

# Digital Politics: Assessing the Influence of Election Officials Social Media Usage on Youth Voter Turnout

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## Youth Voter Turnout and Social Media

Despite increasing numbers, American youth consistently turnout to vote at low rates. Youth face high costs of voting, including a lack of civic skills, stability and habit, education, and experience. Yet, youth are one of the most likely demographics to use the internet and social media platforms to gain political knowledge, mainly due to their high levels of internet literacy. Social media messaging across various platforms has been shown to mobilize voters and influence offline behaviors, especially during election periods. Thus, the informational provisions made by election officials on social media can have a unique influence on the behaviors and rates of turnout of American youth voters.

## Hypothesis

*If state election officials have a high frequency of social media posts, then that state will have higher rates of youth voter turnout compared to low frequency states.*

## Data

For this study, data was gathered from the Cooperative Election Study (CES) and the #TrustedInfo2022 dataset. The data used examines all fifty to states during the 2022 midterm election to ensure generalizability.

## Results

Table 1: The Effects of Election Officials Social Media Provisions on Youth Voter Turnout

	(1)	(2)
	Model 1: Bivariate	Model 2: Multivariate
	b	b
State Election Officials Social Media Provisions	0.024***	0.025***
Education		0.041***
Family Income		0.001***
Campaign Mobilization		-0.212***
Voter History		-0.024***
Political Interest		0.060***
Ideology		-0.014***
Race		-0.021***
Gender		0.008
Constant	0.123***	0.321***
Observations	9115	9115
R2	0.003	0.192
Adj. R2	0.003	0.191

Dependent Variable: Youth respondents to the CES that self-reported voting in 2022 Midterm. \* 0.1 \*\* 0.05 \*\*\*0.01

## Summary

A one unit increase of state election official's social media provisions increases the probability of youth voting by 0.025 percentage points. This is a positive relationship. This relationship persists after accounting for other variables that are known to influence turnout. This suggests that the effect of state election official's social media provisions on the probability of youth voting is independent of other factors.

## Methods

To test the hypothesis that youth voter turnout will increase in states in which their election officials post more on social media platforms bivariate and multivariate tests were conducted. The bivariate test is used to test the strength of the relationship between the DV (youth voters) and IV (social media provisions). The multivariate test is used to control for other common predictors of turnout.

## Conclusion

These findings support the idea that informational provisions, specifically when presented on social media platforms, have the capability of decreasing the cost of voting through the increase of civic skills, thus resulting in an increase of voter turnout. It shows that when election information is presented on an easily accessible platform, like social media, then the cost of voting is decreased which increases one's probability of voting. This is especially applicable to the youth voting bloc. Furthermore, these findings show the abilities of social media to be an arena for mobilization for elected officials. This study is generalizable and does offer opportunities for further exploration and research.