Postcard Project

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Why Postcards?

• Some research has shown that postcards can have a positive effect when used in political campaigns.
• Would it work for GOTV?

Committee Charge

• Project initiated by by the LWV-RMA Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Committee
• Ad Hoc Postcard Committee of three formed
• Budgeted for 1000 postcards (postage and printing)
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT

Proposal
To send postcards to two groups of registered voters in a low-turnout Legislative District within the City of Rochester:
• Who did not vote in the 2016 general election (Did Not Vote group) and
• Who registered to vote after the 2016 general election (Newly Registered group)

Questions
• Will postcards have an impact on either group voting in the November 2019 election?
• Will there be a difference between the Newly Registered group and the Did Not Vote group?
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT

Postcard Design

- Emphasized the new early voting option.
- Included two important offices and an important issue on the ballot.
- Provided a space to write a short personal message.
- Designed by a member of our League, an accomplished (and patient) graphic designer.
- Printed by a local printer.
- Cost: $350.00 for stamps, $102.60 for printing for a total of $452.60
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT

Postcard Design

NYS now has Early Voting!

Please join your neighbors in voting this year. Your vote is your voice, and Rochester needs to hear it!

New York State now has Early Voting!
Vote at any of these locations or times!

Check your early voting location:
- Greece Town Hall
- Ogden Town Hall
- MCC Down Town Campus
- Penfield Town Hall
- Marketplace Mall
- SUNY Empire State College
- Ridge Culver Plaza

Included on the 2019 ballot:
- Monroe County District Attorney
- City Court Judge
- Police Accountability Board

For your Election Day polling place and candidates’ info, go to Vote411.org

Get involved and vote!

- Jessica
Method

• Chose our target audience: Legislative District 22
• Requested lists of registered voters for our two groups from our county BOE
• Removing incomplete data left a total of 5,062 names for the two groups:
  o 1728 names in the Newly Registered list
  o 3334 in the Did Not Vote list
• Randomly selected 1000 names from the two groups:
  o 340 from the 1,728 Newly Registered list
  o 660 from the 3,334 Did Not Vote list
The original lists from the BOE were alphabetical. To make sure we got a random sample of 1000 names:

1. Assigned each person a random number between 0 and 1 using the Excel RAND function
2. Sorted the list based on the random numbers
3. To choose 1000 random names, selected the top ~1/5 from each randomized list (~5,000/5 = 1,000)
4. Created new Excel spreadsheets of the 1000 names and addresses for printing labels
5. Printed the labels from the spreadsheets on Myra’s home computer
Method (continued)

• Recruited volunteers to help write the personal messages, and to stick on stamps and labels:
  o Members of Indivisible Rochester at their regular meeting
  o College students active in their GOTV community service organization and in Alpha Phi Omega, a service-oriented fraternity

• Brought the completed postcards to the post office, in zip code order, to help post office staff.
Results

To do our analysis:

• We went back to our original randomized lists and created two new “no postcard” Newly Registered and Did Not Vote lists.

• Received from our BOE a list showing which of the people on all four of our lists had voted in the November 2019 election.
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT

Results: Newly Registered

For this group, the number of registered voters we could consider was reduced to 294 from the original 340 because:

- 31 postcards were returned as undeliverable
- 15 people were found to be ineligible to vote

- Of the 294 potential voters who received postcards in this group, **33 voted**.
- For comparison, in the no postcard group with 340 potential voters, **24 voted**
- To test whether this small difference was statistically significant, we compared the two with a “Z-test for two proportions” and found that the difference was just significant.
Results: Did Not Vote

For this group, the number of registered voters we could consider was reduced to 588 from the original 660 because:

- 61 postcards were returned as undeliverable
- 11 people were found to be ineligible to vote

- Of the 588 potential voters who received postcards in this group, 1 voted.
- For comparison, in the no postcard group of 660 potential voters, 16 voted.
- Using the same “Z-test for two proportions” the difference here was significant, meaning that significantly more potential voters who did not receive postcards voted compared to the number of potential voters who did receive postcards. (?!)

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Results: Conclusions (?)

• For the Newly Registered group, there was a slight increase in the number of people voting who received postcards compared to the people who did not receive them.

• For the Did Not Vote group, there was a statistically significant decrease in voting for people who received postcards compared to people who did not.

• Were the postcards annoying and made people LESS likely to vote?

• But...2019 was a off-year election where people who generally do not vote might be expected to vote in lower numbers than in a presidential year.
Proposal

• To send postcards to newly registered voters (registered between Nov. 2019 - July 2020) in multiple low-turnout Legislative Districts within the City of Rochester.

Question

• Will we be able to replicate our (just) significantly positive finding that more newly registered people who received postcards voted than people who didn’t receive them?
Postcard Design

- Included all 2020 voting options (absentee, early, election day) as well as times and places for early voting.
- Provided a space to write a short personal message
- Designed by a member of our League and printed by our local printer
- Cost: $102.60 for printing.
2020 POSTCARD PROJECT

Postcard Design

Welcome New Voters!

Please join your neighbors in voting this year! Your vote is your voice, and it needs to be heard.

You can vote absentee, early or on Election Day (See back for early voting dates & times.)

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, educational organization of women that encourages informed and active citizen participation in government.

Vote Early at Any of These Locations. Your Early Vote Will be Counted on Election Day!

Choose your early voting location:
- David F. Gantt Community Center
- City of Rochester Recreation Bureau
- Edgerton Recreation Center
- SUNY Empire State College
- Town of Chili Senior Center
- North Greece Road Church of Christ
- Marketplace Mall (North Entrance)
- Irondequoit Public Library
- Harris-Whalen Park Lodge
- Perinton Square Mall
- Webster Recreation Center

Choose your early voting date & time:
- Saturday, Oct 24, 9am-3pm
- Sunday, Oct 25, 9am-3pm
- Monday, Oct 26, 9am-5pm
- Tuesday, Oct 27, 11am-8pm
- Wednesday, Oct 28 9-5
- Thursday, Oct 29, 11am-8pm
- Friday, Oct 30, 9am-5pm
- Saturday, Oct 31, 9am-3pm
- Sunday, Nov 1, 9am-3pm

Or vote on Election Day: Nov. 3
Vote at your assigned polling place 6am-9pm

Go to Vote11Log for polling place and candidates' info.

Please vote! Every vote counts!
2020 POSTCARD PROJECT

Method (continued)

• We recruited volunteers through our newsletter and website. Sixteen people volunteered, both members of our League and non-members.

• At an initial Zoom meeting we asked volunteers if they were willing to donate stamps. Many were, so we expanded our goal from the original 1,000. Volunteers offered to complete between 30-180 postcards, including providing stamps.

• Due to COVID restrictions, cards and labels were picked up from Myra’s porch and completed at the volunteers’ homes.
2020 POSTCARD PROJECT

Method

• We acquired a list of all voters who had registered since the last election and sorted them by Legislative District.

• We used data on turnout to rank LDs from lowest to highest. We kept adding LDs until we had about twice as many new voters as we wanted to send postcards (because we wanted to keep the experiment, so we’d know if we were accomplishing anything).
Method

- There was a total of 3568 registered voters in the eight districts. We cut each district in half for a total of 1784 newly registered voters.

- In the end, we covered 8 out of 11 LDs that are partly or wholly within the City of Rochester.
2020 POSTCARD PROJECT

Method (continued)

• After the election, we got the voter data base from the BOE and looked at the districts we’d sent to.

• We matched the voters from our original list to the new list, to find out who’d voted.

• NOTE: about 15% of voters were no longer in the same LD after the election, compared to in July. This speaks to the instability in the lives of voters in these low-income, low turnout districts, during the pandemic.
### Results: Turnout Among New Voters

Districts are ordered by turnout, from lowest to highest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative District</th>
<th>GOT POSTCARDS</th>
<th>DIDN’T GET POSTCARDS</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LD 22</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 28</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 29</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 27</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 25</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 21</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 6</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 19</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: Conclusions

• Overall, those new voters who got postcards were less likely to vote than those who didn’t.
• This was most true in the two lowest turnout districts! Our prime targets!
• This was a presidential year, so turnout was much higher overall than in 2019.
• This was a pandemic year with a lot of chaos in people’s lives.
For this group, the number of registered voters we could consider was reduced to 294 from the original 340 (87%) because:
  • 31 postcards were returned as undeliverable
  • 15 people were found to be ineligible to vote

Of the 294 who received postcards in this group, 33 voted, a proportion of $\frac{33}{294}$ or 11%.

For comparison, in the no postcard group containing 340 potential voters, 24 voted, a proportion of $\frac{24}{340}$ or 7%.

To test whether this difference (11% with postcards vs. 7% without postcards) is statistically significant, the two proportions $\frac{33}{294}$ vs $\frac{24}{340}$ were compared with the "Z-test for two proportions."
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT - STATS

Results: Newly Registered

$Z$-test for two proportions

$$Z = \frac{(\hat{p}_{pc} - \hat{p}_{nopc})}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

$\hat{p}_{pc}$ is proportion from postcard group $= \frac{33}{294}$

$\hat{p}_{nopc}$ is proportion from no postcard group $= \frac{24}{340}$

$\hat{p}$ is overall proportion $= \frac{33 + 24}{294 + 340}$

$n_1$ is number postcard group [294]

$n_2$ is number in no postcard group [340]
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT - STATS

Results: Newly Registered

\[
Z = \frac{\hat{p}_{pc} - \hat{p}_{nopc}}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}
\]

\[
\hat{p}_{pc} \text{ is proportion from } \textit{postcard} \text{ group} = \left[\frac{33}{294}\right]
\]

\[
\hat{p}_{nopc} \text{ is proportion from } \textit{no postcard} \text{ group} = \left[\frac{24}{340}\right]
\]

\[
\hat{p} \text{ is overall proportion} = \left[\frac{33 + 24}{294 + 340}\right]
\]

\[
n_1 \text{ is number postcard group} = 294
\]

\[
n_2 \text{ is number in no postcard group} = 340
\]

\[
Z = \frac{(\hat{p}_{pc} - \hat{p}_{nopc})}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}} = \frac{\frac{33}{294} - \frac{24}{340}}{\sqrt{\frac{33 + 24}{294 + 340}(1 - \frac{33 + 24}{294 + 340})\left(\frac{1}{294} + \frac{1}{340}\right)}} = 1.97
\]

A Z-value of 1.97 indicates that the difference is \textit{just significant} at the 95% confidence level.
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT - STATS

Results: Did Not Vote

\[
Z = \frac{(\hat{p}_{pc} - \hat{p}_{nopc})}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p}) \left( \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}
\]

\(\hat{p}_{pc}\) is proportion from \textit{postcard} group = \(\frac{1}{588}\)

\(\hat{p}_{nopc}\) is proportion from \textit{no postcard} group = \(\frac{16}{660}\)

\(\hat{p}\) is overall proportion = \(\frac{1 + 16}{588 + 660}\)

\(n_1\) is number postcard group \([588]\)

\(n_2\) is number in no postcard group \([660]\)
2019 POSTCARD PROJECT - STATS

Results: Did Not Vote

A Z-value of -3.67 indicates that the difference is **significant** at the 95% confidence level.