

## **2005 FACULTY RESEARCH GRANT CLOSING REPORT**

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### **1. Description of grant-supported activity.**

The grant provided me with summer salary to complete the data entry and analysis of a ten-precinct voter mobilization field experiment, and to write a manuscript summarizing my findings.

### **2. Were you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.**

I was able to complete the project, though not in the original timeframe I had anticipated. There were significant problems with the data set I received from a student worker. For this reason, I had to fix many of these problems and do all of the data entry myself. In addition, (after prolonged legal battles) the voter files from the county registrar's office contained new voters who had registered after the original field experiment had been conducted. To make matters worse, the registrar had "cleaned" the data files, purging them of deceased voters and voters who had moved to other counties. For these reason, I had to go through the files very systematically, checking to make sure the old file (containing the original treatment assignments) matched the new file (containing the voter turnout data) exactly. This was extremely time consuming. In addition, the student worker who compiled and printed my walks lists had truncated some of the lists. This meant that all voters in both the treatment and the control group from those streets had to be removed from the data set. Guaranteeing the accuracy and validity of the data set took all summer, causing me to continue my analysis and writing into the next academic year.

### **3. Did, or will, the project result in a specific product -- a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc? If so, please describe and indicate state of development.**

Yes, this project has resulted in a comparative study of the 2002 congressional mobilization efforts and the 2003 mayoral mobilization efforts. This article is significant because it dispute the findings of previous work suggesting that electoral context, including the competitiveness of the race, does not affect the success of voter mobilization drives during general election campaigns. I argue that the competitiveness of the race (in itself) is not the key factor in determining the impact of door-to-door voter registration campaigns. Instead, it is the competitiveness of the ground war, as measured by the number of other groups already engaging in mobilization activities, that determines the relative impact of

a given mobilization effort. In races where political parties have already organized door-to-door registration campaigns, there is little reason for non-partisan groups to engage in get-out-the-vote drives. This is particularly true if the main goal of the group is to turn out voters on Election Day. On the other hand, in races where the parties and campaigns do little to mobilize voters, (ideological or non-ideological) non-partisan groups may have a significant impact on voter turnout. I was originally holding this article for publication in an edited book on voter mobilization field experiments. Unfortunately, the contract for this book fell through. The article is now under review at an academic journal.