Burden by Design? Proceduralism, Bureaucratic Errors, and the Burden Tolerance of Bureaucrats

Abstract

Bureaucratic errors are a common and understudied source of administrative burdens in public service delivery. However, existing research has yet to consider the impacts of fire alarms over bureaucratic errors on the burden tolerance of bureaucrats. In this article, we leverage theory on proceduralism to make predictions regarding the unique influence of fire alarms over bureaucratic errors on the burden tolerance of bureaucrats. We conduct a survey experiment of 2,476 bureaucrats working in state agencies in the U.S. to estimate the effects of fire alarms over bureaucratic errors on burden tolerance under two randomly selected scenarios: 1) errors resulting in overpayment (fraud/waste) and 2) errors resulting in underpayment (loss of access). In line with our theory, we find that bureaucrats are more likely to impose additional burdens on potential clients when they experience a fire alarm over an overpayment scandal, whereby potential clients gain access to programs for which they are ineligible (fraud). We also find that bureaucrats reduce administrative burdens on potential clients when they experience a fire alarm over an underpayment scandal, where eligible applicants are erroneously denied access. Finally, the magnitude of the effects for the underpayment (access) scenario are significantly smaller than the estimates for the overpayment (fraud) scenario, revealing the power of fire alarms regarding fraud for influencing bureaucrats' burden tolerance. Interestingly, in contrast to prior research, these results are driven by bureaucrats identifying with the Democratic party, who disproportionately increase application requirements after fire alarms draw attention to overpayments (fraud).

Media attention often reveals bureaucratic errors in government program administration which can lead to further investigation by legislative actors and others (Peeters & Widlak, 2023). For example, the Washington Post recently sued the US government to publish data from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). This data suggested that funds appropriated to the program to help maintain payrolls were lent to non-existent companies. In one case, a team of six from East Orange, New Jersey have been accused of attempting to defraud the government via PPP claims using forged tax forms for fake small businesses with at least $62,000 in overpayments having been disbursed (IRS 2022). In fact, the Small Business Administration itself estimates that at least 70,000 of the PPP loans are potentially fraudulent (Pfeiffer and Fast 2023).

One way to mitigate potential overpayments is by increasing the required documentation from clients in application processes, which would add additional validation and demonstrate a commitment to cracking down on fraud, waste, and abuse. However, these increases in administrative burdens may also lead to underpayments via reducing access to programs for clients, in this case actual small businesses who maintained payrolls, who need the help the most (e.g., Barnes, 2020; Bell et al., 2023; Bell & Jilke, 2024; Chudnovsky & Peeters, 2021; Heinrich et al., 2022; Lasky-Fink & Linos, 2023; Martin et al., 2023; Nisar, 2017). Considering this important tradeoff, we ask: how will bureaucrats use their discretion over administrative burdens when attention is drawn to their programs for improper[1] payments?

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[1] According to 31 U.S.C. §3351 an improper payment includes the following "any payment that should not have been made or that was made in an incorrect amount, including an overpayment or underpayment, under a statutory, contractual, administrative, or other legally applicable requirement; and… (i) any payment to an ineligible recipient; (ii) any payment for an ineligible good or service; (iii) any duplicate payment; (iv) any payment for a good or service not received, except for those payments where authorized by law; and (v) any payment that does not account for credit for applicable discounts."

Existing explanations predicting whether bureaucrats will decide to shift burdens from the state onto potential clients rely on a theoretical model consisting of characteristics such as political ideology, personality, racial attitudes, or organizational capacity (Aarøe et al., 2021; Bell et al. 2021; Campbell & Ahn, 2023; Dynes et al., 2021; Haeder & Moynihan, 2024; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2021)(Bell et al. 2021). However, we argue in this situation, regardless of individual ideology, personality, racial attitudes, and even organizational capacity, bureaucrats will be incentivized to shift the level of administrative burdens to avoid any additional scandal or negative attention from political principals. In this way, we argue the burden tolerance of bureaucrats is at least partially driven by a previously unexplored factor: fire alarms over bureaucratic errors resulting in improper payments.

In our theoretical model, we also argue that not all fire alarms are going to affect bureaucrats equally. In cases where a fire alarm is raised about bureaucratic errors resulting in *overpayments* to clients (what many think of as fraud, waste, and abuse), we argue that bureaucrats will react by shifting significant burdens onto those clients. On the other hand, when a fire alarm raises concerns about bureaucratic errors that result in less eligible applicants accessing the program, we predict that bureaucrats will be less supportive of expanding application burdens. Our work also contributes to existing scholarship by arguing that the magnitude of fire alarms over underpayments to clients (loss of access) will be smaller than the effects in the overpayment frame due to the prevalence and power of fraud as a policy image that poses reputational damage for bureaucrats worried about additional oversight and political control (Carpenter 2010). Moreover, we draw from literature emphasizing bureaucratic proceduralism and negativity bias to justify our prediction that bureaucrats will weigh fire alarms

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on overpayments (fraud) more heavily than fire alarms calling attention to underpayments (access) (Bagley, 2019; James et al., 2020; Moynihan, 2025).

We evaluate our expectations through a pre-registered experiment embedded in a survey of 2,476 bureaucrats working in U.S. state agencies across 9 states. Our results indicate that concerns about overpayments in the form of fraud increase support for increasing the application requirements associated with a stylized small business development program, while concerns about underpayments associated with the inability of qualified applicants to access the same program prompt lower levels of support for increasing those burdens. Further, our results also demonstrate that the magnitudes of the effects related to fraud are significantly larger than those related to accessibility, supporting our argument that concerns about overpayments prompt larger increases in administrative burdens than do concerns about underpayments prompt decreases in burdens. Additionally, our analyses show that bureaucrats are not uniformly supportive of all kinds of administrative burdens, but instead demonstrate substantial variation in their levels of support for different kinds of application requirements; for instance, while respondents in all conditions express strong support for increasing income verification requirements, respondents are generally opposed to or neutral on raising the minimum credit rating applicants must have. Finally, in exploratory analyses we find that, in contrast to existing literature, our treatment effects are driven by Democrat-leaning bureaucrats; while Republican-leaning bureaucrats are supportive of burdens at roughly equal levels across treatment conditions, Democratic-leaning bureaucrats are significantly less supportive of burdens in the control and accessibility conditions but become as supportive of burdens as Republicans when made aware of fraud. Therefore, bureaucratic errors resulting in fraud/overpayment build burden tolerance among Democrats who generally have lower burden tolerance in the absence of a scandal over bureaucratic errors. These

findings have significant implications for burden reduction initiatives across the US and elsewhere, demonstrating the importance of fire alarms about bureaucratic errors and the importance of specific burden types over others.

These findings have important theoretical and practical implications. First, our findings demonstrate the importance of a previously unexplored factor in predicting the burden tolerance of bureaucrats: bureaucratic errors in the form of improper payments. We uncover a distinct mechanism explaining the adoption of burdens beyond what prior studies have emphasized such as ideology, demonstrating the importance of threats to program integrity for both Democrat-leaning and Republican-leaning bureaucrats. Second, our study demonstrates that in many cases administrative burdens may originate because of mistakes made by the bureaucracy in the past or fear of making those mistakes in the future, which create more hurdles for potential clients that may result in substantial inequities in access to public services. This offloading of burdens from the state onto its potential clients has serious normative implications, which we explore in our conclusion. Finally, our results add significant nuance to burden tolerance studies by revealing that not all application burdens are viewed equally. Thus, existing burden tolerance studies that leverage the standard survey scale measuring acceptability of hassles in citizen-state interactions miss important nuance that may be essential to understand as governments seek to reduce administrative burdens while maintaining support for programs and preserving perceptions of program integrity.

The Determinants of Burden Tolerance

Public management scholars have focused considerable attention on the negative consequences of administrative burdens (i.e., learning, compliance, and psychological costs in citizen-state interactions) for clients' access to public services, mental health, and emotional

well-being (e.g., Baekgaard et al., 2022; Bækgaard et al., 2024; Bell et al., 2023; Haeder & Moynihan, 2023; Hattke et al., 2020; Heinrich, 2016; Herd & Moynihan, 2020, 2018; Linos et al., 2020; Peeters, 2019). While there is ample research investigating the consequences of administrative burdens, less research has investigated the causes and origins of administrative burden adoption by bureaucrats (Halling & Baekgaard, 2023).

Recent scholarly work suggests that administrative burdens can be driven by individual bureaucrats and the discretion they have in policy implementation; in other words, no matter the policy design that legislators put in place, individual bureaucrats have the power to reduce or intensify clients' experiences of administrative burdens (Bell & Jilke, 2024; Bell & Smith, 2022; Benish et al., 2024; Herd & Moynihan, 2018; Jilke et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding why administrative burdens are adopted by policymakers and bureaucrats is an important question for scholars to better answer, especially as governments around the world seek to build a political will around burden reduction initiatives (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), US Office of Management and Budget, US Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs).

Existing explanations for why policymakers and bureaucrats support the expansion of administrative burdens have focused on personality, personal experience, political ideology, racial attitudes, and organizational capacity (Aarøe et al., 2021; Baekgaard et al., 2020; Bækgaard et al., 2024; Bell et al., 2021; Bell & Meyer, 2023; Bell & Smith, 2022; Campbell & Ahn, 2023; Haeder & Moynihan, 2023; Heinrich et al., 2022; Newswander et al., 2024; Peeters, 2019). So far, studies have found that personality traits and political ambition play a role in burden tolerance (Dynes et al., 2021, 2023). Specifically, conscientious individuals are more supportive of burdens while those with more openness to experience are less supportive of

administrative burdens (Aarøe et al., 2021). In other cases, burdens may be adopted because of bureaucrats having limited administrative capacity and high workloads (Andersen & Guul, 2019; Bell & Meyer, 2023; Guul et al., 2019) or reduced because policymakers have personal experience with burdensome programs (Baekgaard et al., 2020). Importantly, burdens originating from limited administrative capacity and high workload may be distinct from "hidden politics" and may originate from unintentional practices that are the result of internal organizational dynamics rather than bureaucrats using discretion to accomplish political goals (Peeters, 2019). Alternatively, burdens can also emerge from institutional design, such as decentralization and audit mandates on federal funding, which may lead to additional burdens being constructed by local agencies or individual street-level bureaucrats (Bell et al., 2024; Bell & Smith, 2022; Robben et al., 2024). Finally, recent studies have found that racial resentment among U.S. non-Hispanic White respondents are more likely to support administrative burdens, while those with higher empathy and lower administrative capital are less tolerant of burdens (Haeder & Moynihan, 2023, 2024).

Most research finds political ideology to be a dominant factor shaping support for burdensome policies (Campbell & Ahn, 2023; Haeder & Moynihan, 2023; Johnson & Kroll, 2021). As such, Newswander and co-authors (2024) propose that bureaucrats will use burdens as a tool for accomplishing partisan goals (i.e., "hidden politics[2]"), but ultimately, they do not find support for their hypothesis. Our work builds on this article, arguing that the environment in which bureaucrats operate is likely the reason we see the findings of Neswander et al., (2024)

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[2] Here we follow the common usage of the term. However, we note that tracking the term to its origin, to our knowledge Hacker (2004), suggests that the term hidden politics refers more accurately to policymaking. That is to say implementing bureaucratic discretion is a result of politics and is political but is not politics in and of itself but is instead policymaking or policy implementation.

diverge from their predictions. This is, in fact, in line with earlier research on poll workers in New Mexico (Atkeson et al. 2014b). Atkeson and colleagues find that the context of being a poll worker, and specific associated beliefs, explains street-level bureaucrat use of discretion and inconsistent application of voter ID laws as opposed to partisanship. In line with this article, we argue that the context in which bureaucrats operate matters; the culture of proceduralism and the rule bound nature of bureaucratic structures create a unique decision environment in which bureaucrats are not engaging in "hidden politics", but instead may be taking actions to avoid additional oversight from partisan lawmakers and reputational damage and/or scrutiny inflicted by fire alarms (Damonte et al., 2014; Durant, 1991; McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984).

Together, we argue that burden tolerance studies have yet to consider a factor that many bureaucrats face in the administration of programs: bureaucratic errors resulting in improper payments, which can prompt criticism from political principals and the public, damage agency reputations, and hurt agency morale. This factor helps answer a question posed by early administrative burden work, "under what conditions do 'hidden politics' become visible" (Moynihan, Herd, and Harvey 2014, pg. 63). In this way, we highlight a novel factor that reflects the unique political and organizational context bureaucrats operate within to theorize about the drivers of burden tolerance.

Bureaucratic Errors, and the Burden Tolerance of Bureaucrats

Most administrative burden literature has focused on the adoption of administrative burden as "hidden politics" whereby burdens are imposed on the public to accomplish political goals such as reducing the cost of programs, without necessitating the legislature to publicly reduce funding for popular programs (Herd & Moynihan, 2018; Moynihan & Herd, 2023). However, scholars have also recognized that unintentional or intentional organizational practices

that cause bureaucratic errors are another source of administrative burden, especially in more complex programs (Bullock, 2014; Holler et al., 2024; Peeters, 2019; Widlak & Peeters, 2020). Bureaucratic errors can result in overpayments or underpayments, and many governments have attempted to reduce the instance of improper payments globally (Greer & Bullock, 2018; Morton-Huddleston et al., 2018). When bureaucratic errors occur, oftentimes political officials in the legislature and even political principals within the executive branch must contend with negative media attention, reputational damage, and increased political oversight (Compton et al., 2023; Damonte et al., 2014; Maor & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2016; Young et al., 2023).

Bureaucrats dedicated to the mission and success of the programs they administer may take action to demonstrate to political officials that they take the stewardship of taxpayer dollars seriously. When concerns about over- or underpayments arise that undermine that bureaucratic commitment, bureaucrats can try to assuage stakeholders by increasing or decreasing administrative burdens, respectively, that may reduce the prevalence of those errors. Thus, when bureaucrats are primed to think about program overpayments, such as fraud, we expect that they will respond by raising the administrative burdens potential clients must satisfy to access the program.

Hypothesis 1: When concerns about overpayments arise, bureaucrats are more supportive of expanding application requirements.

In contrast, when bureaucrats are made to consider program underpayments, such as denying eligible individuals access to programs, we expect that bureaucrats will respond by lowering the burdens potential clients face when trying to use the program.

Hypothesis 2: *When a program attracts attention for poor accessibility, bureaucrats are less supportive of expanding application requirements.*

In both Hypothesis 1 and 2, we depart from prior studies by theorizing that the prospect or realization of bureaucratic errors motivates bureaucrats to alter levels of administrative burden to anticipate or appear responsive to those errors, regardless of those bureaucrats' underlying characteristics such as political ideology, personality, or racial attitudes. Bureaucrat implementation of additional, or fewer, burdens may be used to reduce the scrutiny from politicians and the media to reduce damage to organizational image, especially if the change in burdensome application requirements reduces the chances of future overpayments or underpayments. In fact, recent descriptive research on federal bureaucrats in Mexico suggest this may be the case (Erlich et al. 2021). Erlich and co-authors used detailed administrative data merged with extensive media coverage to find that bureaucrats responded more quickly, that is reduced burden, to information requests when the media was reporting about government failure but were slower to respond, increased burden, when the media was reporting about corruption. These patterns suggest lower-level bureaucrats actively engage in strategic reputation management via the implementation of administrative burdens. Similarly, experimental evidence in the EU also suggests bureaucrats may be more responsive to requests when media attention is negative as opposed to non-existent (Rimkutė and van der Voet 2024). Our work draws on methods similar to Rimkutė and van der Voet (2024) to better understand the dynamics documented in Mexico by Erlich and colleagues (2021), adding nuance to the kind of media attention experimentally manipulated and presented to bureaucrat survey respondents.

Additionally, we argue that bureaucrats will respond more strongly to over- and underpayments because the culture, ethics, and proceduralism of administrative agencies prompt

them to weigh these two types of improper payments differently (Bagley, 2019; Moynihan, 2025). First, we highlight the culture and ethics of administrative agencies to justify our prediction. Being good stewards of taxpayer funds is a *foundational ethos* among government employees and bureaucrats, who often face political pressure from elected officials and the media to improve the integrity of programs, be better stewards of tax-payer funds, and ensure that eligibility criteria are not being circumvented by applicants (Bell and Smith 2022; Atkeson et al 2014b).

From an operational standpoint, this cultural and ethical obligation is formalized in administrative procedures (Krause and Hong 2024). For instance, every budget cycle bureaucrats must justify the funding they receive for programs administered by their agency, and part of this process involves audits of payments made to applicants. In this process, it is usually easier to disburse funds that should have been paid than to 'claw back' funds inappropriately disbursed. In addition to the pressure bureaucrats face to address fraud/overpayments in their day-to-day operations, culture, and ethics, bureaucrats also must contend with political optics and there are few worse political firestorms than a fraud scandal for an agency or program's reputational image (Carpenter & Krause, 2012). In fact, for certain programs, investigations for overpayments are legally required, while investigations for underpayments are not, effectively institutionalizing and enculturating a certain form of loss aversion (Kahneman and Tversky 1992; Krause and Hong 2024). These institutionalized procedures suggest that bureaucrats will behave preemptively to reduce fraud given the institutional and legal evidence that their political principals, legislative and executive, are more concerned about fraudulent spending or waste than program access.

More broadly, research on welfare policy and media coverage Scholars studying welfare policy attitudes have revealed that popular images of fraudsters are pervasive and often convey racialized and gendered messages that invoke underlying biases that can reduce public and policymakers' support for programs that bureaucrats are administering (e.g., Baekgaard et al., 2022; Gilens, 2009). Of these images, none have been more pervasive than Reagan's welfare queen (for journalistic accounts see, Demby 2013 and Levin 2013; for academic research, see Kohler-Hausmann 2015; Mould 2020). Based on the real case of 'Linda Taylor's' many frauds, the symbolic welfare queen has been used as a representative image of welfare recipients as indolent charlatans who are intent on taking advantage of the system. Most importantly for our work, this image centers the specific frauds of one case as a much more extensive and generalized phenomenon. Therefore, overpayments to applicants for government programs like fraud are likely to be a particularly sensitive subject among bureaucrats and will likely elicit a stronger response than what we observe among bureaucrats under fire for underpayments.

When it comes to concerns about underpayments restricting access to public services, we argue that bureaucrats will be less responsive. From an institutional perspective, this is driven in part by the onus of correcting the error being put onto the client to communicate the error to the bureaucrat and system, and the lack of automation of correctios (Widlak and Peeters 2020; Holler, Tarshish, and Kaplan 2023). While from an individual perspective, previous research has demonstrated the negativity bias that leads to blame avoidance and even overcompliance due to extreme caution among bureaucrats of violating statute or procedures (such as those in the Administrative Procedures Act) (James et al., 2020). This leads to what many term "proceduralism" which Moynihan (2025) defines as "the tendency of public sector systems, and the people operating within them, to focus on rules, constraints, and processes to the point that

they severely degrade their own capacity to perform the primary goals the public has assigned them" (p. 4). Over time, proceduralism leads to the accumulation of formal processes, paperwork, and rules that create red tape for bureaucrats and administrative burdens for clients.

However, in an underpayment scenario where those burdens have caused eligible individuals to lose access to public benefits, bureaucrats can blame several other culprits. For example, bureaucrats can manipulate the attribution of blame away from themselves and onto either the applicants or policymakers for benefits that were not distributed to eligible applicants (Holler, Tarshish, and Kaplan 2023). Additionally, extensive paperwork and burdensome requirements are generally the status quo for bureaucrats administering programs with complex legal and reporting requirements due to proceduralism, which may lead bureaucrats to fail to see documentation requirements as a burden on the public and instead as a necessary evil for acquiring funding to support their programs (Bagley 2019). Therefore, while concerns about fraud may increase support for increasing documentation and compliance costs, concerns about access may not increase support for reducing documentation as intensely.[3]

While research suggests reductions in burden do in fact increase program take-up (Fox, Stazyk and Feng 2020; Bell, Kappes and Williams 2024), the compound effects of proceduralism and institutionalized penalties for wasteful spending will likely dampen the burden reduction effects of access concerns. In combination with these institutional dynamics is the tendency of humans to weight losses more than equivalent gains as identified by prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky 1992). Previous research has documented cases of bureaucrats adopting algorithms to identify fraud which ultimately resulted in costly scandals (Peeters & Widlak, 2023;

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[3] For example, bureaucrats may prefer to invest in navigators or other third-party assistance to help applicants rather than changing the required documents, which may involve additional legal hurdles.

Priergaard, 2024). In the case of Robodebt, this scandal ended up costing the government money rather than achieving the intended cost savings due to the lawsuits from members of the public who were adversely impacted (Henriques-Gomes, 2023; Priergaard, 2024). These cases reflect what Holler, Tarshish and Kaplan (2023) identify as efforts to reduce Type 1 error (false positives or fraud) that inadvertently also increased Type 2 errors (false negatives or reducing access). Together, we argue that these dynamics will lead bureaucrats to weigh the risk of fraud more heavily than the risk of denying eligible applicants program access.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of fraud on support for burdens is of larger magnitude than the effect of poor accessibility on support for burdens.

Research Design

Examining the effect of bureaucratic errors on bureaucrats' preferences for administrative burden poses important inferential challenges. First, it is difficult to determine how bureaucrats weigh the potential for different types of bureaucratic errors when they make decisions about how to implement government programs; while researchers can observe some environmental factors that may inform how bureaucrats weigh considerations of fraud and accessibility limits, such as which party controls the executive and legislative branches, it is rarely possible to observe other factors which may influence those decisions, such as private communications between the bureaucrat and their political principals, internal research on how implementation policies have affected accessibility and fraud for related programs in the past, and even the bureaucrat's own predisposition towards administrative burdens. Second, even if the array of forces that influence the level of burden bureaucrats implement for policies was fully observable,

we would not be able to isolate the effect bureaucratic errors from other factors related to both bureaucratic errors and the level of burden. In light of these barriers to both observing the data needed to assess the relationship between bureaucratic errors and burden tolerance and isolating that relationship from other potential confounders, we conducted a pre-registered survey experiment with state-level bureaucrats in 9 US states that randomly assigned respondents to vignettes that present scenarios where bureaucratic errors result in either concerns about fraud (overpayments) or access (underpayments), respectively, before asking them to indicate their preferred level of administrative burdens for a hypothetical policy program. In utilizing an experimental design, we can observe the behavior of real-world bureaucrats who have experience with setting and implementing administrative burdens as we systematically alter the improper payments scenario in isolation from other potential confounders.[4]

Protocol

We included our pre-registered experiment in a survey of state-level bureaucrats fielded between May 31 and June 26, 2024.[5] The sampling frame for the survey included all state government employees whose email addresses were publicly available through the states' online

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[4] While nearly all bureaucrats encounter administrative burdens in at least some aspect of their jobs, bureaucrats in certain kinds of positions may have more experience with designing and implementing burdens than others. For instance, more senior bureaucrats with supervisory responsibilities may be more likely to be consulted by agency leaders for feedback when revising policies and enjoy more discretion over how to implement they and their subordinates' implementation of those burdens relative to street-level bureaucrats. As most of the states in our sample provide contact information for *all* civil servants, some of our respondents may have more relevant experience than others, which could condition how they react to our treatments. To assess this possibility, we drew on respondents' pre-treatment answers to questions about how frequently they engaged in "policymaking" and "implementation" tasks in the course of their jobs and repeated out analyses on the subsamples of respondents who reported "very" and "somewhat" frequently engaging in each of those tasks and those who reported "not very frequently" or "never" engaging in each of those tasks. The results of these subsample analyses, presented in Tables SI.7-SI.10, are substantively consistent with those conducted with the full sample, suggesting that the degree of first-hand experience the bureaucrats had with policymaking and implementation tasks that often involve burdens did not condition their responses to our treatments.
[5] Our pre-analysis plan is available through the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/epb2g?view_only=b356267aecfe4a4983f6c9721113e818.

directories in the following nine states: Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New

Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Vermont. The bureaucratic institutions of these states

and the people who work in them may not be wholly representative of state-level agencies across

the United States, but they were chosen to ensure variation on important, socioeconomic,

political, and cultural dimensions that may influence the preferences and behaviors of

bureaucrats such as state size and geographic location, party control of the states' governorship

and legislature, and the distribution of racial and ethnic groups in the population.[6] 2,476 of the

219,103 individuals who received invitations to participate in the survey completed the module

containing this experiment, yielding a response rate of 1.1% (2,476/219,103).[7]

After completing a battery of pre-treatment questions, we asked respondents to imagine

working at the department of commerce in a state different than their own and provided them

with a short vignette about a Small Business Development Program (SBDP) the department is

responsible for administering. In the vignette, respondents are told that the program is

undergoing an audit, and their supervisor has asked them to make recommendations to modify its

system for verifying businesses' eligibility for SBDP. We choose to study the effects of

bureaucratic errors in the context of small businesses because many prior studies focus entirely

on welfare programs and small business development programs are less politicized. Relatedly,

because a small business development program is less likely to carry the "deservingness" stigma

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[6] Please see Supplemental Information Section B for more information on the selection of states, collection of state bureaucrat email addresses, and descriptive statistics of respondents.

[7] Our response rate is lower than those obtained in other recently published survey experiments using American elite samples (Furnas and LaPira 2024; Miller 2022), but it is similar to response rates for surveys of the American mass public (e.g., "You Ask, We Answer: How the Times/Siena Poll is Conducted," The New York Times, October 22, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/article/times-siena-poll-methodology.html) and the size of our sampling frame ensured we would obtain enough respondents to facilitate well-powered analyses. We believe our relatively low response rate is a product of state government employees having been trained by information technology professionals to be skeptical of emails from unfamiliar senders; we discuss some of the evidence behind this belief in Supplemental Information A.

attached to welfare programs that prompts strong reactions from the public, political leaders, and the media, we bias ourselves *against* finding support for our hypotheses as our treatment effects in this context compared to a welfare context. Further, small business development programs are common across the US at all levels of government and therefore likely to be familiar, in some respect, to most respondents.

Our main experimental manipulation is the rationale provided for the SBDP audit in our vignette, through which we alter respondents' exposure to either overpayments or underpayments.[8] In the control condition, respondents read that SBDP must be reauthorized early next year and that state legislators have requested an audit ahead of that reauthorization; this language is intended to convey to respondents that the audit is a routine part of the program's lifecycle and not prime bureaucratic error considerations. In our fraud condition, we tell respondents that a local news station recently ran investigative reports revealing that 20% of the loans subsidized by SBDP were given to businesses who were ineligible to participate, and that state legislators requested the audit in response to the investigative reports. Finally, in our accessibility condition, we again tell respondents that a local news station recently aired investigative reports about SBDP, but that in these reports 20% of businesses who applied for loans were rejected because the program erroneously deemed them ineligible, again prompting an audit at the request of state legislators.

After reading their assigned vignette, each respondent is then presented with five potentially burdensome application requirements for SBDP's eligibility verification system and asked whether they would recommend increasing, decreasing, or making no change to the level

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[8] We also randomize the partisan affiliation of the state legislators requesting the audit, which we use to evaluate our pre-registered hypotheses H4a-H6b. Please see the Supplemental Information for more details about these hypotheses and the corresponding analyses.

of administrative burden associated with each requirement. For instance, for "Documentation to verify income/revenue," respondents are asked if they would recommend requiring "more documentation," "less documentation," or making "no change to the documentation required." In our analysis, we recode responses for each of the five requirements as three-point ordinal variables, where -1 indicates reducing the burden, 1 indicates increasing the burden, and 0 indicates recommending no change to the burden. As we pre-registered, we also construct a composite burden scale representing each respondent's preferences for altering burdens across all five of the application requirements; to do so, we sum the numerical values associated with their choices for each requirement and normalize the resulting sums to range between -1 and 1. Consequently, each 0.2-unit shift on this scale corresponds with a change in the level of one of the five application requirements presented.

Results

In Figure 1, we present respondents' support for increasing the level of burden for the requirements presented in the vignette across our control (squares), accessibility (circles), and fraud (triangles) conditions, and how the degree of support in our treatment conditions differs from that in the control condition. Starting with the top two panes, on the left we display the net percentage of respondents in each condition that support increasing the level of burden for each of the five application requirements, and on the right we assess how the degree of support among respondents in the treatment conditions differs from control condition respondents.[9] Because of our trichotomous coding of respondents' preferences for increasing, decreasing, or maintaining

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[9] Because our Hypotheses 1-3 invoke 18 hypothesis tests (five application requirements and the composite scale for each of our treatment conditions compared to the control condition, as well as comparing the magnitudes of the fraud and accessibility effects for the same six outcomes), we pre-registered that we would account for our statistical tests for multiple comparisons. We do so by utilizing Bonferroni-corrected significance thresholds; given our 18 hypothesis tests, our p-value threshold is $p = \frac{0.05}{18} \approx 0.0028$.

the level of burden associated with each requirement, these values represent the difference between the percentage of respondents who support increasing the burden level and those who support decreasing the burden level. For instance, the 32% net support for increasing the amount of documentation required to verify an applicant's inventory among respondents in the control condition indicates that the share of respondents in the control condition who support increasing this level of burden is 32 percentage points higher than the share that supports decreasing it.

Across the five application requirements, we observe systematic differences in attitudes towards burdens across our randomly assigned overpayment or underpayment scenarios. In support of Hypothesis 1, we note that for all five requirements the net percentage of support for increasing burdens is distinguishably higher among respondents randomly assigned to the fraud condition relative to respondents in the control condition. For instance, whereas the net support for increasing the amount of documentation required to verify an applicant's income among control condition respondents is 32%, the net support among those in the fraud condition is more than twice as large at 69%. Again, whereas the net support for increasing the minimum credit rating among control condition respondents is -18%, indicating that more respondents would prefer to *lower* the minimum credit rating, the net support for increasing the minimum credit rating among fraud condition respondents is 2%. Together, across all five of the application requirements, we find support for Hypothesis 1; bureaucrats are more likely to support increasing application burdens when their programs are flagged for an overpayment scandal that results in an audit than a standard recurring audit.

Focusing on the results corresponding with the accessibility condition, we also find support for Hypothesis 2, though our treatment effects are distinguishable from zero for only two of the five requirements (Credit Rating and Business Plan). For instance, while the net support

for increasing the level of detail required in applicants' business plans is 48% in the control condition, net support for increasing this burden is only 39% among respondents in the accessibility condition—a decrease of approximately 10 percentage points.

Moving to the bottom two panes, we present the level of support for our composite burden scale across treatment conditions on the right and the difference between the level of support among respondents in the control condition with those in each of our treatment conditions on the right. Since each 0.2-unit increment on this scale is associated with increasing or decreasing the level of burden associated with one of the five requirements, our results indicate that while respondents in the control and accessibility conditions support increasing the level of burden for roughly one of the five requirements (0.22 and 0.17, respectively), those in
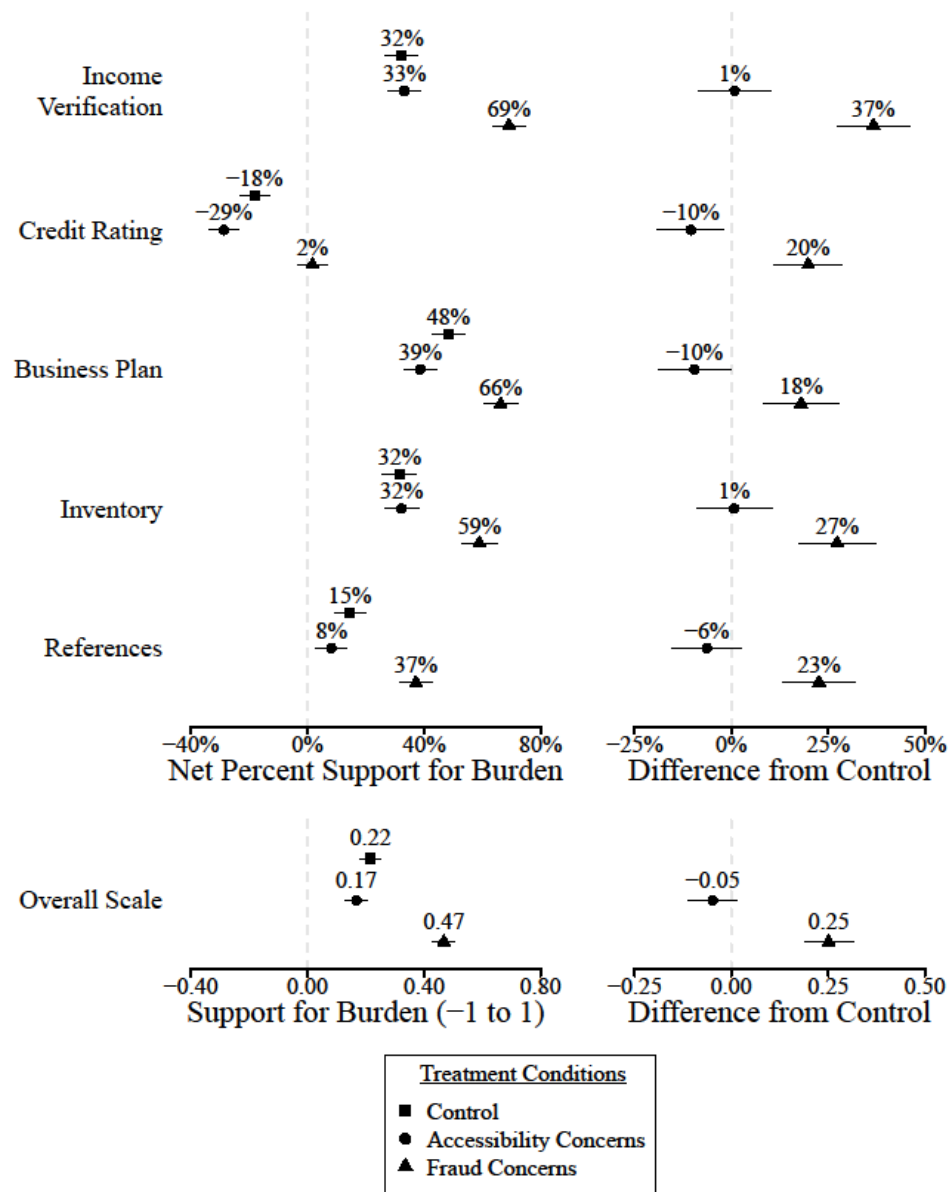
Figure 1. Marginal Effects of Fraud and Access Treatments on the Adoption of Burden.
Points in the left panes reflect the net support for each application requirement (top) and the composite support for all five requirements (bottom) for respondents in the control (square), accessibility (circle), and fraud (triangle) conditions, and lines represent conventional 95% confidence intervals. Points in the right panes represent the differences between the level of support for each requirement (top) or composite support for all five requirements (bottom) among respondents in the control condition and the accessibility (circle) and fraud (triangle) conditions, and lines represent Bonferonni-corrected 95% confidence intervals (see footnote 9). Any discrepancies between differences in the left pane and corresponding levels of support in the right pane are due to rounding.

the fraud condition support increasing the level of burden for more than two of the five

requirements (0.47). Consistent with our results in the top panes, the level of support associated

with the fraud condition is distinguishably higher than that for the control condition (a difference of 0.25), lending further support to Hypotheses 1. However, the substantively small effect associated with the accessibility condition (-0.05) falls short of statistically distinguishability, thus yielding no further support for Hypothesis 2.

We can also use the estimates in Figure 1 to test Hypothesis 3, in which we expected that the magnitude of the effects associated with the fraud condition would be distinguishably larger than those associated with the accessibility condition; that is to say, information about fraud associated with SBDP prompts respondents to increase burdens more than information about accessibility concerns associated with SBDP prompts them to decrease burdens. To evaluate this hypothesis, we conduct generalized linear hypothesis tests for the regression models associated with each of the six outcome variables where the null hypothesis is that the magnitude of the coefficient associated with the fraud treatment is equal to that of the coefficient associated with the accessibility treatment. In four of the six cases—Income Verification, Inventory, References, and the composite scale—we reject the null hypothesis, as the magnitudes of the fraud treatment are distinguishably larger than those of the accessibility treatment. For instance, for the income verification outcome, the effect of fraud on prompting respondents to increase the amount of documentation required from applicants is 37 times larger than the effect of accessibility concerns on respondents' choices. This finding aligns with our theoretical expectations, revealing the power of fraud concerns in predicting the burden tolerance of bureaucrats.

Finally, we also note the presence of significant variation across the application components in terms of the overall support for increasing requirements. Existing studies of burden tolerance use a scale that measures general policy preferences and ideas surrounding the acceptability of burdens; this scale leaves important variation uncaptured (Baekgaard, Halling,

and Moynihan 2024). Previous work has focused on survey items and designs that underreport support for burdensome policies such as increase application requirements (Baekgaard, Halling, and Moynihan 2024). Our results highlight that not all burdens are equal in the eyes of bureaucrats. For instance, while even respondents in the control and accessibility conditions are supportive of increasing income verification, bureaucrats are not supportive of increasing credit rating requirements. This indicates that any audit (regardless of the reasoning) may result in increased verification requirements such as income verification, business plans, and inventory. This may be because some application components are considered necessary, and others are considered unnecessary and/or biased. These results are theoretically in line with research showing policy domain is not an important predictor of burden tolerance (Campbell and Ahn 2023) but that support for specific strategies varies (Haeder and Moynihan 2024). This has significant implications for burden reduction efforts, suggesting that burden reduction may be more possible on some application elements such as the credit rating than others.

Partisanship-Conditional Effects

In Figure 2, we present results from an exploratory analysis that conditions our treatment effects by the partisan affiliations of our respondents.[10] Similar to Figure 1, we present the net percentage of Democratic (gray lines and points) and Republican (black lines and points) respondents in each condition who support increasing the level of burden for each requirement in the top left pane.[11] In the top right pane, we show the difference in the level of support between

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[10] This analysis utilizes only respondents who identify as Democrats or Republicans. While this analysis was not pre-registered, the key finding from the analysis—that our treatment effects are driven by Democratic respondents—emerged naturally from our evaluation of our pre-registered hypotheses H4a-H6b. Please see Supplemental Information Section C for details.

[11] As in Figure 1, we utilize Bonferroni-corrected significance thresholds. However, because the number of comparisons doubles to 36 (i.e., the 18 comparisons we make to evaluate Hypotheses 1-3 for the full sample, but conducted for Democrats and Republicans separately), our p-value threshold is $p = \frac{0.05}{36} \approx 0.0014$.

the control condition and each of the treatment conditions. Finally, we show the level of support

for increasing burdens aggregated across all five requirements in each condition and the

treatment effects associated with the accessibility and fraud conditions in the bottom left and

right panes, respectively. Examining first the five burden requirements for our fraud treatment,

we observe that whereas Republican respondents (black lines and points) only express

distinguishably different support for increasing the level of burden relative to those in the control

condition for one of the five requirements, Democratic respondents (gray lines and points)

indicated distinguishably higher levels of support for increasing burden levels for all five

requirements relative to their control condition counterparts. For instance, Republican

respondents in the fraud condition are not distinguishably more likely to support raising the

minimum credit rating, but the net percentage of Democratic respondents in the fraud condition

who support increasing the minimum credit rating is 24 percentage points larger than Democrats

in the control condition and is statistically distinguishable.[12]

Moving to the composite burden scale for our fraud treatment, we see that both

Democratic and Republican respondents express higher levels of support for burdens, but that the

treatment effect for Democrats is more than twice as large as and statistically distinguishable

from the treatment effect for Republicans. Whereas Republicans' increase in support for

burdens, 0.13, corresponds to raising the burden level for one of the five requirements by nearly

two-thirds, the increase in support for burdens among Democrats, 0.29, is associated with raising

the burdensome requirements by a full unit and then increasing the burden level for a second

requirements by nearly one-half.

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[12] While the treatment effects associated with the fraud condition are always larger for Democrats than Republicans, only the Democratic treatment effect associated with the Inventory requirement is distinguishably larger than that for Republicans.

When we turn to the coefficient estimates associated with our accessibility treatment, we note that all but one are negative, as expected, but that they tend to exhibit smaller magnitudes and one one—that associated with the Credit Rating requirement for Republicans—is statistically distinguishable from zero. Turning to the burden scale, both Republicans and Democrats express lower levels of support for burdens across the five requirements, but the coefficient estimates are substantively small and not statistically distinguishable from zero.
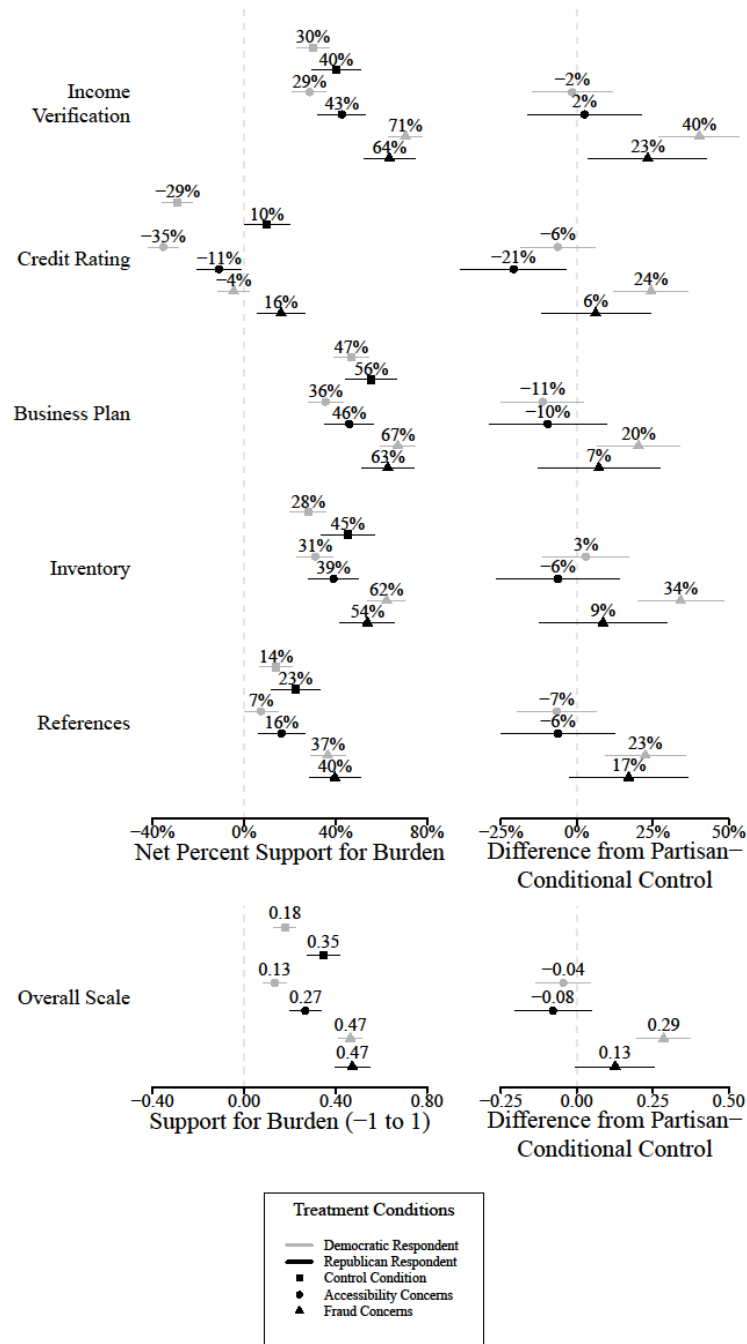
Figure 2. Marginal Effects of Fraud and Access Treatments on the Adoption of Burden, Conditioned by Respondent Partisanship. Points in the left panes reflect the net support for each application requirement (top) and the composite support for all five requirements (bottom) for respondents in the control (square), accessibility (circle), and fraud (triangle) conditions, and lines represent conventional 95% confidence intervals. Points in the right panes represent the differences between the level of support for each requirement (top) or composite support for all five requirements (bottom) among respondents in the control condition and the accessibility (circle) and fraud (triangle) conditions, and lines represent Bonferonni-corrected 95% confidence

intervals (see footnotes 9 and 11). Any discrepancies between differences in the left pane and corresponding levels of support in the right pane are due to rounding.

Together, this set of results suggests that the treatment effects manifested for fraud in our main analysis are driven by Democratic respondents. This result emerges in part because the baseline level of support for burdens among Republicans is higher than it is among Democrats. For example, for the composite burden scale outcome, Republicans in the control condition are 0.17 more supportive of higher burdens than Democrats, but Republicans and Democrats in the fraud treatment express the same level of support for higher burdens (0.47). Thus, while Republicans are naturally inclined towards higher burdens, Democrats can be prompted to dramatically increase their support for burdens when fraud concerns are raised.

Discussion

Our findings have important implications for theory and practice. Burden tolerance studies have focused on factors such as ideology, racial attitudes, and demographic and background characteristics, which may be effective at predicting the burden tolerance of the public but may miss important factors that shape bureaucrats' burden tolerance. Our study highlights an important factor—fire alarms over bureaucratic errors that result in improper payments—that has been understudied but is practically essential for understanding the level of administrative burden in public programs. Drawing from theory on proceduralism, we highlight the unique context of bureaucratic agencies that may drive bureaucrats to be more sensitive to fire alarms over fraud than fire alarms regarding access. Our findings not only support this theory, but also add additional nuance to existing work by examining how these effects differ across Republican and Democratic-leaning bureaucrats. Our subgroup analysis shows that in contrast to prior research, bureaucrats are more likely to adopt burdens in response to fire alarms over bureaucratic errors resulting in overpayments (fraud), especially if they identify with the

Democratic Party. This contradicts existing work which suggests Republican/conservative bureaucrats are more likely to implement burdens, by illustrating a scenario in which bureaucrats adopt administrative burdens regardless of their ideology/political party identification. Together, our work advances literature on burden tolerance by revealing the disproportionate influence of fire alarms over fraud on the burden tolerance of Democratic-leaning bureaucrats, who have much lower baseline burden tolerance.

Another theoretical implication of our study is that not all application components (potential burdens) are considered equal in the eyes of state bureaucrats in the U.S., though the general impulse is to increase burdens on average (Haeder and Moynihan 2024). Emerging research has highlighted the need to disentangle legitimate from illegitimate burdens (Nisar & Masood, 2023), yet burden tolerance studies often utilize a scale that capturing general perceptions on the acceptability of hassles in interactions with government (Aarøe et al., 2021; Bækgaard et al., 2024). As a result, existing empirical evidence has yet to illuminate the elements of application processes that may be seen as illegitimate burden compared to legitimate burden. Our study provides evidence that bureaucrats consider income verification, business plans, and inventory key components of application processes that they would consider supplementing even when accessibility concerns arise. On the other hand, increasing credit rating requirements was universally opposed by our respondents, though the magnitude did vary across our randomly assigned conditions. Together, our findings suggest that researchers should invest in measuring burden tolerance across different application components to reveal the areas in which burden reduction efforts may be considered more "legitimate" and/or politically feasible.

One of the normative implications of our findings is that administrative burdens may be adopted because of bureaucratic errors, which may shift burdens from the state onto the public

even when members of the public have done nothing wrong. This has important normative impacts for public management literature on the balance between fraud and access to public services. Often, fraud is framed as individuals attempting to circumvent eligibility requirements and steal money or benefits that they are not entitled to. However, overpayments to clients are also the fault of flawed government systems and processes (Pahlka, 2023; Peeters & Widlak, 2023; Priergaard, 2024; Rank et al., 2021; Widlak & Peeters, 2020; Young et al., 2023). Therefore, bureaucrats may be penalizing clients for the flaws of antiquated government systems, which increases the time tax on both clients and government. In fact, a recent case in Arizona sheds light on this possibility (Hudetz 2025). Carmen Heredia, former director of the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the state's Medicaid agency, was forced to resign after her actions intended to address fraudulent billing practices. The state suspended all payments to over 300 businesses with allegedly fraudulent billing practices in an attempt to hold these entities accountable. In so doing, Medicaid recipients lost coverage to vital benefits with over 500 people becoming homeless and over forty indigenous people dying. Therefore, Heredia's actions penalized clients for the flaws of corporate billing practices, and that loss of access to vital care led to controversy surrounding her appointment and eventual resignation. This case is just one example of the incredibly important practical balance that bureaucrats must strike between program integrity and client access, which we hope more scholars will weigh in on in future research.

Before we conclude, we acknowledge that our work is subject to some key limitations. First, as with any survey experiment, external validity is an important consideration. For instance, we study burden tolerance of bureaucrats in response to fire alarms in small business development programs, which are comparatively less politicized than welfare programs. These

programs also involve substantially different socially constructed target populations for Republicans and Democrats (Bell, 2021). It is possible that the results would diverge for other programs with more politically contentious programs and for programs that have less powerful target populations who may be socially constructed negatively ("undeserving") (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2021). The specifics of such programs also vary widely across different states and localities. We encourage future research to investigate the extent to which our results extend to other policy areas and program specifics. Another important external validity concern may arise from our survey sample, which covers state bureaucrats in 9 U.S. states but does not include bureaucrats in other states or in other countries. It is possible that a nationally representative sample of U.S. bureaucrats or a survey of bureaucrats in other countries could yield results that diverge from our study, and we encourage future research to test the bounds of our findings in new contexts. However, we strategically chose the 9 states included for their ability to represent the US overall, across various dimensions, so we expect this limitation to be relatively minor.

Conclusion

Public management scholars have dedicated substantial attention to the effects of administrative burden, but less work has examined the causes of administrative burdens (Halling & Baekgaard, 2023). While existing literature highlights public opinion and policymakers' opinions on the imposition of burden (e.g., Aarøe et al., 2021; Baekgaard et al., 2020; Haeder & Moynihan, 2024), bureaucrats are the actors who most often have discretionary power to determine levels of administrative burden (Bell & Smith, 2022; Heinrich et al., 2022). We extend existing work by revealing a novel determinant, external 'fire alarms' about fraud or access, of the burden tolerance of bureaucrats in the United States. To do so, we use a large survey sample

drawn from a complete inventory of state bureaucrats in 9 U.S. states and a vignette experimental design.

While previous burden tolerance literature emphasizes the importance of demographic characteristics, political beliefs, and organizational capacity in predicting support for the adoption of administrative burdens, we focus on a factor that we argue is especially important for bureaucrats: fire alarms over bureaucratic errors resulting in improper payments (overpayments or underpayments). We hypothesize that fire alarms over bureaucratic errors resulting in improper payments will meaningfully shift how bureaucrats perceive administrative burdens (specifically application requirements), as bureaucrats attempt to mitigate any negative impacts on organizational reputation and perceptions of programmatic integrity. Our work departs from prior literature by arguing that fire alarms over bureaucratic errors resulting in overpayments (fraud) will be even more powerful than fire alarms regarding underpayments (access). Our theoretical framework first highlights the unique context in which bureaucrats operate that privileges concerns about fraud over access due to proceduralism, negativity bias, and overcompliance (Bagley, 2019; James et al., 2020; Moynihan, 2025). Second, we highlight the importance of the pervasive gendered and racialized policy image of fraudsters that drives policy preferences in the U.S. and reduces support for government programs (e.g., Gilens, 2009; Hancock, 2004).

Using a survey experiment about state small business development programs, we first find that concerns about fraud increase support for implementing additional application requirements while concerns about access slightly reduce support for adopting additional application requirements. We also find that when compared to Republican-leaning bureaucrats, Democrat-leaning bureaucrats become disproportionately more supportive of increasing

administrative burdens once they are notified about a fraud audit relative to the control condition.

Therefore, fire alarms over fraud/overpayment build burden tolerance among Democrats who

generally have lower burden tolerance in the absence of a scandal over bureaucratic errors. These

findings have significant implications for burden reduction initiatives across the US and

elsewhere, demonstrating the importance of fire alarms over bureaucratic errors in the adoption

of administrative burdens.

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Supplemental Information

Section A: Preregistration

We preregistered our experimental design through the Open Science Framework on May 22, 2024 (https://osf.io/epb2g?view_only=b356267aecfe4a4983f6c9721113e818). As we analyzed our survey responses, we made two deviations from our preregistered design concerning which potential respondents in the sampling frame we solicited to participate in the survey and the addition of an exploratory analysis which we include in the main paper. We detail the former deviation here in detail and provide an explanation of how our exploratory analysis arose in SI Section C.2. Additionally, we also here clarify an imprecise component of our preregistered design and how we implemented it in our analysis.

First, in our preregistration, we planned to randomly sample 25% of the email addresses we obtained from state employee directories. We chose this approach to balance both power considerations for all of the modules on the survey while not overburdening public employees.[13] The size of our random sample anticipated a response rate of between 5% and 10%, as reported in recent studies utilizing survey experiments with other elite populations (e.g., e.g., Furnas and LaPira 2024; Miller 2022), which would have yielded us approximately 2,600 to 5,200. However, 24 hours after distributing email invitations to the random sample, we observed a response rate of lower than 1%, which prompted concern that we would not obtain enough responses to conduct sufficiently powered analyses.[14] Accordingly, we decided to send email invitations to all state government employees for which we collected email addresses.

Second, as we explain in SI Section C.2, in the course of conducting our analyses to test our hypotheses H4a-Hb6, we uncovered an unexpected heterogeneous effect—that Democratic respondents were uniformly more responsive to the fraud treatment than were their Republican counterparts. Because this finding has the potential to explain the proliferation of administrative

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[13] Starting with the initial sample of 253,344 emails across the nine states, we considered two factors that would inform our expected response rate: 1) the expected turnover of state employees between the time the emails were collected in 2023 and the survey was fielded in 2024 and 2) observed response rates in other recent samples of political elites. First, based on reported turnover rates of states in our sample, we expected approximately 16% of employees in our sample to no longer be employed by their state rendering their email address invalid. Second, examining recent survey experiments of political elites, such as congressional staff and federal lobbyists, we anticipated a response rate of between 5% and 10% (e.g., Furnas and LaPira 2024; Miller 2022). Given these factors, we expected to collect approximately 2,600 to 5,200 responses.

[14] While it is difficult to understand systematic reasons for non-response, anecdotally we believe state government employees are not as responsive as other recently studied elite populations because they have been trained to be cautious when opening and interacting with emails sent from unfamiliar sources. Many potential respondents emailed the author who facilitated survey distribution asking for confirmation and/or evidence that the survey invitation was legitimate, and officials from the information technology (IT) offices of several state agencies called the author to assess whether the emails were associated with a cybersecurity risk. Additionally, several potential respondents informed the author that the policies set forth by their IT offices prevented them from participating, and others indicated that their IT offices send similar messages to "test" the employees' compliance with agency policies. Separately, several potential respondents also told the author that their agency barred employees from completing outside surveys or participating in academic research unless the activities were pre-approved by the agency head.

burdens despite the sizable number of bureaucrats who identify as Democrats despite that their baseline support for burdens is often lower than Republicans, we include it in the main paper.

Third, our preregistration document indicated that "multiple comparisons corrections will be made as appropriate" but we did not explicitly state how those multiple comparisons corrections would be implemented in the analysis. Because of this imprecision, we later chose to implement Bonferroni corrections because they are the most conservative type of multiple comparison correction, thus biasing against our rejecting the null hypothesis across tests. To determine the appropriate Bonferroni correction for the analyses we present in the main paper, we determined how many unique null hypothesis significance tests in each set of analyses corresponded with Hypotheses 1-3. For the analyses associated with Figure 1, which tests Hypotheses 1-3 for the full sample, we identified 18 hypothesis tests—six comparisons between the control condition and the accessibility condition (one for each of the five application requirements and the composite scale), six comparisons between the control condition and the fraud condition, and six comparisons between the accessibility condition and fraud condition. Thus, the p–value threshold for these tests is $p = \frac{0.05}{18} \approx 0.0028$. For the analyses associated with Figure 2, which tests Hypotheses 1-3 for Democrats and Republicans separately, we conducted the same 18 hypotheses tests for each party, thus doubling the number of hypothesis tests to 36. Thus, the p–value threshold for these tests is $p = \frac{0.05}{36} \approx 0.0014$.[15]

Section B: Survey Protocol

Section B.1: Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame for the survey in which the survey experiment was embedded was all state government employees in the following nine states whose email addresses were posted publicly in the employee directories of those states: Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Vermont.[16, 17] In the first half of 2023, one of the authors and student research assistants collected the emails from the directories of these states and formatted them into comma-separated files.

The total number of unique email addresses collected from these nine states is 252.316. Initial email invitations were sent to all unique email addresses between May 31 and June 3, 2024, and reminder emails were sent to all respondents that had not yet completed the survey on June 11

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[15] For our analyses of our preregistered Hypotheses 4-6 presented in Section C.2, we present our results with the conventional p=0.05 threshold; because our findings are generally null using this threshold, applying multiple comparisons corrections would not change the substantive interpretation of the results.

[16] The survey was also distributed to state government employees in Florida, but we excluded respondents from Florida in our preregistered design (see Supplemental Information Section A).

[17] In late 2021, one of the authors surveyed the employee directories of all fifty states to determine whether the state posted publicly the email addresses of its employees publicly. At that time, 25 states provided such information publicly. From those 25 states, one of the authors selected a subset of states where it was most feasible to collect the email addresses given the formatting of each state's directory and such that the subset would be representative across important state-level characteristics, such as geographic location and partisanship.

and June 18, 2024. Response collection ceased at the end of the day on June 26, 2024, at which point 2,476 respondents had provided an answer to at least one of the outcome questions in the experiment. Subtracting from the 33,213 emails which were returned as undeliverable, the response rate for this module is approximately 1.1% ($\frac{2,476}{219,103}$).

Section B.2 Vignette and Question Wording

After responding to a pre-treatment question battery, respondents were prompted to imagine working for the department of commerce in a state different than their own and read a short vignette about a program the department administers, the Small Business Development Program (SBDP). In the vignette, all respondents read that the program is undergoing an audit and the respondent's boss has asked for their advice on how the department might modify the system for verifying applicants' eligibility for SBDP. In the vignette, two requirements are independently randomized across respondents: 1) the rationale for the audit and 2) the partisanship of the legislators requesting the audit. The wording of the vignette and the different treatments associated with each requirement are provided below.

Section B.2.1 Vignette

Imagine you work for the state Department of Commerce in a state different from the one where you work now. One of your primary responsibilities is to help administer the Small Business Development Program (SBDP), a loan guarantee program that helps small businesses secure loans from local financial institutions.

[AUDIT RATIONALE REQUIREMENT] [LEGISLATOR PARTISANSHIP TREATMENT REQUIREMENT] have requested a comprehensive audit of the program.

Treatment Requirements

- Audit Rationale
  o Per state law, the SBDP must be reauthorized by the state legislature every five years, and this reauthorization process will occur early next year. Ahead of this process
  o One of the largest local news stations recently ran a series of investigative reports about the SBDP and revealed that 20% of the loans SBDP subsidized last year were erroneously granted to small businesses who were ineligible to participate in the program. In light of the revelations
  o One of the largest local news stations recently ran a series of investigative reports about the SBDP and revealed that 20% of the small businesses who applied for loans under SBDP were rejected because the program erroneously deemed them ineligible to participate in the program. In light of the revelations
- Legislator Partisanship
  o several legislators
  o Democratic legislators
  o Republican legislators

Section B.2.2 Question Wording

In the audit process, your boss has asked you to offer recommendations for how the Department of Commerce might modify its system for verifying eligibility for SBDP. For each of the following items, please indicate whether and how you would recommend modifying the system:

- Documentation to verify income/revenue
  - Require more documentation
  - Require less documentation
  - Make no change to the documentation required
- Inventories of assets and liabilities
  - Require more detailed inventories
  - Require less detailed inventories
  - Make no change to the inventory detail required
- Business plan that justifies need for the loan
  - Require more detailed business plans
  - Require less detailed business plans
  - Make no change to the business plan detail required
- References from the applicant's suppliers
  - Require more references
  - Require fewer references
  - Make no change to the number of required references
- Minimum applicant credit score
  - Increase the minimum credit score for eligibility
  - Decrease the minimum credit score for eligibility
  - Make no change to the minimum credit score for eligibility

Section B.3: Respondent Demographic Characteristics

The only systematic information we were able to collect about state government employees in the full sampling frame was their names, email addresses, and the states by which they were employed.[18] We present information about survey responsiveness by state in Table SI.1.

For respondents who participated in our experiment, we collected information on a range of demographic characteristics pre-treatment. We provide information about the characteristics of our sample of respondents in Table SI.2.

Table SI.1: Sampling Frame Response Rates by State

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[18] For some states, we were also able to collect information about the agency and/or office in which they worked and the physical address of their workplace. However, this information was not provided by all states and is not presented in a uniform format across states, so we are not able to use it in assessing sample representativeness.

State	# of respondents	# of employees invited to participate	Response rate
Connecticut	264	11,929	2.2%
Florida	640	68,178	0.9%
Illinois	34	1,840	1.8%
Indiana	221	27,168	0.8%
Nebraska	434	12,701	3.4%
New Hampshire	29	8,898	0.3%
North Carolina	781	48,283	1.6%
Oregon	921	36,460	2.5%
Vermont	119	3,645	3.3%
TOTAL	2,476	219,103	1.1%

Table SI.2: Respondent Demographic Characteristics

	# (%) of respondents
Gender	
Male	1115 (45.0%)
Female	1305 (52.7%)
Something else/Other	27 (1.1%)
Prefer not to say	25 (1.0%)
NA	4 (0.2%)
Age	
18-29	129 (5.2%)
30-49	1091 (44.1%)
50-64	1070 (43.2%)
65 or older	185 (7.5%)
NA	1 (0.0%)
Income	
Less than $25,000	6 (0.2%)
$25,000-$49,999	207 (8.4%)

$50,000-$74,999	460 (18.6%)
$75,000-$99,999	489 (19.7%)
$100,000-$199,999	991 (40.0%)
$200,000 or more	303 (12.2%)
NA	20 (0.8%)

Education

Some high school, or less	1 (0.0%)
High school graduate or GED	84 (3.4%)
Some college, no 4-year degree	357 (14.4%)
College graduate	911 (36.8%)
Post-graduate degree	1120 (45.2%)
NA	3 (0.1%)

Race

American Indian or Alaska Native	17 (0.7%)
American Indian or other Pacific Islander	10 (0.4%)
Asian	62 (2.5%)
Black or African American	217 (8.8%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5 (0.2%)
Other	131 (5.3%)
White	2018 (81.5%)
NA	16 (0.6%)

Hispanic

Yes	164 (6.6%)
No	2277 (92.0%)
Prefer not to say	29 (1.2%)
NA	6 (0.2%)

Party Identification

Strong Democrat	717 (29.0%)

Not a very strong Democrat	335 (13.5%)
Lean Democrat	296 (12.0%)
Independent	244 (9.9%)
Lean Republican	155 (6.3%)
Not a very strong Republican	210 (8.5%)
Strong Republican	285 (11.5%)
Other/NA	234 (9.5%)

Ideology

Very liberal	268 (10.8%)
Liberal	603 (24.4%)
Slightly liberal	311 (12.6%)
Moderate	629 (25.4%)
Slightly conservative	194 (7.8%)
Conservative	359 (14.5%)
Very conservative	104 (4.2%)
NA	8 (0.3%)

Years of Experience in State Government

Less than 5 years	589 (23.8%)
5-10 years	703 (28.4%)
11-15 years	306 (12.4%)
16-20 years	285 (11.5%)
More than 20 years	591 (23.9%)
NA	2 (0.1%)

Job Selection Method

Appointed by elected official	85 (3.4%)
Hired/promoted through civil service system	2016 (81.4%)
Other	372 (15.0%)
NA	3 (0.1%)

Burden Tolerance (Baekgaard et al. 2024)	
1.00-1.75	733 (29.7%)
2.00-2.75	1075 (43.5%)
3.00-3.75	436 (17.6%)
4.00-5.00	228 (9.2%)
NA	0 (0.0%)
How Frequently Respondent Engages in Policymaking Tasks	
Never	1011 (40.8%)
Not very frequently	845 (34.1%)
Somewhat Frequently	43517.6%)
Very Frequently	185 (7.5%)
NA	0 (0.0%)
How Frequently Respondent Engages in Implementation Tasks	
Never	243 (9.8%)
Not very frequently	209 (8.4%)
Somewhat frequently	584 (23.6%)
Very frequently	1435 (48.0%)
NA	5 (0.2%)

Section C: Empirical Analysis

In this section, we present additional information about the empirical analyses we present in the main text and discuss the results of the tests associated with additional pre-registered hypotheses that we do not include in the main text.

Section C.1: Tabular Presentation of Results Presented in the Main Paper

Tables SI.3 and SI.4 present the tabular results of the models which underlie Figures 1 and 2, respectively, in the main text.

Table SI.3: Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.32 *	-0.18 *	0.48 *	0.15 *	0.32 *	0.22 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Equity Concerns	0.01	-0.10 *	-0.10 *	-0.06 *	0.01	-0.05 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Fraud Concerns	0.37 *	0.20 *	0.18 *	0.23 *	0.27 *	0.25 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Democratic Legislators	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Republican Legislators	0.05	0.02	0.06	-0.01	0.04	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Num. obs.	2473	2472	2473	2472	2471	2463

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the Bonferroni-corrected $p < \frac{0.05}{18} \approx 0.0028$ level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent.

Table SI.4: Partisanship-Conditional Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.30 *	-0.29 *	0.47 *	0.14 *	0.28 *	0.18 *
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Equity Concerns	-0.02	-0.06	-0.11 *	-0.07	0.03	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Fraud Concerns	0.40 *	0.24 *	0.20 *	0.23 *	0.34 *	0.29 *
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Democratic Legislators	0.02	0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Republican Legislators	0.04	0.04	0.06	-0.04	0.00	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)

	(1) Documentation	(2) Credit Rating	(3) Business Plan	(4) References	(5) Inventories	(6) Burden Scale
GOP Respondent	0.10	0.39 *	0.09	0.09	0.17 *	0.17 *
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.04)
Equity Concerns:	0.04	-0.15 *	0.02	0.00	-0.09	-0.03
GOP Respondent	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Fraud Concerns:	-0.17 *	-0.18 *	-0.13	-0.05	-0.26 *	-0.16 *
GOP Respondent	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Democratic Legislators:	-0.03	-0.10	-0.04	0.01	-0.06	-0.05
GOP Respondent	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Republican Legislators:	0.08	-0.06	0.00	0.08	0.05	0.03
GOP Respondent	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Num. obs.	1996	1995	1996	1994	1995	1988

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the Bonferroni-corrected $p < \frac{0.05}{36} \approx 0.0014$ level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Models include only respondents who self-identified as Democrats or Republicans, where the omitted category is Democratic respondents.

Section C.2: Additional Pre-Registered Hypotheses

In our pre-analysis plan, we pre-registered 9 hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 through 3, which we examine in the main text, were as follows:

1. When a program attracts attention for fraud, bureaucrats are more supportive of administrative burdens
2. When a program attracts attention for poor accessibility, bureaucrats are less supportive of administrative burdens
3. The positive effect of fraud on support for burdens is of larger magnitude than the negative effect of poor accessibility on administrative burdens

We pre-registered 6 additional hypotheses, H4a-H6b, which were as follows:

4. Respondent-legislator copartisanship and fraud:
   a. When a program attracts attention for fraud from copartisan legislators, bureaucrats are more supportive of administrative burdens than when it attracts attention for fraud from non-copartisan legislators or legislators with indeterminate party identification.
   b. When a program attracts attention for fraud from copartisan legislators, bureaucrats are less supportive of administrative burdens than when it attracts

attention for fraud from non-copartisan legislators or legislators with indeterminate party identification.

5. Respondent-legislator copartisanship for accessibility:
    a. When a program attracts attention for poor accessibility from copartisan legislators, bureaucrats are less supportive of administrative burdens than when it attracts attention for poor accessibility from non-copartisan legislators or legislators with indeterminate party identification.
    b. When a program attracts attention for poor accessibility from copartisan legislators, bureaucrats are more supportive of administrative burdens than when it attracts attention for poor accessibility from non-copartisan legislators or legislators with indeterminate party identification.
6. Respondent-legislator copartisanship (party-specific):
    a. When a program attracts attention for fraud from copartisan Republican legislators, bureaucrats are more supportive of administrative burdens.
    b. When a program attracts attention for poor accessibility from copartisan Democratic legislators, bureaucrats are less supportive of administrative burdens.

In general, these hypotheses emerged from an expectation that the degree to which our fraud and accessibility treatments influenced respondents' burden preferences would be conditioned by the correspondence between their own partisan affiliation and that of the legislators who initiated the program audit.

- H4a and H5a are analogues of H1 and H2 that build from the assumption that bureaucrats are more responsive to the concerns of principals when those principals share their partisan affiliation or other kinds of preferences and identities because they trust those principals to make decisions that will bring policy closer to their mutually-held preferences.
- H4b and H5b are also analogues of H1 and H2, but they instead build from the assumption that bureaucrats are more responsive to the concerns of principals when those principals do not share their partisan affiliation or other kinds of preferences and identities because they fear greater sanctions from those principals for non-compliance.
- Whereas H4a-b and H5a-b are agnostic as to *which* party the respondents are copartisans of, H6a-b leverage the identities of the parties to expect that respondents will react more strongly to copartisan principals when the rationale for the audit promotes the kinds of changes to burden levels that their party prefers. Specifically, H6a expects that, because Republicans generally support higher levels of burden, in large part to limit fraud, that Republican respondents will support higher levels of burden when Republican legislators request the audit, while H6b expects that, because Democrats generally oppose higher levels of burden and emphasize program accessibility, that Democratic respondents will support lower levels of burdens when Democratic legislators request the audit.

To evaluate H4a-b and H5a-b, we estimate linear regression models that interact our treatment which provides the rationale for the program audit with a trichotomous indicator for whether the respondent is a copartisan of the legislators requesting the audit, a non-copartisan, or whether this correspondence is indeterminate (e.g., a Democrat in the control condition for legislator partisanship). The results for the corresponding models are presented in Table SI.5. None of the

coefficients for the interaction terms are statistically distinguishable, indicating that we find no support for H4a-b or H5a-b.

To evaluate H6a-b, we estimate linear regression models that interact our treatment which provides the rationale for the program audit with a categorical variable that can take on one of the following four values:

1. Indeterminate—there is no clear correspondence between the partisan affiliation of the respondent and the legislators requesting the audit (i.e., the partisan affiliation of the legislators is not disclosed).
2. Copartisan Democrat—the respondent is a Democrat and the legislators requesting the audit are Democrats.
3. Copartisan Republican—the respondent is a Republican and the legislators requesting the audit are Republicans.
4. Noncopartisan—the respondent's partisan affiliation is different from that of the legislators requesting the audit (e.g., the respondent is a Republican and the legislators are Democrats).

The results for the corresponding models, presented in Table SI.6, do not provide support for H6a or H6b; in fact, the only two interaction terms that are statistically distinguishable suggest that Republican respondents are *less* supportive of burdens when Republican legislators request an audit following allegations of fraud, which is the opposite of what is expected by H6a. However, in interpreting the interactive effects in the models in Table SI.6, we found that Democratic respondents who are told that Democratic legislators are requesting the audit after allegations of fraud consistently exhibit higher levels of support for burdens that are often statistically distinguishable from those associated with similarly situated Republican respondents.

This unexpected finding led us to conduct the exploratory analysis we present in the main paper which compares the treatment effects of Democratic and Republican respondents without conditioning on the treatment requirement that identifies the partisanship of the legislators requesting the audit; there, we find that Democratic respondents respond more strongly to the fraud treatment than do Republican respondents. Thus, while this exploratory analysis was not pre-registered, it emerged as a natural product of our assessment of our other pre-registered hypotheses.

From a theoretical standpoint, we believe that these null effects can be explained by the nature of the task we asked bureaucrats to complete. Each of the application requirements we asked bureaucrats to evaluate is likely under the complete control of the state agency rather than the legislature. Therefore, bureaucrats may have been less responsive to the partisanship of the legislature than we expected because they believed each application requirement was a part of policy implementation rather than policy design, which legislators may have more authority to control.

Table SI.5: Copartisanship-Conditional Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.30 *	-0.19 *	0.48 *	0.16 *	0.33 *	0.22 *
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Equity Concerns	0.05	-0.05	-0.08	-0.07	0.01	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Fraud Concerns	0.41 *	0.20 *	0.18 *	0.24 *	0.26 *	0.26 *
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Copartisan Legislators	0.12 *	0.01	0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Noncopartisan Legislators	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Equity:Copart	-0.04	-0.02	-0.04	0.04	0.08	0.00
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Fraud:Copart	-0.13	0.02	-0.06	0.01	-0.00	-0.03
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Equity:Noncopart	-0.12	-0.13	-0.04	-0.02	-0.11	-0.08
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Fraud:Noncopart	-0.06	-0.07	-0.00	-0.10	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Num. obs.	1996	1995	1996	1994	1995	1988

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the $p<0.05$ level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Models include only respondents who self-identified as Democrats or Republicans.

Table SI.6: Democratic and Republican Copartisanship-Conditional Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens

	(1) Documentation	(2) Credit Rating	(3) Business Plan	(4) References	(5) Inventories	(6) Burden Scale
Intercept	0.30 *	-0.19 *	0.48 *	0.16 *	0.33 *	0.22 *
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Equity Concerns	0.05	-0.05	-0.08	-0.07	0.01	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Fraud Concerns	0.41 *	0.20 *	0.18 *	0.24 *	0.26 *	0.26 *
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Dem Copartisan Legislators	0.06	-0.13 *	-0.02	-0.11	-0.10	-0.06
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.04)
GOP Copartisan Legislators	0.22 *	0.28 *	0.16	0.12	0.16	0.19 *
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.05)
Equity:Dem Copart	-0.09	0.03	-0.07	0.04	0.11	0.00
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.06)
Equity:GOP Copart	0.02	-0.15	-0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.03
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.08)
Fraud:Dem Copart	-0.07	0.13	-0.01	0.10	0.11	0.05
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.06)
Fraud:GOP Copart	-0.23 *	-0.18	-0.16	-0.14	-0.21	-0.18 *
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.08)
Equity:Noncopart	-0.12	-0.13	-0.04	-0.02	-0.11	-0.08
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Fraud:Noncopart	-0.06	-0.07	-0.00	-0.10	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Num. obs.	1996	1995	1996	1994	1995	1988

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five

dependent variable values for each respondent. Models include only respondents who self-identified as Democrats or Republicans.

Section C.3: Alternative Model Specifications

Table SI.7: Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens Among Respondents Who Frequently Engage in Policymaking

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.27 *	-0.22 *	0.45 *	0.14 *	0.26 *	0.18 *
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Equity Concerns	-0.00	-0.09	-0.09	-0.08	0.03	-0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Fraud Concerns	0.43 *	0.22 *	0.21 *	0.24 *	0.39 *	0.30 *
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Democratic Legislators	0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Republican Legislators	0.08	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	0.00	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Num. obs.	619	617	618	619	619	616

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the $p<0.05$ level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Only respondents who indicate that they "somewhat" or "very" frequently engage in policymaking tasks are included in these analyses.

Table SI.8: Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens Among Respondents Who Infrequently Engage in Policymaking

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.34 *	-0.17 *	0.50 *	0.15 *	0.34 *	0.23 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Equity Concerns	0.01	-0.11 *	-0.10 *	-0.06	-0.00	-0.05 *

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Fraud Concerns	0.34 *	0.19 *	0.16 *	0.22 *	0.23 *	0.23 *
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Democratic Legislators	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Republican Legislators	0.04	0.00	0.08 *	0.00	0.05	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Num. obs.	1854	1855	1855	1853	1852	1847

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Only respondents who indicate that they "not very frequrntly" or "never" engage in policymaking tasks are included in these analyses.

Table SI.9: Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens Among Respondents Who Frequently Engage in Implementation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.34 *	-0.17 *	0.50 *	0.17 *	0.34 *	0.23 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Equity Concerns	0.01	-0.11 *	-0.07 *	-0.08 *	0.01	-0.05 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Fraud Concerns	0.38 *	0.19 *	0.21 *	0.22 *	0.27 *	0.26 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Democratic Legislators	-0.02	-0.02	-0.06	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Republican Legislators	0.03	0.00	0.03	-0.02	0.01	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Num. obs.	2016	2015	2016	2015	2014	2006

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Only respondents who indicate that they "somewhat" or "very" frequently engage in implementation tasks are included in these analyses.

Table SI.10: Effect of Risk Perception Treatments on Support for Administrative Burdens Among Respondents Who Infrequently Engage in Implementation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Documentation	Credit Rating	Business Plan	References	Inventories	Burden Scale
Intercept	0.27 *	-0.24 *	0.42 *	0.02	0.23 *	0.14 *
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Equity Concerns	0.03	-0.06	-0.19 *	0.04	0.02	-0.03
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.06)
Fraud Concerns	0.30 *	0.24 *	0.07	0.25 *	0.28 *	0.23 *
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.06)
Democratic Legislators	0.04	-0.02	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.03
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Republican Legislators	0.14	0.07	0.15	0.04	0.15	0.11 *
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.05)
Num. obs.	452	452	452	452	452	452

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the $p<0.05$ level (two-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is indicated with the column heading; in Models 1-5, the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal variable, and in Model 6 it is the average of the first five dependent variable values for each respondent. Only respondents who indicate that they "not very frequrntly" or "never" engage in implementation tasks are included in these analyses.

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