

# Seeing an American flag can shift voters towards Republicanism

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## *Discover Magazine:*

As a visitor to the USA, one sometimes gets the feeling that it's hard to move or look around without seeing a flag. They are seemingly everywhere, an omnipresent reminder of national identity. But the star-spangled banner is more than a symbol; it can also influence minds in unexpected ways. Travis Carter from the University of Chicago has found that when people think about voting decisions, the mere sight of the American flag can subtly shift their political views... towards Republicanism. It's an effect that holds in both Democrats and Republicans, it affects actual votes, and it lasts for at least 8 months.

In the run-up to the 2008 US presidential election, Carter recruited a group of around 200 volunteers and asked them about their political views. A month or so later, he split them into two groups that were comparable in terms of their political beliefs, voting intentions and other variables. Both groups rated how likely they were to vote for either the Democrat Barack Obama or the Republican John McCain on an online questionnaire. The questionnaires were identical except for one small detail – in the top left corner of the screen, one group saw a small American flag and the other saw nothing.

Read the whole story: [Discover Magazine](#)