When We All Vote
2019 Celebrity GOTV Mail Test

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When We All Vote

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This test studied the effects of celebrity-endorsed GOTV mail in Virginia’s 2019 general election.

The mail program featured positive social pressure and two different celebrity messengers - one primarily known outside of politics (Kerry Washington) and one primarily known from politics (Michelle Obama).
The universe comprised voters of color with relatively low vote propensity scores

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Women(^1)</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black(^2)</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% AAPI(^2)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Latinx(^2)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in Hampton Roads area</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Voted in 2018 General Election</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean 2019 Turnout Score</td>
<td>20</td>
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\(^1\)Gender is measured in this test as binary (male and female). Gender was acquired from TargetSmart, which at the time of this test only provided male, female, and unknown categorical data.

\(^2\)Race is modeled, not self-reported.
Mail Program

One piece of social pressure mail sent one week before the election
The front side of the mailer varied the messenger

No Celebrity Messenger

VOTING IS YOUR POWER. USE IT.

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5.
POLS ARE OPEN 6 A.M. TO 7 P.M.
FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION AT VOTE.ELECTIONS.VIRGINIA.GOV

Non-Politics Celebrity

“VOTING IS YOUR POWER. USE IT.”
— KERRY WASHINGTON

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5.
POLS ARE OPEN 6 A.M. TO 7 P.M.
FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION AT VOTE.ELECTIONS.VIRGINIA.GOV

Politics Celebrity

“VOTING IS YOUR POWER. USE IT.”
— MICHELLE OBAMA

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5.
POLS ARE OPEN 6 A.M. TO 7 P.M.
FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION AT VOTE.ELECTIONS.VIRGINIA.GOV
The backside of the mailer was identical across all conditions and included social pressure language.
Overall, we estimate that the program increased turnout by 0.5 percentage points and added 7 voters per $1,000 spent (VPK).
Each type of messenger appears to have increased turnout.

Estimates for celebrity messengers are slightly higher than in the no celebrity condition, but there is too much uncertainty to determine whether some messengers were more effective than others.
Subgroup Results
For 18-34 year olds, adding a celebrity messenger seems to have increased turnout.

This celebrity boost does not seem to exist for voters aged 35+. For them, effects are of similar magnitude between no celebrity and celebrity conditions.

![Graph showing celebrity boost by different age groups](image)

**Celebrity boost by different age groups**

**Estimated celebrity boost =**

(Estimated turnout increase in Pooled Celebrity condition) -

(Estimated turnout increase in NoCelebrity condition)
Summary & Discussion

- The mail program increased turnout among voters of color in the 2019 Virginia elections, in line with prior findings on social pressure mail tests.
- There is too much uncertainty to determine whether some messengers overall were more effective than others.
- Among voters aged 18-34, there is suggestive evidence that adding celebrity messengers further increased turnout. Future programs could address the following questions.
  - Is this *celebrity boost* present among other groups of voters?
  - Does the *celebrity boost* vary by the type of celebrity (athletes, artists, local celebrities, etc.) and their relationship to the audience?
Thank You!

When We All Vote, Michelle Obama, Kerry Washington

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