

## **“Do You Have a Voting Plan? Implementation Intentions, Voter Turnout, and Organic Plan Making”**

Phone calls encouraging citizens to vote are staples of modern campaigns. Insights from psychological science can make these calls dramatically more potent while also generating opportunities to expand psychological theory. I present a field experiment conducted during a 2008 presidential primary election (N = 287,228) showing that facilitating the formation of a voting plan (i.e., implementation intentions) can increase turnout by 4.1 percentage points among those contacted, but a standard encouragement call and self-prediction have no significant impact. Among single-eligible-voter households, the formation of a voting plan increased turnout among persons contacted by 9.1 percentage points, whereas those in multiple-eligible voter households were unaffected by all scripts. Some situational factors may organically facilitate implementation-intentions formation more readily than others; I present data suggesting that this could explain the differential treatment effect that we found. I discuss implications for psychological and political science, and public interventions involving implementation intentions formation.

In addition to increasing turnout in the presidential primary election, we find that the pre-primary implementation intentions intervention also results in increased turnout in the presidential general election. There are several possible mechanisms for this downstream effect, though which specifically cannot be isolated. This is the first study to find downstream turnout effects from within an election cycle, dramatically increasing the return on investment of money spent on voter mobilization in primary elections.