# To Guide Us in These Latter-days: When partisans disagree with the Church's guidance

Kelsey Eyre, Jordan Gygi, & Kesley Townsend | Dr. Chris Karpowitz | Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy | Political Science Department kelseyeyre@gmail.com, gygijordan@gmail.com, kesley.townsend@gmail.com

# Background

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches many distinct doctrines that have political implications. We examine whether Republicans and Democrats respond differently when their political and religious views do not align. To do this, we employ the "method of listening" used by Kathy Cramer (2016). This method allows us to identify the complex thought processes of members of the Church regarding these issues.

## Methods

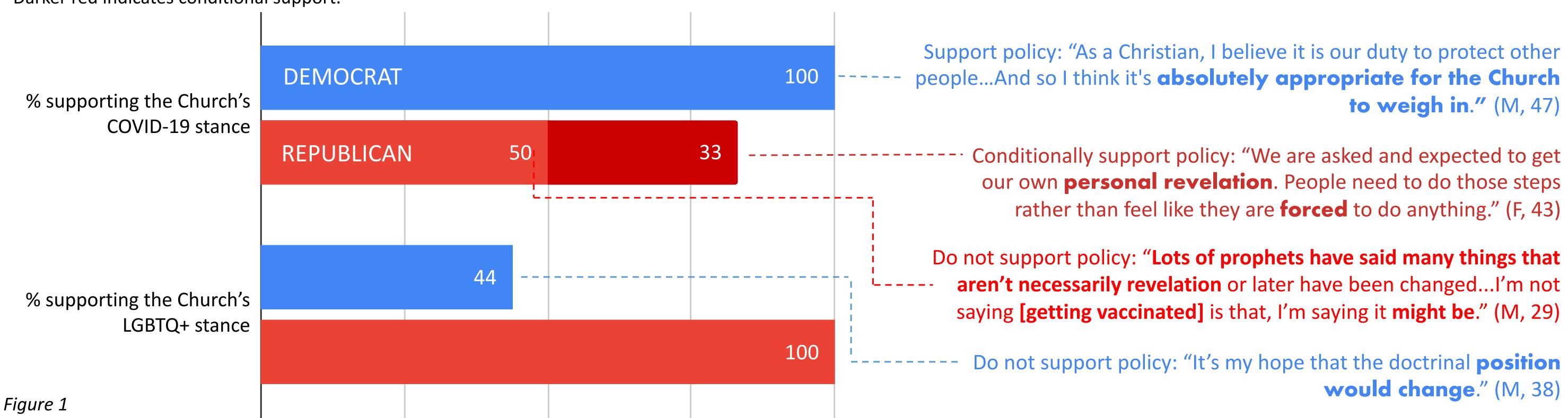
- Conducted 24 in-depth interviews spanning approximately 13 hours.
- Read Church Handbook statements about vaccinations and gay marriage to the subjects.
- Asked questions regarding subjects' feelings about the Church's guidance on theses issues.
- Asked how they would respond to hypothetical situations that could arise from these issues:
  - Do you think an unvaccinated/gay  $\bullet$ member should be released from their calling?
- Systematically coded each response to measure levels of consistency across issues.

# Implications

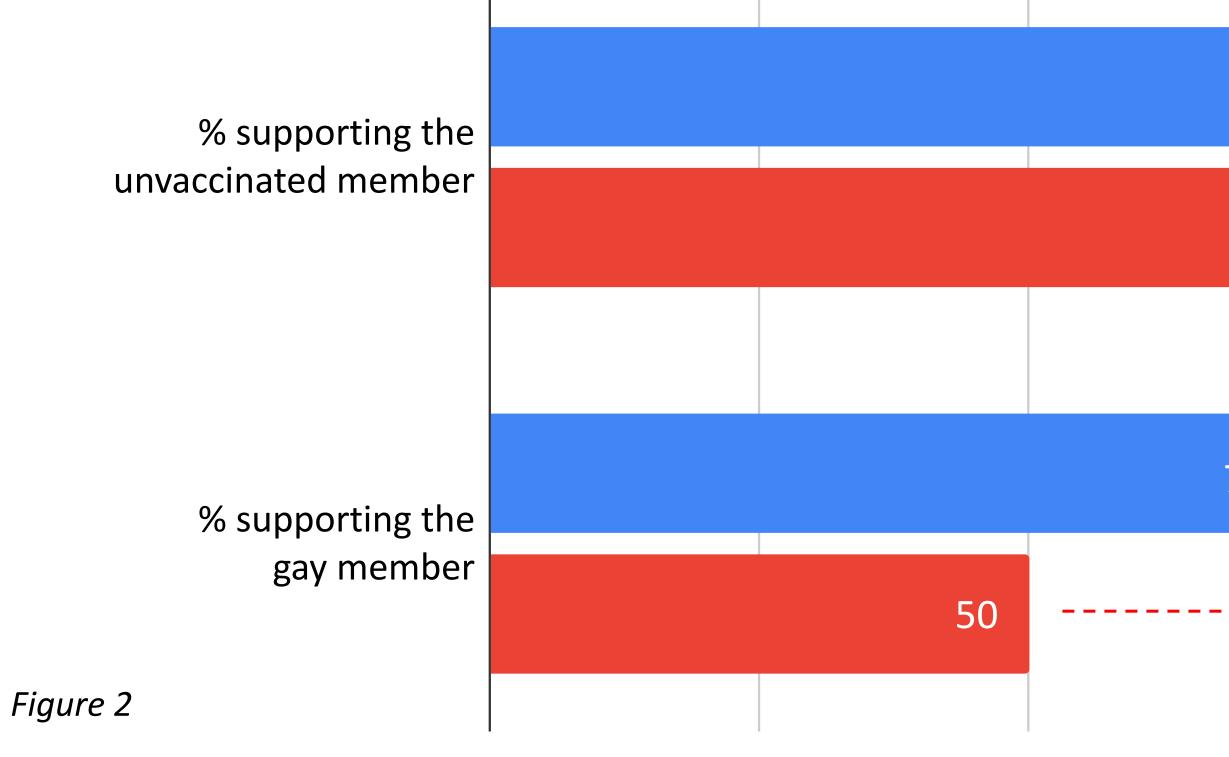
- Democrats and Republicans both struggle when Church policy contradicts their political beliefs, but it appears they react differently to that struggle.
- Republicans generally expressed support for church policy, but support was more conditional when the policy contradicted political views.
- Democrats appear to be better able to empathize with out-party members who may struggle with Church teachings.

A qualitative analysis of how Latter-day Saint Republicans and Democrats experience and justify disjunctions between religious and political beliefs differently

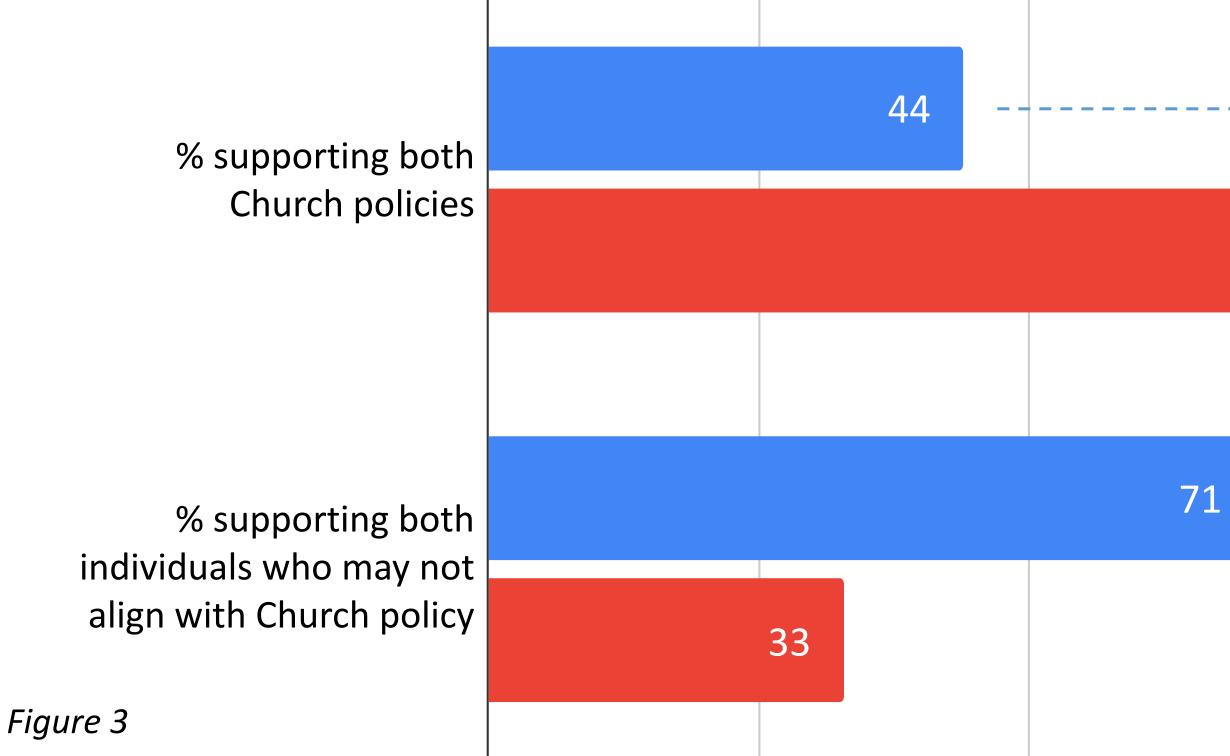
#### **Republicans More Consistently Support Church Policy (with conditions)** \*Darker red indicates conditional support.



#### **Democrats More Consistently Support Individuals who May Not Align with Church Policy**



### **Republicans Emphasize Policy while Democrats Emphasize Individuals**



	Do not support individual: "I don't thin
75	the temple if you're not vaccinated, let a
75	Support individual: "The church handb vaccinations <b>do not say</b> [ <b>not getting va</b>
	Support individual: "Like, is t Church [to release the gay memb
75	go
	Support individual: "If the homosexual, but like covenants, I live by God's cor <b>be fine</b> with [a gay persor

Not support both policies: "		
decision. Like, God has given us	- +	
latter-days but I don't think t		
the	83	
Support both policies: "I don't God's law, <b>that's just the v</b>		
Support both individuals: "I do feel l		
for more conservative memb		
[vaccinations], not because I		
becauseI get that like things th		
guess, that com		





**to weigh in**." (M, 47)

would change." (M, 38)

ink you should be able to enter alone attend church. I would release them all." (M, 59)

book and like all the talk about vaccinated] is sinful." (M, 29)

that within the protocol of the ber]? Yes. **Do I think that's a** ood thing to do? No." (F, 23)

ere was a man that was openly ke, that person was like, 'I have ommandments,' then I would on serving in a calling]." (M, 29)

"I allow for myself to make the s prophets to guide us in these that that means that what prophet says goes." (F, 23)

't see any value in arguing with way that it is for me." (F, 43)

like I have some **compassion** bers that are concerned about I agree with the issue, but just hat, that are hard for me, I me from the Church..." (M, 38)