

Self-Interest and Voter Support for Defund the Police

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Abstract

Prior research documents the importance of race, prejudice, and partisanship in shaping mass position-taking on police reform; however, little-to-no research explores self-interest as a potentially operative factor—especially for reforms affecting police budgets and service capacity. We identify a form of self-interest theoretically present for voters when considering “defund the police” proposals and utilize as a test case a police defunding ballot initiative in Los Angeles County with a rare feature rendering it uniquely well-suited for detecting voter self-interest: it targeted the county sheriff’s department and was voted on by county residents under and *not under* this agency’s jurisdiction. Using a design-based approach leveraging contiguous election precincts along different sides of the sheriff departments’ jurisdictional boundaries, we find little-to-no evidence that voters sought to protect the budget—and thus service capacity—of their public safety provider. Instead, we find evidence that voting was largely driven by anti-minority orientations.

Word Count: 9475 (Excluding References)

Introduction

The police killing of George Floyd in May of 2020 triggered the largest episode of social protest in American history (Buchanan and Patel, 2020). Years after these events, police reform remains a prominent issue in the United States, with 89% of the American public believing that changes are still needed to police procedures across the nation¹. Following the Floyd protests, an array of police reforms were presented to voters in subnational elections², yielding new opportunities to investigate the forces shaping voters' preferences on progressive justice reform. Research conducted within the past decade identifies race, prejudice, and partisanship as primary factors shaping Americans' reactions to police violence and position-taking on police reform (Updegrove et al., 2020; Reny and Newman, 2021; Jefferson et al., 2021; Boehmke et al., 2023). Neglected in this expanding vein of scholarship, however, is an exploration of a factor long-argued to structure policy preferences and voting: self-interest. Added to this, a review of over 60 years of research on self-interest finds ample tests for its presence in issue areas such as taxation, welfare, affirmative action, immigration, abortion, gay rights, and drug policy, yet a relative scarcity of tests within the domain of law enforcement and, especially, police reform (Weeden and Kurzban, 2017). In short, a contribution can be made to the growing literature on police reform and long-standing corpus of studies on self-interest by testing for the presence of self-interest in voter support for police reform.

A major protest slogan and police reform initiative that emerged during the 2020 Floyd protests was “defund the police” (Miller, 2020), which alludes to divesting public funds from law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and reallocating them to non-policing forms of public safety and community support (BLM Global Network, 2020; Lowrey, 2020; Ray, 2020). In the aftermath of the Floyd protests, calls for police defunding moved beyond the streets and into city council and town hall meetings and onto local ballots³. Defund the police (hereafter

¹<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/policing-opinion-poll-2023-02-05/>

²For example, Ballotpedia identifies 32 police-related ballot initiatives in local elections in 2020-2021 (link)

³See examples from Minneapolis, Austin, Portland, and Los Angeles

“DTP”) was a focal issue in the 2020 Presidential Election, with the controversial “Break In” campaign advertisement by sitting president Donald Trump that connected his challenger, Joe Biden, to the DTP movement. The 30-second advertisement depicted a woman watching a television segment about police defunding. While viewing this segment, a burglar breaks into her home and she calls 911 and receives a message stating, “I’m sorry that there’s no one here to answer your emergency call.” A YouGov poll found that ratings of Biden among Democratic and Independent registered voters dropped after viewing this attack ad.⁴ After winning the Presidency, Joe Biden reignited public debate over DTP in 2022 following his State of the Union Address, where he said that the answer to nationwide crime surges “is not to defund the police. The answer is to fund the police.”⁵

A central feature of DTP that sets it apart from other popular police reforms is the trade-off presented to the public by competing policy stakeholders between (a) paring the size and operational scope of police forces to redress police violence, and (b) maintaining the capacity of LEAs to provide service and public safety. Public discourse surrounding reforms like implicit bias training, chokehold and taser bans, body-worn cameras, and civilian oversight, have not involved opposition based on the claim that implementation would reduce LEA capacity to respond to 911 calls and provide service⁶. However, when it comes to deliberation over DTP, concern over the maintenance of police service and public safety are the *main* points of argumentation against the policy, with opponents claiming it will render LEAs unable to do their jobs and crime will worsen as a result⁷. According to the Executive Director of the Fraternal Order of Police, defunding the police would leave “no line of defense between innocent people and the potential for lawlessness”⁸. DTP initiatives are thus unique when it comes to the potential sources of voter preference formation due to the distinct

⁴<https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/31207-trump-advertisement-break-in-poll>

⁵<https://www.whitehouse.gov/state-of-the-union-2022/>

⁶For example, opposition to body-worn cameras is based on their IT costs and protecting civilian privacy (link); opposition to implicit bias training is based on its presumed inefficacy (link); and opposition to taser bans is based on preserving a means of de-escalation(link)

⁷See examples from ABC News, The Seattle Times, Slate Magazine, and the National Police Support Fund

⁸Quoted inABC News.

presence of a form of self-interest centering on *service protection*: the motive to protect the capacity of a LEA to provide service to one's household or neighborhood if or when needed.

The literature on policy threat predicts that policies will mobilize to action those whom they directly or indirectly harm (Laniyonu, 2019; Walker, 2020). This prediction is applicable to proposals to DTP, as they evoke the threat of a policy change that could lead to salient perceived harms (e.g., reduced police service and public safety). Given that threats are highly catalyzing of political action (Miller and Krosnick, 2004), it is reasonable to expect that service protection would be an operative factor depressing voter support for DTP. Decades of research finds a relatively limited role of self-interest in shaping public opinion and political behavior (Sears et al., 1980; Lau and Heldman, 2009). Critically, this literature suggests that self-interest is most likely to be operative when the potential harms of a policy are clear and loom large for a set of affected stakeholders (Chong et al., 2001; Weeden and Kurzban, 2017). Examples of these “most likely” cases for self-interest include cigarette taxes and smokers (Green and Gerken, 1989), property tax cuts and homeowners (Sears and Citrin, 1985), estate taxes and lottery winners (Doherty et al., 2006), welfare spending and the newly unemployed (Margalit, 2013), ACA enrollment and the infirm (Reny and Sears, 2020), and opioid treatment policy and residence in areas with high overdose rates (Benedictis-Kessner and Hankinson, 2019).

DTP initiatives are akin to these documented most-likely cases on the grounds that they involve substantial perceived costs (e.g., reduced service and increased crime) to affected stakeholders (i.e., households under the jurisdiction of a financially impacted LEA). Americans are notably concerned about crime and victimization: when asked how much they worry about “crime and violence,” 54% of Americans reported “a great deal” of worry and another 29% reported “a fair amount”⁹. A poll of Californians found that 65% were concerned about being the victim of a crime¹⁰ and surveys of Los Angeles County residents document

⁹Gallup Organization. 2023. Gallup Poll, March, Question 14 [31120183.00014]. Gallup Organization. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

¹⁰Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). PPIC California Statewide Survey, Question 44. 31120113.00043. Ipsos. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, 2023.

significant concern over property and violent crime.¹¹ Experimental evidence demonstrates that Americans believe that even small reductions to the size of their local LEA will result in increases in crime and decreases in public safety (Vaughn et al., 2022). In short, the threat of reduced service capacity when the police are needed should loom large for voters in affected jurisdictions, rendering self-interest a plausible and likely factor in shaping voter support for a DTP initiative. Alternately, if self-interest is not operative in shaping voter support for DTP, it would provide a strong addition from a new issue domain to the corpus of evidence concluding that electoral behavior is largely driven by forces other than self-interest.

There are a few recent empirical assessments of public support for DTP (Boehmke et al., 2023), police abolition (Morris and Shoub, 2023), and criminal justice reform (Ang and Tebes, 2023). These studies, however, focus on the effects of exposure to social protest and police violence on policy support, with no explicit mention of “self-interest” or incorporation of voter concern over police service capacity. In fact, consistent with past research demonstrating the predominance of symbolic and partisan orientations in driving public opinion and electoral behavior, these studies find that partisan preference is one of the strongest predictors of individual support for DTP (Boehmke et al., 2023) and precinct support for police abolition (Morris and Shoub, 2023). Honing in on recent studies of exposure to police violence, these studies do not conceptualize policy support among the treated as the exercise of self-interest; rather, they construe their findings as voter mobilization in response to policy threat. While this mobilization could nonetheless be viewed as a type of self-interest enactment, what is unequivocal is that these studies do not theoretically or empirically explore self-interest in the form of service protection. As such, we see the literature as ripe for an explicit exploration of self-interest in voter support for DTP. Importantly, this exploration should channel policy debate surrounding DTP by focusing on self-interest as service protection.

Web. Jan-13-2023.

¹¹<https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/programs/data/qualityoflife/>

The Case of Measure J in Los Angeles County

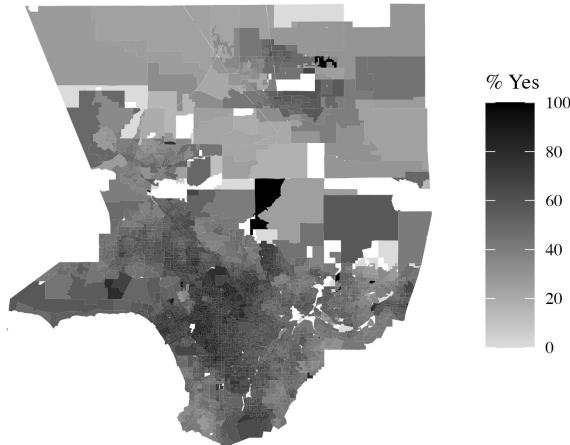
We explore the role of self-interest in voter support for police defunding using the case of Measure J in Los Angeles County (LAC). On the November 3rd, 2020 General Election, voters in LAC were presented with a county-wide ballot initiative soliciting a “Yes” or “No” vote on a proposed county charter amendment that would require LAC to divert 10% of its discretionary budget away from “carceral systems and law enforcement” in order to be spent on social services and jail diversion. The earmarked funds under the proposed amendment explicitly prohibited the funds from being used on prisons, jails, or the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD). The principal group behind Measure J was a coalition of local organizations, including the Long Beach and Los Angeles chapters of Black Lives Matter, working under the name “Re-imagine Los Angeles,” who publicly characterized it as a “ballot measure to divest from incarceration and policing and invest in the health and economic wellness of marginalized people in their communities.”¹² Measure J passed with 57% of the roughly 3.8 million votes cast throughout LAC. Figure 1, Panel A, provides a greyscale heatmap of voter support for Measure J in LAC election precincts, revealing greater support in Central LA, the South Bay, and Gateway and Westside cities relative to Santa Clarita and the San Fernando, Antelope, and San Gabriel Valley subregions. While myriad polls exist soliciting public preferences over DTP¹³, Measure J was put to a vote, enabling researchers to observe actual behavior or “revealed preferences,” which is valuable given that reported preferences do not always align with future behavior (LaPiere, 1934).

Several characteristics of LAC situate it as a useful context for studying electoral behavior and police reform. First, LAC is the largest county in the U.S. by population, with over 10 million residents and 6 million eligible voters as of 2020, which renders it larger than 40 of the 50 U.S. states. LAC is demographically diverse, with large Latinx (48%), Asian (15%), and Black (8%) populations, and it contains 88 cities and approximately 140 unincorporated areas

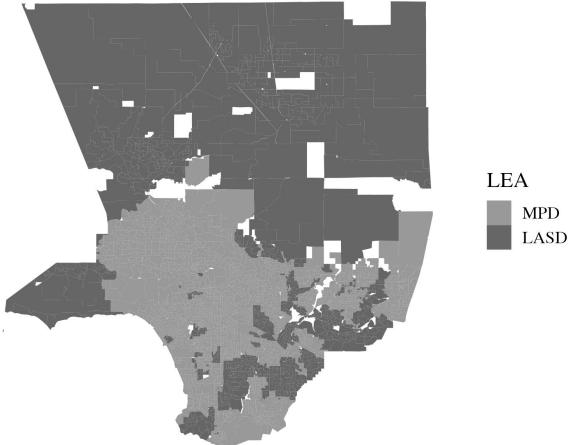
¹²See <https://reimagine.la/about/>

¹³For example, see FiveThirtyEight

A. Support for Measure J



B. LEA Jurisdiction



C. Border Precincts

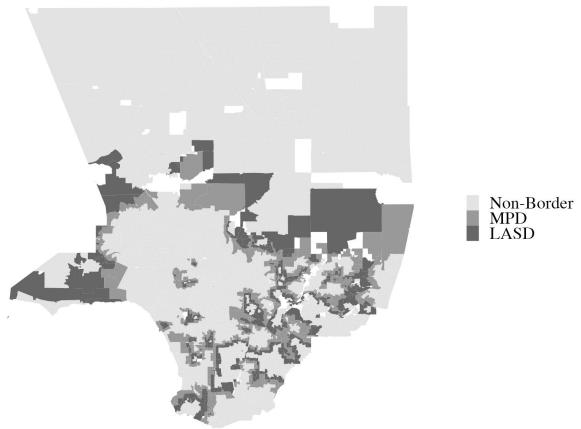


Figure 1: Map of LAC with Election Precinct Boundaries. Maps depict precinct support for Measure J (Panel A), LEA jurisdiction (Panel B), and contiguous precincts along LASD jurisdiction borders (Panel C). White spaces are precincts with 0 overall votes or 0 votes on Measure J.

with a heterogenous set of characteristics along demographic, socioeconomic, and political dimensions. In addition, the LASD is the largest county sheriff's department in the U.S., with 18,000 employees, 10,000 sworn deputies, and service provision to 42 cities and 153 unincorporated LAC communities. Perhaps most relevant, LAC is an epicenter for political

conflict over law enforcement: LAC experiences the highest level of fatal police violence, with 685 police killings of civilians between 2010-2020.¹⁴ Related to this, LAC experienced two of the largest episodes of civil unrest in response to police violence: the 1965 Watts Rebellion and the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising. Moreover, with the onset of the 2020 George Floyd protests in June of 2020, protesting and civil unrest throughout LAC escalated to the point where the National Guard was called and the entire county was put on a mandatory curfew¹⁵. While there is a history of conflict between the police and civilians in LAC, service protection as a form of self-interest remains highly plausible as an operative factor shaping the vote for Measure J given that a March 2020 survey of county residents found that 61% place high importance on being protected from crime and 62% reported varying degrees of satisfaction with their interactions with local law enforcement.¹⁶

County-Wide Vote with Differing Intra-County LEA Jurisdiction

Measure J offers a unique opportunity to assess the operation of self-interest in the form of service protection due to the county-wide nature of the vote but the disparate intra-county organization of LEA jurisdiction within LAC. Measure J was directed against funding for the LASD but would not affect the budgets of the 46 municipal police departments (MPDs) in operation in LAC. Critically, election precincts in LAC are either serviced by the LASD or a MPD, with no formal overlap in LEA jurisdiction. Figure 1, Panel B, depicts the jurisdictional boundaries of the LASD, showing the election precincts serviced by either the LASD (dark grey) or a MPD (light grey). Given Measure J only implicated the county budget and the LASD, the initiative presented county voters with the same ballot question but a distinct proposal with differing potential costs depending on where they lived: for voters living under the jurisdiction of the LASD, it involved defunding the policing agency servicing one's own household and neighborhood; however, for voters living under the jurisdiction of a MPD, it

¹⁴Figure based on the Fatal Encounters database (downloaded May 21, 2021, see <https://fatalencounters.org/>)

¹⁵<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-05-31/looting-vandalism-leaves-downtown-l-a-stunned>

¹⁶<https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/programs/data/qualityoflife/>.

involved defunding a widely-known locally-operating LEA while leaving the budget of the police agency servicing one's own household and neighborhood untouched.

This unique feature of the vote implies the presence of a self-interest-based service-protection motive for voters living under the jurisdiction of the LASD but the relative absence of such for those living under the jurisdiction of a MPD. In short, the county-wide nature of the vote—including its targeting of a county-level LEA—but disparate intra-county organization of LEA jurisdiction affords a unique opportunity to test for self-interest in the form of service protection. If popular arguments against DTP evoking concern over police service capacity have traction, such arguments should have been more salient to voters under LASD jurisdiction. While it is conceivable that voters served by a MPD could have been motivated by sociotropic concern over public safety in neighboring and remote county areas under LASD jurisdiction, their level of egotropic concern should have been little-to-none given that personally envisioning the need to call the police for their household would not entail calling the LASD. Therefore, we expect average support for Measure J to be lower among voters under the jurisdiction of the LASD, which we label the *service-protection hypothesis*.

This hypothesis presumes voters' awareness of the LEA serving their household and community. While we were unable to locate extant survey data asking LAC residents to identify the LEA serving their community, we are able to gain insight into this issue using publicly-available internet search data from Google Trends. Variation in internet search volume has been shown to capture the salience of an issue or entity among the American public (Mellon, 2014). Figure 2 displays differences in information seeking about the LASD and MPDs across LAC cities by LEA jurisdiction. Panel A reveals a very large *1.9 standard deviation* difference in information-seeking about the LASD among cities served by the LASD compared to those served by an MPD. Simply put, internet users in communities under the jurisdiction of the LASD seek out information about the LASD much more than users in communities not served by the LASD. This difference in information-seeking implies that residents under the jurisdiction of the LASD are aware of this fact as evinced by their

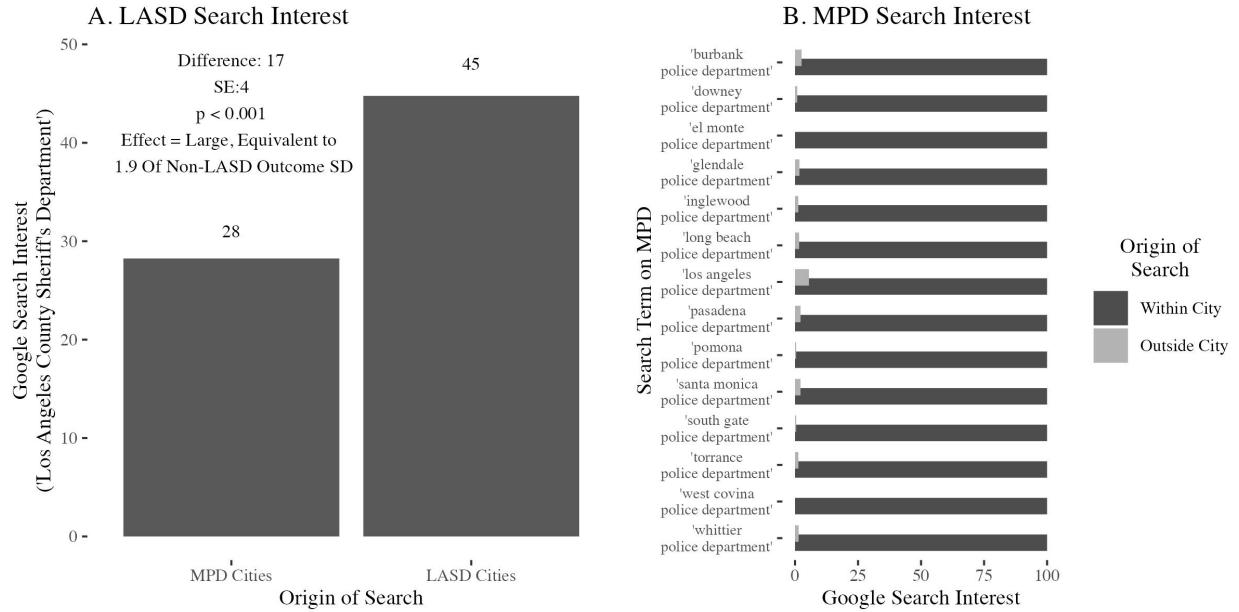


Figure 2: LASD- and MPD-Served Cities are Differentially More Likely to Seek Information Concerning their Own LEA. Panel A characterizes search interest in the “los angeles county sheriff’s department” between MPD and LASD-served cities. Panel B characterizes search interest among the MPD-serviced cities in the top-20 most populous LAC cities on their own MPD relative to all other cities. Data are from Google Trends between January 1, 2010 to November 1, 2020 on all 100 LAC cities Google collects search interest data on. Search interest is normalized between 0-100. Estimates are population-weighted.

differential interest in this LEA. Alternatively, Panel B lists every MPD-served city among the top-20 most populous cities in LAC and reveals that information-seeking within these cities about their own MPD maxes out on the Google Trends scale (range: 0-100) but is near zero for other cities in LAC. Put simply, residents that live in a particular MPD-served city (e.g., Burbank) maximally search for their own MPD (e.g., Burbank Police Department), but residents who live outside that particular MPD-served city (e.g., Glendale, Los Angeles, Pasadena) do not search for that MPD. These stark differences in search volumes imply awareness of one’s respective MPD among LAC residents residing in cities with a MPD.

The feasibility of the service-protection hypothesis is further buttressed by key characteristics of Measure J and the election environment in LAC. First, central features of Measure J fit the American public’s understanding of the moniker “defund the police.” A survey conducted in 2020 found that 70% of Americans perceived the protest slogan “defund the

police” to mean “redirect some police department funding to other social services” as opposed to “eliminating police departments completely.”¹⁷ Evidence that voters in LAC perceived Measure J as a DTP initiative comes from internet search activity in the LA metro area in the weeks before and after the 2020 Election. Time-stamped and geocoded data from Google Trends reveal that internet searches for “defund the police” by users in the LA metro area spiked leading up to and following the election. Moreover, search interest in “defund the police” was larger in the LA metro than non-LA metro areas throughout California (Figure B7, Table B1), suggesting interest in DTP in the LA metro area was not due to a generalized trend related to the 2020 election but rather the placement of Measure J on the ballot.

Second, various sources of information available to voters conveyed that Measure J was a defunding initiative; moreover, these sources of information made it clear that the measure would *only affect* the LASD compared to the 46 MPDs operating within LAC.¹⁸ First and foremost: all voters in LAC were sent sample ballots and voter information guides that provided ballot wording and arguments in favor and against each measure (see Appendix A). These materials *explicitly* told voters that the funds set aside from Measure J *could not* be used for the LASD, and no other LEA was singled out in these materials. While Measure J did not propose a direct cut to the LASD budget, various sources of information made it clear to voters that the measure could reduce the flow of funds available to the LASD. Chief among these, the official arguments appearing against Measure J on the sample ballot and voter information guide told voters that the measure “permanently takes \$500,000,000 in funding away” from “911 operators” and “public safety officers” (see Figures ?? and A5).

Second of these sources of information was local media coverage and media outreach by prominent stakeholders in the county. Critically, each of these sources explicitly depicted the initiative as a defunding measure targeting the LASD. Discussion of Measure J appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* made it clear the measure implicated the budget of the LASD and

¹⁷PRRI 2020 American Values Survey, Question 92, 31118163.00091, PRRI, (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, 2020)

¹⁸<http://www.laalmanac.com/crime/cr69.php>

that its principal opponent was the LASD (Cosgrove, 2020). Opponents of Measure J publicly argued that it was a de facto DTP policy since money would inevitably be reduced from the LASD to fund social programs mandated by the charter amendment. For example, the Sheriff of the LASD in 2020, Alex Villanueva, publicly characterized Measure J as a “campaign to continue defunding LASD” that would make the streets of LAC “look like a scene from Mad Max.”¹⁹ The LASD released a statement on its website claiming the measure would mean “additional reductions to our budget.”²⁰ On the LASD’s Facebook page, Villanueva posted a video on October 28, 2020²¹, where he stated that the passage of Measure J would mean a “\$145,000 cut to our budget” and “equate to the loss of 1,200 positions in the department,” which he said would cause “a devastating cut on our patrol services”, concluding that “our response times to go to crime will increase.” The Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS), which is the union for LASD deputies, alone spent \$3.5 million on TV and social media advertising indicting Measure J’s purported threat to public safety by constraining the pool of resources for law enforcement.²² Ads released by ALADS in the lead-up to the election contained titles and captions including “Measure J defunds the essential workers we count on to protect us” and “Measure J will lead to devastating consequences. Don’t let Measure J defund our public safety.” Finally, the Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association (PPOA), the professional association representing LASD deputies, released an ad stating “Measure J will cripple public safety” and “will absolutely DEFUND the work of dedicated PPOA members throughout LA County” (see Section C).

In the end, the primary opponents on record for Measure J were the LASD, Sheriff Villanueva, and organizations representing LASD deputies.²³. From official campaign materials and media coverage to hefty public outreach by opponents, the information environment in LAC leading up to the election was rich with information about the targeting of LASD and

¹⁹See <https://twitter.com/LACoSheriff/status/1285718712243412992>

²⁰<https://lasd.org/statement-regarding-measure-j/>

²¹<https://www.facebook.com/LosAngelesCountySheriffsDepartment/videos>

²²<https://www.vox.com/2020/11/4/21549019/measure-j-police-abolition-defund-reform-black-lives-matter-protest-2020-election-george-floyd>

²³See the Ballotpedia page for Measure J and the official endorsements for the measure.

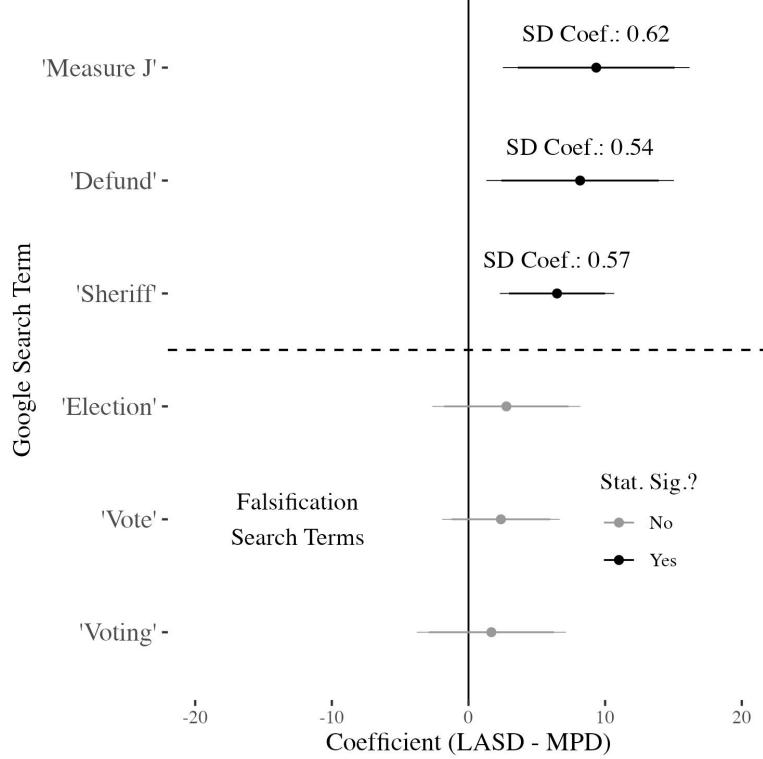


Figure 3: Differences in Internet Search Interest in Measure J and Related Terms Between Users in LASD- and MPD-Served Cities. X-axis is the t-test difference in Google search interest between LASD- and MPD-served cities, Y-axis is the search term. Estimates use data from all 100 LAC cities Google collects search interest data on. Search interest is normalized between 0-100. Temporal domain of data is from September 1, 2020 to November 3, 2020. Annotations denote the coefficient normalized by the standard deviation of the search interest outcome. 95% CIs displayed.

the threat to LASD service capacity and public safety. This, in turn, renders it plausible that voters would experience *differential policy threat* from Measure J as a function of their LEA jurisdiction. One method for gleaning the existence of differential policy threat from Measure J is to analyze information-seeking related to Measure J and the election among LAC residents using Google Trends search interest data.

Figure 3 presents estimated differences in search interest in “Measure J”, “Defund”, and “Sheriff” in the run-up to the 2020 election between users in cities served by the LASD versus a MPD. Interest in these terms was significantly higher among internet users served by the LASD. Crucially, these differences are substantively large, equivalent to 57-62% of the Google

Trends search interest measure standard deviation. Therefore, the threat of police defunding likely loomed large for LAC residents serviced by the LASD. What is more, LASD-served cities were *not* more likely to search for “Election”, “Vote”, or “Voting” than MPD-served cities, suggesting the difference in search interest in Measure J and related content by LEA jurisdiction was not due to users in LASD-served cities engaging in more internet searches related to the election in general. In sum, these differential search patterns are consistent with research demonstrating that information-seeking is stimulated by policy threat (Coan et al., 2021; Pantoja and Segura, 2003). Perhaps most important, the heightened interest in Measure J and the Sheriff’s Department among users in areas of LAC served by the LASD suggests that these residents *knew they fell under LASD jurisdiction* and were aware of the targeted policy threat of Measure J to their public safety provider.

Data and Methods

Our analysis uses administrative election results data for LAC from the November 3rd, 2020 General Election. We obtained this data at the smallest level of geographic aggregation available—the precinct-level—from the office of the LAC Registrar-Reporter/County Clerk.²⁴ In total, the final vote for Measure J was tabulated and reported for 3,050 election precincts.²⁵ The outcome variable in our analysis is the proportion of voters in each precinct casting a vote on Measure J who voted “Yes” on the initiative (% Yes, rescaled to range from 0 to 1).

To determine if an election precinct is served by the LASD or a MPD, we retrieved data on service boundaries for all LEAs operating within LAC from the County of Los Angeles Open Data website²⁶. We overlaid election precinct boundaries with LASD service boundaries in QGIS, and coded a precinct as served by the LASD if it was contained within LASD service boundaries. Conveniently, all precincts fall under the jurisdiction of a single LEA

²⁴See <https://www.lavote.net/home/voting-elections/current-elections/election-results/past-election-results>

²⁵We exclude precincts with 0 votes overall or 0 votes on Measure J.

²⁶<https://data.lacounty.gov/GIS-Data/Reporting-Districts/kvwy-dqs6>

(LASD or a MPD) because both election precinct and LEA service boundaries are determined by the borders of cities and unincorporated communities throughout LAC²⁷. We created a dichotomous variable, labeled *LASD*, coded “1” for precincts under the jurisdiction of the LASD and “0” for those under the jurisdiction of a MPD. In this study, residing under the jurisdiction of the LASD captures the theorized “treatment”—namely, the presence of self-interest in the form of the egotropic motive to protect LASD service capacity and provision to one’s household or neighborhood.

We account for an extensive set of precinct-level control covariates potentially correlated with LEA jurisdiction and support for criminal justice reform. Using census block group data from the 2015-2019 5-year American Community Survey, we use areal interpolation²⁸ to generate precinct-level estimates of our control covariates, including: population size and density, median household income, the proportion of adults holding a college degree or higher (*% college*), the proportion of housing units that are owner-occupied (*% own home*), the proportion of workforce adults that are unemployed (*% unemployed*), the proportion of the population that is 55 years or older (*% 55+*), the proportion of the population that is either Black, Latinx or Asian (*% Black, Latino, Asian*), and the proportion of adults employed in protective services (e.g., police and sheriff’s officers, *% security*).

To address general differences in left-right political orientations, we control for the proportion of voters in each precinct registered as Democrats in the 2020 election (*% Democrat*).²⁹. Given the longstanding racialization of crime in the United States (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997) and the demonstrated role of race and prejudice in shaping Americans’ reactions to police violence (Reny and Newman, 2021; Jefferson et al., 2021) and attitudes toward the police (Newman et al., 2023; Russell and Garand, 2023), we also control for the proportion of precinct voters who supported California Proposition 16 (2020) (*% Proposition*

²⁷GIS data on LASD jurisdiction and LAC precinct boundaries were slightly jittered from each other, which could generate the possibility for error using automatic processes to identify LASD precincts. Therefore, we identified which precincts overlapped with LASD boundaries by hand.

²⁸Implemented via the `sf` package in R.

²⁹Data on Democratic registration retrieved from the California Statewide Database

16). Proposition 16 would have repealed Proposition 209 (1996), which prohibited ethno-racial affirmative action in public institutions. Prior research demonstrates that support for affirmative action is largely informed by antipathic attitudes toward non-white groups, specifically Black people (Kluegel and Smith, 1983), making it a suitable proxy for sentiment toward minorities. Voters exposed to potentially egregious policing practices, like police killings, may be inclined to constrain the police by voting for justice reform (Ang and Tebes, 2023). Therefore, we adjust for precinct-level police killing rates using geocoded data on the universe of police killings in the four years prior to the 2020 election (*police killing rate*).³⁰ Finally, routine exposure to violent crime may increase voter's sensitivity to police capacity to mitigate crime (Vaughn et al., 2022). Thus, we adjust for homicide rates³¹ using geocoded homicide data throughout LAC in the four years prior to the 2020 election (*homicide rate*).³²

Analytic Strategy

One approach to testing the service protection hypothesis would involve using regression on all 3,050 precincts in LAC to assess whether there were average differences in support for Measure J between precinct voters served by the LASD versus a MPD. Given the size of LAC and concentration of LASD-served precincts in specific regions of the county, one concern with this approach is that LASD- and MPD-served precincts significantly differ on a host of characteristics. This concern is powerfully confirmed in Figure 4, Panel A, which reveals substantial covariate imbalance: precincts served by the LASD are significantly different than those served by a MPD on 8/15 baseline covariates (i.e. income, education, home ownership, age, population density, partisanship, and affirmative action support). In short, estimating a regression coefficient for *LASD* entails comparing drastically different precinct types.

Given this, we use a design-based approach focusing on the subset of $N = 862$ *neighboring* election precincts strewn along each side of LASD jurisdictional boundaries throughout LAC.

³⁰Source: <https://fatalencounters.org/>

³¹To construct police killing and homicide rates, we normalize the count of police killings and homicides by precinct population and multiply that quantity by 1,000.

³²Source: <https://homicide.latimes.com/>

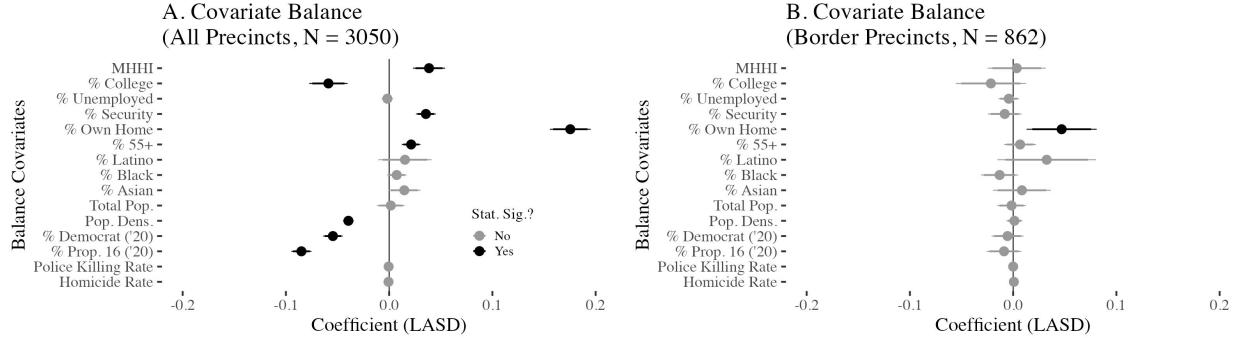


Figure 4: Covariate Imbalance between LASD- and MPD-Served Election Precincts. Plots depict balance tests for for all LAC precincts (Panel A) and contiguous precincts along LASD jurisdiction borders (Panel B). All covariates scaled between 0-1. Estimates are population-weighted. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

Figure 1, Panel C, depicts this subset of precincts existing along different sides of LASD's zigzagging jurisdictional boundaries. The intuition behind this design is that focusing on contiguous precincts will render a more alike set of comparison units. Using this subset of border precincts *drastically* reduces covariate imbalance between LASD- and MPD-served precincts (Figure 4, Panel B). Compared to the full set of LAC precincts, we only observe imbalance on 1/15 baseline covariates (home ownership), equivalent to statistical chance. The reduction in covariate imbalance is a critical demonstration in establishing the value of this design-based approach. What is particularly notable is that use of this bordering precinct subsample eliminates imbalance on partisan orientations (*% Democrat*), and additional tests demonstrate that these precincts voted similarly on state and local referenda pertaining to criminal justice or police reform between 2004 to March 2020 (Figure G14). Also worthy of note: these border precincts experienced similar rates of homicide and police killings of civilians in the 4 years prior to the 2020 election, and additional tests demonstrate that bordering precincts served by LASD or the Long Beach and Los Angeles police departments experienced similar rates of police-initiated stops of civilians (Table F3). Altogether, these tests bolster the claim that this design is effectively comparing demographically, politically, and criminologically alike units.

One important accompanying demonstration is showing that LEA jurisdictional boundaries

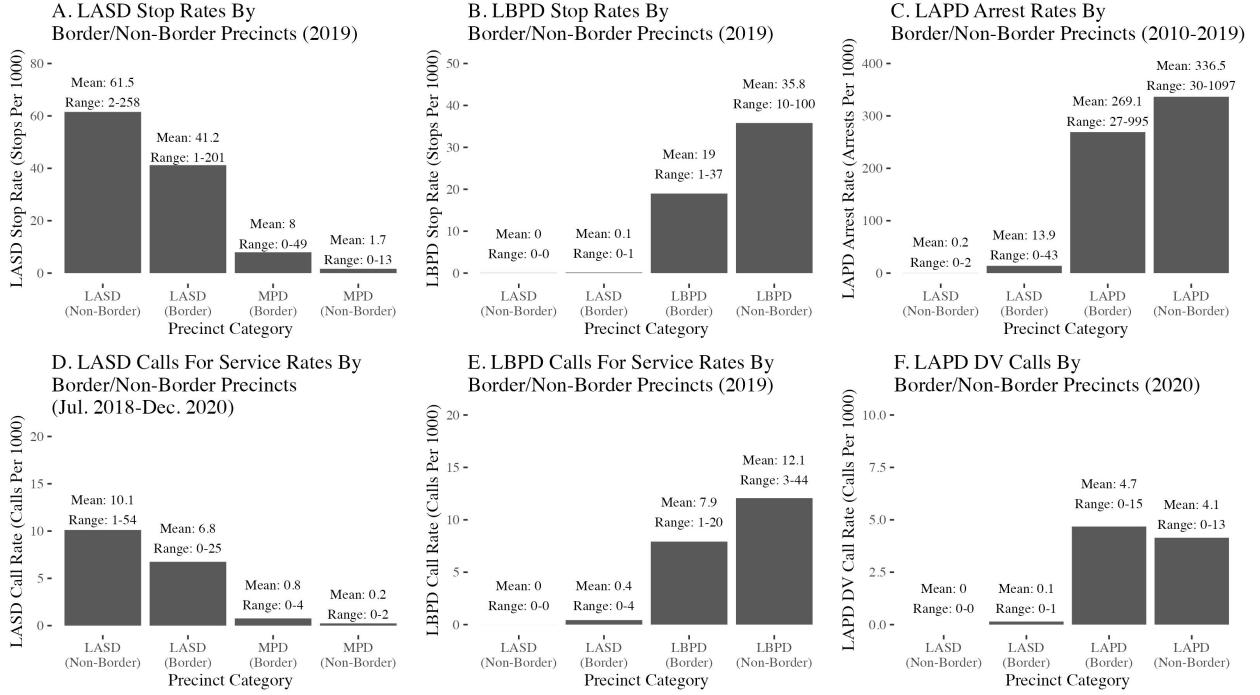


Figure 5: Rates of Policing and Response to Calls for Service Across LASD and MPD Jurisdictions. Panels A-C characterize the LASD stop rate, LBPD stop rate, and LAPD arrest rate for LASD non-border precincts, LASD border precincts, MPD (LBPD/LAPD for Panel B/C) border precincts, and MPD (LBPD/LAPD for Panel B/C) non-border precincts (x-axis). Panels D-F characterize the LASD call for service rate, LBPD call rate, and LAPD domestic violence call rate (y-axis) by precinct type (x-axis). Annotations denote mean stop rate and range for each respective precinct category. Estimates are population-weighted.

are *sharp* among this subset of contiguous precincts, which renders feasible the assumption that voters in these areas are able to discern their LEA. If the LASD or MPDs regularly engage in cross-jurisdiction policing activity in these bordering precinct areas, voters in these precincts may be justifiably unclear about which LEA is their service provider, which should bias the estimated *LASD* coefficient toward zero. In contrast, if LEA activity discontinuously shifts across jurisdictional boundaries, it would provide the objective conditions needed to render plausible the assumption that voters along different sides of the LASD border know which LEA services their household.

Figure 5, Panels A-C characterize policing activity by the LASD, Long Beach Police

Department (LBPD), and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD),³³ whose combined jurisdiction covers 70% of election precincts in LAC. Each bar chart groups precincts into four types: LASD-served precincts not touching the LASD border, LASD-served precincts on the LASD border, LBPD/LAPD-served precincts touching the LASD border, and LBPD/LAPD-served precincts not touching the LASD border. The bar charts in Panels A-C reveal discontinuous drops in LEA policing activity (i.e., police stop rates and arrest rates) between precincts just inside and outside its jurisdictional border. One basis for residents to identify which LEA has jurisdiction over their household is—*who engages in policing activity in their immediate neighborhood?* The results in Panels A-C suggest precinct voters served by an MPD just outside of LASD jurisdiction see very little LASD policing activity in their precinct compared to neighboring precincts just inside LASD jurisdiction. Conversely, precinct voters just inside of LASD jurisdiction bordering LB or LA see little activity in their precinct by LBPD or LAPD. A second basis for residents to identify which LEA has jurisdiction over their household is—*who responds to a 911 call?* Panels D-F in the bottom row of Figure 5 reveal discontinuous shifts across jurisdictional lines in the LEA responding to 911 calls for service or domestic violence (DV). For example, when precinct voters just inside of LAPD jurisdiction call to report DV, the LAPD answers; however, for precinct voters just outside of LAPD jurisdiction, their calls to report DV are answered by a different LEA.³⁴

Taken together, these data suggest a discontinuous drop in the “treatment” (self-interest deriving from being served by the LASD) as a function of traversing LASD jurisdictional borders. Despite the close proximity of neighboring precincts just inside and outside of LASD jurisdiction, the data in Figure 5 render it plausible that these voters discern being served by the LASD versus a MPD. As such, there is a plausible difference across LASD jurisdictional lines among these border precincts in the presence of self-interest in the form of the motive to protect LASD service capacity and provision. In the following section, we report the results from our border precinct analysis. Importantly, as a check against our border precinct

³³For information on the data used to construct police stop and arrest rates on Figure 5, see Section D.1

³⁴For information on the data used to construct calls for service rates on Figure 5, see Section D.2

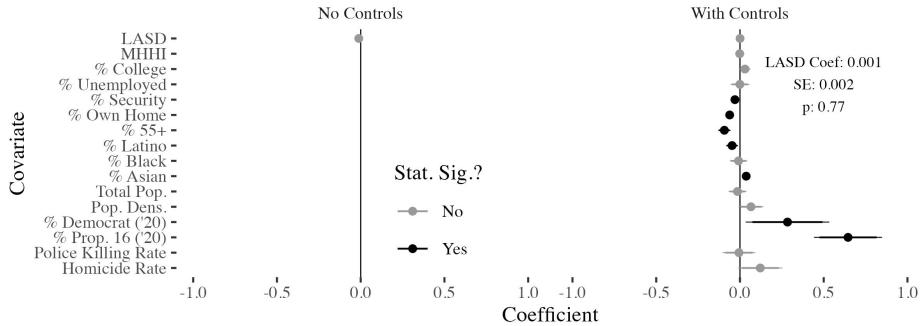


Figure 6: Effect of *LASD* Jurisdiction on Measure J Support. Plots present coefficient estimates from bivariate (left-panel) and multivariate (right-panel) regression models. All estimates from LAC border precinct subsample. All covariates scaled between 0-1. Estimates are population-weighted. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

findings, we present results using all LAC precincts in the appendix. As a preview, regardless of analytic strategy, we recover statistically and/or substantively null effects for *LASD*.

Results

Figure 6 presents the results from our analysis of bordering election precincts. We present coefficient estimates for *LASD* from a bivariate model and a model including controls. In both models, we find that the effect of *LASD* service provision on *% Yes* for Measure J is statistically null. The *LASD* coefficient conditional on controls is precisely 0 ($\beta = 0.001$, $SE = 0.002$, $p = 0.77$). The standardized *LASD* coefficient is equivalent to 0.004 standard deviations ($SE = 0.015$). Effect size research posits a standardized effect of 0.05 is substantively negligible (Cohen, 2013). By extension, under an equivalence test, coefficients are deemed *very negligible* if their 95% CIs are within ± 0.05 SD (Lakens et al., 2018). The standardized *LASD* coefficient and its confidence intervals are within ± 0.05 SD, so the *LASD* effect is negligible under the equivalence test. These results suggest self-interest in the form of voting against a proposition that may reduce the capacity of one's own public safety provider was not operative in shaping the vote for Measure J.

As a check against the possibility that this null result is induced by our research design

(i.e., analyzing neighboring precincts along the LASD border), we demonstrate in the appendix (Section E) that the estimated effect of *LASD* on $\% \text{ Yes}$ in the full set of $N = 3,050$ precincts is substantively very small (0.7 percentage points, 5% of the outcome standard deviation), highly sensitive to confounding, and indistinguishable from its estimated effect on other state and local criminal justice reform ballot initiatives. This latter finding indicates that voters under the jurisdiction of LASD did not go out of their way to oppose Measure J relative to their standing tendency to oppose progressive justice reform. As these other state and local ballot measures had no bearing on LASD's budget or operational capacity, these findings provide evidence against self-interest in the form of service protection as a uniquely operative factor in shaping the vote on Measure J. In sum, the suggested conclusion when analyzing the full set of precincts is consistent with that from our bordering precinct analysis: little-to-no evidence that precincts under LASD jurisdiction systematically opposed the initiative.

We conducted several additional checks against these null results. First, one may suspect the null results could be explained by lack of sufficient knowledge about Measure J and/or LEA jurisdictional boundaries necessary for voters to enact self-interest in the form of service protection. If this were the case, then an interaction term between *LASD* and factors that may be correlated with political knowledge concerning Measure J and LEA service provision would be negative. It stands to reason that more educated precincts (Persson, 2015), precincts with more homeowners who may be more invested in their neighborhood amenities (e.g. public safety provision) (Brunner et al., 2015), and precincts with older voters who may be more aware of their public safety service provider (Jennings, 1996), would be less inclined to support Measure J conditional on LASD service provision. Inconsistent with the notion our null result is driven by the absence of knowledge or sophistication, we do not observe heterogeneity in the effect of *LASD* by $\% \text{ college}$, $\% \text{ own home}$, or $\% 55+$ (Table J5, Models 3-5). These null results imply self-interest was not operative regardless of baseline factors that could encourage knowledge over the particularities of LEA service provision and Measure J.

Second, the null result may be a function of “extended” self-interest generating a treatment

spillover effect—that is, voters in MPD-served precincts along the LASD jurisdiction border may have an interest in protecting LASD service capacity in bordering LASD-served precincts so they do not have to live near areas with escalating crime or that crime does not spill over into their communities. There are two reasons such extended self-interest effects do not explain our null result in Figure 6. First, if the null was driven by spillover effects, then we would expect a large *LASD* coefficient using the full set of LAC precincts, which include MPD precincts further inland from the LASD border that may be less concerned with crime spillover from LASD precincts. However, as mentioned before, we do not find *LASD* has a substantively meaningful effect using data from all LAC precincts (Section E). Second, if the null result is driven by spillover effects via concerns related to crime in adjacent LASD precincts for bordering MPD precincts, we would expect the average homicide rate of LASD precincts bordering MPD precincts to be negatively associated with support for Measure J among MPD precincts along the LASD border. We do not find this to be the case (Table H4), further suggesting spillover effects do not underlie our null result.

Third, our null results may be masking countervailing effects by partisanship (Vaughn et al., 2022). Precincts with more registered Democrats may be inclined to support Measure J if serviced by LASD whereas precincts with more registered Republicans may be differentially motivated to reject Measure J conditional on LASD service provision. To this end, we assess the heterogenous effect of *LASD* by *% Democrat*. We do not find evidence our null result is driven by partisan countervailing effects (Table J5). Fourth, given our outcome variable is the number of votes for Measure J normalized over the sum of votes for and against Measure J, our results may be affected by post-treatment conditioning on a) voting on Measure J (i.e. not abstaining), b) turnout, and c) registration. Therefore, we assess if our findings are sensitive to alternative *% Yes* outcomes where the total votes for Measure J are normalized over a) all ballots cast, b) registered voters, and c) the citizen voting-age population (CVAP). Our results do not change using these alternative outcomes (Figure I15). Finally, self-interest may still be operative even if there are no differences in *% Yes* between LASD and MPD

precincts bordering LASD jurisdiction if turnout is higher on the LASD side of the LASD jurisdiction border. This is because *% Yes* at the border is 3 percentage points *less* than the *overall* LAC Measure J vote (54 versus 57 percentage points). However, we find the effect of *LASD* on turnout (normalized over registered voters and/or CVAP) is statistically null (Figure I15).

Alternative Forms of Self-Interest and Symbolic Politics

If self-interest in the form of service protection among voters under LASD jurisdiction played an insignificant role in the vote, *what factors played a significant role?* The right-side plot in Figure 6 reveals that the presence of homeowners and the elderly within a precinct were each negatively related to precinct support for Measure J. Prior research documents that older people are more concerned about crime and vulnerable to criminal offenses (Braungart et al., 1980) and that homeowners may be more sensitive to the threat of crime than renters due to having a stronger stake in preventing social disorder in their long-term residence and sustaining property values (Donnelly, 1989). As such, these findings could be seen as indicative of self-interest in the form of “crime-sensitivity”—that is, opposition to Measure J among precincts possessing characteristics linked to elevated sensitivity of residents to crime.

Three things should be noted about the estimated relationships between Measure J support and home ownership and elderly composition. First, these relationships are substantively small. The standardized coefficients for *% own home* and *% 55+* are -0.1 and -0.06. Second, these factors are not conditioned by residing within LASD jurisdiction (Table J5, Models 4-5), suggesting a “knee-jerk” negative reaction to DTP among home-owning and elderly voters that could be viewed as “unenlightened” self-interest given that it occurred regardless of whether the initiative at hand affected the LEA serving their household (Bartels, 2016). Third and perhaps most critically, they are highly sensitive to omitted variable bias. We implement a sensitivity analysis to use other variables in our fully-specified regression model to a) identify the variable that is most prognostic of *% own home*, *% 55+*, and *% Yes*; and

b) assess how many times the most prognostic variable an omitted variable would have to be to undermine the association between $\% \text{ own home}$, $\% 55+$, and $\% \text{ Yes}$ (Cinelli and Hazlett, 2020). The most prognostic variable of joint variation in $\% \text{ own home}$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ is population density. The association between $\% \text{ own home}$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ could be attenuated to 0 in the presence of a confounder equivalent to 4x population density. Likewise, the most prognostic variable of joint variation in $\% 55+$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ is $\% \text{ Latino}$. The negative association between $\% 55+$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ could be attenuated to 0 in the presence of a confounder equivalent to 4x $\% \text{ Latino}$. These metrics will become more meaningful below when discussing sensitivity analyses for the estimated coefficients for *Proposition 16*.

Another key finding on Figure 6 is the absence of an association between the *homicide rate* and $\% \text{ Yes}$ on Measure J. Precincts exposed to higher levels of crime may be more sensitive to perceptible reductions in public safety provision as a function of Measure J's policy impact. Therefore, precincts exposed to higher homicide rates may be inclined to reject Measure J in order to mitigate the threat of violent crime. However, precincts exposed to higher homicide rates are not more or less likely to support Measure J. Moreover, the effect of *LASD* service provision on $\% \text{ Yes}$ is not heterogeneous by the homicide rate (Table J5, Models 7-9), further suggesting self-interest in the form of crime-sensitivity is not operative.

One notable finding in Figure 6 is that the presence of individuals working in protective services (e.g., police officers) in a precinct was negatively related to support for Measure J. While potentially reflective of the exercise of self-interest among individual LASD deputies or group-level solidarity among LEA officers in general, the precinct-level nature of the data along with the lack of precision in the Census data regarding occupation (i.e., LEA employees being lumped together with firefighters, security guards, and park rangers) make it difficult to glean too much from this estimated coefficient. What is more, this estimated relationship is substantively very small (-0.02 standardized coefficient) and sensitive to omitted variable bias, with a sensitivity analysis demonstrating it would take a coefficient equivalent to 2x *Proposition 16*, the covariate that is most prognostic of joint variation in $\% \text{ security}$ and $\%$

Yes, to reduce the relationship between $\% \text{ security}$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ to 0.

As a final assessment of the import (or lack thereof) of self-interest, we explored the relationship of calls for service (CFS) to precinct support for Measure J (adjusting for control covariates). This ancillary analysis was intended to capture self-interest in the form of “service-utilization”—namely, that residents who frequently use police services may be more opposed to policy proposals that could erode police service capacity. To measure service utilization, we used time-stamped and geocoded CFS data publicly available from the LASD, LBPD, and LAPD (i.e., the data used for Figure 5). We report the results from this analysis on Figure K16. In each instance, the relationship of CFS to Measure J support is substantively very small and statistically indiscernible from zero. What is particularly notable is the null result for CFS among precincts served by the LASD, whose own public safety provider was targeted by Measure J. While readers can likely conceive of alternative measures of police service utilization, such measures are not readily publicly available nor geocoded at a level of granularity necessary to map onto election precincts. As such, the results presented in Figure K16 represent the best tests possible using available data, and these tests imply little-to-no self-interest in the form of service utilization. Not only were precincts eligible for service by LASD (i.e., assigned to the “treatment”) not more likely to oppose Measure J, precincts under LASD jurisdiction with frequent calls to LASD for service (i.e., those receiving the “treatment” by using LASD service) were not more opposed to Measure J than their LASD-served counterparts with comparably less frequent calls for LASD service.

Given this gamut of negligible and non-robust relationships, we revisit the question: *what did matter?* The most striking result presented in Figure 6 is the estimated relationship of precinct $\% \text{ Proposition 16}$ (i.e., revealed preferences on a “race-conscious” affirmative action policy) to $\% \text{ Yes}$ vote on Measure J. The estimated relationship is substantively large (0.65 standardized coefficient respectively) and is significantly larger than the association of $\% \text{ Democrat}$ to $\% \text{ Yes}$ on Measure J (0.24) and the aforementioned associations between $\% \text{ own home}$, $\% \text{ 55+}$, $\% \text{ security}$ and $\% \text{ Yes}$ on Measure J. Indeed, coefficient difference tests

demonstrate the min-max absolute value coefficients for *% Proposition 16* are statistically larger and distinguishable from the min-max absolute value coefficients for *LASD*, *% own home*, *% 55+*, and *% security* (Table L6). Furthermore, sensitivity analyses demonstrate that the positive association between *% Proposition 16* and *% Yes* would require an unobserved confounder equivalent to 8x *% Black*, the most prognostic covariate of joint variation in *% Proposition 16* and *% Yes*, to be attenuated to 0. These unobserved confounders are much larger than the unobserved confounders it would take to attenuate the coefficients characterizing the relationship between alternative measures of self interest (*% own home*, *% 55+*, *% security*) and Measure J support. This suggests that symbolic orientations related to race mattered more than self-interest for voting on Measure J, and are less likely to be perturbed by omitted variables.

These findings are consistent with a foundational study on self-interest published in 1980 (Sears et al., 1980) finding that crime victimization and concern over crime in one's neighborhood (i.e., self-interest) mattered little in shaping Americans' preferences on "law and order" policies while symbolic factors like anti-minority sentiment were *highly* predictive. Moreover, we demonstrate in Table N8 that the coefficient for *% Proposition 16* remains positive, substantively sizeable, and statistically significant when adjusting for precinct support for Measure R, which was a LAC ballot measure proposing a civilian oversight commission for the LASD during the March 3, 2020, Primary Election. This implies that the coefficient estimate for *% Proposition 16* is not simply channelling standing opposition to police reform and is instead tapping into anti-minority policy support.

Conclusion

This article provides a powerful test case for the potential role of self-interest in shaping voter support for a prominent yet controversial type of justice reform: "defund the police." Public discourse surrounding DTP is replete with warnings about eroded LEA service capacity and

elevated crime as a function of diminished service capacity. Prior research also shows the American public, as well as the population of voters in the present study (i.e. LAC residents), are distinctly concerned about crime and the maintenance of public safety (Vaughn et al., 2022).³⁵ Put together, these conditions suggest that the motive to protect the service capacity of one's public safety provider would be an operative and powerful factor for voters when weighing their support for a DTP proposal. To test this expectation, one needs to find a case where a DTP initiative was subject to popular vote. Moreover, if an analyst could dream up an ideal scenario for such a test case, they might envision a situation where the motive for service protection could differ across a set of voters, for example, by varying whether or not the LEA servicing their household is affected by the DTP initiative at hand. This may seem like a tall order for the real-world, however, because it would require a DTP proposal targeting a specific LEA that allows those served by this LEA to cast a vote as well as those *not served* by the LEA to also cast a vote. Many may reflexively balk at this notion, for why would those not served by a specific LEA—and thus lacking a stake in the situation—be given the same opportunity as those served by it to cast a vote over its level of funding?

Measure J in LAC in the 2020 General Election provided this very type of case, and the reason for it: the LEA targeted (the LASD) is a county-level agency with discontinuous pockets of jurisdiction within the county yet all county residents contribute to the county tax revenues that fund its operations. As such, all county residents were given the opportunity to cast a vote on the measure, thus affording the unique opportunity to observe differences in support for the measure between voters served and *not served* by the targeted LEA. With these opportune conditions in hand, we sought to test for self-interest in the form of service protection in voter support for Measure J. We implemented a research design that drastically reduced demographic and political differences between election precincts served and not served by the LASD. This design involved focusing our analysis on the subset of neighboring election precincts strewn along different sides of LASD's zigzagging jurisdictional boundaries

³⁵<https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/programs/data/qualityoflife/>

throughout LAC. Our analysis rendered little evidence that collections of voters served by the LASD opposed the measure more than collections of voters served by a different public safety provider. Critically, even when relaxing our research design to include all election precincts in the county, we found little evidence of service protection among LASD-served precincts. Complementing these null results, we fail to uncover robust evidence for other possible incarnations of self-interest, including opposition to Measure J among those more frequently utilizing police services or those possessing characteristics associated with greater sensitivity to crime. In short, across various conceptualizations, we uncover a consistent lack of evidence that self-interest shaped voter support for Measure J.

These findings offer a powerful addition to the corpus of studies testing for self-interest in public opinion and political behavior. The standing wisdom among leading scholars is that self-interest plays a negligible role in most areas of politics and that group identity and symbolic politics are prepotent drivers of mass attitudes and behavior (Sears et al., 1980; Lau and Heldman, 2009). As new policies are proposed or new issues become salient, new opportunities for testing self-interest become available. For example, former U.S. President Barack Obama made health care reform a focal point of his campaign and presidency, which initiated considerable conflict over health care in the years leading up to and following the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to Reny and Sears (2020), the ACA created a strong case for observing self-interest given that those opposed to the program faced fines for going uninsured once the program came into effect. Analyzing large-N survey data, Reny and Sears (2020) find symbolic factors, such as partisan identification, massively dwarfed the effect of self-interest in shaping support for ACA. Similar to Obama's presidency increasing the salience of healthcare, the 2014 Ferguson Uprising, growth of the Black Lives Matter movement, and 2020 Floyd Protests contributed to police reform being a salient issue in the U.S. over the past decade. While myriad studies have explored the factors shaping public support for BLM and police reform, this work has yet to theoretically or empirically explore the role of self-interest. Indeed, tests focusing on criminal justice and policing are

notably underrepresented in the corpus of literature on self-interest. This article, therefore, contributes to the literature by identifying a unique test case for self-interest within an underrepresented policy domain. Given the characteristics of Measure J that render it a “most likely” case for self-interest, the absence of self-interest offers a powerful reinforcement to the standing wisdom that self-interest typically plays a minimal role in shaping public opinion and political behavior. Instead, our findings reinforce the axiom that citizens largely rely on their symbolic orientations—such as their feelings toward and identification with politically salient groups in society—to inform their attitudes and vote choices.

Having noted our contributions, it is important to discuss the limitations of our analyses. First, since voter file data does not contain information on individual vote choices, the best available option was to analyze precinct-level data (the smallest unit of geographic aggregation) on vote choice for Measure J. Therefore, we caution readers in making inferences concerning individual voters on the basis of our empirical findings. This said, our analysis includes many very small precincts in dense urban areas that include relatively homogeneous collections of voters. One direction for future research would be to assess the relationship between different dimensions of self-interest, symbolic orientations, and DTP support using individual survey data. Such research, while possessing the benefit of individual-level observation, would carry the limitation of analyzing the reported, versus revealed, preferences of voters.

Second, although we provide a significant amount of evidence to suggest voters in LASD-serviced areas may have understood Measure J as a policy threat to their LEA and LASD-serviced areas understand that the LASD is their LEA, it is plausible voters may have not effectively understood that Measure J differentially affected the LASD versus MPDs throughout LAC. However, this may not be a limitation but rather a theoretical feature of the limited consequences of self-interest. Even when self-interest should be salient in shaping policy preferences (i.e. the explicit imposition of budgetary constraints on a LEA for voters serviced by that particular LEA), it may still be difficult, for a variety of reasons, for voters to effectively gauge how particular policy propositions affect their tangible interests

(i.e. their interest in maintaining the capacities of their public safety provider) (Reny and Sears, 2020). Therefore, consistent with our conclusion that symbolic orientations mattered more in shaping the vote on Measure J, voters may *still* rely on relatively accessible symbolic orientations (e.g., anti-minority sentiment) to decide their vote on particular policies. Future research should continue to assess if differences in the extent to which voters understood particular policies pose a threat to self-interest would ultimately affect downstream policy preferences.

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A Measure J Voter Information Materials

A.1 Sample Ballot

 **Sample Ballot**

General Election
November 3, 2020

DISTRICT ANTELOPE VALLEY HEALTH CARE DISTRICT Member, Board of Directors Vote For No More Than THREE <input type="radio"/> KRISTINA HONG Emergency Nurse <input type="radio"/> MATEO B. OLIVAREZ Incumbent <input type="radio"/> ABDALLAH S. FARRUKH Incumbent <input type="radio"/> KEVIN L. VON TUNGELEN Business Owner <input type="radio"/> MICHAEL P. RIVES Retired Hospital Worker <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate	JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT Office No. 72 Vote For ONE <input type="radio"/> STEVE MORGAN Deputy District Attorney, County of Los Angeles <input type="radio"/> MYANNA DELLINGER Law Professor/Attorney <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate	COUNTY MEASURE J Vote YES or NO COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION MINIMUM COUNTY BUDGET ALLOCATION. Shall the measure, annually allocating in the County's budget no less than ten percent (10%) of the County's locally generated unrestricted revenues in the general fund to address the disproportionate impact of racial injustice through community investment and alternatives to incarceration and prohibiting using those funds for carceral systems and law enforcement agencies as detailed in the ordinance adopting the proposed charter amendment, be adopted? <input type="radio"/> YES on Measure J <input type="radio"/> NO on Measure J
COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Vote For ONE <input type="radio"/> JACKIE LACEY Los Angeles County District Attorney <input type="radio"/> GEORGE GASCÓN Justice Reform Advocate <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate	JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT Office No. 80 Vote For ONE <input type="radio"/> DAVID A. BERGER Deputy District Attorney, County of Los Angeles <input type="radio"/> KLINT JAMES MCKAY Administrative Law Judge, California Department of Social Services <input type="radio"/> Write-In Candidate	STATE 14 STATE MEASURE 14 Vote YES or NO AUTHORIZES BONDS CONTINUING STEM CELL RESEARCH, INITIATIVE STATUTE. Authorizes \$5.5 billion state bonds for: stem cell and other medical research, including training; research facility construction; administrative costs. Dedicates \$1.5 billion to brain-related diseases. Appropriates General Fund moneys for repayment. Expands related programs. Fiscal Impact: Increased state costs to repay bonds estimated at about \$260 million per year over the next roughly 30 years. <input type="radio"/> YES on Measure 14 <input type="radio"/> NO on Measure 14
		● Continue voting on next page

EN-NP-0001-1-2

LA 001-012

Figure A1: Sample Ballot Information On Measure J.

A.2 Measure J Information



Candidate Statements & Measures

FULL TEXT OF BALLOT MEASURE J ORDINANCE NO. 2020-0040		
An ordinance calling a special election to be held on November 3, 2020, throughout the County of Los Angeles for the purpose of voting upon an amendment to the Los Angeles County Charter and directing the consolidation of the election with the statewide general election to be held on the same day.		(1) To appoint all County officers other than elective officers, and all officers, assistants, deputies, clerks, attaches [14] and employees whose appointment is not provided for by this Charter. [15] ...
The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles ordains as follows:		(8) <u>To allocate, in compliance with all laws and regulations, the County's locally generated unrestricted revenues in the general fund as follows:</u> A. <u>Set aside a baseline minimum threshold of at least ten percent (10%) of the County's locally generated unrestricted revenues in the general fund (Net County Cost), as determined annually in the budget process or as otherwise set forth in the County Code or regulations, to be allocated on an annual basis, after input from, among others, the public and County departments at a public hearing, for the following primary purposes:</u> i. <u>Direct Community Investment,</u> 1. <u>Community-based youth development programs,</u> 2. <u>Job training and jobs to low-income residents focusing on jobs that support the implementation of the "Alternatives to Incarceration" workgroup recommendations as presented to the County Board of Supervisors on March 10, 2020, especially construction jobs for the expansion of affordable and supportive housing, restorative care villages, and a decentralized system of care,</u> 3. <u>Access to capital for small minority-owned businesses, with a focus on Black-owned businesses,</u> 4. <u>Rent assistance, housing vouchers and accompanying supportive services to those at-risk of losing their housing, or without stable housing,</u> 5. <u>Capital funding for transitional housing, affordable housing, supportive housing, and restorative care villages with priority for shovel-ready projects.</u> ii. <u>Alternatives to Incarceration,</u> 1. <u>Community-based restorative justice programs,</u> 2. <u>Pre-trial non-custody services and treatment,</u> 3. <u>Community-based health services, health promotion, counseling, wellness and prevention programs, and mental health and substance use disorder services,</u> 4. <u>Non-custodial diversion and reentry programs, including housing and services.</u>
PROPOSED COUNTY CHARTER AMENDMENT. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION MINIMUM COUNTY BUDGET ALLOCATION. Shall the measure, annually allocating in the County's budget no less than ten percent (10%) of the County's locally generated unrestricted revenues in the general fund to address the disproportionate impact of racial injustice through community investment and alternatives to incarceration and prohibiting using those funds for carceral systems and law enforcement agencies as detailed in the ordinance adopting the proposed charter amendment, be adopted?	YES	
PROPOSITION J This Proposition shall become effective only if it is submitted to the voters at the election held on November 3, 2020 and is approved. The Charter amendment shall become operative on July 1, 2021. First: Section 11 of Article III of the Charter of the County of Los Angeles is amended to read: Section 11. It shall be the duty of the Board of Supervisors:		NO

4193-EN-00012

LA 001-034

Figure A2: Information on Measure J Mandates (Part 1)



Candidate Statements & Measures

<p><u>B. The set aside shall not be used for any carceral system or law enforcement agencies, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County Superior Courts, or Los Angeles County Probation Department, including any redistribution of funds through those entities. This restriction does not extend to State law requiring the County to fund court facilities and expenditures, including, but not limited to, the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002 (2002 Senate Bill No. 1732) and Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 (1997 Assembly Bill No. 233), other mandatory fines and fees, or any other County commitments to the extent required by law.</u></p> <p><u>C. The unrestricted revenues that are set aside shall phase in over a three-year period, beginning July 1, 2021, and incrementally grow to the full set-aside by June 30, 2024, pursuant to the procedures codified in the County Budget Act in the Government Code.</u></p> <p><u>D. The set aside cannot supplant monies otherwise allocated for the same categories listed in Subsection (8)(A), as defined and set forth in the County Code or regulations.</u></p> <p><u>E. The Board of Supervisors shall establish an inclusive and transparent process on the allocation of funds set aside by this Subsection (8).</u></p> <p><u>F. Notwithstanding this Subsection (8), the Board of Supervisors may, by a four-fifths vote, reduce the set-aside in the event of a fiscal emergency, as declared by the Board of Supervisors, that threatens the County's ability to fund mandated programs.</u></p> <p>Second: In the event that the amendment to the Charter of Los Angeles County contained in this Proposition is rendered inoperative because of the actions of any court, legislative or other body, or for any other reason, the provisions of the County Charter in effect on November 3, 2020, shall remain in full force and effect.</p> <p>Third: If any section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Proposition is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words of this amendment to Section 11 of Article III of the Charter. The voters of the County of Los Angeles declare that they would have independently adopted each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Proposition irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections,</p>	<p>subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words of this amendment to Section 11 of Article III is declared invalid or unenforceable.</p> <p>SECTION 3. <u>Consolidation.</u> The special election shall be consolidated with the statewide general election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. The Proposition shall be placed upon the same ballot as that provided for the general election. The precincts, polling places, or vote centers, and precinct board members shall be the same as provided for the statewide general election.</p> <p>SECTION 4. <u>Proclamation.</u> Pursuant to section 12001 of the Elections Code, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles hereby PROCLAIMS that a special countywide election shall be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020, to vote upon the Charter Amendment described in Section 2 of this Ordinance.</p> <p>SECTION 5. <u>Effective Date.</u> Pursuant to Section 9141 of the Elections Code and Section 25123 of the Government Code, this Ordinance shall take effect upon the adoption thereof.</p> <p>SECTION 6. <u>Authority.</u> This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to sections 23720, 23730, and 23731 of the Government Code, and sections 9141, 10402, 10403, and 12001 of the Elections Code.</p> <p>SECTION 7. <u>Publication.</u> This Ordinance shall be published once before the expiration of 15 days after its passage in a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed, published and circulated in the County of Los Angeles pursuant to Government Code section 25124.</p> <p>The Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board of Supervisors is ordered to file a copy of this Ordinance with the Registrar-Recorder at least 88 days prior to the day of the election.</p>
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LA 001-035

Figure A3: Information on Measure J Mandates (Part 2)

A.3 Measure J Argument in Favor

Candidate Statements & Measures

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE	HECTOR VILLAGRA Executive Director, ACLU of Southern California
J	
Vote YES on Measure J to address the disproportionate impact of racial injustice by prioritizing health, housing, youth development and jobs in low-income and underserved communities—with a particular focus on Black, Brown, and low-income communities.	DAN LANGFORD
Vote YES on Measure J to make sure that a minimum of 10% of EXISTING local county revenue is guaranteed to be invested in community safety, housing stability, and care.	Executive Secretary-Treasurer and CEO,
Vote YES on Measure J because it is clear that now is the moment to re-imagine L.A. County and make sure our county government budget reflects our shared values and priorities.	SW Regional Council of Carpenters
Vote YES on Measure J to:	ISAAC BRYAN
--Increase community based counseling and mental health services --Prioritize restorative justice programs --Expand job training and placement support --Create housing that is affordable to working people --Support small businesses --Scale up mentoring and youth development programs	Director of Public Policy, UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies
Vote YES to shift resources from the criminal justice system to programs proven to address the root causes of crime. Incarceration and punishment are ineffective at treating poverty, mental illness, and a lack of housing.	
Vote YES on Measure J because it is fiscally responsible and holds our elected leaders accountable. This is NOT a new tax—instead it will gradually and responsibly phase in the 10% budget set aside of existing local revenues over a four-year period. The funding set aside could be paused by the Board of Supervisors in a fiscal emergency. The measure promotes transparency by requiring an annual budgeting process that is flexible, but with a clear framework of eligible and non-eligible uses.	
In these unprecedented times, we need real, meaningful change. Vote YES on Measure J to prioritize health, housing, and economic investment in communities across L.A. County.	
ELISE BUIK President & CEO, United Way of Greater L.A.	
PATRISSE CULLORS Chair, Reform L.A. Jails	

4193-EN-00015

LA 001-037

Figure A4: Argument in Favor of Measure J

A.4 Measure J Argument in Disfavor



Candidate Statements & Measures

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE J	
<p>Measure J has good intentions, but the consequences will be painful.</p> <p>Vote No on Measure J.</p> <p>No on Measure J – the county is struggling just to provide existing services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measure J permanently diverts nearly \$500,000,000.00 away from essential workers and critical public services county residents already rely on to a broad wish list of unspecified programs county government isn't equipped to manage.- The county is still struggling to help get us through the COVID-19 crisis and decrease homelessness.- Permanently diverting hundreds of millions of dollars from essential services into a whole new set of unspecified programs during a health and economic crisis will hurt the people it's designed to help. <p>No on Measure J – puts the safety of our neighborhoods at risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measure J permanently takes \$500,000,000.00 in funding away from where it is needed the most—emergency response workers, nurses, 911 operators, public safety officers, social workers, and other essential workers. <p>No on Measure J – big political promises and no explanation of consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Los Angeles Times called it a "bad idea" and a "poor substitute for careful study, deliberation, and decision making."- Measure J is cloaked in progressive words and big political promises, but no plan to implement and no specific fiscal accountability to make sure the money is spent effectively.- Four county politicians rushed Measure J to the ballot without assessing the consequences of how permanently diverting nearly half a billion dollars away from essential county services will harm our neighborhoods. <p>We all want more people in Los Angeles to succeed, but all Measure J actually does is permanently divert nearly \$500,000,000.00 away from essential county services into a whole new wish list of programs the county can't effectively manage.</p> <p>Vote No on Measure J.</p> <p>More information: ProtectEssentialWorkers.com</p>	<p>KATHRYN BARGER Chair, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors</p> <p>DAVID SIFUENTES Retired Firefighter</p> <p>LAMBERT ADOUKI Long Beach Community Organizer</p> <p>MARIA BOWSA Retired Registered Nurse</p>

4193-EN-00017

LA 001-039

Figure A5: Argument in Disfavor of Measure J

A.5 Measure J Argument in Disfavor Rebuttal



Candidate Statements & Measures

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE J	ANDREA PASQUINI Registered Nurse
<p>Vote Yes on Measure J</p> <p>For far too long our underserved and marginalized communities across L.A. County have been left out and left behind, with fatal public health consequences. Measure J will change this.</p> <p>The lack of investment has driven higher levels of poverty and shorter life expectancy for Black, Brown and low-income people. The pandemic has made this inequity even more clear.</p> <p>While voting YES on Measure J is about creating a more just and equitable future that reflects our shared values, the opponents of Measure J prefer to use fear tactics to maintain the broken status quo.</p> <p>Over 100 organizations with a track record of fighting for justice, community investment, health and wellness say Yes on Measure J.</p> <p>National Union of Healthcare Workers, Black Lives Matter L.A., Community Coalition, Frontline Wellness Network, UNITE HERE! Local 11, and many more have all called for bold and permanent action to improve public safety and prioritize our communities. Measure J does exactly that.</p> <p>-YES on Measure J – Increases public safety by funding programs that proactively address and treat the root causes of crime.</p> <p>-YES on Measure J – Increases public safety by funding mental health treatment and counseling.</p> <p>-YES on Measure J – Ensures that at least 10% of EXISTING County funds are fairly dispersed through a transparent, inclusive process for impacted communities—rather than being allocated through backroom deals to campaign contributors.</p> <p>Re-Imagine L.A. County, vote YES on Measure J.</p> <p><u>www.MeasureJforLA.com</u></p> <p>BELTRAN CHOW, LCSW Enriched Residential Services Program Coordinator</p> <p>DAHLIA FERLITO, MPH Health Educator</p> <p>LIZ SUTTON, LCSW Enriched Residential Services Program Manager</p>	

4193-EN-00018

LA 001-040

Figure A6: Rebuttal Against Argument in Disfavor of Measure J

B Internet Search Interest of “Defund the Police” in LA Metro Area Before and After 2020 Election

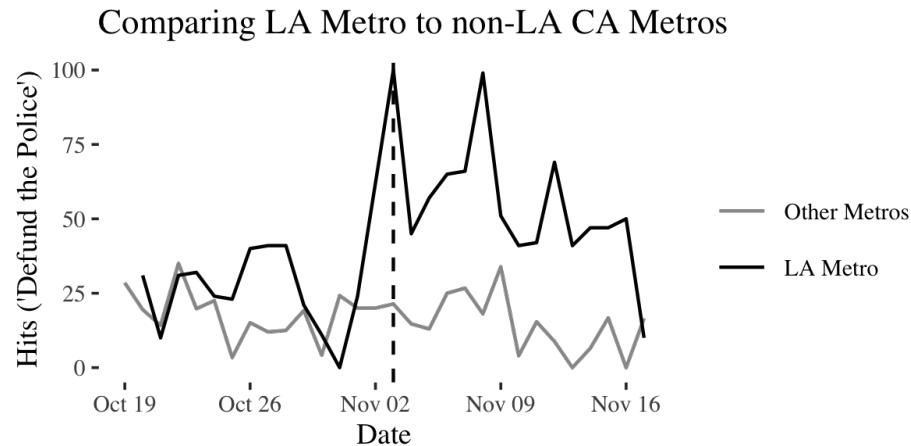


Figure B7: LA Metro Residents Sought Information About “Defund the Police” *MORE* than Residents From Other California Metropolitan Areas. The plot displays daily (x-axis) Google search intensity (y-axis) in the Los Angeles metropolitan region (black) compared to the mean search intensity in all other California metropolitan regions (grey) in the two weeks before and after the Measure J vote. The dashed vertical line denotes the moment Measure J was voted on. The non-LA metros are Bakersfield, Chico-Redding, Eureka, Fresno-Visalia, Monterrey-Salinas, Palm Springs, Sacramento-Stockton, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara.

Table B1: The Mass Public Paid More Attention to ‘Defunding the Police’ in the LA Metropolitan Area Than non-LA California Metropolitan Areas on Election Day (Google Trends Data)

	Search Hits (“Defund the Police”) (1)
Los Angeles x Election Day	54.48*** (10.69)
Los Angeles	24.12*** (2.44)
Election Day	5.48 (10.69)
R ²	0.07
N	319

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. HC2 city-clustered robust SEs in parentheses.

C Anti-Measure J Campaign Ads



Figure C8: Anti-Measure J Ad by The Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs 1



Figure C9: Anti-Measure J Ad by The Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs 2



Figure C10: Anti-Measure J Ad by The Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs 3

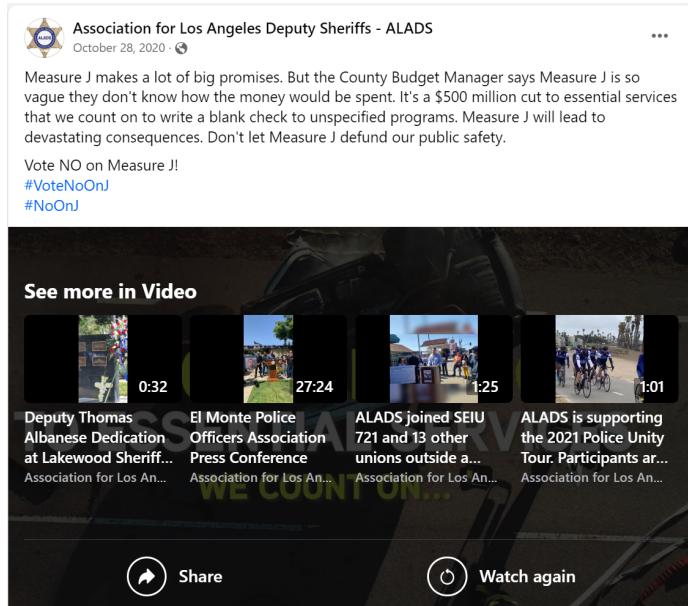


Figure C11: Anti-Measure J Ad by The Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs 4


 Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Assoc. - PPOA
 October 5, 2020 · 

 Your ballot is your voice. We encourage you to use this PPOA endorsement guide when voting in the upcoming elections.

PPOA ENDORSEMENTS for November 2020 Elections

Members are encouraged to use the PPOA endorsement guide below when voting in the upcoming election:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- **No on Measure J:** Don't let county supervisors permanently cut \$500,000,000 from essential services provided by PPOA members and other county employees.
- Jackie Lacey for L.A. County District Attorney
- Herb Wesson for L.A. County Supervisor, District 2

LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT

- Steve Morgan for L.A. Superior Judge, Seat 72
- Scott Yang for L.A. Superior Judge, Seat 162

CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION

- **Yes on Prop 20:** This proposition will ensure that a criminal who rapes an unconscious person, traffics a child for sex or assaults a peace officer will NOT be eligible for early release.

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY

- Tom Lackey for Assembly 36th District
- Jacqui Irwin for Assembly 44th District
- Blanca Rubio for Assembly 48th District
- Burton Brink for Assembly 49th District
- Freddie Rodriguez for Assembly 52nd District
- Sydney Kamager-Dove for Assembly 54th District
- Lisa Calderon for Assembly 57th District

CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

- Shannon Grove for Senate 16th District
- Scott Wilk for Senate 21st District
- Ling Ling Chang for Senate 29th District
- Richard Roth for Senate 31st District

CITY COUNCIL

- Steve Hofbauer for Mayor, City of Palmdale

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARDS

- Jeremiah Arnold for La Cañada School District Board
- Greg Palatto for Bonita Unified School District Board
- Scott Schmerelson for Los Angeles Unified School Board, District 3

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

- Scott Svankin for L.A. Community College Board of Trustees

Figure C12: Anti-Measure J Ad by The Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association

D LEA Activity Information

D.1 Policing Activity

To construct the police stop and arrest rate estimates for LASD non-border precincts, LASD border precincts, LBPD/LAPD border precincts, and LBPD/LAPD non-border precincts on Figure 5, Panels A-C, we use a variety of datasets.

For Panel A, we acquired incident-level data on Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department stops in 2019.³⁶ The data include street addresses, which we geocode via Google's geocoding API to identify the latitude/longitude coordinate of each stop. We use the latitude/longitude coordinates to identify how many LASD stops occur within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average stop rate (i.e. stops normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD border precincts, c) MPD border precincts, and d) MPD non-border precincts.

For Panel B, we acquired incident-level data on Long Beach PD stops in 2019 from Long Beach Open Data.³⁷ The data also include street addresses, which we geocode via Google's geocoding API to identify the latitude/longitude coordinate of each stop. We use the latitude/longitude coordinates to identify how many LBPD stops occur within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average stop rate (i.e. stops normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD precincts bordering Long Beach, c) Long Beach border precincts, and d) Long Beach non-border precincts.

For Panel C, we acquired incident-level data on LAPD stops between 2010-2019 from Los Angeles Open Data.³⁸ The data include latitude/longitude coordinates, which we use to identify how many LAPD arrests occur within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average arrest rate (i.e. arrests normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD precincts bordering Los Angeles, c) Los Angeles border precincts, and d) Los Angeles non-border precincts.

D.2 Requests For Service

To construct the police calls for service estimates for LASD non-border precincts, LASD border precincts, LBPD/LAPD border precincts, and LBPD/LAPD non-border precincts on Figure 5, Panels D-F, we use a variety of datasets.

First, for Panel D (data on LASD calls for service rates), we do not have data on the universe of LASD calls for service since it is not publicly available. Therefore, we use the incident-level LASD stop data used on Panel A and subset the stop data to stops that were the product of calls for service. Our assumptions are twofold: 1) calls for service, in general, are likely correlated with calls for service that led to stops and 2) calls for service that led to stops were likely initiated in the location that the stop occurred. Data on 911 calls that led to LASD stops includes address information which we geocoded using the Google geocoding API to identify latitude and longitude coordinates. We use the latitude and longitude coordinates to identify the number of LASD calls for service (that led to stops) within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average call rate (i.e. calls normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD border precincts, c) MPD border precincts, and d) MPD non-border precincts.

Second, for Panel E (data on LBPD calls for service rates), we also do not have data on the universe of LBPD calls for service since it is not publicly available. Therefore, like with the LASD, we use the incident-level LBPD stop data used on Panel B and subset the stop data to stops that were the product

³⁶Source: https://data.lacounty.gov/datasets/5d079a13bd914010a513c11f7d581d95_0/explore

³⁷Source: <https://data.longbeach.gov/explore/dataset/lbpdrripa-data-annual>

³⁸Source: <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Arrest-Data-from-2010-to-2019/yru6-6re4>

of calls for service. Data on LBPD stops that were the product of 911 calls includes address information which we geocoded using the Google geocoding API to identify latitude and longitude coordinates. We use the latitude and longitude coordinates to identify the number of LBPD calls for service (that led to stops) within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average call rate (i.e. calls normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD precincts bordering Long Beach, c) Long Beach border precincts, and d) Long Beach non-border precincts.

Third, for Panel F, we do not have data on the universe of LAPD 911 calls that are geocoded since it is not publicly available. However, LA Open Data makes available geocoded calls for service for domestic violence reasons.³⁹ Our assumptions here are 1) calls for service for domestic violence may be correlated with calls for service in general and 2) if domestic violence calls do not occur outside LAPD jurisdiction (e.g. in LASD jurisdiction), it stands to reason 911 calls in general may not occur outside LAPD jurisdiction. The LAPD domestic violence call data include latitude and longitude coordinates, which we use to identify the number of LAPD domestic violence calls during 2020 within each precinct throughout LAC. We then estimate the population-weighted average call rate (i.e. calls normalized by population, with the resultant quantity multiplied by 1,000) for a) LASD non-border precincts, b) LASD precincts bordering Los Angeles, c) Los Angeles border precincts, and d) Los Angeles non-border precincts.

³⁹Source: <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Domestic-Violence-Calls-from-2020-to-Present/qq59-f26t>

E Full Precinct Set Replication

Table E2: Effect of LASD on Measure J Support (Full Set of LAC Precincts)

	% Measure J	
	(1)	(2)
LASD	-0.100*** (0.005)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Median HH Income	-0.007 (0.007)	
% College	0.026** (0.010)	
% Unemployed	0.007 (0.016)	
% Security	-0.020*** (0.006)	
% Own Home	-0.056*** (0.005)	
% 55+	-0.092*** (0.011)	
% Latino	-0.049*** (0.010)	
% Black	-0.051*** (0.012)	
% Asian	0.026*** (0.005)	
Total Pop.	0.009 (0.014)	
Pop. Dens.	0.028* (0.014)	
% Democrat ('20)	0.179*** (0.054)	
% Prop. 16 ('20)	0.791*** (0.046)	
Police Killing Rate	0.020 (0.037)	
Homicide Rate	0.071* (0.036)	
Outcome SD	0.150	0.150
R ²	0.138	0.936
Num. obs.	3050	3050

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. All covariates scaled between 0-1. HC2 robust SEs in parentheses

Table E2 characterizes the effect of LASD service on Measure J support using all LAC precincts. Service protection by LASD is associated with a decrease in Measure J support of 0.7 percentage points, equivalent to 5% of the outcome standard deviation.

Although these results are somewhat inconsistent with the null result from the bordering precinct approach in the main text, we do not believe the results assessing the effect of LASD on Measure J support with the full LAC precinct sample invalidates our main result for *three reasons*.

LASD Effect on Prior CJ Propositions (Full Sample)

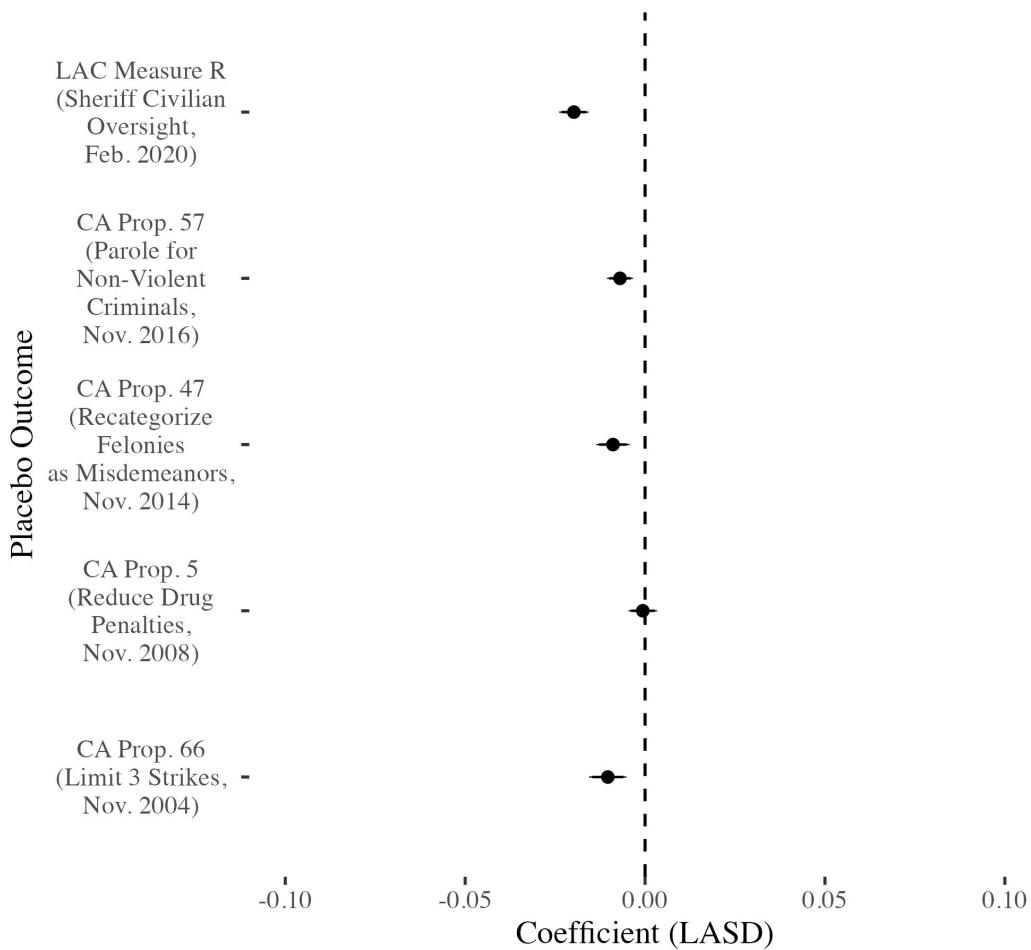


Figure E13: Falsification tests assessing the effect of LASD service on support for non-Measure J criminal justice propositions (all LAC precincts). X-axis is the effect of LASD service provision for border precincts. Y-axis is the falsification outcome. All models are control covariate adjusted. All covariates scaled between 0-1. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

First, the results using the full LAC precinct sample may be susceptible to confounding. Unlike the bordering precinct sample, balance tests suggest precincts serviced by LASD versus MPDs in the full LAC sample are statistically distinct from each other in a number of ways (higher median income, lower college education, more people employed in security services, more homeownership, more older people, less population density, less Democrats, see Figure 6, Panel A). Therefore, the effect of LASD on Measure J support using the full LAC precinct sample instead of the bordering precinct sample may be more likely to be driven by omitted variable bias. Indeed, a sensitivity analysis demonstrates that the LASD effect in the full LAC precinct sample can be easily attenuated to 0 in the presence of confounders equivalent to 1x % Proposition 16 (% yes for repealing anti-affirmative action), 2x % homeownership,

and 4x % Democrat (Cinelli and Hazlett, 2020).

Second, the LASD effect on Measure J support using the full LAC precinct sample is substantively small, especially compared to other factors. LASD service protection is associated with a 0.05 standardized decrease in Measure J support, a substantively small effect. For instance, prior research suggests standardized effect sizes lower than 0.2 are substantively small (Rice and Harris, 2005). Indeed, the min-max coefficient for % Proposition 16 (% yes for repealing anti-affirmative action) and % Democrat is over 5 and 1 outcome standard deviations, implying the influence of LASD service protection is substantively meaningless relative to other “symbolic” factors.

Third, the LASD effect on Measure J support using the full set of precincts is likely confounded by unobservable factors that motivate LASD-served precincts to reject progressive criminal justice propositions *in general*. Unlike in the border precinct sample (Figure G14), falsification tests assessing the effect of LASD service provision on pre-Measure J progressive criminal justice propositions is always negative and statistically significant (Figure E13), implying the results using the full set of LAC precincts are confounded by unobservable motivations among LASD precincts to reject progressive criminal justice reform.

In summary, the effect of LASD service provision on Measure J support is substantively small, sensitive to confounding, and fails critical falsification tests that suggest insulation from omitted variable bias. Therefore, we do not believe significant stock should be put in the results using all LAC precincts.

F Policing Intensity Balance

Table F3: Effect of *LASD* on Police Stop Rate (Border Sample: Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Bordering LASD Precincts)

	Police Stop Rate	
	(1)	(2)
LASD	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.011 (0.010)
Median HH Income	0.020 (0.034)	
% College	0.009 (0.055)	
% Unemployed	-0.045 (0.055)	
% Security	-0.024 (0.022)	
% Own Home	0.011 (0.018)	
% 55+	0.001 (0.023)	
% Latino	0.064 (0.061)	
% Black	0.033 (0.040)	
% Asian	0.006 (0.026)	
Total Pop.	0.006 (0.028)	
Pop. Dens.	0.022 (0.057)	
% Democrat ('20)	-0.368 (0.305)	
% Prop. 16 ('20)	0.263 (0.231)	
Police Killing Rate	0.015 (0.046)	
Homicide Rate	-0.049 (0.105)	
R ²	0.003	0.085
Num. obs.	264	264

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

F.1 Notes on Incorporating Police Stop Data

To generate measures of police intensity across LASD, Long Beach PD, and Los Angeles PD served precincts, we acquired data on LASD contact with civilians (i.e. pedestrian and vehicular stops) from the Sheriff's Automated Contact Reporting System (SACR) website: https://lasd.org/SACR_opendata.html. For all

stop datasets across LASD, LBPD and LAPD served precincts, we subset the stop data to 2019 since that is the year where police stop data across all three departments temporally overlap. The LASD contact data included information on the street address of each contact. We then geocoded each street address to its latitude/longitude coordinate using the Google Maps API. Then, we identified the geographic intersection of each LASD contact and the 3,050 LAC precincts in our sample. We summed up the number of LASD contacts in each precinct for the year 2019 to determine the number of LASD stops in each precinct. We then normalized the number of LASD stops by the precinct population using information from the 2019 ACS 5-year sample and multiply that quantity by 1,000 to construct the stop rate.

We also use data on vehicular and pedestrian stops from the Los Angeles Open Data website: <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Vehicle-and-Pedestrian-Stop-Data-2010-to-Present/ci25-wgt7>. We merge this data with reporting district shapefiles that determine police patrol and 911 reporting boundaries (see: <https://data.lacounty.gov/GIS-Data/Reporting-Districts/kvwy-dqs6>). We then use a spatial weighted merge between reporting district and LAC election precinct shapefiles to derive estimates of the number of stops in each Los Angeles city election precinct during the year 2019. We normalize the number of LAPD stops by the precinct population in 2019 and multiply that quantity by 1,000 to construct the stop rate.

Finally, we use vehicular and pedestrian stop data from the Long Beach Open Data website: https://data.lb.longbeach.gov/datasets/3d57257946ab46908440f0daa134043c_0/explore. The data include street address information, which we geocode using the Google Maps API to gather latitude/longitude coordinates of each LBPD traffic/pedestrian stop. We identify the geographic intersection of each LBPD stop with the 3,050 LAC precincts in our sample. We sum up the number of LBPD stops in each precinct for the year 2019 to determine the number of LBPD stops in each precinct. We then normalize the number of LBPD stops by the 2019 precinct population and multiply that quantity by 1,000 to construct the stop rate.

G Falsification Tests on Pre-Measure J Criminal Justice Propositions

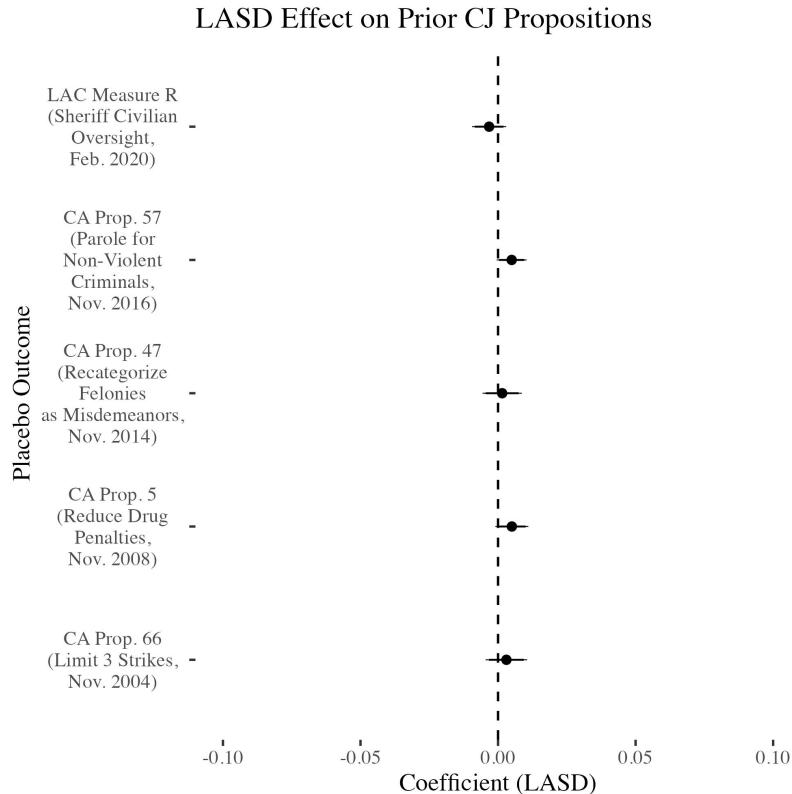


Figure G14: Falsification tests assessing the effect of LASD service on support for non-Measure J criminal justice propositions (border precinct sample). X-axis is the effect of LASD service provision for border precincts. Y-axis is the falsification outcome. All models are control covariate adjusted. All covariates scaled between 0-1. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

G.1 Notes On Alternative Criminal Justice Ballot Measures

LA County Measure R (Feb. 2020). Measure R was considered during the March 3, 2020 Primary Election throughout LA County (LAC). It is also known as the Civilian Police Oversight Commission and Jail Plan Initiative. It was approved by LAC voters with a 73% “yes” vote. A “yes” vote supported authorizing the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission to develop a plan designed to reduce jail population and incarceration and granting the Commission subpoena power to investigate complaints. A “no” vote opposed authorizing the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission to develop a plan designed to reduce jail population and incarceration and granting the Commission subpoena power to investigate complaints, thereby requiring a majority vote of the Commission members to request a subpoena from the Office of the Inspector General. See here for more details.

Proposition 57 (2016). Proposition 57 was considered during the November 8, 2016 General Election throughout California. It is also known as the California Parole for Non-Violent Criminals and Juvenile Court

Trial Requirements Initiative. It was approved by California voters with a 64% “yes” vote. A “yes” vote supported increasing parole and good behavior opportunities for felons convicted of nonviolent crimes and allowing judge, not prosecutors, to decide whether to try certain juveniles as adults in court. A “no” vote opposed this measure increasing parole and good behavior opportunities for felons convicted of nonviolent crimes and favored keeping the current system of having prosecutors decide whether to try certain juveniles as adults in court. See here for more details.

Proposition 47 (2014). Proposition 47 was considered during the November 4, 2014 Midterm Election throughout California. It is also known as the Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative. It was approved by California voters with a 60% “yes” vote. A “yes” vote supported classifying certain crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies unless the defendant had prior convictions for murder, rape, certain sex offenses or certain gun crimes; allowing re-sentencing for those currently serving a prison sentence for any of the offenses that the initiative reduced to misdemeanors; and creating the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund to receive appropriations based on savings from the initiative. A “no” vote opposed the measure. See here for more details.

Proposition 36 (2012). Proposition 36 was considered during the November 6, 2012 General Election throughout California. It is also known as the Changes to Three Strikes Sentencing Initiative. It was approved by California voters with a 69% “yes” vote. A “yes” vote supported changing the three strikes sentencing system established by a 1994 ballot initiative, Proposition 184, to impose life sentences when new felony convictions are serious or violent; allowed re-sentencing for convicts serving life sentences for felonies that were not serious or violent, except in the case of rape, murder, or child molestation. A “no” vote opposed the measure. See here for more details.

Proposition 5 (2008). Proposition 5 was considered during the November 4, 2008 General Election throughout California. It is also known as the Nonviolent Drug Offender Sentences and Rehabilitation Initiative. It was disapproved by California voters with a 59% “no” vote. A “yes” vote supported the ballot measure to expand drug treatment programs for criminal offenders, increase prison and parole rehabilitation programs, and reduce penalties for certain marijuana possession crimes. A “no” vote opposed the measure. See here for more details.

Proposition 66 (2004). Proposition 66 was considered during the November 2, 2004 General Election throughout California. It is also known as the Changes to Three Strikes Criminal Sentencing Law Initiative. It was disapproved by California voters with a 52% “no” vote. A “yes” vote supported amending the state’s three-strikes criminal sentencing law to reduce the number of crimes for which someone can be sentenced for life. A “no” vote opposed the amendment. See here for more details.

H Ruling Out Crime Spillover for Border MPD Precincts

Table H4: Crime in Adjacent LASD Precincts Does Not Explain Lower Support for Measure J in MPD Precincts Along LASD Jurisdiction Border

	% Measure J	
	(1)	(2)
Homicide Rate (Bordering LASD Average)	0.002 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.002)
Median HH Income		-0.004 (0.018)
% College		0.055* (0.028)
% Unemployed		0.046 (0.044)
% Security		-0.016 (0.017)
% Own Home		-0.052** (0.016)
% 55+		-0.106*** (0.029)
% Latino		-0.036 (0.029)
% Black		-0.015 (0.050)
% Asian		0.034 (0.019)
Total Pop.		-0.008 (0.040)
Pop. Dens.		0.096* (0.042)
% Democrat ('20)		0.249 (0.216)
% Prop. 16 ('20)		0.660*** (0.181)
Police Killing Rate		-0.004 (0.066)
Homicide Rate		0.222 (0.126)
R ²	0.000	0.864
Num. obs.	464	464

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

I Assessing LASD Effect on Alternative Outcomes

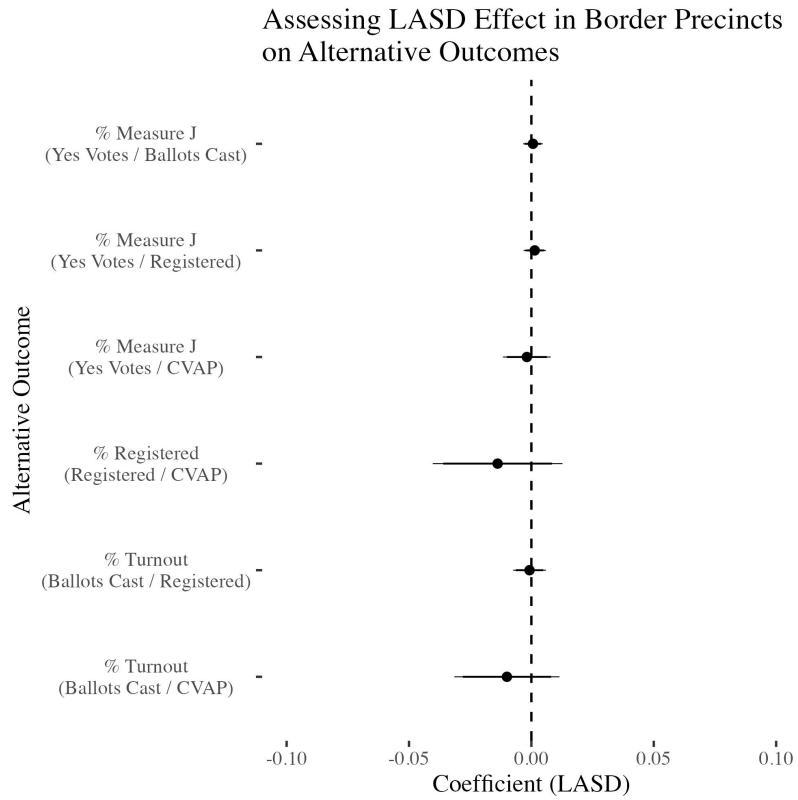


Figure I15: Assessing the effect of LASD service protection on alternative % Measure J outcomes, registration, and turnout. X-axis is the effect of LASD service provision for border precincts. Y-axis is the alternative outcome. All models are control covariate adjusted. All covariates scaled between 0-1. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

J Assessing Heterogeneity

Table J5: Heterogenous Effect of LASD Service on Measure J Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	% Measure J						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
LASD x % Democrat ('20)	0.03 (0.04)											
LASD x % Prop 16 ('20)		0.01 (0.04)										
LASD x % College			-0.01 (0.01)									
LASD x % Own Home				-0.00 (0.01)								
LASD x % 55+					0.02 (0.02)							
LASD x % Black						0.02 (0.02)						
LASD x % Latino						0.01 (0.01)						
LASD x % Asian						0.01 (0.02)						
LASD x Homicide Rate (1y)							-0.08 (0.04)					
LASD x Homicide Rate (4y)								-0.05 (0.13)				
LASD x Homicide Rate (10y)									0.07 (0.10)			
LASD x PK Rate (1y)										-0.02 (0.21)		
LASD x PK Rate (4y)											-0.01 (0.10)	
LASD x PK Rate (10y)												-1.90 (51.74)
Median HH Income	-0.00 (0.01)											
% College	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)								
% Unemployed	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)
% Security	-0.03** (0.01)											
% Own Home	-0.06*** (0.01)											
% 55+	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)						
% Latino	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)										
% Black	-0.01 (0.03)											
% Asian	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Total Pop.	-0.01 (0.03)											
Pop. Dens.	0.06 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)
% Democrat ('20)	0.27 (0.15)	0.28* (0.13)										
% Prop 16 ('20)	0.64*** (0.11)	0.64*** (0.12)	0.64*** (0.11)	0.64*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.64*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)	0.65*** (0.11)
PK Rate (1y)										0.03 (0.14)		
PK Rate (4y)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.06)		
PK Rate (10y)											0.00 (3.76)	
Homicide Rate (1y)						0.06* (0.03)						
Homicide Rate (4y)	0.11 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)		0.15 (0.11)		0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07)
Homicide Rate (10y)								0.07 (0.07)				
R ²	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89
Num. obs.	862	862	862	862	862	862	862	862	862	862	862	862

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

K Assessing Relationship Between CFS and Measure J Support

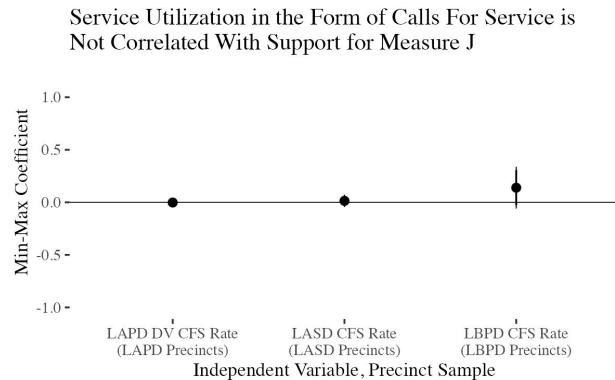


Figure K16: Association between service utilization in the form of calls for service and support for Measure J X-axis defines the coefficient (y-axis) for different call for service rate (calls per 1000 people in a precinct) measures. Each coefficient is from a separate model using LAPD precincts, LASD precincts, and LBPD precincts from left to right. All models are control covariate adjusted. All covariates scaled between 0-1. 95% CIs displayed from HC2 robust SEs.

L Coefficient Difference Tests Between Symbolic and Self-Interest Factors

Table L6: Coefficient Difference Tests Between Symbolic and Self-Interest Factors

Dataset	Difference	Estimate	SE	t-stat	p-value
Border Precincts	$ \% \text{ Prop. } 16 - \text{LASD} $	0.64	0.11	5.86	0.00
Border Precincts	$ \% \text{ Prop. } 16 - \text{Homicide Rate} $	0.52	0.14	3.76	0.00
Border Precincts	$ \% \text{ Prop. } 16 - \% \text{ Own Home} $	0.58	0.10	5.60	0.00
Border Precincts	$ \% \text{ Prop. } 16 - \% \text{ 55+} $	0.55	0.10	5.53	0.00
Border Precincts	$ \% \text{ Prop. } 16 - \% \text{ Security} $	0.62	0.11	5.52	0.00

M Assessing Alternative Self-Interest Measures

Table M7: Association Between Proxies for Self-Interest and Measure J Support

	% Measure J						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Police Killing Rate (1y)	-0.04 (0.06)						
Police Killing Rate (4y)		0.02 (0.04)		0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.07)
Police Killing Rate (10y)			0.81 (5.06)				
Homicide Rate (1y)				0.03* (0.01)			
Homicide Rate (4y)	0.08* (0.04)	0.07* (0.04)	0.07* (0.04)		0.07* (0.04)		
Homicide Rate (10y)						0.07* (0.03)	
LASD Call Rate							0.00 (0.01)
Median HH Income	-0.01 (0.01)						
% College	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)
% Unemployed	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
% Security	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)
% Own Home	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
% 55+	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.06** (0.02)
% Latino	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.04** (0.02)
% Black	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
% Asian	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Total Pop.	0.01 (0.01)						
Pop. Dens.	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.05 (0.05)
% Democrat ('20)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.20* (0.09)
% Prop 16 ('20)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.77*** (0.09)
R ²	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94
Num. obs.	3049	3049	3049	3049	3049	3049	913

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

N Demonstrating Relationship Between Affirmative Action Support and Measure J Support = Primarily Symbolic Net of Policy Substance

Table N8: Adjusting for Measure R Support

	% Measure J (1)
LASD	0.002 (0.002)
Median HH Income	-0.007 (0.013)
% College	-0.000 (0.011)
% Unemployed	-0.015 (0.024)
% Security	-0.007 (0.011)
% Own Home	-0.032** (0.011)
% 55+	-0.085*** (0.018)
% Latino	-0.057*** (0.015)
% Black	-0.002 (0.025)
% Asian	-0.003 (0.015)
Total Pop.	-0.002 (0.023)
Pop. Dens.	0.004 (0.033)
% Democrat ('20)	0.158 (0.132)
% Prop. 16 ('20)	0.523*** (0.106)
% Measure R ('20)	0.328*** (0.064)
Police Killing Rate	-0.033 (0.050)
Homicide Rate	0.022 (0.065)
R ²	0.903
Num. obs.	862

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$