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## RESEARCH

### MESSAGING MATTERS: HOW INFORMATION ABOUT UNDERREPRESENTATION AFFECTS THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN CALIFORNIA

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**Abstract:** Can racial and ethnic minorities be mobilized to participate in politics at greater rates? We theorize that mobilization messages providing information about a group's underrepresentation in government may increase participation among racial/ethnic minorities. However, responsiveness to such messages should vary depending on individuals' prior awareness of their group's underrepresentation. Using a two-wave panel survey that randomly assigned different get out the vote messages, we find that messages highlighting a racial/ethnic group's underrepresentation in government do not increase Latinos', Blacks', or Asians' likelihood of voting. We also find that such messages can decrease other forms of political participation among Asians and Latinos who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation. These findings indicate that information about underrepresentation can actually demobilize certain segments of the electorate. Thus, practical efforts to boost participation among underrepresented groups should either communicate information about underrepresentation in other ways or provide a different type of message altogether.

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Can racial and ethnic minorities be mobilized to participate in politics at greater rates? For decades, scholars and practitioners have expressed concern about the unrepresentativeness of the electorate (relative to the general population) and the consequences it might have for democratic accountability. These concerns are particularly acute in states like California, where growing racial/ethnic diversity in the population is not reflected in rates of political participation. For example, a recent report from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows that 60% of likely voters in California are white, even though California's population is only 42% white. Conversely, California's population is 36% Latino, yet only 18% of the state's likely voters are Latino (PPIC 2016). These "participation gaps" among different racial/ethnic groups are consequential, given differences in these groups' policy priorities and political preferences (e.g., Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1997; Matsuoka and Junn 2013). As such, politically interested groups, get out the vote (GOTV) organizations, and states themselves have invested considerable resources in boosting the political participation of underrepresented groups.



Yet, we still know little about how different types of mobilization messages affect racial and ethnic minorities. Indeed, existing studies offer conflicting conclusions about whether targeted group-based messages are more effective than standard get out the vote messages among racial and ethnic minorities. On the one hand, several studies show that the particular message used in mobilization campaigns does not seem to matter as much as the mode of delivery (e.g., in person, over the phone). Any message that encourages members of the general population to vote seems to have a similar effect in increasing the likelihood of participation (for a review see Green and Gerber 2015). In contrast, other studies find that the nature of the message does seem to matter for mobilization, at least among certain groups like young people and Latinos (Green and Vavreck 2008; Valenzuela and Michelson 2016). These findings are also consistent with survey and lab experimental work on messaging and engagement (e.g., DeFrancesco Soto and Merolla 2006; Merolla et al. 2013), as well as studies of ethnic group endorsements (Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2019). These studies offer reason to believe that how GOTV messages are communicated might matter for increasing the participation of underrepresented groups.

In this study, we examine whether mobilization messages that provide information about the underrepresentation of one's racial/ethnic group in government are effective at increasing political participation. Such messages are communicated in real-world elections. For example, during the 2018 election, iamavoter.com had a billboard on route 60 East in Southern California that pointed out the exact underrepresentation of women in government, stating that "over 50% of the United States is female, but only 20% of Congress is female." Racial and ethnic minorities are similarly underrepresented in government, relative to their presence in the population.

However, scholars have yet to study whether and when messages that provide information about a group's underrepresentation effectively increase political participation among racial and ethnic minorities. It is possible that receiving information about the extent to which one's racial/ethnic group is underrepresented in government may cause individuals to conclude that more people from their group need to participate, at least as a first step in improving representation. However, the effectiveness of such information may vary across individuals within a particular racial/ethnic group. If one of the key ways such information works is by individuals being exposed to and learning new information, then we might expect the information to more effectively increase participation among individuals who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation in government.

In what follows, we examine whether and to what extent racial and ethnic minorities are aware of their group's underrepresentation in government. Our results reveal that a nontrivial percentage of Black, Latino, and Asian respondents are unaware of their group's underrepresentation. We then assess the effects of being exposed to a message that informs them of their group's underrepresentation. We find that such information has no effect on Blacks', Latinos', or Asians' likelihood of voting. While the information increases Blacks' willingness to engage in other forms of political participation, it can actually decrease participation among Latinos and Asians. Together, these results indicate that messages highlighting a racial/ethnic group's underrepresentation in government can have unintended demobilizing effects on certain segments of the electorate. This suggests that practical efforts to boost participation among underrepresented groups should either communicate information about a group's underrepresentation in other ways or provide a different type of message altogether.



### **Closing Participation Gaps:**

Scholars and practitioners have explored a wide range of factors that contribute to participation gaps in the electorate, especially among racial and ethnic groups. Some of the factors that intensify participation gaps among racial and ethnic minorities are lower levels of socio-economic resources (e.g., Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Leighley and Nagler 2013; but see Fraga 2018), language barriers among some immigrant-rooted communities (e.g., DeSipio 1996; Hero and Campbell 1996), along with limited political socialization in the U.S. context (e.g., Hajnal and Lee 2001; Lee, Ramakrishnan and Ramirez 2006). Scholars have also identified various institutional attempts at voter suppression (e.g., Barreto, Nuño, and Sanchez 2009; Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson 2017; Sobel and Smith 2009; but see Grimmer et al., 2018), and limited mobilization by campaigns and organizations (e.g., García Bedolla and Michelson 2012; Lee, Ramakrishnan and Ramirez 2006; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) as factors that exacerbate participation gaps among racial and ethnic minorities. On this last factor, one effective way to help close such gaps is by boosting the mobilization efforts of campaigns and organizations. Scholars have found that when racial and ethnic minorities are encouraged to participate by campaigns, organizations, or churches, they are more likely to do so (e.g., García Bedolla and Michelson 2012; Ramirez 2007; Verba, Brady and Schlozman 1995; Wong 2005). But, what types of get out the vote (GOTV) messages are most effective in getting racial and ethnic minorities to engage in politics?

A long line of literature in persuasion (as well as marketing) indicates that the message used in a GOTV appeal should matter, but that it may not matter in the same way for all individuals, or all groups. For one, research on persuasion in social psychology finds that information is more likely to be processed systematically and have lasting effects when individuals are more motivated to process that information (e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1996; Chen and Chaiken 1999). However, individuals are not equally motivated to process information in a given GOTV appeal. Rather, motivation to process a message may depend on the characteristics of the message itself and how they relate to the individual; the more relevant a message is for a person, the more likely she should be to process the information carefully and systematically (Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981). Some of the more important indicators of relevance are when a message is high in personal importance, for example related to something the individual cares about or is linked to one's identity (e.g., Johnson and Eagly 1989). We might therefore expect to find that, on average, a GOTV appeal that invokes a group one identifies with will be more likely to capture one's attention, and be processed, than a standard GOTV appeal. As a result, a group-based GOTV message should be more likely to increase political participation than an appeal that uses a standard get out the vote script or appeals to some other civic duty.

Some examples of GOTV appeals that may be more relevant to racial and ethnic minorities are those that invoke an individual's racial or ethnic identity, or focus on issues of concern to the group. Existing research has explored the effects of identity-based appeals in GOTV messages and has found some empirical support for the theory that group-based messages may effectively mobilize racial and ethnic minorities (Panagopoulous and Green 2008; Abrajano 2010; DeFrancesco Soto and Merolla 2006; Valenzuela and Michelson 2016).

Here we focus on a novel group-based appeal that has not been explored in the literature. Specifically, we examine a group-based appeal that contains factual information about the extent to which a



group is represented in the political system. Existing work suggests that individuals are more likely to feel empowered and participate in politics as their group is better represented in government (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Part of the mechanism underlying this effect is that individuals may be more trusting of descriptive representatives (Williams 1998) and inclined to think that they will be more responsive to their needs (Mansbridge 1999). Using observational data, several scholars have found linkages between having a descriptive representative and increased turnout among African Americans (Tate 2003; but see Gay 2001; and Griffin and Keane 2006 for more nuanced findings) and Latinos (Barreto 2007; Rocha et al 2010; but others have found more mixed support; see, for example, Fraga 2016). But, how might racial and ethnic minorities react to a GOTV appeal like the one noted in the introduction, which provides information about their group's underrepresentation in government?

Being exposed to a message about the underrepresentation of one's racial/ethnic group in government is likely to first draw one's attention since it is high in relevance. As individuals have the motivation to more carefully process the information, it may lead them to think more in depth about this issue. They may draw the conclusion that more people from their group need to participate, at least as a first step in improving representation. Once a group turns out in higher numbers, it may signal to prospective candidates likely support if they run for office, thereby improving representation in the long-term. This was likely what the organization iamavoter.com had in mind when they posted the billboard about the underrepresentation of women in U.S. government. It signals a need for more women to become involved in politics, through voting and other types of political participation. Of course, the effectiveness of information about underrepresentation may vary across individuals within a group. If one of the key ways in which such information works is by individuals being exposed to and learning new information (Druckman and Leeper 2012), then we might expect the information to more effectively increase participation among individuals who are unaware of the underrepresentation of their group in government.

### **Study Design:**

To measure racial and ethnic minorities' awareness of their group's underrepresentation in government and examine how information about it affects their participation in politics, we conducted a two-wave online panel survey of eligible citizens ages 18 and up with an embedded experiment. The first wave of the survey was fielded from October 15th to October 28th, 2018. About seven to ten days after wave 1, respondents were invited to complete the second wave of the survey, which was fielded from October 24th to November 4, 2018, just before Election Day (November 6, 2018). Our sample consists of Latinos, Blacks, and Asians in California, supplemented with a national sample of Asians and Blacks (total sample size is 2,216: See Table A1 in the Appendix for sample characteristics).<sup>1</sup>

In the first wave of the survey, all respondents were asked basic demographic questions, including one that measures their racial/ethnic identity. Respondents were then asked questions that measure their beliefs about the extent to which their racial/ethnic group is represented in the population at large and in the legislature. Specifically, all respondents were asked to estimate what percentage of the U.S. population their racial/ethnic group comprises. Respondents were also asked to estimate

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<sup>1</sup> The survey included 1,354 Californian respondents, and 862 respondents who resided in other states.



what percentage of members of the U.S. Congress belongs to their racial/ethnic group. California respondents were also asked these questions for the California population and the California state legislature. These questions allow us to measure respondents' prior beliefs about the representational status of their group. We ask these questions in the first wave of the survey (which was administered approximately one week before the second wave) to ensure that we do not reveal the purpose of the experiment embedded in the second wave, and to ensure that we do not prime identity or representation issues in that wave.

In the second wave, we re-contacted these respondents and randomly assigned them to receive different types of messages before expressing their likelihood of voting and engaging in other forms of political participation. In the control group, respondents receive a message that encourages them to perform a civic duty other than voting. Specifically, they receive a message from "California Recycles" (or whatever state they live in for the supplemental national sample) that reminds them that Earth Day happens every April and emphasizes that their responsibilities as a citizen include recycling. They are also given information about who to contact if they have questions about recycling. This message provides an important benchmark against which the effects of different types of get out the vote (GOTV) messages can be compared (See the Appendix for the full scripts).

In the "standard GOTV message" group, respondents receive a message that is similar to the control group message, but it encourages voting instead of recycling. In particular, respondents receive a message from "The Voter Project" that reminds them of the election in November and emphasizes that their rights as a citizen include voting. They are also given information about who to contact if they have questions about voting. This type of message is commonly used in GOTV research, and it allows us to assess the effects that a standard voting message has on respondents' likelihood of voting and other forms of participation, relative to the recycling message.

In the "underrepresentation message" group, respondents receive a message that encourages them to vote by conveying information about the underrepresentation of their racial/ethnic group in government. The message is attributed to an organization associated with respondents' race/ethnicity (e.g., "The Latino Voter Project" for Latino respondents) and provides factual information about the percentage of respondents' own racial/ethnic group in the legislature versus in the population. For example, Latino respondents in California read, "Many citizens are concerned with the underrepresentation of Latinos in government. While Latinos make up 39 percent of the California population, they only hold 22.5 percent of the seats in Sacramento. It is important to have more Latino elected officials, since they are more likely to put issues on the agenda and help pass policies that affect the Latino community." The messages for Black and Asian respondents similarly convey that their racial/ethnic group is underrepresented in the legislature.<sup>2</sup> This group allows us to examine how

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<sup>2</sup> Black respondents, as well as Asian respondents from outside of California, receive information about the underrepresentation of their racial/ethnic group in the U.S. Congress, relative to their percentage in the U.S. population. All of the data on representation was truthful, based on census data on the presence of each group in California or the national level (depending on the sample) compared to their presence in either the California state legislature or the U.S. Congress at the time the study was fielded. In the analyses that follow, we pool the responses from California and non-California respondents among Asians and Blacks. Due to sample size limitations, we are unable to estimate these results separately.



a message that provides information about underrepresentation compares to the standard GOTV or recycling message.

After receiving one of these messages, respondents are asked to report the likelihood that they will vote in the 2018 general election (response options include “not at all likely,” “somewhat likely,” “likely,” or “very likely”).<sup>3</sup> We also gave them the opportunity to fill out a postcard to express their views to their U.S. senators. If they choose to do so, then they are asked to convey which policy issues should be at the top of the political agenda and are given an opportunity to write a message to their senators.<sup>4</sup> This measure allows us to examine whether respondents are actually willing to engage in a particular form of political participation above and beyond voting. We also include a self-report measure that asks respondents how likely they are to participate in the following political activities in the next 12 months: 1) contacting a government official to express their policy views, 2) donating money to a campaign, 3) attending a meeting of a town or city government or school board, and 4) joining a protest, march, rally or demonstration. Response options for each form of participation include “not at all likely,” “somewhat likely,” “likely,” or “very likely.” We combined these responses into a participation index ( $\alpha = .85$ ). We examine whether the underrepresentation message increases these types of political participation among racial and ethnic minorities, relative to the standard GOTV message and the recycling message. We also assess whether the effects of the underrepresentation message vary depending on respondents’ prior awareness of their group’s underrepresentation in government.

## **Results:**

Our results reveal important variation in respondents’ awareness of their racial/ethnic group’s underrepresentation in government. To measure awareness of such underrepresentation, we use respondents’ answers to the wave 1 survey questions that asked them to estimate the percentage of their racial/ethnic group in the population and in the legislature. Respondents who report a smaller percentage of their racial/ethnic group in the legislature than in the population are considered to be aware of the underrepresentation of their group in government. Conversely, respondents who report a greater percentage of their racial/ethnic group in the legislature than in the population are considered to be unaware of their group’s underrepresentation in government.<sup>5</sup> We find that a sizeable majority of Latino, Black, and Asian respondents are already aware of their racial/ethnic group’s underrepresentation in government. However, a nontrivial percentage of these respondents are not. Specifically, 17 percent of Asians, 21 percent of Blacks, and 16 percent of Latinos are unaware of their group’s underrepresentation in government.

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<sup>3</sup> We also asked if they had already voted. In the analysis of this measure, we only include those who have not yet voted.

<sup>4</sup> Respondents were told that their messages would be sent to their senators, which is truthful information. At the end of the study, respondents were debriefed about the groups used in the study, learning that while they are analogous to actual organizations, they were created by the researchers for purposes of the study.

<sup>5</sup> Those who reported the same percentage were also coded as unaware of underrepresentation.



The variation in respondents' prior beliefs enables us to test whether information about their racial/ethnic group's underrepresentation in government induces learning among those who were previously unaware of it and boosts their participation as a result. To do so, we regress each of our dependent variables (likelihood of voting, probability of contacting one's senator, willingness to engage in other forms of political participation) on a dummy variable for the "underrepresentation message" treatment group, as well as an interaction between this treatment group variable and a dummy variable that indicates whether respondents were aware of their group's underrepresentation. In one model, the omitted category is the control group, while in the other it is the "standard GOTV message" group. The full regression results are in Tables A3-A5 in the Appendix.<sup>6</sup> Here, we illustrate the relevant findings for each dependent variable in figures.

With respect to the likelihood of voting, we do not find any significant effects for the underrepresentation message, regardless of Latino, Black, and Asian respondents' awareness of their group's underrepresentation in government. The results for contacting one's senators show that, if anything, information about the underrepresentation of one's group in government *reduces* the likelihood of contacting one's senators, especially among those previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation. In general, Latinos and Asians who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation in government are more likely to contact their senators in the control and standard GOTV message conditions (relative to their counterparts who are already aware of their group's underrepresentation). However, this probability decreases when they learn that their group is underrepresented in government. For example, Figure 1 shows that the underrepresentation message significantly reduces the probability that Asians who are unaware of their group's underrepresentation will contact their senators, relative to their counterparts in the standard GOTV message condition (a reduction from 0.78 in the standard GOTV message condition to 0.44 in the underrepresentation treatment;  $p < 0.05$ ).

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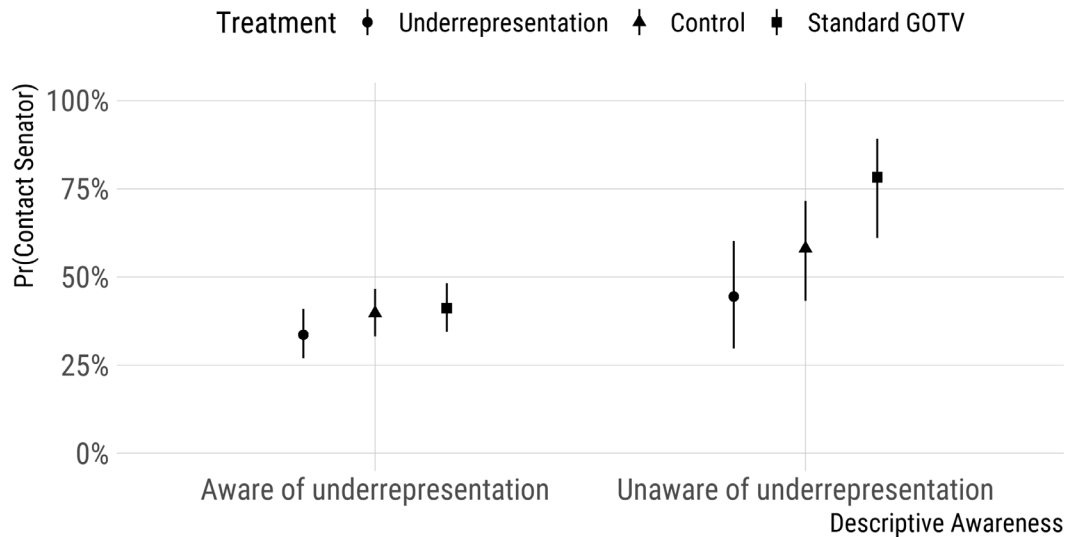
<sup>6</sup> Our study included two additional group-based messages, one about the respondents' identification with their state and the other with their race/ethnicity. Our analyses include variables for these treatment groups, but we explore those results more in-depth in a separate paper. Participants were balanced on a variety of demographic factors and political dispositions across these experimental conditions (see the Appendix, Table A2).



**Figure 1**

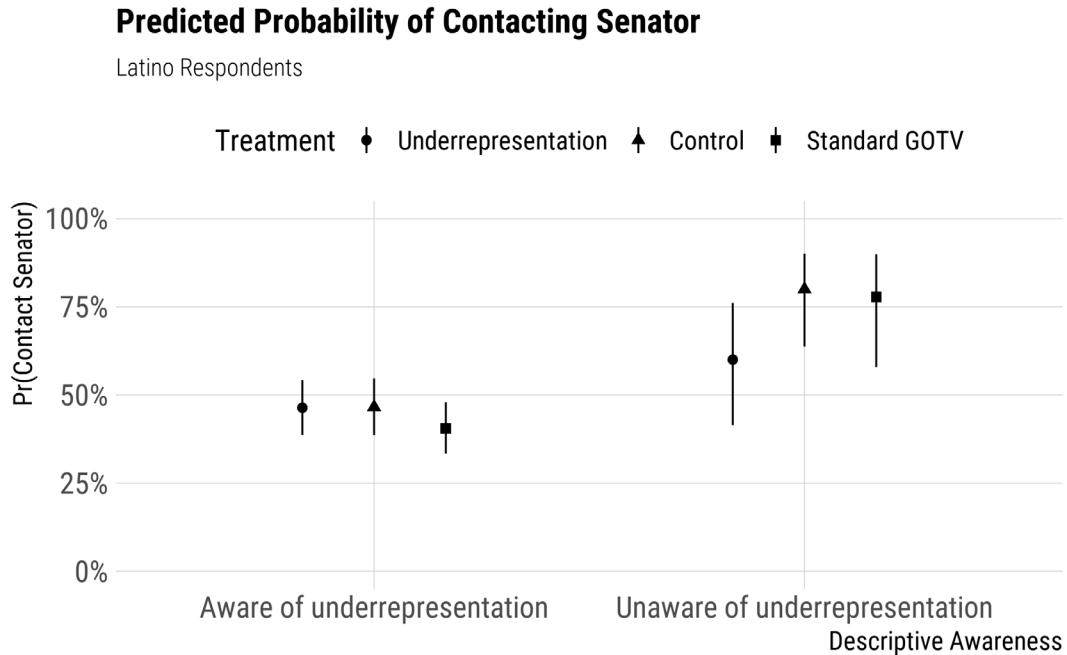
**Predicted Probability of Contacting Senator**

Asian Respondents



The results in Figure 2 show a similar pattern for Latinos, relative to the control group, though the effect is outside of conventional significance levels. Specifically, the underrepresentation treatment decreases the probability that Latinos who are unaware of their group’s underrepresentation will contact their senators from 0.80 in the control group to 0.60 in the underrepresentation treatment ( $p = 0.14$ ). Learning that your group is underrepresented in government therefore leads to behavior that more closely mirrors the behavior of those who were already aware of their group’s underrepresentation in government. We do not however find any significant effects among Blacks who are aware versus unaware of their group’s underrepresentation.

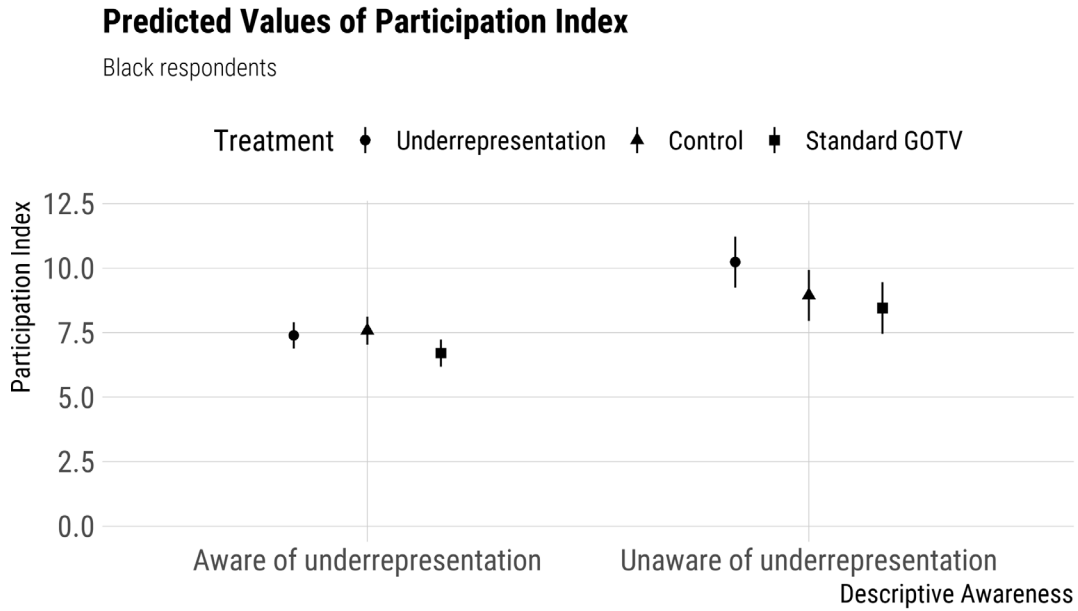
**Figure 2**



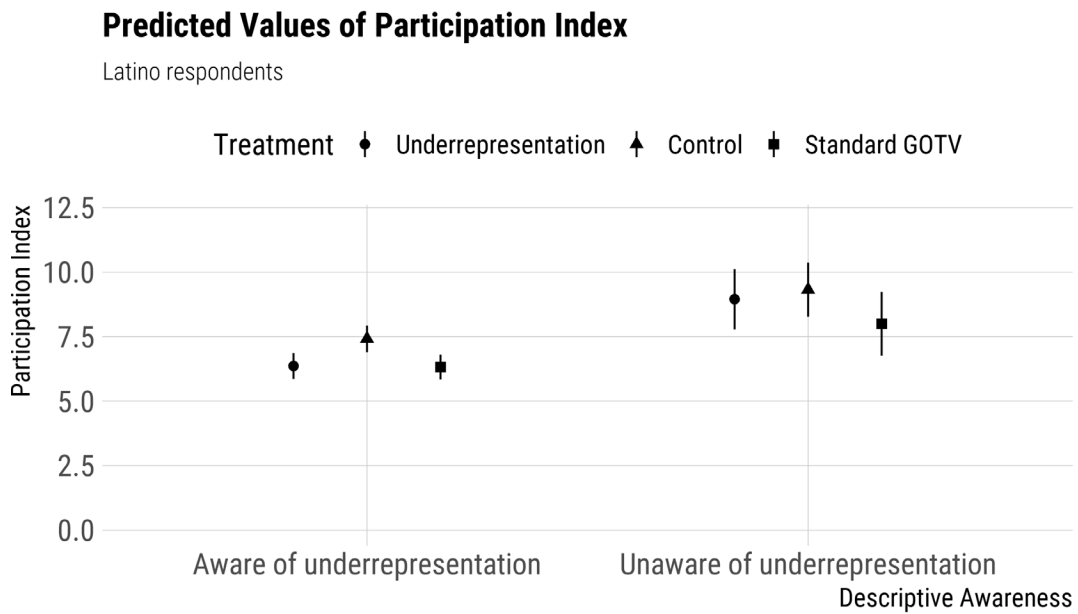
The effects of the underrepresentation message on respondents' willingness to engage in other forms of political participation are mixed. On the one hand, the underrepresentation treatment increases participation among Blacks who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation (10.24 on the participation index), relative to their counterparts in both the control (8.94;  $p = 0.126$ ) and standard GOTV message (8.45;  $p < 0.05$ ) conditions (see Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> However, Figure 4 shows that this same treatment decreases participation among Latinos who were aware of their group's underrepresentation by about 1 unit on the participation index relative to their

<sup>7</sup> Disaggregating the participation index into its component behaviors suggests that the underrepresentation treatment increases these respondents' participation the most in terms of their likelihood of attending a local government meeting (relative to the standard GOTV message) and attending a protest (relative to the control). However, these differences are smaller than the aggregated index results.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**





counterparts in the control group ( $p=0.02$ ).<sup>8</sup> We do not observe significant effects among Asians who are aware versus unaware of their group's underrepresentation.

## Conclusion

The results of our study show that messages highlighting the underrepresentation of one's racial/ethnic group can, under certain conditions, demobilize segments of the electorate. For Asians and Latinos, we find that this information can reduce the likelihood of contacting one's senators among those who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation. It can also reduce other forms of participation among Latinos who were aware of their group's underrepresentation. Rather than motivating individuals to become more engaged (perhaps to try to change their group's underrepresentation), the information appears to discourage them from doing so. This result is troubling because these respondents initially had higher levels of participation than those who were already aware of their group's underrepresentation. In some instances, learning about their group's underrepresentation reduced their levels of participation down to the lower levels among those who were already aware of their group's underrepresentation. However, this same information boosted other forms of political participation among Blacks who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation in government.

These findings have important implications for the scholarly literature on political mobilization and for practical efforts to boost participation among members of underrepresented groups. While groups like iamavoter.com have invested considerable resources in billboards and other materials that advertise groups' underrepresentation in government, there has been little empirical study of the effects of such messages. Our study is one exception, and it indicates that messages of this sort may be counterproductive for two reasons. First, many racial/ethnic minorities are already aware of the underrepresentation of their group in government. These individuals have lower levels of political participation to begin with and are unaffected by messages conveying information that they already possess. Second, for those who were previously unaware of their group's underrepresentation, learning about it may make them less (not more) inclined to participate in politics. The one exception to this pattern occurs among Blacks, who became more likely to participate in certain political activities when they learned about their group's underrepresentation in government.

A possible explanation for the different results we observe among Blacks may stem from their higher level of perceived group commonality and linked fate, relative to Latinos and Asians (Sanchez and Vargas 2016). The stronger attachments that Blacks tend to have to their group may induce them to respond in a more positive manner to the information about their group's underrepresentation. That is, instead of becoming demobilized in response to such information, they may become motivated to try to increase their group's representation in government. While future research on the source of these different results among racial/ethnic groups is needed, our results demonstrate that the effects of information about underrepresentation vary both within and across groups. Thus, more targeted efforts to disseminate such information (e.g., via the mail or through canvassing, as opposed to on

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, disaggregating the participation index suggests that the underrepresentation treatment decreases these respondents' participation the most in terms of their likelihood of donating money to a campaign and attending a political meeting (relative to the control), though these differences are small.



billboards) may make this type of message more effective. It is therefore imperative to test new GOTV messages with each targeted group before fielding them to a broad cross-section of the electorate, since some messages may have mixed, and unintended, effects.

Our study raises new questions that future research on this topic should explore. For one, it is important to examine whether there are other kinds of information about representation that will lead to mobilization rather than demobilization. Learning about the underrepresentation of one's racial/ethnic group in government may have depressed participation since individuals may have felt that non-descriptive representatives would be less responsive to their interests (see Broockman and Butler 2011 for some evidence that this may be the case). This may explain, for example, why some respondents were less likely to contact their senators upon learning that their group is underrepresented in government. The information about underrepresentation might also have led respondents to believe that they can do little to alter the supply of candidates that share their race/ethnicity, thereby inducing them not to vote and engage in other forms of political participation. Another potential explanation for the demobilizing effects we observe is that the information might have inadvertently conveyed that one's racial/ethnic group is underrepresented in government because members of their group typically do not participate in politics. By communicating a descriptive social norm of low participation among members of their group, the information might have discouraged racial/ethnic minorities from participating (Gerber and Rogers 2009). Indeed, research in psychology indicates that information about what people actually do tends to encourage behavior that is consistent with that norm (Reno, Cialdini, and Kallgren 1993, Cialdini et al. 2006). If this is the case, then information about (under)representation might be more effective at increasing participation if it avoids conveying a descriptive norm of low participation among particular racial/ethnic groups. We explore this possibility in future research.



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## Appendix

**Table A1. Sample Covariate Means (SD)<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Covariate</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
Education	4.05 (1.5)
Income	6.43 (3.41)
Interest	3.43 (1.14)
Ideology	3.47 (1.6)
Age	40.85 (15.07)
Democrat	0.55 (0.5)
Female	0.58 (0.49)
Asian	0.36 (0.48)
Latino	0.29 (0.45)
Black	0.35 (0.48)

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<sup>9</sup> Covariates coded as follows: Education [1-7], Income [1-12], Political Interest [1-5], Ideology [1-7], Age [numeric], rest coded as proportion.

**Table A2. Covariate Means across Treatment conditions, (SD)**

<b>Control</b>	<b>Group Identity</b>	<b>Underrepresentation</b>	<b>Standard GOTV</b>	<b>State Identity</b>	<b>Balance Test<sup>10</sup></b>
4.04 (1.47)	4.07 (1.52)	3.98 (1.48)	4.02 (1.53)	4.14 (1.49)	0.67 (p < 0.61)
6.31 (3.42)	6.48 (3.33)	6.4 (3.4)	6.28 (3.47)	6.71 (3.43)	0.67 (p < 0.61)
3.47 (1.16)	3.47 (1.14)	3.42 (1.15)	3.35 (1.13)	3.45 (1.11)	0.85 (p < 0.49)
3.57 (1.64)	3.4 (1.59)	3.39 (1.57)	3.53 (1.54)	3.45 (1.65)	0.99 (p < 0.41)
40.25 (40.25)	41.74 (41.74)	41.58 (41.58)	40 (40)	40.73 (40.73)	1.21 (p < 0.303)
0.55 (0.5)	0.55 (0.5)	0.56 (0.5)	0.56 (0.5)	0.5 (0.5)	3.96 (p < 0.41)
0.54 (0.5)	0.59 (0.49)	0.55 (0.5)	0.62 (0.49)	0.58 (0.49)	7.72 (p < 0.10)
0.38 (0.49)	0.38 (0.49)	0.34 (0.47)	0.36 (0.48)	0.37 (0.48)	2.64 (p < 0.61)
0.29 (0.45)	0.27 (0.44)	0.29 (0.46)	0.31 (0.46)	0.29 (0.45)	1.4 (p < 0.82)
0.33 (0.47)	0.35 (0.48)	0.37 (0.48)	0.34 (0.47)	0.35 (0.48)	1.68 (p < 0.79)

NOTE: The State Identity and Group Identity covariate means are from the two additional treatment groups included in the survey, but analyzed in a separate paper. In the State Identity treatment group, respondents received a message highlighting their identification with their state. In the Group Identity treatment, respondents received a message highlighting their identification with their race/ethnicity.

<sup>10</sup> Balance Test column reports F-statistic and p-value for Education, Income, Interest, Ideology, and Age and the Chi-Square statistic and p-value for Democrat, Female, Asian, Latino, and Black.

**Table A3. Descriptive Awareness Moderator on the Likelihood of Voting by Race/Ethnicity, OLS**

	AAPI (Control)	AAPI (Standard GOTV)	Latino (Control)	Latino (Standard GOTV)	Black (Control)	Black (Standard GOTV)
<b>State Identity</b>	-0.333 (0.305)	-0.459 (0.331)	0.450 (0.309)	0.233 (0.334)	0.050 (0.280)	-0.049 (0.287)
<b>Underrepresentation</b>	-0.296 (0.341)	-0.422 (0.365)	0.185 (0.323)	-0.031 (0.347)	-0.191 (0.270)	-0.290 (0.277)
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity</b>	<b>-0.574 *</b> <b>(0.322)</b>	<b>-0.700 **</b> <b>(0.347)</b>	-0.050 (0.309)	-0.267 (0.334)	0.313 (0.275)	0.214 (0.282)
<b>Control</b>		-0.126 (0.331)		-0.217 (0.334)		-0.099 (0.275)
<b>Standard GOTV</b>	0.126 (0.331)		0.217 (0.334)		0.099 (0.275)	
<b>Aware of underrepresentation</b>	-0.093 (0.242)	-0.118 (0.275)	0.373 (0.245)	0.091 (0.272)	0.046 (0.219)	-0.133 (0.226)
<b>State Identity * Aware</b>	0.422 (0.343)	0.447 (0.367)	<b>-0.623 *</b> <b>(0.345)</b>	-0.341 (0.365)	-0.173 (0.320)	0.006 (0.325)
<b>Underrepresentation * Aware</b>	0.477 (0.376)	0.502 (0.398)	-0.400 (0.356)	-0.118 (0.375)	0.181 (0.310)	0.360 (0.315)
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity * Aware</b>	<b>0.650 *</b> <b>(0.357)</b>	<b>0.676 *</b> <b>(0.381)</b>	0.022 (0.346)	0.304 (0.365)	-0.281 (0.316)	-0.102 (0.321)
<b>Control * Aware</b>		0.025 (0.366)		0.282 (0.366)		0.179 (0.315)
<b>Standard GOTV * Aware</b>	-0.025 (0.366)		-0.282 (0.366)		-0.179 (0.315)	
<b>Intercept</b>	<b>3.074 ***</b> <b>(0.216)</b>	<b>3.200 ***</b> <b>(0.251)</b>	<b>3.050 ***</b> <b>(0.219)</b>	<b>3.267 ***</b> <b>(0.253)</b>	<b>3.258 ***</b> <b>(0.189)</b>	<b>3.357 ***</b> <b>(0.199)</b>
<b>N</b>	623	623	521	521	621	621
<b>R2</b>	0.016	0.016	0.014	0.014	0.008	0.008
<b>logLik</b>	-950.693	-950.693	-722.730	-722.730	-908.804	-908.804
<b>AIC</b>	1923.385	1923.385	1467.459	1467.459	1839.608	1839.608

\*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\* p < 0.05; \* p < 0.1.

**Table A4. Descriptive Awareness Moderator on Contact Senator by Race/Ethnicity, Logit**

	AAPI (Control)	AAPI (Standard GOTV)	Latino (Control)	Latino (Standard GOTV)	Black (Control)	Black (Standard GOTV)
<b>State Identity</b>	0.134 (0.518)	-0.821 (0.626)	-0.827 (0.668)	-0.693 (0.720)	0.288 (0.607)	0.486 (0.598)
<b>Underrepresentation</b>	-0.549 (0.531)	<b>-1.504 **</b> <b>(0.637)</b>	-0.981 (0.677)	-0.847 (0.728)	0.362 (0.605)	0.560 (0.596)
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity</b>	0.311 (0.550)	-0.645 (0.652)	-0.163 (0.713)	-0.029 (0.762)	-0.034 (0.593)	0.164 (0.584)
<b>Control</b>		-0.956 (0.623)		0.134 (0.756)		0.198 (0.562)
<b>Standard GOTV</b>	0.956 (0.623)		-0.134 (0.756)		-0.198 (0.562)	
<b>Aware of underrepresentation</b>	<b>-0.743 *</b> <b>(0.403)</b>	<b>-1.638 ***</b> <b>(0.535)</b>	<b>-1.522 ***</b> <b>(0.538)</b>	<b>-1.638 ***</b> <b>(0.596)</b>	<b>-1.410 ***</b> <b>(0.446)</b>	<b>-1.114 ***</b> <b>(0.432)</b>
<b>State Identity * Aware</b>	0.268 (0.573)	<b>1.163 *</b> <b>(0.673)</b>	0.809 (0.724)	0.924 (0.769)	-0.090 (0.662)	-0.385 (0.652)
<b>Underrepresentation * Aware</b>	0.285 (0.591)	<b>1.180 *</b> <b>(0.687)</b>	0.971 (0.731)	1.086 (0.775)	-0.177 (0.658)	-0.473 (0.648)
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity * Aware</b>	-0.467 (0.603)	0.428 (0.698)	-0.045 (0.769)	0.070 (0.811)	0.429 (0.649)	0.134 (0.638)
<b>Control * Aware</b>		0.895 (0.669)		0.115 (0.803)		-0.295 (0.621)
<b>Standard GOTV * Aware</b>	-0.895 (0.669)		-0.115 (0.803)		0.295 (0.621)	
<b>Intercept</b>	0.325 (0.364)	<b>1.281 **</b> <b>(0.506)</b>	<b>1.386 ***</b> <b>(0.500)</b>	<b>1.253 **</b> <b>(0.567)</b>	<b>1.179 ***</b> <b>(0.404)</b>	<b>0.981 **</b> <b>(0.391)</b>
<b>N</b>	804	804	639	639	766	766
<b>logLik</b>	-533.574	-533.574	-426.066	-426.066	-502.383	-502.383
<b>AIC</b>	1087.147	1087.147	872.132	872.132	1024.766	1024.766

\*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\* p < 0.05; \* p < 0.1.

**Table A5. Descriptive Awareness Moderator on Participation Index by Race/Ethnicity, OLS**

	AAPI (Control)	AAPI (Standard GOTV)	Latino (Control)	Latino (Standard GOTV)	Black (Control)	Black (Standard GOTV)
<b>State Identity</b>	0.129 (0.809)	-0.231 (0.876)	-1.502 (0.930)	-0.182 (1.011)	0.590 (0.859)	1.077 (0.866)
<b>Underrepresentation</b>	-0.717 (0.838)	-1.077 (0.903)	-0.370 (0.955)	0.950 (1.034)	1.294 (0.846)	<b>1.781 **</b> <b>(0.853)</b>
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity</b>	-0.931 (0.847)	-1.291 (0.911)	<b>-1.684 *</b> <b>(0.930)</b>	-0.364 (1.011)	-0.148 (0.882)	0.339 (0.888)
<b>Control</b>		-0.360 (0.876)		1.320 (0.984)		0.487 (0.853)
<b>Standard GOTV</b>	0.360 (0.876)		-1.320 (0.984)		-0.487 (0.853)	
<b>Aware of underrepresentation</b>	<b>-2.097 ***</b> <b>(0.632)</b>	<b>-2.213 ***</b> <b>(0.718)</b>	<b>-1.903 ***</b> <b>(0.709)</b>	<b>-1.678 **</b> <b>(0.804)</b>	<b>-1.366 **</b> <b>(0.682)</b>	<b>-1.746 **</b> <b>(0.686)</b>
<b>State Identity * Aware</b>	0.418 (0.896)	0.533 (0.959)	0.854 (1.030)	0.629 (1.097)	-1.374 (0.973)	-0.993 (0.976)
<b>Underrepresentation * Aware</b>	1.014 (0.926)	1.129 (0.987)	-0.684 (1.050)	-0.909 (1.116)	-1.474 (0.958)	-1.094 (0.961)
<b>Racial/ethnic Identity * Aware</b>	1.499 (0.929)	1.614 (0.990)	1.540 (1.034)	1.315 (1.101)	-0.091 (0.993)	0.289 (0.995)
<b>Control * Aware</b>		0.115 (0.956)		-0.225 (1.072)		0.380 (0.968)
<b>Standard GOTV * Aware</b>	-0.115 (0.956)		0.225 (1.072)		-0.380 (0.968)	
<b>Intercept</b>	<b>8.161 ***</b> <b>(0.572)</b>	<b>8.522 ***</b> <b>(0.664)</b>	<b>9.320 ***</b> <b>(0.636)</b>	<b>8.000 ***</b> <b>(0.750)</b>	<b>8.941 ***</b> <b>(0.598)</b>	<b>8.455 ***</b> <b>(0.607)</b>
<b>N</b>	804	804	640	640	766	766
<b>R2</b>	0.040	0.040	0.056	0.056	0.068	0.068
<b>logLik</b>	-2066.963	-2066.963	-1643.898	-1643.898	-2039.091	-2039.091
<b>AIC</b>	4155.926	4155.926	3309.796	3309.796	4100.182	4100.182

\*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\* p < 0.05; \* p < 0.1.

## CALIFORNIA SAMPLE TREATMENT SCRIPTS

### CONTROL

As you may know, Earth Day happens every April. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens.

Here is a message that has been used by: California Recycles

**Recycling is Important!** We want to remind you to recycle. Recycling is an important thing we can do to protect the planet. This year, remember your responsibilities as a citizen and reduce, reuse, and recycle.

If you have any questions about recycling, please visit the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery website (<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov>). You can also call them toll free at (800) RECYCLE (732-9253). They are available to answer any questions you have about recycling.

### STANDARD GOTV MESSAGE

As you may know, there is a general election in California this November. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens during elections.

Here is a message that has been used by: The Voter Project

#### **Voting is a right!**

Whichever candidate or party you prefer, we want to remind you to exercise your right to vote this November. The right to vote is an important tradition. This election, remember your rights as a citizen. If you have any questions about the voting process, please visit the Secretary of State's website (<http://www.sos.ca.gov>). You can also call them toll free at (800) 345-VOTE (8683). They are available to answer any questions you have about exercising your right to vote.

### UNDERREPRESENTATION MESSAGE

As you may know, there is a general election in California this November. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens during elections.

Here is a message that has been used by: **The [Asian American & Pacific Islander/Black/Latino ] Voter Project**

#### **Voting is a right!**

Whichever candidate or party you prefer, we want to remind you to exercise your right to vote this November. The right to vote is an important tradition. This election, remember your rights as a citizen.

**Representation starts with your vote:**

Many citizens are concerned with the underrepresentation of [Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs)/Blacks/Latinos] in government. [While AAPIs make up 14 percent of the California population, they only hold 10.8 percent of the seats in Sacramento/ While Blacks make up 13.3 percent of the U.S. population, they only hold 9.3 percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress/While Latinos make up 39 percent of the California population, they only hold 22.5 percent of the seats in Sacramento]. It is important to have more [AAPI/Black/Latino] elected officials, since they are more likely to put issues on the agenda and help pass policies that affect the AAPI community.

If you have any questions about the voting process, please visit the Secretary of State's website (<http://www.sos.ca.gov>). You can also call them toll free at (800) 345-VOTE (8683). They are available to answer any questions you have about exercising your right to vote.

**NATIONAL SAMPLE TREATMENT SCRIPTS**

**CONTROL**

As you may know, Earth Day happens every April. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens.

Here is a message that has been used by: `{e://Field/rspst}` **Recycles**

**Recycling is Important!**

We want to remind you to recycle. Recycling is an important thing we can do to protect the planet. This year, remember your responsibilities as a citizen and reduce, reuse, and recycle.

If you have any questions about recycling, please review what the environmental protection agency is doing in your state at <https://www.epa.gov/home/epa-your-state>.

**STANDARD GOTV MESSAGE**

As you may know, there is a general election in `{e://Field/rspst}` this November. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens during elections.



Here is a message that has been used by: **The Voter Project**

**Voting is a right!**

Whichever candidate or party you prefer, we want to remind you to exercise your right to vote this November. The right to vote is an important tradition. This election, remember your rights as a citizen.

If you have any questions about the voting process, please visit the Secretary of State's website for  $\{e://Field/rspst\}$ . They are available to answer any questions you have about exercising your right to vote.

**UNDERREPRESENTATION MESSAGE**

As you may know, there is a general election in  $\{e://Field/rspst\}$  this November. We would now like you to read a message that organizations often send to citizens during elections.

Here is a message that has been used by: **The [Asian American & Pacific Islander/Black] Voter Project**

**Voting is a right!**

Whichever candidate or party you prefer, we want to remind you to exercise your right to vote this November. The right to vote is an important tradition. This election, remember your rights as a citizen.

**Your voice starts with your vote:**

Many citizens are concerned with the underrepresentation of [Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs)/Blacks] in government. [While AAPIs make up 7.2 percent of the US population, they only hold 2.8 percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress/ While Blacks make up 13.3 percent of the U.S. population, they only hold 9.3 percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress.]

It is important to have more [AAPI/Black] elected officials, since they are more likely to put issues on the agenda and help pass policies that affect the [AAPI/Black] community.

If you have any questions about the voting process, please visit the Secretary of State's website for  $\{e://Field/rspst\}$ . They are available to answer any questions you have about exercising your right to vote.