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## Electoral Studies

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# Partisan mail and voter turnout: results from randomized field experiments

A.S Gerber   ... M Green

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### Abstract

Political campaigns currently make extensive use of direct mail, particularly in state and local races, yet its effects on voter behavior are not well understood. This essay presents the results of large-scale randomized field experiments conducted in Connecticut and New Jersey during state and municipal elections of 1999. Tens of thousands of registered voters were sent from zero to nine pieces of direct mail. The target populations included party registrants with a strong history of voter participation, independents, and a random subset of registered voters. Our results indicate partisan campaign mail does little to stimulate voter turnout and may even dampen it when the mail is negative in tone.



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## Keywords

Campaigns; Experiment; Voter turnout; Direct mail

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