-checkers tend to be liberal, neutral, or conservative?
- Liberal
- Neutral
- Conservative

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.
I feel confident that I can find the truth about political issues.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Most public officials can be trusted to do what is right without our having to constantly check on them.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
-Don't know

When government leaders make statements to the American people on television or in the newspapers, they are usually NOT telling the truth.
-Strongly agree
-Agree
-Neither agree nor disagree
-Disagree
-Strongly disagree
-Don't know

How often do you pay attention to what's going on in government and politics?
-Always
-Most of the time
-About half the time
-Some of the time
-Never

Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How interested or not interested would you say that you were in the political campaigns this year?
-Very much interested
-Somewhat interested
-Not much interested
-Not at all interested

How much attention were you able to pay to the 2014 election campaign?
-A lot
-Some
-Not much
-No attention

We would like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer.

Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person.

-Barack Obama
-John Boehner
-Democratic Party
-Republican Party
-PolitiFact
-Factcheck.org
Thinking about fact-checking again, which of the following is closer to your opinion?
- Fact-checking has no effect on how politicians behave
- Fact-checking helps to keep politicians honest

Which of the following is closer to your opinion?
- Fact-checking helps me understand politics better
- Fact-checking confuses me with debates over obscure details

Now we have a set of questions about statements made during the 2014 campaign. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like. We will present you with each statement and then ask you how accurate you think the statement is. Please tell me if you think it is very accurate, somewhat accurate, not too accurate, or not accurate at all.

Electricity rates have declined while Rick Scott has been governor of Florida.
- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don't know

North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan missed more than half of the Senate Armed Services Committee's public hearings in 2014.
- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don't know

Barack Obama has bombed more Muslim countries as president than George W. Bush did while in office.
- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don't know

[FL]
Former Florida governor Charlie Crist asserted his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself 75 times during testimony in a Medicare fraud case.
- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

According to a non-partisan Congressional report, raising the minimum wage would cost 500,000 jobs in Florida alone.
Though both opposed it in the past, Florida governor Rick Scott and his opponent Charlie Crist now support charging in-state tuition to illegal immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.

[GA]
U.S. Senate candidate David Perdue’s former company was sued for wage discrimination against female managers.

In a questionnaire, U.S. Senate candidate Michelle Nunn ranked agriculture as the 18th most important issue facing Georgia.

David Perdue supports eliminating the U.S. Department of Education in favor of more local control of schools.

[NH]
U.S. Senate candidate Scott Brown was one of the top recipients of campaign contributions from Wall Street.
U.S. Senate candidate Scott Brown opposed a law to give women information about the development of fetuses before they could have an abortion.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen has voted with President Obama 98 percent of the time since she took office.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

[OR]
Social Security is the program mostly responsible for the size of the federal budget deficit.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

Oregon’s unemployment rates has been above the national average for more than a decade.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley voted six times to authorize the U.S. government to borrow money to pay for debts that it has already incurred.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

[RI]
Democratic gubernatorial candidate Gina Raimondo won a contract from the city of Providence that was approved in secret.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know
The pension system for the city of Providence only has about 30 percent of the funds needed to meet its obligations.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Allan Fung did not raise taxes while he was in office as mayor of Cranston.

Texas state legislators passed a measure that prevented the state’s attorney general from being able to settle major lawsuits without legislative approval.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott helped prosecute a member of the ISIS terrorist group from Syria.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis took a campaign contribution from a hospital chairman immediately before intervening in a lawsuit against that hospital.

U.S. Senator Mark Warner supports providing options for veterans deemed mentally incompetent to own guns to appeal that judgment.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

U.S. Senator Mark Warner voted with President Obama 97 percent of the time in the Senate.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

[WI]
Wisconsin governor Scott Walker promised not to take contributions during budget season in his 2010 campaign.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

Wisconsin ranks near the middle of the pack among Midwestern states in job growth last year.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau in Wisconsin projects the state will have a budget surplus next year.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
- Not accurate at all
- Don’t know

[other states]
Joni Ernst, the Republican U.S. Senate candidate in Iowa, supported "personhood" legislation that would have amended the state Constitution to define a fertilized human egg as a person starting at conception.

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Not too accurate
No fighters associated with ISIS, the Islamic State group in Syria, have been apprehended coming across the U.S.-Mexico border.

A significant proportion of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention spending is devoted to social programs like jazzercise, urban gardening and massage therapy.

Based on the result of Tuesday's elections, who will have control of the House of Representatives and the Senate in 2015?

Which of these states will have a runoff election to decide their U.S. Senate race(s)? (select all that apply)

Which artist recently announced a 2015 tour to promote his new album Melody Road?

Which of these websites recently live-streamed runway shows from Bridal Fashion Week to its readers?
Which of these baked goods brands announced its first line of gluten free products in October?
- Bisquick
- Krusteaz
- Betty Crocker
- Pillsbury
- Don’t know
Online Appendix B

Fact-check length study

Due to funding limitations that constrained available survey time as well as concerns about respondent attention and panel attrition, we treated respondents with shortened PolitiFact articles that included the introduction and conclusion to each fact-check, but excluded the middle sections that made the fact-checks lengthy and time-consuming to read.

We therefore conducted an auxiliary study on Mechanical Turk comparing the results of complete fact-checks with the abbreviated versions included in our YouGov experiment. We specifically evaluate the null hypothesis that the length of the fact-check does not affect respondent attitudes toward fact-checks or the other outcomes of interest in the main study using identical procedures to those described in the main text except as noted below:

- No survey weights are available.

- The Turk study is conducted as a single study with a pre-treatment section including questions from wave 1, a manipulation in which some respondents are exposed to three short or long fact-checks, and a post-treatment section including questions from wave 2. We also ask additional questions designed to explicitly gauge reaction to the length of the treatments.

Our expectation in this preregistered supplementary analysis was that responses to the complete fact-checks will generally show few differences compared with the abbreviated versions and that any differential responses we do observe will be consistent with our expectations above (e.g., a more negative response to complete counter-attitudinal fact-checks compared with the abbreviated versions). The full design of the Turk study, including the stimuli used, is available upon request. The study was initiated on December
19, 2014 and run until data were collected on 500 participants.\textsuperscript{36}

As with the primary study, we block-randomized based on familiarity and favorability towards fact-checking. However, we use a slightly simpler procedure by grouping answers into larger familiar/unfamiliar and favorable/unfavorable categories. There were thus a total of five groups: familiar and favorable, familiar and unfavorable, unfamiliar and favorable, unfamiliar and unfavorable, and respondents who did not answer either the familiarity question or the favorability question. We measured six outcome variables at the end of the study: feelings toward PolitiFact and the fact-check articles the participants had read on a 0–100 feeling thermometer, whether they liked or disliked the articles they read on a five-point ordinal scale, and whether they felt the articles contained “too little detail,” “about the right amount of detail,” or “too much detail.”

We tested for treatment effects on each outcome variable (treating mean feelings toward the article as one outcome) and for a composite favorability score created using a principal components factor analysis of PolitiFact feelings, mean feelings toward each article, and how much they reported liking the articles. The models reported in Table B1 were estimated using OLS with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights to account for the block randomization procedure described above.\textsuperscript{37}

In general, we find little difference between conditions other than a significant increase

\textsuperscript{36}Note: We excluded a placebo condition from the Turk study due to a number of relevant differences between the YouGov study in the context and participant population, which include differences in participant characteristics between the studies, the post-election context versus the pre-election context, a one-shot study versus a multi-wave panel design, and the number of fact-checks to which respondents are exposed (nine for members of the YouGov treatment group versus three in Turk). The auxiliary study is solely intended to test differences in response to the short versus long fact-checks. Our expectation is that the higher levels of respondent attention generally observed among Turk participants should lead to greater differences between the short and long fact-checks than we would have observed with YouGov respondents. The response to the fact-checks in the Turk study is also observed immediately rather than after a delay, which should again increase the likelihood of observing different responses.

\textsuperscript{37}Results for the ordered outcomes were identical using ordered probit (available upon request).
Table B1: Experimental effects of fact-check length (Mechanical Turk sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PolitiFact feelings</th>
<th>Liked articles</th>
<th>Article feelings</th>
<th>Composite favorability</th>
<th>Detail level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long fact-check</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.25)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(2.03)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (short articles)</td>
<td>62.38**</td>
<td>3.76**</td>
<td>60.78**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.94**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.62)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(1.28)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05; ** p < .01; OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights.

in the perceived level of detail (p < .01). In the short fact-check condition, 11% of respondents said there was “too little detail,” 84% said there was “about the right amount,” and only 5% said there was “too much.” By contrast, 34% of respondents in the long fact-check condition said there was “too much detail” and only 63% said there was “about the right amount” (the proportion saying there was “too little” declined to 4%).

Experimental balance and attrition

To minimize attrition, respondents were not randomized until the beginning of mini-wave 1. Per our preregistration, we test for differential attrition by examining the relationship between completion of wave 2 and treatment assignment, which is our primary measure of attrition. We observe a modestly higher study completion rate in the treatment than placebo condition (85% versus 80%; p < .05), which we attribute to the potentially more interesting content (fact-checks about an upcoming election rather than press releases).

However, it is critical to verify that differential attrition does not threaten the validity of our inferences. In Table B2, we therefore test for balance on the following list of observable characteristics both at the stage at which respondents were randomized and at the conclusion of the study, which allows us to examine whether imbalance on observables worsened between the initial randomization and the final sample.

- Attitudes toward fact-checking measured in wave 1 (median splits on the composite fact-checking interest measure used to test H1 and the composite fact-checking favorability measure used to test H2)
- Political characteristics (partisanship and a median split on political knowledge)
- Demographic characteristics (race, sex, and age)

38The one partial exception is that respondents reported modestly more positive feelings toward PolitiFact (4.09; 95% CI: -0.33, 8.51), but this effect falls short of statistical significance at conventional levels and is not replicated on other outcome measures.
Table B2: Experimental balance tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial experimental sample</th>
<th>Final sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High fact-checking interest</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High fact-checking favorability</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High political knowledge</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45+</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We observe no evidence of imbalance at either stage, suggesting that the initial randomization was successful and that differential attrition did not create imbalance on observable characteristics. Specifically, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the treatment and placebo conditions on any of these characteristics among respondents at the stage of the initial randomization (mini-wave 1) or at the conclusion of the study (wave 2). As in any experimental study, we cannot assess imbalance on unobservables, but the available evidence suggests that we can safely treat missingness as ignorable. We therefore interpret the experimental effects in the main text as causal.

Finally, we also assess whether there was differential attrition on observational characteristics of interest between wave 1 and wave 2. Table B3 compares completion rates by respondent characteristics by those who took our initial battery at wave 1 \((n = 3197)\) and those who completed the mini-waves and wave 2 and were included in the final YouGov Sample \((n = 1000)\). Again, we observe no pattern of differential attrition (we cannot reject the null of no difference in completion rates for any of the listed characteristics), suggesting that the YouGov panel participants who opted not to participate in the study after wave 1 were not different on observables from those who chose to continue.

**Effects of placebo content**

To determine if participants in our placebo condition remembered the content they were shown, we tested whether they were more likely than the treatment group to answer questions about it correctly. This finding provides a contrast to the treatment effect estimate for the questions asking about recall of fact-checking information that is used to test H3.

Each respondent received a total of three questions for which the correct answer is coded as 1 and other answers are coded as 0 (see Online Appendix A for wording). We esti-
Table B3: Observational attrition tests

| Low fact-checking interest      | 0.31 |
| High fact-checking interest    | 0.32 |
| Low fact-checking favorability  | 0.31 |
| High fact-checking favorability | 0.32 |
| Democrat                       | 0.31 |
| Non-Democrat                   | 0.32 |
| Republican                     | 0.31 |
| Non-Republican                 | 0.31 |
| Low political knowledge        | 0.30 |
| High political knowledge       | 0.32 |
| Non-black                      | 0.32 |
| Black                          | 0.29 |
| Male                           | 0.32 |
| Female                         | 0.31 |
| Age 18–44                      | 0.33 |
| Age 45+                         | 0.30 |
| N                              | 3197 |

Our results indicate that exposure to placebo content during the campaign increased the proportion of correct answers to questions about that content after the election from 6% to 29%, an increase of 23 percentage points \((p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.20, 0.26)\). These findings suggest that our results for Hypothesis 3 above are not the result of differential engagement or attention between conditions: placebo respondents appear to have paid close attention to the content they received as well.

\[^{39}\text{This specification produces the same results as the preregistered model (which instead uses a treatment indicator as the predictor variable) but is easier to interpret.}\]
Table B4: Experimental evidence of placebo belief accuracy effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correct answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placebo condition</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (treatment mean)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights.
### Additional results

Table B5: Partisan differences in fact-checking favorability: Wave 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>Low knowledge</th>
<th>High knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>-0.20*</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30–44</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45–59</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 60+</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats-Republicans</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-sided). OLS models with survey weights provided by YouGov. The outcome variable is a composite measure of fact-check favorability (see Online Appendix A for question wording).
Table B6: Partisan differences in fact-checking favorability by political knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High knowledge (binary)</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat × high knowledge</td>
<td>0.88**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican × high knowledge</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge (0–8)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat × political knowledge</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican × political knowledge</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30–44</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45–59</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 60+</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with survey weights provided by YouGov. The outcome variable is a composite measure of fact-check favorability measured during wave 1 (see Online Appendix A for question wording).
Table B7: Fact-checking belief accuracy effects by outcome measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>Non-PolitiFact states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FL/Scott</td>
<td>NC/Hagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.232**</td>
<td>0.239**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.190**</td>
<td>0.304**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.018)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights. Outcome variable are individual political knowledge questions administered after the election (see Online Appendix A for question wording). Results for state-specific questions asked of respondents in PolitiFact states are omitted due to small sample sizes but are available upon request.

Table B8: Fact-checking belief accuracy effects by political knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>All partisans</th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.057*</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.048)</td>
<td>(0.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge</td>
<td>0.046**</td>
<td>0.046**</td>
<td>0.064**</td>
<td>0.017**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure×pol. knowledge</td>
<td>0.019**</td>
<td>0.021**</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.027**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.038*</td>
<td>0.037*</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.084**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.018)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.145**</td>
<td>0.152**</td>
<td>0.137**</td>
<td>0.144**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights. The outcome variable are composite measures of belief accuracy administered after the election (see Online Appendix A for question wording).
Table B9: Partisan differences in belief accuracy effects (interaction models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.155**</td>
<td>0.281**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment × GOP</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>-0.175**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.060)</td>
<td>(0.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.089**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.351**</td>
<td>0.184**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure: GOP</td>
<td>0.177**</td>
<td>0.105**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < .01 (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights. The outcome variable are composite measures of belief accuracy administered after the election (see Online Appendix A for question wording).
Table B10: Effects of fact-checking exposure on belief accuracy (stricter coding)

(a) Overall treatment effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>All partisans</th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.068**</td>
<td>0.068**</td>
<td>0.120**</td>
<td>0.052**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.154**</td>
<td>0.159**</td>
<td>0.188**</td>
<td>0.069**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
<td>(0.018)</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Differences by political knowledge levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th>All partisans</th>
<th>Belief-consistent</th>
<th>Belief-inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>0.061**</td>
<td>0.057**</td>
<td>0.094**</td>
<td>0.070**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High political knowledge</td>
<td>0.152**</td>
<td>0.154**</td>
<td>0.203**</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure×high knowledge</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.048)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PolitiFact state</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.088**</td>
<td>0.090**</td>
<td>0.098**</td>
<td>0.053**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure: High knowledge</td>
<td>0.075**</td>
<td>0.075**</td>
<td>0.144**</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights. The outcome variable is a composite measure of belief accuracy administered after the election (see Online Appendix A for question wording). In this coding scheme, which is more strict than the one used in the measures considered in Table 3, “True” PolitiFact ratings are only coded as correct only if a respondent calls the claim “very accurate,” “Mostly true” is coded as correct for “somewhat accurate,” “Half-true” is coded correct for somewhat accurate,” “Mostly false” is coded correct for “not too accurate,” “False” is coded correct for “not accurate at all” and “Pants on fire” is coded correct for “Not accurate at all.”
### Table B11: Don’t know response rate by fact-check exposure and political knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact-checking exposure</td>
<td>-0.170**</td>
<td>-0.100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior political efficacy</td>
<td>-0.126**</td>
<td>-0.073**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.034**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure×pol. knowledge</td>
<td>-0.018*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.496**</td>
<td>0.631**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-sided). OLS models with robust standard errors and inverse probability of treatment weights. The outcome variable is the proportion of don’t know responses provided by respondents (see Online Appendix A for question wording).