



PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY,
COMMUNICATIONS, AND ENGAGEMENT

P.A.C.E.
VOTER
PARTICIPATION
CAMPAIGNS:
RETROSPECTIVE META-ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At P.A.C.E., we are partners in advocacy, communications and engagement. We believe in an America where every family can access a great education and participate fully in our democracy. We partner with local leaders across the country to run advocacy, communications, and engagement campaigns anchored in the foundational beliefs that schools are the bedrock of strong communities and that everyone's voice deserves to be heard in our democracy.

Since our founding in 2018, we have refined a strategy to increase voter turnout in communities of low-propensity voters who are unlikely to have been targeted by other campaigns. **On average, across more than a dozen election efforts, we've increased turnout within our target universes by 11 points.**

This 11 point increase from the expected to actual turnout represents nearly 10,000 more voters turning out than numbers forecast by the voter turnout model.

The elections we are most focused on amplifying community voices in are local elections for offices like the Board of Education or City Council. Turnout is, unsurprisingly, very low in these elections compared with statewide and presidential races. But with the right level of tactical engagement, we have demonstrated that it is possible to develop a voting bloc that we can rely on to turn out and vote in every contest – from presidential elections to off-year municipal and hyper-local races.

We think about our voter participation work in three phases: 1) voter registration, 2) voter commitment, 3) and voter turnout. Once we've established baselines for

phases 1 and 2 using historical data, we align with our partner on a suite of tactics and a set of core messages that align with their goals and local context. Our full set of tactics includes emails, text messages, social media posts, direct mail, phone banking, IVR calls, robocalls, canvassing, and robust digital ad campaigns and is grounded in the idea that the partner organization is viewed as a recognized, credible messenger.

It's critical to note that our voter participation work with partners hinges on obtaining high-level access to a list of their community members, constituents, and, in the case of schools - their families. Our most successful voter participation partnership are when we're given full access to a partner's list that includes the first name, last name, phone number, and address of adult constituents. With that access, we can match the list to a voter file and develop a dataset to track for voter registration and turnout rates.

This report presents a retrospective meta-analysis engaging data compiled and analyzed during and subsequent to voter participation campaigns conducted by P.A.C.E. in support of local organizations in four states.

Following the table of contents directly below, the document narrates greater detail regarding the aims of the analysis, in preface to a sampling of its key findings. A methodology follows, with subsequent body sections exploring the data in greater detail. Appendix charts appear in the final portion of the report, showing the complete distribution of voter participation results disaggregated by key variables.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & KEY FINDINGS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Since 2018, P.A.C.E. Strategies has supported dozens of voter participation campaigns in more than half a dozen states. The aim of this report is to take a retrospective look at a representative sample of these campaigns and interrogate three key questions:

- How does turnout in PACE's voter participation universe compare to overall local turnout?
- How does turnout in PACE's voter participation universe compare to the universe's expected turnout?
- Are there campaign variables that appear to clearly correlate with turnout deltas within the universe?
- What is the size of the universe analyzed to measure PACE's impact?

Following the key findings directly below, the report presents a methodology and then dives into detailed turnout comparisons and an exploration of whether specific variables appear to correlate with trends within the data.



KEY FINDINGS

Within PACE’s universe of voter participation campaigns, 13 campaigns targeting a total of 80,987 registered voters satisfied the criteria for inclusion in this meta-analysis. In this universe of targeted registered voters:

- Voters targeted with participation tactics¹ turned out at higher rates than other voters in the same elections (that is, exceeded overall local turnout) in 12 of the 13 campaigns – on average, by 10 points.
- Voters targeted with voter participation tactics outperformed their expected turnout, which predicts turnout likelihood based on each individual’s unique characteristics, in 13 of the 13 campaigns – on average, by 11 points.
- The overall turnout advantage among voters targeted with participation tactics tended to trend from smaller to larger in alignment with two variables: campaign level² (e.g. the breadth of tactics deployed) and campaign access to contact lists.
 - » “Moderate” level campaigns with fewer tactics deployed had more modest turnout advantages (+1.5 points on average) than “high” level campaigns (+13.1 points on average).
 - » Greater access to contact lists was associated with larger turnout advantages, with “moderate access” returning a +2.6 point advantage, “high access” returning a +9.0 point advantage, and “very high access” returning a +15.0 point advantage.

These results show a much larger “treatment effect” than has been demonstrated in many large sample size studies or randomized control trials (RCTs) designed to measure the impact of voter engagement tactics.

While we cannot prove this without a true RCT that could isolate specific variables and tactics, our hypothesis is that **when you combine a broad suite of voter engagement tactics** with a trusted messenger like a child’s school and target these tactics toward a targeted universe of voters, including those who are unlikely to be engaged by traditional campaigns, you can produce an outsized impact on turnout.



We believe that our retrospective data shows that combining these tactics can produce an outsized impact on turnout.

¹ Specific voter participation tactics are narrated in greater detail in the methodology section of this document.

² Campaign level and list access tiers are defined in detail in the methodological section of this document. See: **Campaign Level**.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The section below narrates methodological notes regarding the selection of campaigns for inclusion in this meta-analysis and discusses extraneous variables that could not be controlled for within the sample.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The campaigns comprising the universe of reviewed data were not conducted with the intent of comparing their outcomes in the future. Instead, each campaign was designed and executed on a bespoke basis, incorporating local priorities and strategy. As an unavoidable result, it is not methodologically possible to fully normalize the sample into a streamlined apples-to-apples universe.

Nonetheless, it is both necessary and possible to install certain inclusion and exclusion criteria in a retrospective meta-analysis – most significantly, with regard to the breadth of tactics deployed and the campaign’s access to necessary contact information.

These filters, bulleted in greater detail below, returned a universe of 13 comparable campaigns that 1) were designated either “moderate level” or “high level” based on the breadth of tactics deployed and 2) enjoyed “moderate” to “very high” access to contact information for the target universe.

Campaign level.

The analysis includes four campaigns designated “moderate level” (deploying promoted digital, email, mail pieces, and phone calls) and nine campaigns designated “high level” (deploying “moderate level” tactics with the addition of on-the-ground organizers or stipend advocates).

Access to contact lists.

The analysis includes campaigns that had access to at least 40% of the target universe’s contact information. This range is additionally segmented into three tiers: moderate access (40 - 60% access), with two campaigns; high access (61 - 80% access), with eight campaigns; and very high access (81 - 100% access), with three campaigns.

DEFINING EXPECTED TURNOUT

To estimate expected turnout for the universe of voters targeted, a methodology was crafted using election- and voter-specific data sources. These sources are reflected in the Expected Turnout Score Formula defined below:

*[The mean local voter score for the target universe (“MU”)] **divided by** [the mean local voter score for the city (“MC”)] **multiplied by** [the actual turnout for the city (“AC”)]*

OR

$MU/MC \times AC.$

In simple terms – the formula applies the ratio of the target universe’s predictive voter score and the target city’s predictive voter score to each election’s actual turnout rate. When tested against historical data, this methodology generated a tight margin of error in the aggregate and did not consistently overpredict or underpredict turnout.

EXTRANEOUS VARIABLES WITHIN THE SAMPLE

The bullets below survey variables that could not be controlled or adjusted for in this retrospective meta-analysis – and that likely moved the needle in ways that are difficult to quantify individually and impossible to quantify all at once.

- **List quality and scope.** List quality – including accuracy and currentness – varied campaign to campaign, as well as within individual campaigns where contacts were retrieved from multiple sources via written agreements with legal input. The full breadth of contact information included in each list (e.g. address, home phone, cell phone, email, social media) also varied at the margins.
- **Campaign duration and timely list acquisition.** Campaign launch dates relative to early voting and election day varied within the sample, as did the timeliness with which the full universe of contacts could be assembled for engagement.
- **Tempo and quality of voter engagement.** Although the surveyed campaigns deployed the same toolkit of tactics, variation existed in terms of the volume of outreach and the quality of outreach that reached potential voters.
- **Matching contacts to confirmed voters.** Several factors contributed to likely variation in the accuracy with which campaign contacts could be matched to confirmed voters, including underlying list quality (e.g. a name listed with a typo that was associated with a correct phone number) and whether the matching process was conducted internally or externally. In cases where a matching process was handicapped, the probable outcome would be an under-measurement of turnout.
- **Campaign cycle.** The universe of 13 campaigns mobilized turnout heading into eight general elections, two runoff general elections, two local school board elections, and one primary. Just as overall turnout varies widely cycle to cycle, so too does the efficiency with which voters can be mobilized.
- **Local election context.** The universe of 13 campaigns operated in four cities located in four different states between 2020 and 2023. The context unique to each jurisdiction – ranging from divisive candidates to perceptions of what was at stake – necessarily affected both overall turnout as well as the ability of voters to be mobilized, in ways that cannot be easily measured.



TURNOUT COMPARISONS: DATA & ANALYSIS

This section compares turnout among voters targeted by the 13 campaigns to 1) actual local turnout and 2) expected voter turnout within the sample. It then takes a closer look at how turnout trended within the 13-campaign universe based on campaign level and contact list access.

TURNOUT AMONG TARGETED VOTERS COMPARED TO ACTUAL LOCAL TURNOUT

The most basic benchmark against which we can compare turnout within our sample of campaigns is straightforward: actual local turnout in the 13 elections. Here, it is important to note that the campaign universe begins at a disadvantage in each election within the sample: the 13 campaigns targeted almost 81,000 voters whose overall likelihood of voting was below the local average.

Heading into each election, this means that available data on voter characteristics projected that the target universes would turnout at lower rates than other registered voters in the same elections. Despite this handicap, however, the voters targeted with participation tactics turned out at higher rates than other voters in the same elections in 12 of the 13 campaigns included in the sample.

The bullets below go into greater detail with regard to how the campaign universe compared to actual local turnout:

- Voters targeted with participation tactics turned out at higher rates than other local registered voters in **12 of the 13 campaigns**.
- The arithmetic difference between campaign turnout and overall local turnout ranged from **-3 points to +24 points**.
- The unweighted average + / - between campaign turnout and overall local turnout was **+9.6 points**.
- The median + / - between campaign turnout and overall local turnout was **+10.4 points**.
- Voters in the universe targeted with participation tactics had a net turnout advantage of **+9,150** additional votes compared to local overall turnout.

TURNOUT AMONG TARGETED VOTERS COMPARED TO THEIR EXPECTED TURNOUT

A more complex and arguably more informative metric to apply to voters in the sample is their expected turnout compared to their actual turnout. This comparison relies on available data on voter characteristics and previous voting behavior to project an individual voter's likelihood of turning out in a given election.

In other words, how did voters targeted with participation tactics turnout relative to a lookalike audience? When this metric is applied, voters targeted with participation tactics outperformed their expected turnout in 13 of the 13 campaigns included in the sample.

The bullets below go into greater detail with regard to how the campaign universe compared to actual local turnout:

- Voters targeted with participation tactics outperformed their expected turnout in **13 of the 13 campaigns**.
- The arithmetic difference between campaign turnout and expected turnout ranged from **+2 points +27 points**.
- The unweighted average + / - between campaign turnout and expected turnout was **+10.8 points**.
- The median + / - between campaign turnout and expected turnout was **8.7 points**.
- Voters in the universe targeted with participation tactics had a net turnout advantage of **+9,379**.



³ Expected turnout data for the individual voters engaged by the campaigns was retrieved from data provided by a third-party vendor. Each turnout score predicts a voter's likelihood of voting in a specific type of election. Scores are scaled from 0 to 100, with scores closer to 100 representing a higher chance to vote in that election.

TURNOUT + / - TRENDS REVIEWED AGAINST OTHER VARIABLES

Having established that the campaign universe outperformed both actual local turnout and expected turnout within the sample, it next merits examining whether any correlations seem to exist between these + / -'s and 1) whether a campaign was “moderate” or “high” level and 2) whether a campaign had “moderate,” “high,” or “very high” access to contact lists.

In theory, one could reasonably expect that campaigns of a higher level (e.g. more tactics deployed) would tend to generate larger value adds than campaigns of a lower level. Similarly, one might expect that campaigns with greater access to contact lists would tend to generate larger value adds than campaigns with less access.

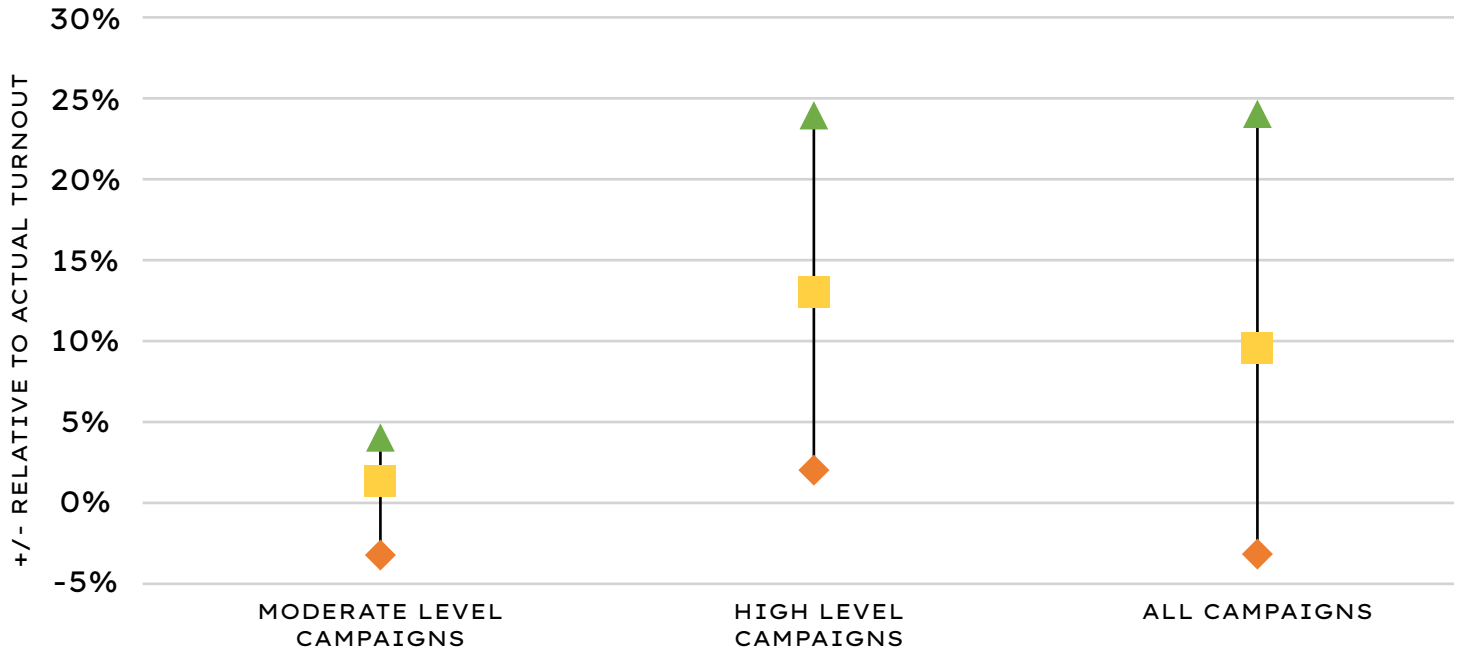
A review of the data tracks with these expectations: higher level campaigns generated larger average turnout advantages, as did campaigns with greater access to contact lists. The tables and charts below present key metrics for the 13-campaign universe disaggregated by campaign level (the first table and chart) and list access (the second table and chart).

TURNOUT +/- COMPARED TO ACTUAL LOCAL TURNOUT BY CAMPAIGN LEVEL			
METRIC	MODERATE	HIGH	COMBINED
Average Turnout +/-	+1.5	+13.1	+9.6
Median Turnout +/-	+2.6	+12.3	+10.4
Turnout +/- Range	-3 to +4	+2 to +24	-3 to +24

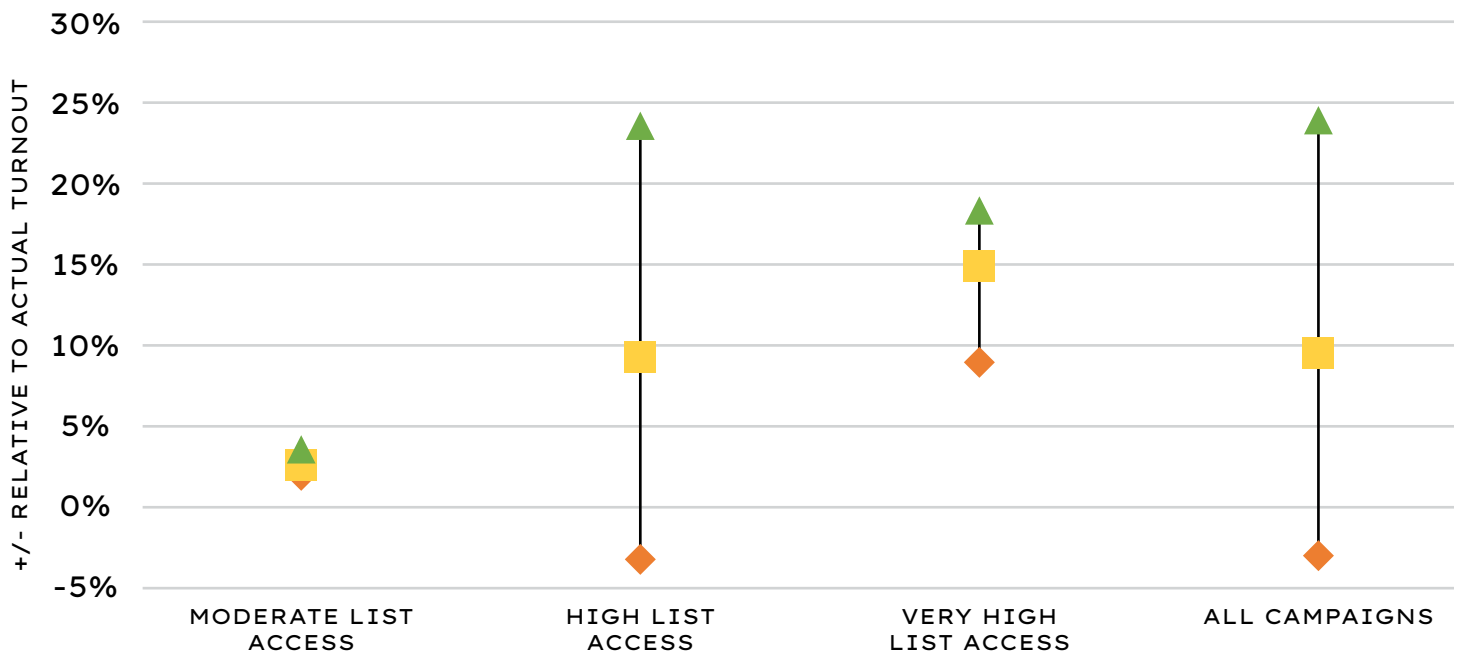
TURNOUT +/- COMPARED TO ACTUAL LOCAL TURNOUT BY LIST LEVEL				
METRIC	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH	COMBINED
Average Turnout +/-	+2.6	+9.3	+15.0	+9.6
Median Turnout +/-	NA ⁴	+10.6	+17.5	+10.4
Turnout +/- Range	+2 to +3	-3 to +24	+9.0 to +18.5	-3 to +24

⁴ No median exists for this grouping, which only included two campaigns.

TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT COMPARED TO ACTUAL TURNOUT +/- RANGES BY CAMPAIGN'S LEVEL (TACTICS DEPLOYED)



TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT COMPARED TO ACTUAL TURNOUT +/- RANGES BY EACH CAMPAIGN'S LEVEL OF LIST ACCESS

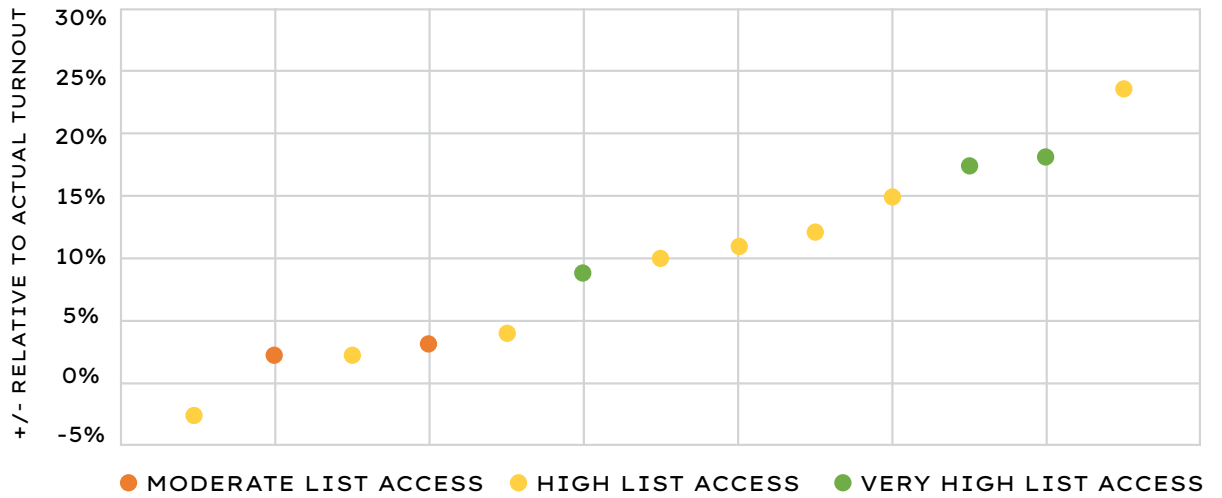


◆ MINIMUM
 ■ AVERAGE
 ▲ MAXIMUM

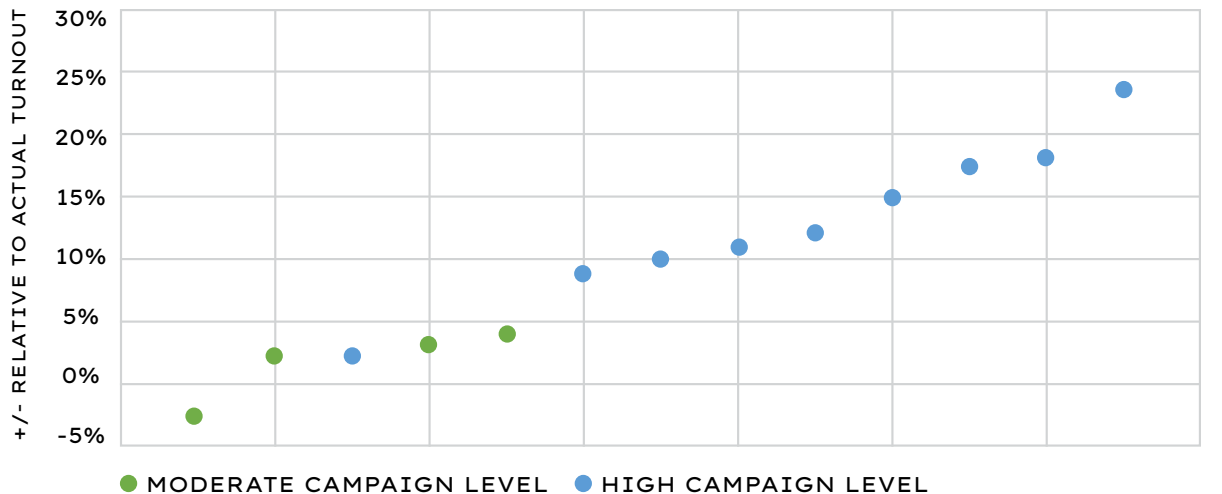
TURNOUT +/-'S RELATIVE TO ACTUAL TURNOUT - BY LIST ACCESS LEVEL & CAMPAIGN LEVEL

The charts below present the distribution of turnout differences for each of the 13 campaigns in the sample relative to actual turnout in the corresponding election. The first chart disaggregates the campaigns by level of list access, and the second chart disaggregates the campaigns by campaign level. Color-coding for these variables appears in the legend, and +/- relative to actual turnout is structured on the y-axis.

TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT COMPARED TO ACTUAL TURNOUT BY EACH CAMPAIGN'S LEVEL OF LIST ACCESS



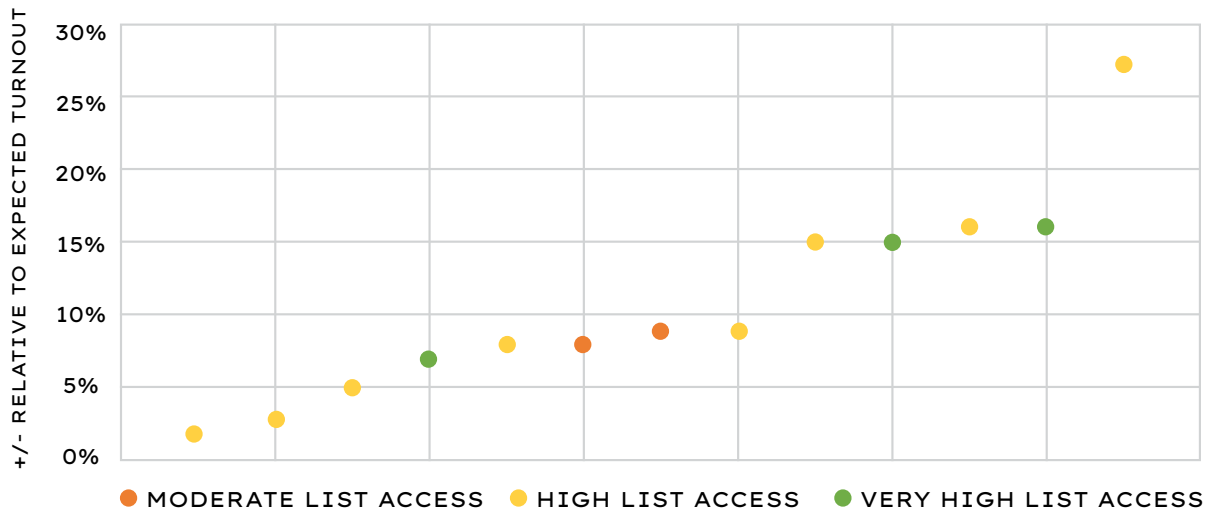
TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT COMPARED TO ACTUAL TURNOUT BY CAMPAIGN LEVEL (TACTICS DEPLOYED)



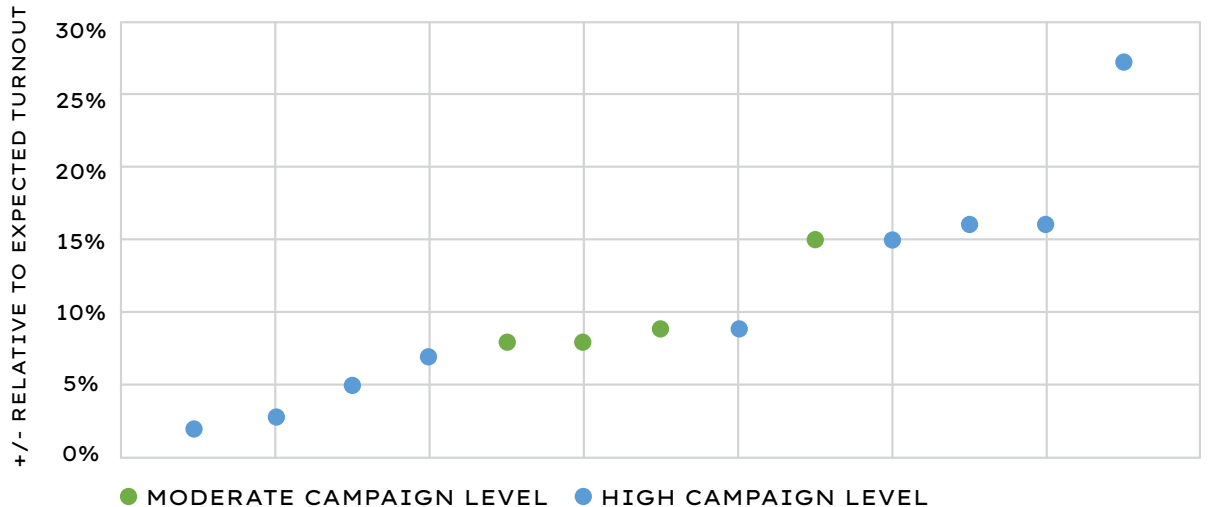
TURNOUT +/-'S RELATIVE TO EXPECTED TURNOUT - BY LIST ACCESS LEVEL & CAMPAIGN LEVEL

The charts below present the distribution of turnout differences for each of the 13 campaigns in the sample relative to expected turnout in the corresponding election. The first chart disaggregates the campaigns by level of list access, and the second chart disaggregates the campaigns by campaign level. Color-coding for these variables appears in the legend, and +/- relative to actual turnout is structured on the y-axis.

TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT +/- COMPARED TO EXPECTED TURNOUT BY EACH CAMPAIGN'S LEVEL OF LIST ACCESS

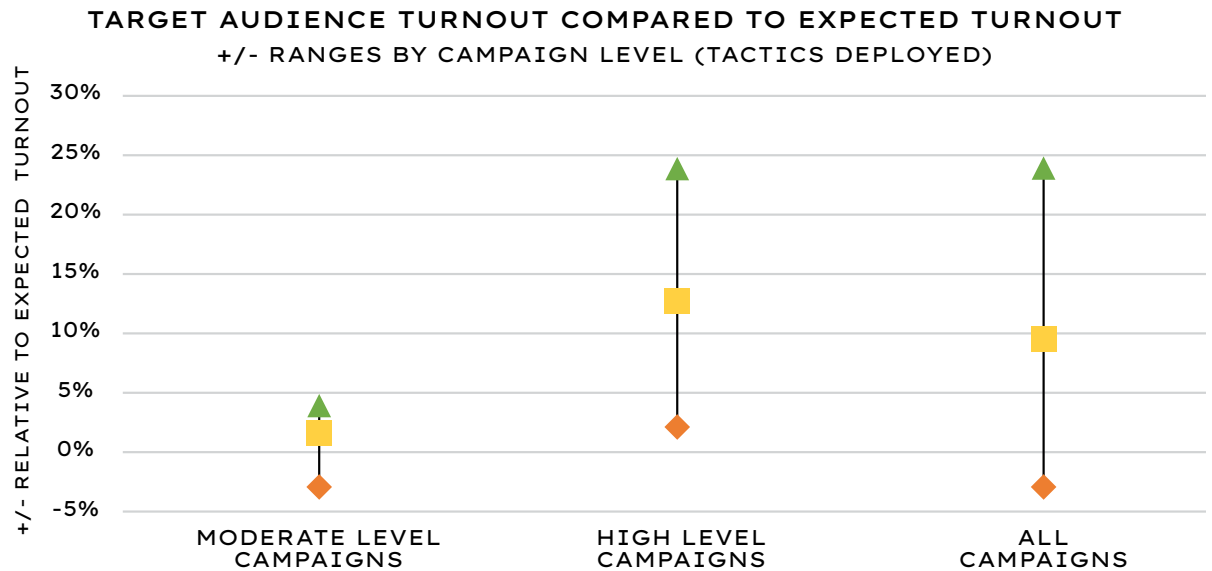
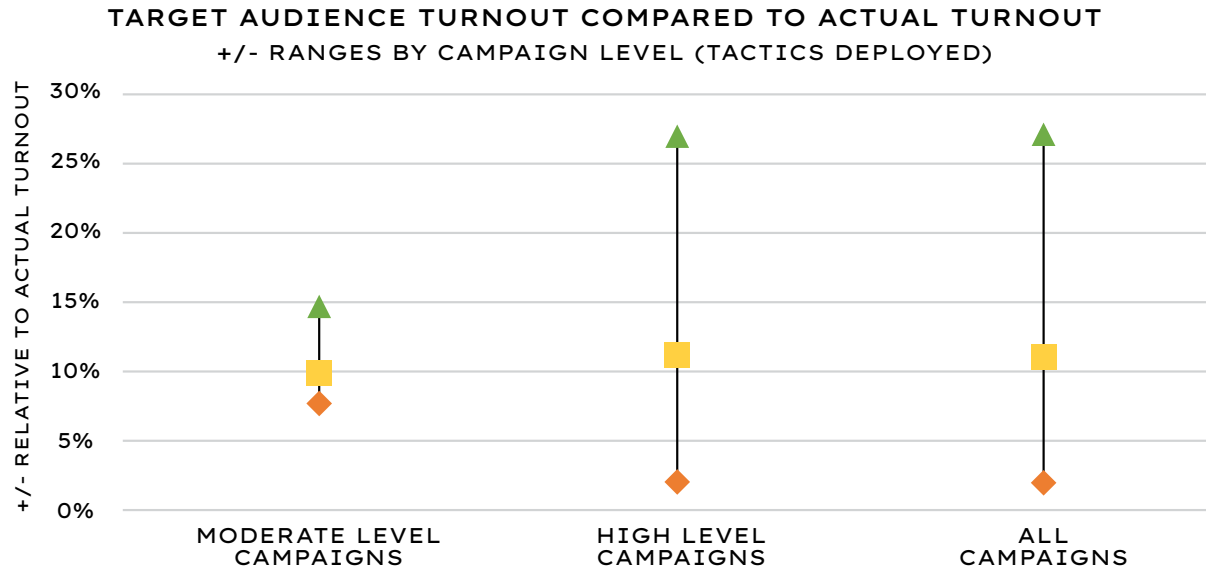


TARGET AUDIENCE TURNOUT +/- COMPARED TO EXPECTED TURNOUT BY CAMPAIGN LEVEL (TACTICS DEPLOYED)



TURNOUT +/-'S RANGES RELATIVE TO EXPECTED TURNOUT - BY LIST ACCESS LEVEL & CAMPAIGN LEVEL

The pairings of charts below show actual versus expected turnout ranges and averages disaggregated by level of list access and campaign level.



◆ MINIMUM
 ■ AVERAGE
 ▲ MAXIMUM

APPENDIX C

