

Reporting Summary

Nature Research wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Research policies, see [Authors & Referees](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- ☐ ☒ The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
- ☐ ☒ A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
- ☐ ☒ The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.
- ☐ ☒ A description of all covariates tested
- ☐ ☒ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
- ☐ ☒ A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
- ☐ ☒ For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.
- ☒ ☐ For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- ☐ ☒ For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- ☐ ☒ Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection All data were collected via Qualtrics

Data analysis All data were analyzed in R Studio

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors/reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Research [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A list of figures that have associated raw data
- A description of any restrictions on data availability

All data are available at <https://osf.io/ewv2a/>, and all materials are available in the supplementary materials.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

- ☐ Life sciences ☒ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Behavioural & social sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	All studies were quantitative experimental; subjects were randomly assigned to experimental or control conditions, and quantitative outcomes were collected.
Research sample	Studies 1-8 included samples recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Studies 9 and 10 included samples of professional lawyers. All subjects lived in the United States when they completed the studies. Overall, 56% of subjects identified as female, and their average age was 35 (min = 18, max = 80). Given these samples, our results can be generalized to Americans, including lawyers, but not to non-WEIRD populations. We recruited these samples to support our hypothesis that advocacy incentives induce bias among both lawyers and laypeople.
Sampling strategy	Subjects were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. Power analysis was used to determine the minimum sample size necessary to have an 80% chance of detecting a small effect (partial eta-squared = .015) with the most complex planned analysis (two-sided).
Data collection	All data were collected on-line. All subjects completed the studies on a computer without an experimenter present.
Timing	In all studies, data were collected in a single wave over the following time periods: Study 1 (3/6/18 - 3/7/18), Study 2 (3/28/18), Study 3 (1/25/20 - 1/26/20), Study 4 (4/22/18 - 4/24/18), Study 5 (11/19/18), Study 6 (8/16/18 - 8/17/18), Study 7 (6/7/19), Study 8 (12/16/19 - 12/18/19), Study 9 (10/8/18 - 10/17/18); Study 10 (2/15/20 - 2/26/20)
Data exclusions	Data were excluded from analysis when the respondent failed one or more attention checks. These exclusions were designed to minimize the likelihood of Type 1 or Type 2 error due to random or inattentive responding. Exclusions were planned in advance, and pre-registered in Studies 4-7, 9 and 10. Overall, 16.04% of respondents (N = 593) were excluded.
Non-participation	Overall, 87% of subjects who started our studies completed them.
Randomization	Subjects were randomly assigned to groups using a random number generator.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ Antibodies
☒	☐ Eukaryotic cell lines
☒	☐ Palaeontology
☒	☐ Animals and other organisms
☐	☒ Human research participants
☒	☐ Clinical data

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ ChIP-seq
☒	☐ Flow cytometry
☒	☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Human research participants

Policy information about [studies involving human research participants](#)

Population characteristics	See above.
Recruitment	In Studies 1-8, subjects were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk. In Studies 9 and 10, subjects (professional lawyers) were recruited in partnership with the panel company Centiment. Lawyers were identified through public employment records. These recruitment methods minimize systematic biases associated with self-selection.
Ethics oversight	Yale University's Institutional Review Board

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.