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**Assistant Professor Search, Department of Political Science**
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am writing to express my interest in the assistant professor position in American politics and political behavior at Northwestern. I am currently an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut in political science and was previously a postdoctoral research associate in the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at Princeton University. I received my PhD in political science from Stony Brook University in August of 2020. I have 17 articles published or accepted in peer-reviewed journals, including in outlets such as the *Journal of Politics, Nature Climate Change,* and *Political Behavior*. My book *Climate Games: Experiments on How People Prevent Disaster* is forthcoming this spring with the University of Michigan press.

I work at the intersection of climate change and governance in the United States, studying how institutional design affects the ability of the public to hold their elected officials accountable and their support for climate policy. My work relies on experimental methods from political economy, political behavior, and public opinion. The first branch of my research primarily utilizes incentivized experiments: Lab experiments in which participants make strategic decisions that determine how much money they earn at the end of the study. Real-world politics are highly complex, making it difficult to identify the causal effect of any policy design on behavior. Incentivized experiments allow me to isolate the effect of a specific institutional change in a controlled environment, testing precise hypotheses about how people will respond. Further, by comparing participant behavior to game theoretic equilibria, I identify when people stray from optimal choices and test hypotheses about voter decision-making.

This approach is illustrated in my included paper, "The road to reelection is paved with good intentions," which is conditionally accepted at the *Journal of Politics*. I argue that when deciding whether to reelect an incumbent, voters consider both policy outcomes and the intentions behind those policies. Decades of research in political science find voters reelect incumbents who produce good outcomes. However, incumbents also invest in signaling whether their outcomes were intended, for example by staking out policy positions, making campaign promises, or apologizing for unintended consequences. Across several experiments I find that voters condition on incumbent intentions: Voters reward incumbents for intending (but failing) to deliver good policy outcomes, and vote out incumbents who deliver good outcomes only on accident. However, voters are more willing to ascribe good intentions to in-group incumbents as opposed to out-group incumbents.

This paper is an extension of my independent dissertation work but coauthored with Scott Bokemper, who was a fellow PhD student at Stony Brook University and has subsequently left academia. By mutual agreement with Scott, I am designated as the lead author of this article, reflecting the fact that I completed data collection on the final experiment and was responsible for all extensions and revisions completed during the article's review process. I am now independently pursuing follow-up research in this area, designing experiments to understand how different institutional arrangements create incentives for leaders to mis-represent their intentions, as well as identifying when people attribute good or bad intentions to their elected officials in ambiguous situations. I have also applied these methods in other projects both independently and with a variety of different coauthors.

My second writing sample is a solo-authored piece (currently under review at *Public Opinion Quarterly*) that exemplifies the second branch of my research agenda. In this line of work, I look outside of the lab to study how policy design and the changing environment interact with individuals' beliefs and attitudes to shape environmental policy support. I show that when the public holds policy-specific inaccurate beliefs, focusing events can mobilize support for policies that inadvertently exacerbate the underlying problem. I illustrate this dynamic with the case of climate disaster. Leveraging Hurricane Sandy as a natural experiment, I find those affected by the storm are more likely to believe in climate change but oppose mitigation policies they incorrectly believe make climate change worse.

My research on climate governance has already received attention both inside and outside of academia. For example, I received the award for best paper published in *Risk Analysis* in 2022. Because of my expertise in climate change public opinion, I was invited to join an interdisciplinary team to identify the determinants of climate change literacy across Africa. Our work has been cited throughout recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations body responsible for synthesizing the state of our knowledge on climate change.

I have experience passing these skills on to the next generation of scholars as an instructor and a lab manager. I would be excited to continue teaching classes in American politics, political behavior, public opinion, environmental politics, and research methods. I have received exceptional course evaluations, even in difficult methods courses, and enjoy mentoring students as they conduct their own research.

I would be absolutely thrilled to continue my research and teaching at Northwestern. Included in my application materials are my curriculum vitae, research and teaching statements, teaching evaluations, writing sample, and contact information for my references. Please contact me at talbot.andrews@uconn.edu or at (971) 235-1709 if you need any additional information. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

*Talbot Andrews*

Talbot M. Andrews