Evaluating the Quality and Effects of Deliberative Governance:
A Case Study of the 2012 Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary ................................................................................................................................. 3

Introduction............................................................................................................................................... 4

History of the Citizens’ Initiative Review ................................................................................................. 4

Description of the 2012 CIR ..................................................................................................................... 6

Evaluation of the Deliberative Quality of the 2012 CIR Panels ............................................................... 7
   CIR Report Card and Overall Satisfaction .............................................................................................. 8
   Analytic Rigor ........................................................................................................................................... 9
   Democratic Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 11
   Non-Coercive and Informed Decision Making ...................................................................................... 14
   Evaluation of the 2012 Oregon CIR Citizens’ Statements .................................................................. 16

Evaluating the Impact of the 2012 CIR .................................................................................................... 17
   CIR Awareness ...................................................................................................................................... 17
   CIR Statement Use and Helpfulness ...................................................................................................... 18
   Online Experimental Survey of CIR Citizens’ Statements .................................................................... 19

Educative Effects ..................................................................................................................................... 21
   Participant Effects ................................................................................................................................. 22
   Emanating Effects ................................................................................................................................. 28

Conclusion and Recommendations .......................................................................................................... 32

References .................................................................................................................................................. 33
Executive Summary

Initiatives and referenda permit citizens to vote directly on legislation, but voters often lack essential policy information when deciding whether to support the measures on their ballots. Moreover, many citizens of contemporary democracies feel shut out of the political process, lacking faith in government and themselves as citizens. Since citizens often do not trust policy experts and political elites to provide trustworthy information, the State of Oregon created an institution to address that problem. After an initial test in 2010, Oregon’s governor signed into law the Citizens’ Initiative Review Commission, which in 2012 convened two stratified random samples of twenty-four Oregon voters, who spent a full week examining a tax reform measure and another on establishing private casinos. At the end of their deliberations, each panel produced a one page Citizens’ Statement that went in Oregon’s Voters’ Pamphlet, which the Secretary of State mailed to every registered voter. Using a combination of direct observation, interviews with panelists and members of the public, and large-sample statewide surveys, researchers studied the deliberative quality and statewide impact of this unique process and found that the panels met a high standard for deliberation, both from the researchers’ perspective as observers and from the point of view of the participants themselves. A majority of Oregon voters became aware of the process, which produced relevant and factually accurate statements. Roughly two-thirds of those who read the statements found them helpful when deciding how to vote. Reading the statements raised voter knowledge substantially. The process additionally led to increases in internal and external efficacy for many participants and voters, and participants reported learning new information about government and shifting the way that they engaged in political communication. Thus, the Citizens’ Initiative Review appears to provide a viable model for using citizen-centered deliberation to inform the judgments of the voting public and increase their faith in the political process.
Introduction

First established in 2009, the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR) is a unique democratic reform—still with nothing comparable anywhere in the world. The CIR stands among other processes that aim to advance the quality of public participation and political deliberation in modern democracy. As Yale democratic theorist Robert Dahl wrote in 1998,

One of the imperative needs of democratic countries is to improve citizens’ capacities to engage intelligently in political life . . . In the years to come . . . older institutions will need to be enhanced by new means for civic education, political participation, information, and deliberation that draw creatively on the array of techniques and technologies available in the twenty-first century (p. 187-188).

One such institution that is in need of enhancement is initiative elections. Too often, voters do not have the information required to make informed decisions about state-wide ballot measures or are misled by manipulative campaign rhetoric. The CIR seeks to improve this established institution by bringing together average voters to deliberate about an initiative and then provide their findings to the public in an easy to understand format.

In this report, we provide an overarching evaluation of the 2012 CIRs, exploring its deliberative quality, impact on voting, and influence on participants’ and voters’ attitudes and actions. We begin by providing a brief history of the CIR before explaining the 2012 reviews in more detail. We next provide a detailed evaluation of the quality of the reviews, assessing them along their analytic, social, and decision-making dimensions. This is followed by a discussion of the impact that the Citizens’ Statements had on voters before moving into an exploration of how participating in, knowing about, or reading the statements produced by the CIR affected the political cognitions and behaviors of participants and the wider public. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of findings and suggestions for future research and improvements to the CIR process.

History of the Citizens’ Initiative Review

First established in 2009, the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review (CIR) is a unique democratic reform—still with nothing comparable anywhere in the world. Though similar processes, such as the Citizens Jury and Delibertive Polling have existed for several decades (for an overview of deliberative methods, see Gastil & Levine, 2005; Nabatchi, Gastil, Weiksner, & Leighninger, 2012), the CIR is the first state-sanctioned government reform to bring together a randomly selected and demographically stratified group of voters to engage in public decision making. The
CIR aims to improve the *quality* of public participation and political deliberation in modern democracy.¹

As social and political reforms began to flourish in the early 1900s during the Progressive Era, many of the states in the United States of America created the initiative process to let voters weigh in on the passage of state laws or amendments to their state constitutions.² Ballot initiatives and referenda (often called simply “ballot measures”) were meant to make the government more accountable by circumventing the corrupting powers of entrenched parties and special interest groups.³ Ballot initiatives, however, can be very complex and burdensome on the public. There can be numerous measures on one ballot covering anything from tax law to bear trapping, and it may require hours of research to understand and decide how to vote. Many voters lack the time, resources, and in-depth knowledge about each proposition in question and instead rely on interest group campaigns and political elites to form preferences (Gerber, 1999; Gerber & Lupia, 1999). This leads to initiative proponents or opponents attempting to outspend their competitors on often highly misleading advertising campaigns that undermine the progressive ideals under which the initiative process was adopted (Broder, 2000).

The CIR was developed with these problems in mind. Its designers sought to improve the quality of information readily available to voters regarding statewide initiatives.⁴ The CIR is a form of the Citizens Jury—a method of public deliberation by citizens about candidates for office (Crosby & Nethercut, 2005)—applied to ballot initiatives. The CIR differs from other deliberative methods in its sample size, duration, and decision-making procedure. For example, the CIR differs from the Deliberative Poll (DP) (Fishkin, 2009) in that the CIR employs a much smaller sample (twenty-four participants rather than one hundred or more for the DP), involves more extensive deliberations (lasting five days rather than two for the DP), and requires participants to make a final decision consisting of a vote accompanied by a written explanation, rather than merely to complete a questionnaire.

Introduced by John Gastil (2000) as a way to adapt Citizens Juries for initiative elections, the CIR was proposed in the 1990s in the U.S. state of Washington by Michael Lowry and Ned Crosby, developer of the Citizens Jury. After the state of Washington failed to adopt the CIR, Tyrone Reitman and Elliot Shuford founded Healthy Democracy Oregon (HDO), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to strengthening the integrity of the ballot initiative process, and worked with Crosby to introduce the CIR in the U.S. state of Oregon (Crosby & Hottinger, 2011; Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005). Crosby (2003) laid out the initial conception of the CIR.

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¹ A very accessible account of this approach is provided in Gutmann and Thompson (2004) and Leighninger (2006).
² In this article, “initiative” means a proposed law written by citizens and placed on a ballot for approval by voters (Matsusaka, 2008), and “initiative process” means the procedures by which an initiative is drafted, placed on the ballot, and voted upon.
⁴ The model underlying the Oregon CIR is the Citizens’ Jury, designed by Ned Crosby and various collaborators (Crosby & Hottinger, 2011; Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005). Crosby (2003) laid out the initial conception of the CIR.
These three proponents organized an unofficial CIR trial in 2008, which persuaded the Oregon legislature to authorize a state-sanctioned implementation in 2010. The success of the latter led the Oregon legislature in 2011 to pass a law making the CIR an official part of the state’s initiative process (Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Walsh, 2013).

To summarize the process, CIR organizers convene representative groups of twenty-four registered Oregon voters, selected via stratified random sampling to match the Oregon electorate in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, education, place of residence, voting history, and party affiliation, for five days to learn about, analyze, and deliberate on statewide initiatives. Over the course of the five days, the panelists hear testimony from advocates both in favor and opposition to the bill (generally including those who initially proposed the initiative and those involved in organized campaigns opposing the initiative) as well as witnesses who serve as subject-matter experts on either specific aspects of the initiative or on related issues (Knobloch et al., 2013). Advocates are selected by HDO, and a list of potential witnesses is prepared by HDO in conversation with the advocates. Panelists then choose which witnesses to call from the pre-developed list based on their specific information needs.

At the end of deliberations, each panel writes a page-long analysis about their assigned initiative for the official Oregon State Voters’ Pamphlet—a governmentally published booklet summarizing initiatives and distributed to voters before an election (Magleby, 1984)—which the Secretary of State delivers along with mail-in ballots to every registered voter in the state. The CIR Statements are meant to improve the information available to voters, eighty percent of whom report using the Voters’ Pamphlet when making voting decisions (Gastil & Knobloch, 2010). In short, the CIR connects small-scale deliberation with electoral decision-making.

**Description of the 2012 CIR**

After reviewing the results of the initial CIR panels in 2010, the Oregon legislature created the CIR Commission. To implement the 2012 panels, the Commission turned to HDO, which had designed and piloted the CIR process. HDO again arranged two separate demographically stratified random samples of twenty-four Oregon voters. Each CIR panel studied a specific ballot measure for five days then produced a one-page Citizens’ Statement that detailed the key findings, policy considerations, and pro and con arguments identified by the panelists. The Secretary of State then included these Statements in the Voters’ Pamphlet that was mailed to every household with voters registered for the 2012 general election.

Two panels were convened in August, 2012 for five days each. The first panel reviewed Measure 85, which proposed allocating corporate tax “kicker” refunds for K-12 public education. The

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5 The design of the Citizens’ Statements is established by law. For details on the CIR law and its commission, see [www.oregon.gov/circ/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/circ/Pages/index.aspx).
second panel reviewed Measure 82, which proposed authorizing privately owned casinos in Oregon.

Each CIR panel followed the same general five-day process design, summarized below:

- **Monday**: Orientation to CIR and the ballot measure
- **Tuesday**: Proponent and opponent presentations and rebuttals
- **Wednesday**: Witnesses called by panel and ongoing small group discussions
- **Thursday**: Final proponent and opponent presentations and drafting of Key Findings/Policy Considerations
- **Friday**: Draft Pro and Con Arguments, review Citizens’ Statement, press conference

To get a sense for what a CIR Citizens’ Statement looks like, consider the case of the panel on private casinos. The neutral Key Findings helped voters understand the context of the proposal. The first read, “Economists disagree on the long term economic impact of private casinos in Oregon.” In spite of that initial equivocation, a later finding noted that “private casinos could negatively affect the gaming revenues of the tribal casinos and the communities they support.” A section on Additional Policy Considerations noted, “If Measure 83 passes, approximately 2,000 full-time jobs with benefits may be created; however, jobs could be lost at tribal casinos and small businesses as well.”

The Statement also included the “Majority Statement in Opposition to the Measure,” a “position taken by 17 of 24 panelists.” The opponents’ first reason read, “Measure 82 changes the Oregon constitution. If this measure passes it will allow more outside influence on gambling within the state. The backers who wrote this measure stand to gain significant profits by changing the Oregon constitution.” The leading argument of the “Minority Statement in Support of the Measure” read, “Measure 82 changes the Oregon constitution to allow the people of Oregon to decide whether they want private casinos and allows the local communities to vote for or against the measure even if voters approve a casino in a statewide election.”

The remainder of this article analyzes the overall performance of the Oregon CIR in terms of its two primary goals. Its first aim was to convene a democratic and deliberative process, whereby a small sample of Oregon voters could come to understand and provide a succinct written analysis of the ballot measure put before them. The second aim was for the Citizens’ Statement produced by the CIR to reach the wider Oregon public, thereby making the electorate more informed in its judgments on these same ballot measures. Each of these questions is taken up in turn.

**Evaluation of the Deliberative Quality of the 2012 CIR Panels**

Each day of the CIR, the research team sat in on the deliberations, utilizing a previously developed evaluative metric (see Knobloch et al., 2013) to assess the processes quality along three primary criteria: analytic rigor, democratic discussion, and well-reasoned decision making.
In addition, the research team distributed brief questionnaires to panelists. This section provides a simple summary of that assessment and the panelists’ self-evaluations.

**CIR Report Card and Overall Satisfaction**

A summary report card for the CIR is shown in Table 1. This presents the overall evaluation of the process in terms of the quality of its analytic rigor, democratic discussion, and production of a well-reasoned statement.

**Table 1. Summary assessments of the quality of deliberation in the August, 2012 Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review panels (on a grading scale from A to F).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Evaluating Deliberation</th>
<th>Measure 85 (Corporate Kicker)</th>
<th>Measure 82 (Non-tribal Casinos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote analytic rigor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning basic issue information</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining of underlying values</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering a range of alternatives</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighing pros/cons of measure</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate a democratic process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality of opportunity to participate</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension of information</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of different views</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce a well-reasoned statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed decision making</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-coercive process</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scores for the 2012 process show an improvement in many areas over the 2010 process, which was assessed in Knobloch et al. (2013). Improvements came by way of better inclusion of values in the panelist discussions and in the ability of advocates and panelists to provide more feedback on draft versions of the Citizens’ Statements. The latter process improvement was especially important to protect the CIR process against insularity, or even drifting into groupthink (Street, 1997), during its panel deliberations.

In the following sections, more detailed results are provided using the panelist evaluations to discuss the CIR’s performance on each of the three main criteria shown in Table 1, but first this report looks at the overall process ratings given by the panelists themselves. At the conclusion of the five-day review, panelists assessed their overall satisfaction with the CIR. Figure 1 presents these results, and shows overall satisfaction was generally “high” or “very high.”

**Figure 1. Panelists’ overall satisfaction with the CIR process.**

![Bar chart showing panelists' overall satisfaction with the CIR process.]

**Analytic Rigor**

One indication of the CIR processes’ analytic rigor was whether or not the panelists believed they had learned enough to make a good decision. Figure 2 presents their responses, and shows that panelists were quite certain they had learned enough to make informed judgments. All Measure 85 panelists felt that they had heard enough to make a good decision, with 20 panelists saying that they had definitely heard enough. No Measure 85 panelist said that they were either unsure that they had heard enough information or that they had probably or definitely not heard enough information. For Measure 82, only one panelist was unsure if he or she had heard enough information to make a good decision, though five said that they probably had and a large

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6 For more on this approach to evaluation, see Gastil, Knobloch, and Kelly (2012). This conception of democratic deliberation comes from Gastil (2008).
majority of panelists (18) said that they definitely had. No Measure 82 panelists said that they had either probably not or definitely not heard enough information to reach a good decision.

**Figure 2. Panelists’ end-of-week self-assessment of having learned enough to make an informed decision.**

Panelists were also asked to “rate the performance of the CIR process” on “weighing the most important arguments and evidence” in favor of and opposing the measures. Figures 3 and 4 present these assessments and show that the CIR panelists were confident that they weighed both pro and con arguments.

**Figure 3. Panelists’ assessment of CIR’s performance on weighing arguments and evidence in favor of the initiative.**
Panelists also rated the CIR’s performance at considering the underlying values at stake with each measure. Figure 5 shows that they thought they did a “good” or “excellent” job at this.

**Figure 5. Panelists’ assessment of CIR’s performance on considering underlying values.**

Democratic Discussion
To assess whether panelists had equal speaking opportunities, panelists were asked at the end of each day whether they “had sufficient opportunity to express [their] views today.” The results indicate that a very large majority of panelists perceived having equal opportunity to speak
during the process: Across ten days of deliberation, the average number of people who reported lacking opportunities to speak was less than one (0.7), with a maximum of two.

To assess whether the advocates had equal time, panelists were asked “how equal was the time given to the advocates” on the four days in which the advocates had an opportunity to address the panelists either in person or through written statements. Most participants said that both sides received equal time each day, with an exception of Tuesday for each panel, when four of the twenty-four panelists each week thought the proponents had more time. This appears to reflect the actual use of time by the ballot measures’ advocates and critics. For instance, on Measure 85, the opponents chose to wave their rebuttal time to spend more time on their presentation. No panelists mentioned this perceived discrepancy in their open-ended comments and the research team perceived neither side being given more time.

Because the panelists were sifting through a large amount of complicated information, they were asked at the end of each day how often they had “trouble understanding or following the discussion today.” Table 2 shows that on every day a majority of panelists from both weeks said that they either “never” or “rarely” had trouble following the conversation.

Table 2. Frequency of reported difficulty understanding information each day of the CIR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To further understand whether the panelists adequately considered the information and arguments raised during the process—particularly those stemming from opposing viewpoints, they were asked the following question at the end of each day: “When other CIR participants or Advocate Team members expressed views different from your own today, how often did you consider carefully what they had to say?” Table 3 showed that every panelist reported that they either “often” or “almost always” considered opposing viewpoints.
Table 3. Panelists’ self-reported consideration of opposing views on each day of the CIR.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Measure 85</th>
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<th>Measure 82</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Often</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CIR panels used a pair of facilitators or “moderators” each day, and at the end of each day, CIR panelists were asked if “the CIR Moderators demonstrated a preference for one side or the other today.” The modal result was all twenty-four panelists reporting no favoritism, with the one exception being the second day on Measure 82, on which three panelists saw bias favoring proponents and two saw the opposite. In no case was the bias important enough to warrant a mention in the open-ended comments given at the end of each day.

Panelists were also asked to assess the neutrality of the staff using the following question on the end-of-week evaluation: “One of the aims of this process is to have the staff conduct the Citizens’ Initiative Review in an unbiased way. How satisfied are you in this regard?” Figure 6 shows that panelists were generally very satisfied.

Figure 6. Panelists’ satisfaction with staff neutrality.
To assess the level of respect upheld during the process, panelists were asked at the end of each day how often they felt “that other participants treated you with respect today.” The CIR scored very high marks on this criterion, as indicated by Table 4.

Table 4. Panelists’ self-report feelings of respect for each day of the CIR.

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<th>Measure 85</th>
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<th>Measure 82</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Mon</td>
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<td>Tues</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Non-Coercive and Informed Decision Making

To ensure that the panelists’ decisions were free from coercion, they were asked at the end of each day how often they felt “pressure to agree with something that [they] weren’t sure about.” Table 5 shows that most panelists from both weeks reported “never” or “rarely” feeling such pressure. Some Measure 82 panelists did “occasionally” feel pressure to agree with things about which they were unsure, and two reported “often” feeling this pressure on Day 4 when they began writing their Citizens’ Statements for the Voters’ Pamphlet. For Measure 85, fewer panelists reported “occasionally” feeling pressure, and on Day 2 one panelist reported feeling this pressure “often” and one reported feeling it “almost always.” These feelings of pressure may have been due to real time constraints as panelists collectively worked to craft a statement for the Voters’ Pamphlet. No panelists reported feeling pressure in their open-ended comments, though several did indicate that they wished they had more time, with a few even offering to stay an extra day or to add an extra hour at the end of each day.

Table 5. Frequency of feeling pressured to make a decision for each day of the CIR.

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<th>Measure 85</th>
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<th>Measure 82</th>
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</table>
For some, though, the ultimate question of deliberation value is whether it changes one’s own opinion. This, after all, is the basic idea of the Deliberative Poll, which compares pre- and post-deliberation attitudes (Fishkin, 2009). To avoid anchoring panelists’ positions based on pre-discussion surveys, however, panelists were asked about this only on the end-of-week evaluation. Panelists reported their position on the measure both “before [they] participated in the CIR” and “at the end of the CIR process.” As indicated in Figure 7, for both groups at least half of the panelists entered the deliberations undecided on the measure on which they would be deliberating. By the end of the week, however, the process had allowed almost all of the panelists to reach a decision on the measure. For Measure 85, the majority of panelists ultimately supported the measure (20 panelists). Of the five Measure 82 panelists who either supported or opposed the measure prior to the process, two maintained support, two maintained opposition, and one panelist switched from strong opposition to strong support. Measure 82 panelists were a bit more evenly divided, with 15 opposing the measure, seven supporting it, and two remaining undecided on their position. Of the 12 Measure 82 panelists who either supported or opposed the measure prior to the CIR, four panelists maintained opposition, four panelists maintained support, three panelists moved from support to opposition, and one panelist moved from support to undecided. These findings suggest that while many panelists came into the CIR undecided, some panelists actually shifted their previously developed position on the measure over the course of the week.

**Figure 7. Panelists’ self-report of position on measure before and after deliberation.**

Finally, panelists were asked to rate their satisfaction with each piece of the Citizens’ Statements that they produced. Figure 8 shows their assessment of the quality of the Key Findings portion of their final statement, and similar responses were given for each other element of their statement. In each case, a large majority (minimum of 17 out of 24) was either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with these components.
Evaluation of the 2012 Oregon CIR Citizens’ Statements

In addition to the evaluation of the deliberative quality of the process, an analysis of the products of those deliberations—the Citizens’ Statements—was conducted. Below, conclusions are presented in brief.

- All of the Key Findings and the Additional Policy Considerations in the 2012 Citizens’ Review Statements appear to be supported by testimonial or documentary evidence presented during the 2012 CIR, or by the text of ballot measures.
- The Key Findings, Additional Policy Considerations, as well as the pro and con statements are generally written in straightforward language that is likely to be accessible to ordinary voters.
- The few assertions in the pro and con statements that do not appear to have originated in evidence or in the text of ballot measures seem to be value-based conclusions that could reasonably have been drawn from that evidence or the ballot-measure texts.
- One assertion in the pro and con statements in the 2012 Citizens’ Review Statements appears to be potentially problematic. In the Measure 82 “con statement,” the assertion that begins with a sentence is both grammatically incorrect (the verb does not agree in number with the subject) and logically faulty, since it claims that an “impact” is “at risk” (which is arguably devoid of meaning). Whether the phrasing of this problematic sentence proved confusing to voters is uncertain.

This amounts to a favorable assessment of the accuracy of the Statements. They contained considerable useful factual information, and the only error is a grammatical ambiguity.

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7 The full statements are available online at [www.la1.psu.edu/cas/jgastil/CIR/ReportToCIRCommission2012.pdf](http://www.la1.psu.edu/cas/jgastil/CIR/ReportToCIRCommission2012.pdf).
Evaluating the Impact of the 2012 CIR

Even if the Oregon CIR was a democratic and deliberative process, the question remains of whether it had a significant impact on the wider electorate. If it failed in this regard, all its effort would have been for naught. Thus, in the final two weeks of the 2012 general election, a statewide phone survey of 800 likely Oregon voters was commissioned. Though the survey had a low overall response rate, it was representative of the Oregon electorate in terms of partisanship, demographics, and voting choices.

Before presenting these results, it is important to note that the proponents of Measure 82 (casinos) opted to halt their campaign after the CIR but before Election Day (Esteve, 2012). Why this occurred has not been determined, but the decision likely affected voters’ responses to some of the questions. The fact that a CIR-analyzed measure was effectively abandoned likely reduced the importance of the CIR analysis for many voters. (Sixty-four percent of those surveyed were aware that the campaign had ceased, though 80% said it made no difference to them.)

CIR Awareness

The survey asked voters how aware they were of the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review panels. Figure 9 shows that CIR awareness was higher in 2012 than in 2010. Also, voters became more aware of the CIR as the election grew closer to an end.

**Figure 9. Awareness of the CIR among likely Oregon voters during the final weeks of the 2010 and 2012 general elections.**

![Graph showing CIR awareness](image-url)
CIR Statement Use and Helpfulness

In the 2012 survey, 53% of people who voted read the CIR Statement on Measure 82, whereas only 44% had read the CIR Statement on Measure 85. CIR users were asked, “How helpful was it to read the Citizens’ Initiative Review statement?” Figure 10 summarizes these results graphically (rounding accounts for the 1% discrepancies in totals). Roughly two-thirds of voters who read the statements found them to be helpful, which suggests that a critical mass of voters may be finding the statements to be essential reference material.

Figure 10. Helpfulness ratings by voters who read CIR Statements for Measures 82 or 85.

Along with the newly instituted CIR Statements, the Oregon Voters’ Pamphlet traditionally contains other pieces of information related to each initiative. Oregon allows citizens and organizations to publish, for a fee, arguments for or against initiatives in the official Voters’ Pamphlet, for the purpose of informing voters (Bassett, 2009; Josslin, 1943). In addition, the Voters’ Pamphlet contains information about the measure and its fiscal impact, produced by two advocates in favor and two opposed to the measure as well as a neutral fifth party.

Another set of questions in the phone survey asked all voters who read the Voters’ Pamphlet how much “trust” they had in each of these four different sections: the CIR Statement, the paid pro/con arguments, the Fiscal Statement, and the Explanatory Statement. Figure 11 shows that they placed “a little” trust in each section. However, this means that Oregon voters placed roughly the same amount of trust in the CIR Statement as the Fiscal and Explanatory
Citizens’ Initiative Review

Statements, which is noteworthy because it contains qualitatively different information than either of those.

**Figure 11. Levels of trust Oregonians placed in different sections of the Voters’ Pamphlet.**

![Bar graph showing trust levels](image)

...How much do you TRUST [this part of the voter guide]?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid Pro/Con Arguments</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIR</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Statement</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory Statement</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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**Online Experimental Survey of CIR Citizens’ Statements**

The CIR Commission views its process as “an innovative way of publicly evaluating ballot measures so voters have clear, useful, and trustworthy information at election time.” Did, in fact, the CIR increase voter knowledge and voters’ confidence in the accuracy of the beliefs they held? To answer this question, an online experiment of Measure 85 was conducted in the final weeks before the election using a sample of 400 Oregon voters who had not yet voted nor read the CIR Statement. These voters were spread evenly across the following four experimental groups:

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8 Paired $t$-test comparisons of means showed that the pro/con statements less trustworthy than other sections ($p < .001$). Whereas Figure 11 shows that roughly the same proportion of Oregon voters have at least “a little” trust in both the CIR Statement and Explanatory Statement, the same mean comparison statistic shows the latter to have a higher average level of trust ($p = .001$).

9 Report co-author Robert Richards has produced a systematic contrast of CIR Statement content against Voters’ Pamphlet contents produced by public officials (Gastil, Richards, & Knobloch, 2014).

10 [www.oregon.gov/circ/Pages/index.aspx](www.oregon.gov/circ/Pages/index.aspx)

11 The survey had a very low response rate (fewer than 2\% of those emailed returned complete surveys), but as with the phone survey, the sample was broadly representative of the general Oregon electorate both demographically and in terms of its voting preferences.
• A group that was shown the full paid pro and con statements;
• A group that was shown the Explanatory and Fiscal statements;
• A group that was shown the CIR Statement; and
• A control group, who received no additional statement.

Respondents then answered a series of factual questions about Measure 85. Figure 12 summarizes the main result. Those assigned to the group that read the CIR Statement outperformed the control group on nine of ten knowledge items. Additionally, CIR Statement readers answered, on average, twice as many knowledge items correctly.

**Figure 12. Average number of correct answers on a ten-item knowledge battery regarding Measure 85 for each of four experimental conditions in the online survey.**

Not only did reading the CIR Statements increase voters’ knowledge about Measure 85, it also increased voters’ confidence in that knowledge, more than any other type of information in this study. Respondents were asked whether each statement was “probably” or “definitely” true or false, and a second analysis was conducted that takes into account one’s confidence in answering such questions correctly. Figure 13 shows that the confidence in accuracy for those assigned to the CIR Statement condition is more than double that of all other participants in the online experiment.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\) Main ANOVA result was $F(3, 268) = 18.9, p < .001$. Post-hoc contrasts were significant between CIR Statement and all other conditions.
Figure 13. Accuracy scores (measuring confidence in accurate knowledge) regarding Measure 85 for each of four experimental conditions in the online survey.

Educative Effects

Our analysis shows that the CIR was not only deliberative but that voters utilized it as an asset when trying to understand the initiative. Though this provides justification for the continued use of CIRs to evaluate ballot measures, it does not address the extent to which the CIR reached a related goal of public deliberation: making participants and the public more confident in their democratic ability and more willing to engage in the political process. Several scholars have noted the capacity for deliberative events to alter participants’ political efficacy as well as their civic engagement, but these findings often remain mixed, with participants seeing increases along some measures but no change or decreases along others (see Pincock, 2013). Moreover, the precise nature of changes to engagement remains relatively understudied, with most measures of attitudinal or behavioral change relying on traditional survey indicators that may not necessarily map onto the skills participants develop during a deliberative event.

Even less well understood is the effect that such forums can have on the wider public. To our knowledge, only one study has measured the impacts that the integration of deliberative forums into political systems can have on how the larger community understands government and their role in it (Knobloch, Barthel, & Gastil, 2013). This study only assessed change along quantitative dimensions without providing a richer assessment of how the public spoke about change in their own words. Below, we rely on interviews and surveys of participants and the public to answer
each of these questions asking first how the CIR altered participants, before moving to the effects the event may have had on participants’ friends and family members as well as the wider public.

Participant Effects
To assess how participants changed as a result of the CIR, we traveled to Oregon to conduct interviews with 23 CIR participants and Oregon voters and learn how their participation altered not only themselves but also other members of their communities. Participants reported changes to a number of their political attitudes and behaviors, particularly those related to initiative elections and communicative habits, but found it hard to share details of their unique experience with other members of their community. Participants did, however, find ways to integrate their new deliberative skills as they interacted with other community members, and subsequently, make small shifts in how other members of their communities engage in politics.

Many of the changes related to different types of internal efficacy. Panelists were most likely to report changes to issue-specific internal efficacy, feeling better prepared to vote on the initiative in question. For many, this issue-specific efficacy extended beyond the specific initiative about which they deliberated and resulted in greater confidence and aptitude in voting on initiatives about which they did not deliberate. Finally, for some internal efficacy widened beyond the scope of initiative elections and translated into a better understanding of government in general, as participants gained a greater understanding of how initiatives were constructed and implemented and a greater appreciation of the work that governing officials perform.

In their interviews, participants often expressed changes specifically related to initiatives. Several panelists discussed changes to their opinions or understanding of the political issue about which they deliberated as a result of the CIR. As one panelist studying Measure 82 noted, “Initially, when they… took a poll, I was on the opposed side. Later, as I considered things, I went in support of the measure. So, I would say my experience did change because I learned more information.” Other participants reported detailed and specific changes to their understanding of the issue, which ultimately changed how they voted on it.

Describing his experience during the 2010 medical marijuana measure, one participant said that:

It changed how I thought of marijuana. I never really thought much about it other than, you know, I've been in a culture that it's definitely not okay because I was in the service, and so, it did change my perspective a little bit to open up my mind to other possibilities besides just the fact that it's an illegal drug.

Moreover, it was the process itself that allowed such changes. When asked what aspects of the CIR led to that change, he continues:

Well, just because I got some different perspectives presented to me that I hadn't considered before. You know, the actual people that are suffering, you know,
severe pain or whatever, that have trouble functioning, and things like that made a big difference for me.

By hearing the experiences of those directly affected by the measure, this participant came to better understand the underlying problem and the need for a solution that addressed it. Other panelists reported access to detailed and relevant information as the primary driver for their opinion change. When asked what about the CIR had led to a new perspective on the issue, one panelist explained it succinctly, “The overall information. It was overwhelming the impact.”

The design of the process, and particularly learning how to listen to alternative perspectives and sift through complicated information, led to larger changes as well. Many participants reported that the CIR process taught them these skills, or at least refreshed them for those who felt they already possessed them. For some, the most important skills that the CIR helped to develop or hone were related to information gathering. When discussing how he applied lessons from the CIR to his everyday life, one panelist said that:

> Instead of just going with what's familiar, I'm more apt to dig in, maybe get some literature, look at past news stories, look at the voting. If it's for a candidate, look at their voting history. Look at the history of what's going into driving the issue.

Several panelists expressed similar changes, reporting that they were more likely to think deeply about an issue as a result of their experience and to perform more research before casting a vote for a ballot issue or candidate. Others expressed newfound listening skills, learning to pay attention to not only new information but new perspectives. When asked what skills she may have developed during her CIR experience, a participant said:

> Trying to, kind of, talk about the pros and cons of a particular issue or a particular side and not a person that, you know, "my way or the highway" type of person, but you know, just being able to listen to different views and, kind of, absorb them and then find out [where those fit in] with the way I [do things].

Panelists were particularly likely to transfer these new skills when voting on other initiatives. Most panelists said that they read the CIR statements that they themselves did not construct or mentioned directly applying the skills they learned during the CIR to make initiative decisions. Describing how she learned about an initiative about which the CIR did not deliberate a panelist said that:

> There was one [that]… had to do with real estate on our ballot. What do I do? I call a realtor and say, how does this affect me? I took what I had learned at the CIR and applied it to him and made him a panelist and asked him the questions, made him the expert… We called experts in, and we listened and asked questions. Well, I kind of reversed it and made him a panelist and the expert, and I asked him the questions, so I could find me some facts.
This mirrors responses made by many panelists who said that their CIR experience made them realize how little effort they previously had put into voting. For these panelists, the CIR spurred a newfound sense of civic duty as they became more aware of the need to research an issue and understand alternative perspectives before casting their ballots.

I’m always working on skills, listening skills and that. You have to be disciplined and during the presentation, write down your question and… gather information. It definitely helped develop skills that I needed to learn.

Finally, some panelists expressed feeling more knowledgeable about governance as a result of their CIR experience. During the process, panelists have the opportunity to interact with governing officials and, by delving into the policy implications of the initiative or in learning how specific initiatives will be implemented, gain insight into how different facets of government function. This changing understanding of how government functions, however, did not map neatly onto our standard definitions of internal or external efficacy. Several panelists reported a better understanding of the role of legislatures or other governing bodies, though this did not necessarily equate to more personal confidence or more faith in government responsiveness. These changes are expressed by a panelist describing her shifting appreciation for the work of legislators. She, like many panelists, compares her own CIR experience to the work of the legislature:

Yeah you know for all my… ranting about the polarizing, the complexity of the things that you’re confronted with when you are in the legislator. [They] go in with really good intentions, and maybe some who go in not with good intentions, but those who go in with good intentions, the complexity of all the issues, well the lack of time to dig as deeply as you might need to and want to… I mean my gosh how many bills are before the legislature every year and we spent a week looking at one. It’s just, the sympathy and empathy for what it’s like to do that, and having to constantly be careful about what you say and how you say it because somebody is likely going to take it out of context.

This panelist, like others, expressed sympathy for the legislators. As a result of her five-day experience she learned just how complex public policy problems are and how difficult it must be for legislators to make good decisions about the vast array of issues that come before them.

And while this was a fairly common sentiment, it did not necessarily equate to more confidence in governing officials. Because the CIR allows panelists to carefully consider an issue beyond the sound bites that generally pervade political campaigns, it gave the panelists an opportunity to see past the partisan rhetoric. For some, this actually translated to less faith in governing officials as panelists learned to critically analyze political messages and their strategic intentions. This was particularly true for those panelists who studied the kicker. Participants on this panel were fairly disappointed in Our Oregon’s decision to boycott the CIR, and this resulted in reduced
faith in the organization and, to some extent, political operatives more generally. As one panelist noted:

I was a little disappointed in some of our officials, but it brought a little insight into their degree of involvement…It was those that opted out to not really wish to participate… Perhaps, they weren't aware of how important it was.

Still, panelists were pleased that the legislature had adopted the CIR and saw this as a sign that officials were interested in the public’s welfare, even if this didn’t mean more faith in government generally. As one participant stated:

I respected the fact that legislature approved this process, and I think it's a valuable process. So, that's good, and I guess, if that means that they respect their constituents enough to allow that, that's good.

These comments, along with those provided by other panelists, indicate that the CIR provided a more nuanced understanding of government. In essence, CIR participants gained a more deliberative perspective of governing processes and government officials. Rather than expressing blanket levels of confidence in government, they expressed a greater appreciation for the complexity of the politics and political issues, and this led to a more balanced assessment of government. In general, participants seemed less disappointed in individual governing officials but more disillusioned with the system in which they operate. Discussing legislators’ obligations to learn about and vote on policy issues, one panelist said:

I think I understand a little bit better just how tricky it is to take on that kind of role and the fact that there are potentially forces coming from so many different directions that you’re having to think about. With these crazy campaigns that get going… so I don’t know that I would necessarily say trust them, because they are, we are, all victims of this system that we’ve allowed to go in the direction it has gone. And I don’t think currently it’s structured in a way that there are enough safeguards… I do have greater compassion, and I do feel like more often than not I hope they are there with good intentions.

As a result of her experience, this panelist began to understand the complexity of the process in which elected officials operate and, as a result, expressed compassion, if not trust, for them.

Aside from these attitudinal changes, some panelists reported changes to their behavior as well. Perhaps the most interesting behavioral changes stemmed from how panelists interacted with other members of their community and utilized their newfound deliberative skills to alter how they engaged in politics. For some, the experience simply led to better political conversations. Below is an extended excerpt from an interview with one participant who describes how he utilized such skills in a political disagreement:
Even though there's sometimes I get frustrated with people that have a
significantly different point of view, I am willing to listen to them, and now, I
even encourage them to express their point of view. In fact, I just had a political
opponent, an argument with a liberal friend recently, because she was really
adamant about whatever point of view it was… She was trying to bait me in on
some kind of an argument that the military is all corrupt, and they're off killing
kids around the world, just on their own accord, and this and that and the other
thing. She was getting really frustrated and not necessarily being very polite.
Every time I responded, I just kept it quiet and quick. I put my point of view there
and why I thought that. At one point, she called me "a complete idiot" because my
mind was closed so much. I said, "Look. I'm trying to be polite and respectful, and
I'm giving you the other half.

Here, the panelist explains how he applied skills learned at the CIR to engage with a
political opponent and tries to create a civil conversation out of a potentially vitriolic
incident. He continues:

There's a lot of stuff I know about what goes on in the military that I'm not at
liberty to talk about… I went on this really long, a five-minute-long, spiel about
it. The next thing she sent back says, "I appreciate that you're talking in a
respectful, calm voice and putting your side of the information out there, and
you've opened up my eyes to some different perspectives that I wouldn't have
considered before."

The CIR process changed not only the participant but other members of their network as well.
By transforming the conversation from a combative to a deliberative tone, the CIR participant
transferred some of his own skills to his conversation partner. Similar stories have been
recounted by several CIR participants from both 2012 and 2010, who try to spread what they’ve
learned to others in their community.

For some this practice extends beyond simple political conversation. A few panelists reported
increased engagement with their community as a result of their participation. As one panelist,
describing changes to her engagement since the CIR, states:

Well, you can't imagine the things that I have gotten involved in since then. I'm
working with my high school and the school system, and because the funding
sources that we have in Oregon are so bad for schools that I've been working with
a group to start an alumni association for the high school that I went to in order to
try to find money outside of the system to help them with new technology and
programs like that… I was kind of pushed in that direction when I saw how bad
the system has failed in funding schools properly because of the gambling issue.
This panelist credits her CIR experience with encouraging her to be more involved in local issues. Moreover, she took what she learned during the CIR as a starting point for increasing her engagement. Because most initiatives have some effect on the state budget, advocates and experts often present panelists with information about levels of funding for different programs, with education often getting attention as many initiatives, such as the non-tribal casinos initiative, are specifically designed to increase education funding. For this panelist, learning about the need for more education funding sparked a desire to get involved in raising those funds.

Other panelists were similarly spurred to political action. One panelist said, “I know that I’m more politically active since the CIR.” This increased participation, however, doesn’t necessarily translate into greater involvement in traditional political activities. No panelist has ever reported becoming more involved in party politics as a result of the CIR, whereas several panelists have reported becoming more involved in community events or even creating their own opportunities for engagement. One panelist explained this disconnect, contrasting his desire for greater involvement with a disdain for traditional advocacy organizations:

I haven't actually participated in any organization because I don't want to get caught up in their agenda and politics either. I'm really discouraged by some of the propaganda on both sides…. I want to be pursuing it at the level where it really matters, which is in correspondence with politicians that are in office. I do a lot of writing to my congressmen and to legislators at the state level. I've probably written eight or ten letters to different politicians in the last three months.

Attempting to circumnavigate the strategic nature of many activist organizations, this panelist chose to contact his elected officials directly.

Finally, those few participants who hold elective office or were somehow otherwise engaged in political organizations prior to their CIR experiences tell stories of bringing their deliberative skills into these more formal political settings. One former panelist is a member of his local city council. He reports repeatedly encouraging fellow counselors to “stay in learning mode,” bringing a rule that guides discussion at the CIR into the formal political arena. Further, he looks back on his time as a counselor before the CIR with some regret, lamenting that he did not possess those deliberative skills in earlier meetings. He says that, “I probably, you know, I made mistakes when I voted.” He points to specific understandings that he gained during the CIR, such as the instability of Oregon’s tax code, as well as the CIR’s rules for discussion as directly pertinent to how he casts his current council votes.

Finally, a few panelists have gone on to become members of the CIR Commission, the state-sanctioned governing body responsible for implementing and overseeing the CIR. These panelists often compare their commission experience to their CIR experience, noting their desire to utilize their deliberative skills in commission meetings and expressing concern that the setting
does not necessarily offer the opportunity to utilize those skills. As one former panelist and current commissioner notes:

It’s strange. I’ve never been on a public commission before, so it’s really strange how the CIR process changes whatever you think, and in the commission you have to be much more, I mean everything’s very public so you have to just be more conscious of what you’re saying so a more free flowing discussion about the plusses and minuses of an issue is a lot harder to do… I wish there was some room to be able to get to have that creative conversation going where you didn’t have that.

She, like other commissioners, finds the formality and political nature of the commission discouraging. Because it operates like other state commissions, discussion is tightly regulated and meetings are publically recorded. Panelists used to the free-flowing, and non-partisan conversation generated during the CIR find the strategic nature and rigidity of the formal commission disheartening.

**Emanating Effects**

Though our analysis showed some evidence that CIR participants are attempting to transfer their newfound knowledge and deliberative skill set to members of their own networks, what of those voters who were aware of the CIR or utilized the Citizens’ Statements but did not have any direct contact with CIR panelists? Did they receive benefits similar to those received by CIR participants or their network members?

To explore this question, the statewide survey asked voters a number of questions about their feelings about their own competency as citizens as well as their feelings about government. Controlling for factors that would typically affect levels of political efficacy—gender, age, race, education, party identification, political interest, and political knowledge\(^\text{13}\)—a simple regression explored whether voters who were aware of the CIR or had read the Measure 85 Citizens’ Statement expressed different levels of confidence in their own capabilities and feelings of government responsiveness as those voters who were unaware of the process and had not read the statement.\(^\text{14}\) Standard measures of internal (4 items; \(\alpha = .868, M = 3.91, SD = .74\)) and external efficacy (4 items; \(\alpha = .709, M = 2.70, SD = .76\)) were used as dependent variables. In addition, we created a scale measuring initiative-specific efficacy, which measured whether voters felt “well qualified to participate in” and “well informed” about initiative elections and

\(^{13}\) To measure political knowledge, the research team created a six-item scale that measured voters’ knowledge of state and national politics, including the party of the then governor, questions about which party held a majority in the Oregon Legislature, and who has the ability to decide if a law is constitutional (0-1 scale, \(\alpha = .453, M = .68, SD = .21\)). Don’t knows were recorded as incorrect.

\(^{14}\) Because Measure 82 had been removed from the ballot, we chose to only focus on those voters who reported reading the Measure 85 statement and thus may have utilized it when casting their own ballots.
had a “good understanding of” initiatives (4 items; α = .856, M = 3.73, SD = .74).

The results of this analysis closely mirror those found in 2010. As described in Table 6, simple awareness of the CIR correlated with higher levels of external efficacy. These voters were more likely to believe that they have a “tremendous influence” on state government, the “final say” in how the state is run, and that “officials genuinely care what people” think. In their interviews, voters reported an increased faith in a governing process that adopted processes like the CIR. As one voter said, “I guess I would have a better feeling about living in a place where they had a lot more of these than I would some place that didn't have any... Just because it offers a more independent view.”

Another voter favorably compared the CIR to their previous experience with New England town meetings. He said, “I'm experienced in direct democracy, and... I kind of miss it. They'd actually stand up and look the other guy in the eye and talk things out, you know? It really was an amazing experience compared to your typical at-a-distance politics.” For these voters, the presence of the CIR was evidence of a different, and better, kind of politics, one less swayed by strategic campaigns and more responsive to thoughtful consideration and the will of the public.

Though awareness of the CIR resulted in increased external efficacy, reading the statements led to no further increases in external efficacy. Reading the Measure 85 Statement, however, did predict higher levels of internal efficacy when controlling for the other factors that would generally influence these measures. These voters were more likely to feel “well qualified to participate in politics,” “better informed about politics and government than most,” and that they had enough information to “help my friend figure out who to vote for” in presidential elections.

Our interviews with voters who were highly aware of the CIR further explain these findings. Voters who had read the CIR statement said that they learned new information or perspectives that they might not have learned on their own. As one voter said, “I think it cuts to the chase and gets a lot of good information out but is concise and well-thought-out and well-formatted. Each of us individually doesn't have to go through and do it on our own.”

One reason that voters seemed to accept the information provided by the CIR was its unbiased nature. Voters were pleased to see information constructed by average citizens and said that they placed more trust in that information than the information generally available through initiative campaigns. One voter said that, “I would trust it way above anything else in the voters' guide, other than, perhaps, the explanation of the measure itself.” Later in the interview, she expanded on this comment, noting that, “It's refreshing to be able to trust some information in the hearts and the heat of a political environment, and that's how I feel about the information that comes out of this.” In short, it appears that it was the CIR process itself that fueled voters’ increases in internal efficacy. Voters’ felt more confident in their decision precisely because they felt more
confident in the information provided by the statements.

Together, the results concerning internal and external efficacy duplicate the results from the 2010. Our 2010 study found that the pilot process increased the external efficacy of those who were aware of the CIR and the internal efficacy for those who read the Citizens’ Statements.

Finally, we asked whether awareness of the CIR and use of its statements resulted in higher levels of initiative-specific internal efficacy, or one’s confidence in their own capability to participate in initiative elections. These results were even more promising than those found for external and standard internal efficacy. Voters who were aware of the CIR Statement saw significant increases in their initiative-specific internal efficacy, and reading the CIR Statements created an additionally significant bump in initiative efficacy over those who were simply aware of the process.
Table 6. Awareness and Use of the CIR Predicting Changes to Internal, Initiative, and External Efficacy

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<td>-1.958 (4.859)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-1.400 (3.896)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.002 (.002)</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.001 (.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.038 (.071)</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.219 (.057)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.050 (.113)</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.093 (.091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.100 (.037)**</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.118 (.030)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>-.164 (.033)**</td>
<td>-.223</td>
<td>-.049 (.027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political interest</td>
<td>.042 (.057)</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.428 (.045)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge</td>
<td>.289 (.179)</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.759 (.144)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of CIR</td>
<td>.208 (.055)**</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.072 (.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read CIR Statements</td>
<td>-.110 (.079)</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.192 (.063)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
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Note. $N = 951$. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors in parenthesis) followed by standardized coefficients controlling for variables listed (age through political knowledge).

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01.
Conclusion and Recommendations

As this analysis makes clear, the Oregon CIR appears to have achieved its two principal objectives in 2012: It conducted panel deliberations of a very high quality, then effectively transmitted the findings of those citizen panels to the wider electorate, which became much better informed about the important and complicated issues placed on the ballot in the general election. In effect, the CIR helped to address one of the greatest problems of direct democracy by finding a way to inform the judgments of the mass public in a way that keeps citizens at the center of the deliberations, both large and small. In addition, the process brought civic benefits to both participants and the wider public. Participants reported gaining deliberative skills and applying those skills when engaging in their local communities, and the wider public increased their political efficacy by simply being aware of the CIR or using the Citizens’ Statements when casting their own votes.

These findings are presented with an eye toward potential replication of the CIR beyond Oregon. Readers may judge for themselves whether this would be possible in their own cultural and political contexts, but for those who may wish to adopt—or adapt—the CIR, the following recommendations for improving the process are offered.

First, the CIR Statement page in the Voters’ Pamphlet should have a more visually engaging layout, and the CIR needs a more robust public information campaign. Awareness of the CIR is expected to increase again in 2014, but to reach more than a bare majority of voters, the CIR needs greater prominence online, in broadcast media, and in the Pamphlet itself.

Second, the CIR orientation should provide more precise training to panelists on how to evaluate evidence, the key terms for each aspect of the process, and the importance of values in relation to evidence and arguments. These three suggestions aim to use the CIR panelists’ time more efficiently to identify key arguments and evidence.

Third, CIR organizers should continue to explore ways to effectively prepare proponents, opponents, and neutral witnesses for their appearance before citizen panelists. If the advocates and witnesses have a clearer idea of the importance of having clearly documented evidence, well structured arguments, etc. all advocates will be equally well prepared for the distinctive deliberative environment of the CIR.

Though this report contains detailed information about the 2012 Oregon CIR, we have only presented here some of the analyses we will develop and publish in the future. Combined with the data from the 2010 Oregon CIR, we now have a rich dataset that should shed considerable light on the efficacy of this unique deliberative process. Anyone reading this report who wishes to learn more about this research or contribute to the analyses of these data can contact the report’s authors.
As we continue to develop our research on the CIR, we conclude by expressing our appreciation to everyone who has made this report and the larger research program underlying it, possible. Our university and foundation partners, our many undergraduate, graduate, and faculty colleagues, as well as others at HDO and beyond, have encouraged our study of the CIR. This process has, from the outset, been open to outside scrutiny and given researchers unfettered access to observing and interviewing the panelists and the process. The panelists themselves also get credit for completing our tedious surveys, with a response rate (still at 100% during panels) that is the envy of all our peers in academia. As both CIR panelists and organizers recognize, it is only through the interplay of practical innovation and rigorous research that we can understand and improve deliberative processes like the CIR.

Anyone reading this report who wishes to learn more about this research or contribute to analyses of these data can contact the report’s authors or visit the project website at www.la1.psu.edu/cas/cir. This process has, from the outset, been open to scrutiny and given researchers unfettered access to observing and interviewing the panelists and the process. It is only through the interplay of practical innovation and rigorous research that scholars and practitioners can understand and improve deliberative processes like the CIR.

This full report is available online at: www.la1.psu.edu/cas/jgastil/CIR/ReportToCIRCommission2012.pdf

References


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