

PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL PRIMARY: ANALYSIS OF GOTV EXPERIMENT

ideas42 and the Environmental Voter Project

July 2019

EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE & TREATMENT CONDITIONS

THE EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE

CONTROL

Control
N = 161,683

TREATMENT



Treatment
N = 743,149

COMPRISING FIVE DIFFERENT TREATMENT CONDITIONS ACROSS TWO DELIVERY CHANNELS

CONTROL

Control
N = 161,683

TREATMENT



Social Pressure
N = 251,152



Endowed Progress
N = 251,910



Loss Aversion
N = 79,996




Social Pressure
N = 80,098



Endowed Progress
N = 79,993

Each digital cell was split 50/50 between a \$0.05 and a \$0.20 average spend per voter

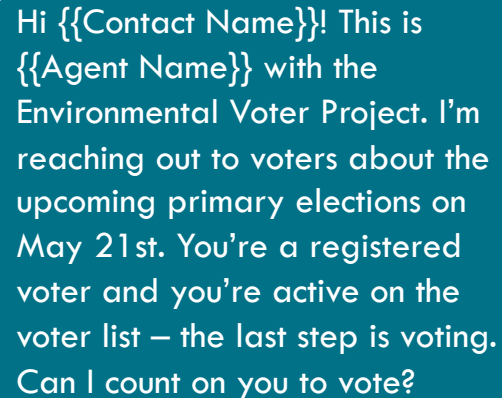
SMS SCRIPTS FOR SOCIAL PRESSURE AND ENDOWED PROGRESS

A green speech bubble containing the text of the 'Social Pressure' SMS script. Below the bubble is a grey input field with three dots.

Hi {{Contact Name}}! This is {{First Name}} with the Environmental Voter Project. Public records show you haven't always voted in past elections. Turnout on May 21st is expected to be above average in your neighborhood. Can I count on you to vote?

Social pressure - the reigning champion of direct mail

VS

A teal speech bubble containing the text of the 'Endowed Progress' SMS script. Below the bubble is a grey input field with three dots.

Hi {{Contact Name}}! This is {{Agent Name}} with the Environmental Voter Project. I'm reaching out to voters about the upcoming primary elections on May 21st. You're a registered voter and you're active on the voter list – the last step is voting. Can I count on you to vote?

Endowed progress - the leading script from the FL experiment

DIGITAL AD VARIANTS

Loss Aversion

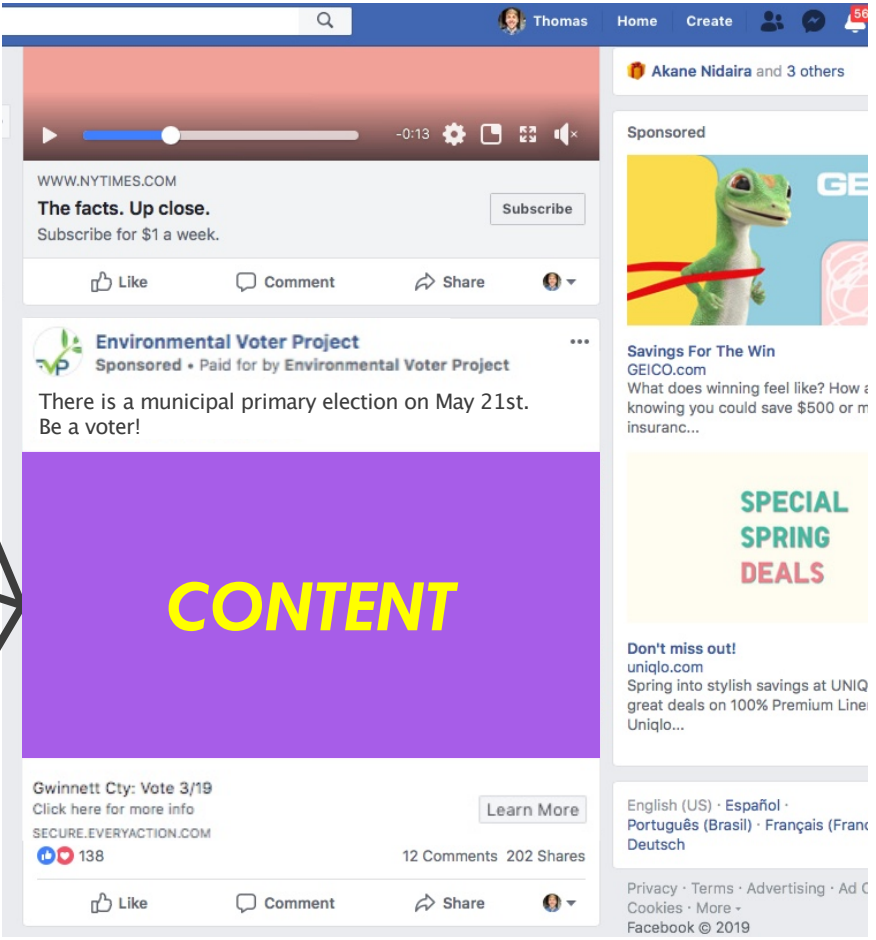
Campaigns spend up to **\$91** to win a vote.
Own your vote.

Social Pressure

Who you vote for is private,
but whether you vote is public.

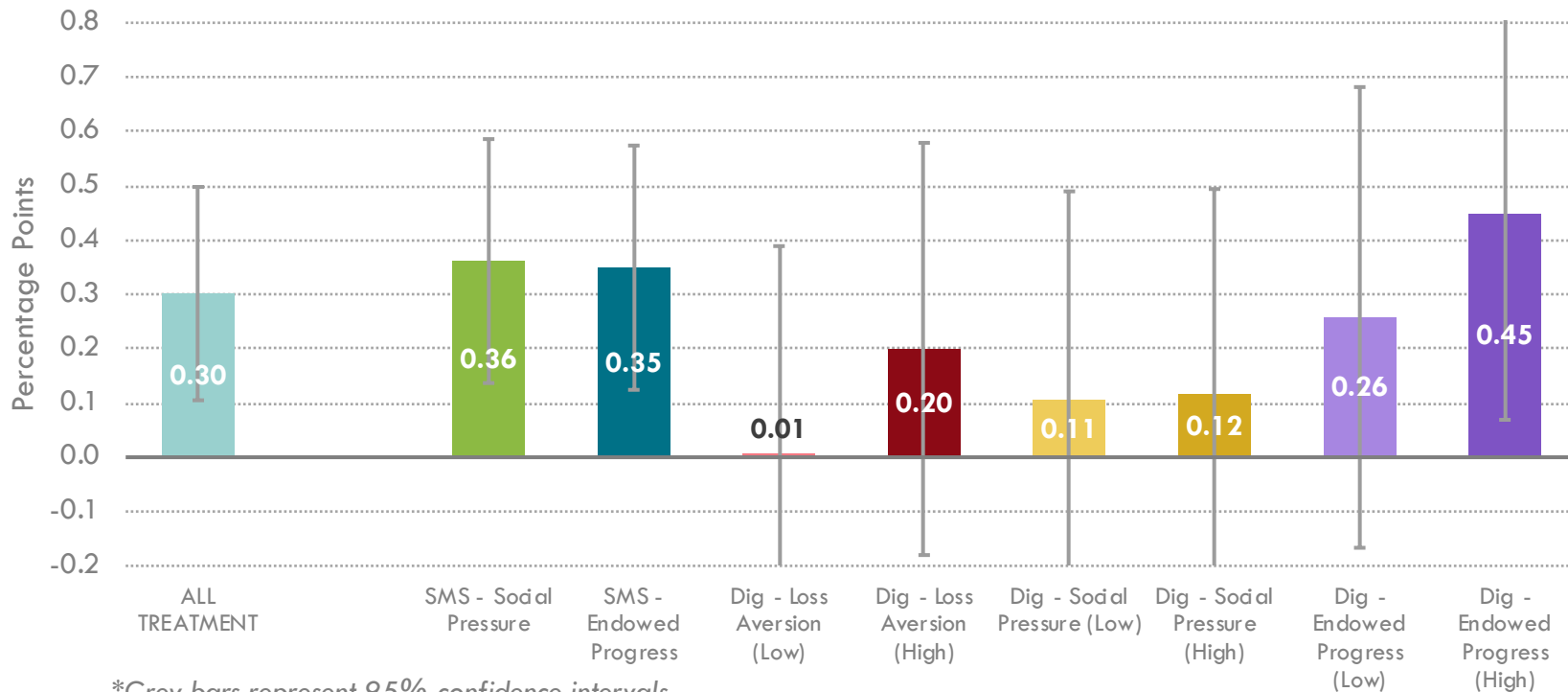
Endowed Progress

☒ You're registered to vote
☒ You're active on the rolls
☐ The last step is voting on May 21

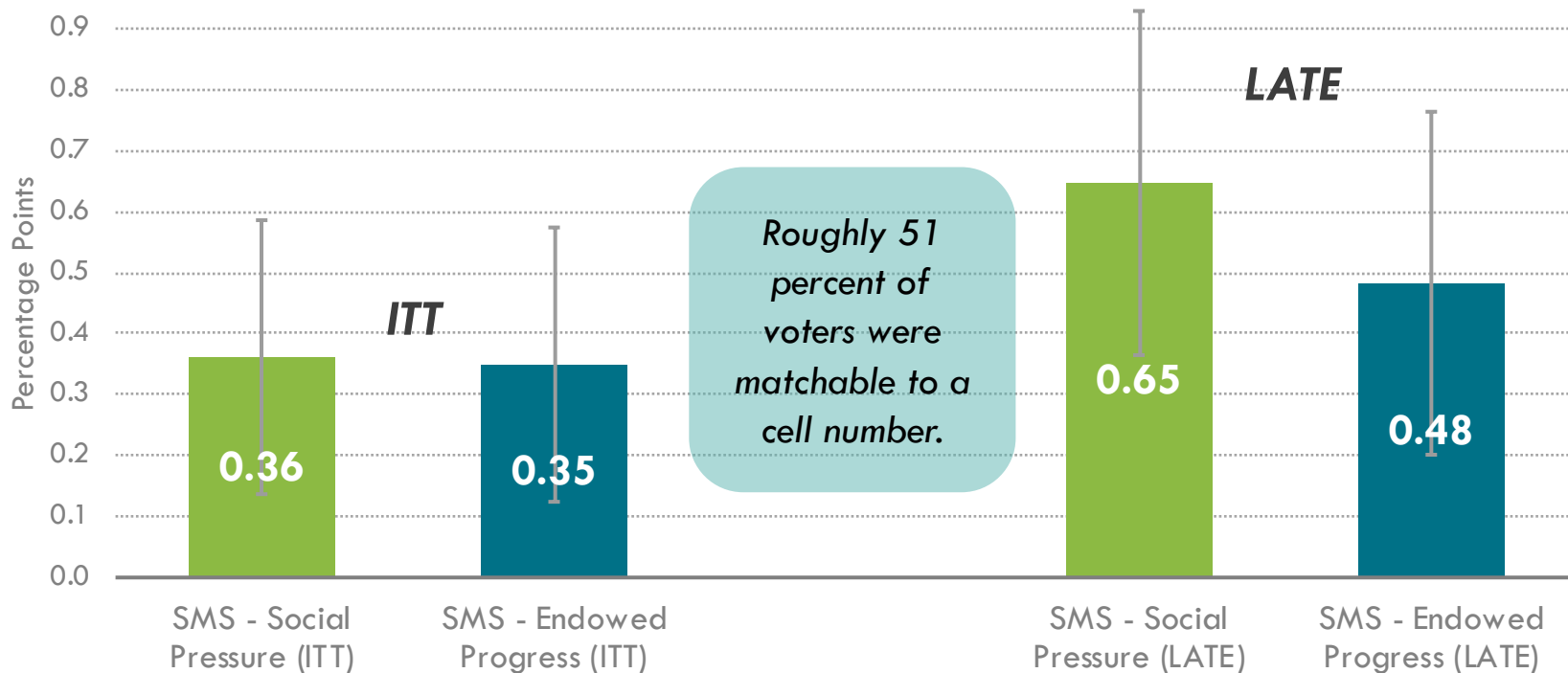


LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

TREATMENT GROUPS SAW AN AVERAGE 0.3 PP INCREASE OVER A BASE TURNOUT OF 10.2%

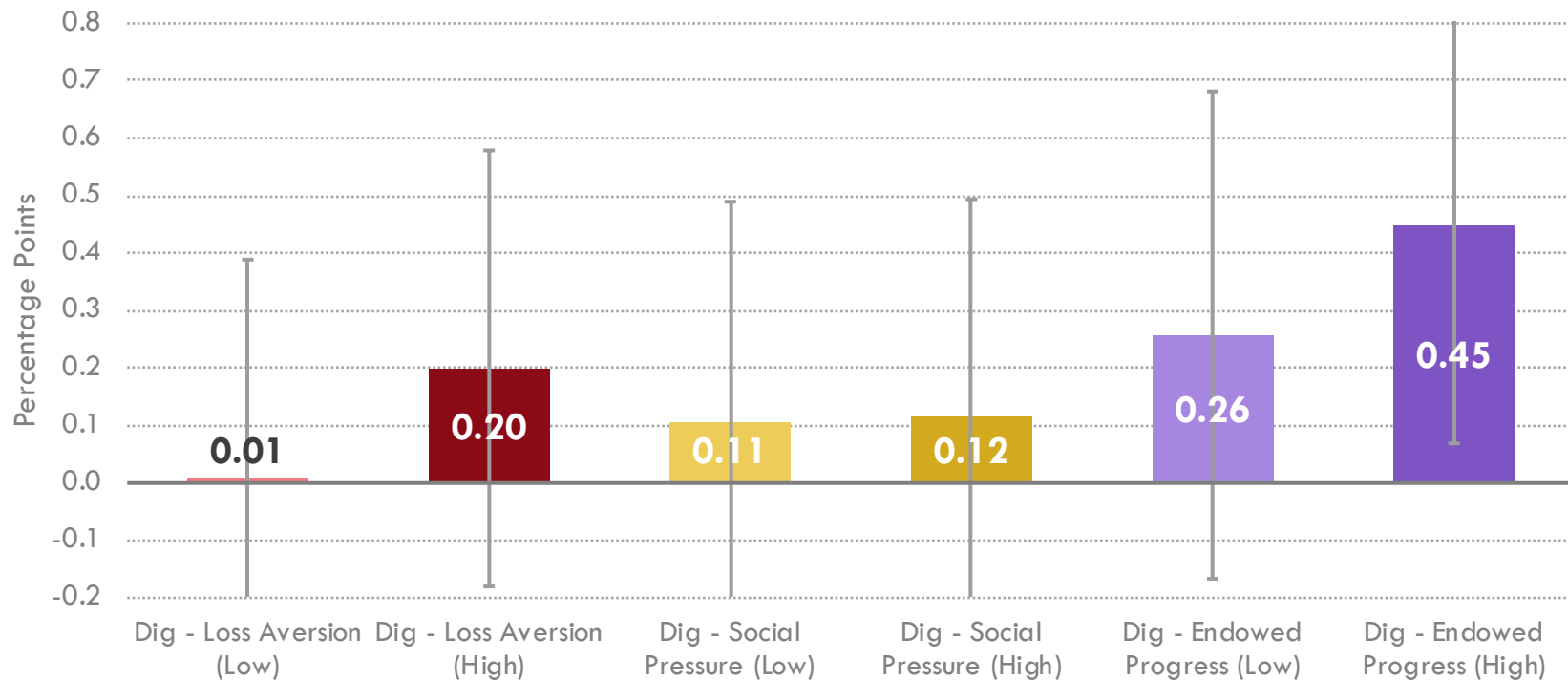


BOTH SMS TREATMENTS RAISED TURNOUT BY AROUND 0.6 PP AMONG REACHABLE VOTERS



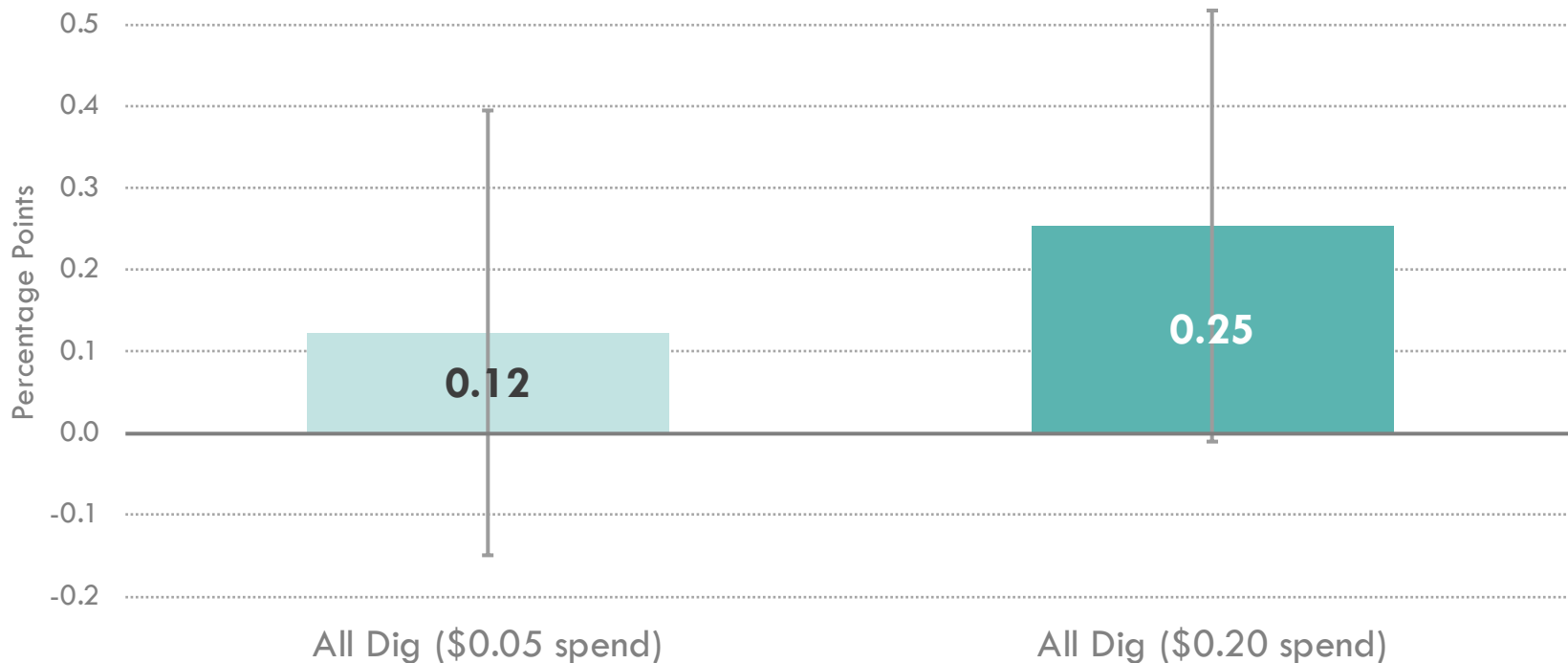
*Grey bars represent 95% confidence intervals

ENDOWED PROGRESS WAS THE ONLY DIGITAL AD VARIANT WITH A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT



*Grey bars represent 95% confidence intervals

RAISING THE DIGITAL AD SPEND FROM \$0.05 TO \$0.20 ROUGHLY DOUBLED IMPACT ON AVERAGE

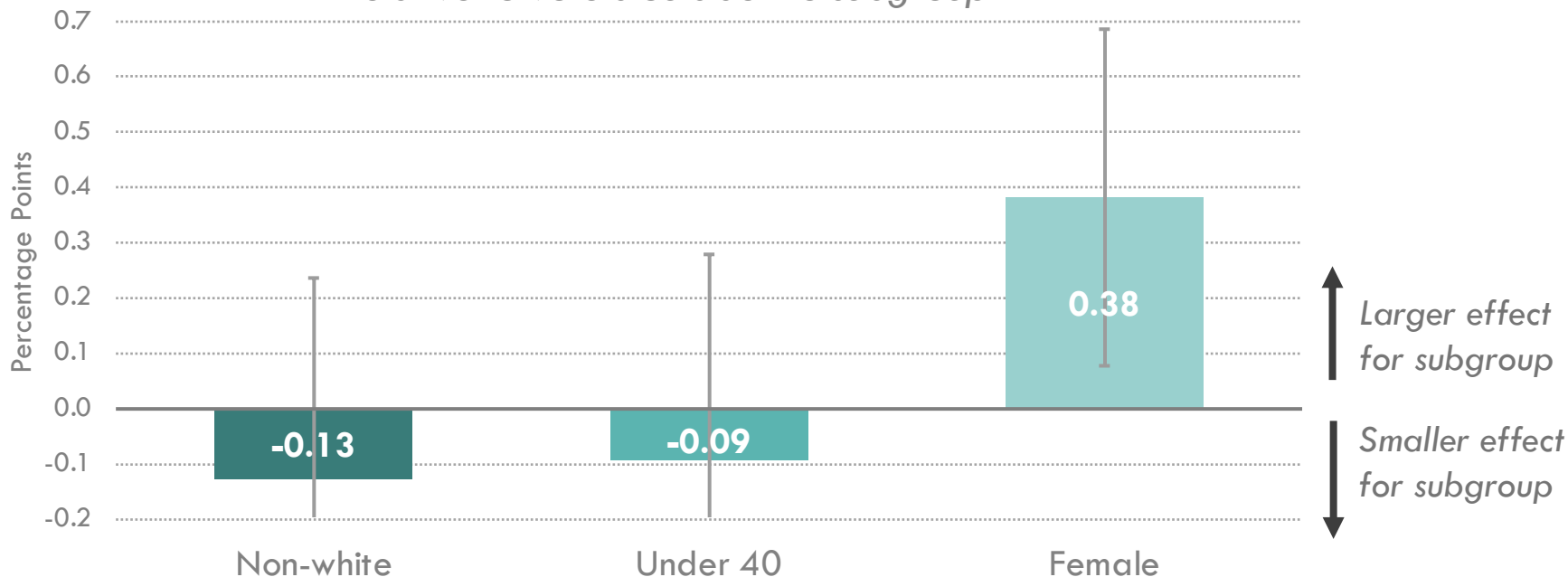


**Grey bars represent 95% confidence intervals*

SUBGROUP ANALYSIS

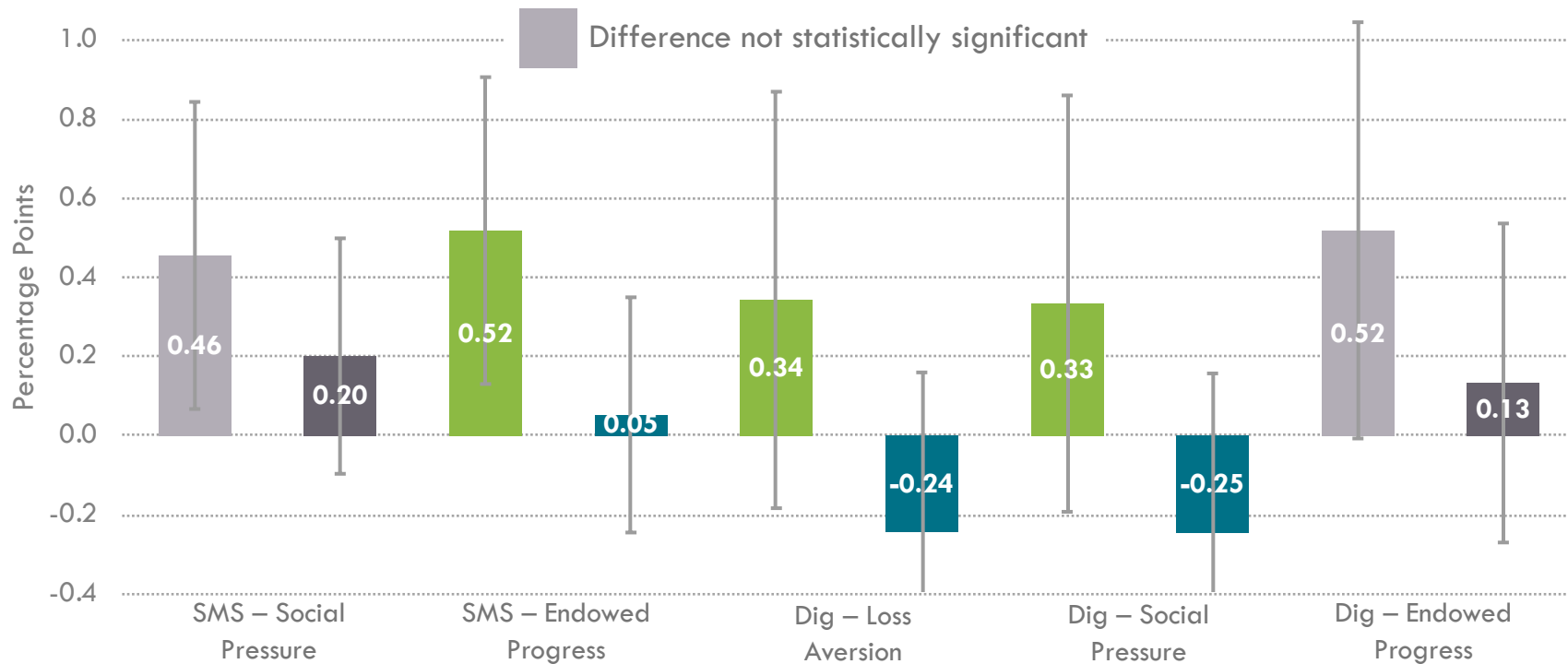
ONLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT EFFECTS DETECTED AMONG FEMALE VOTERS

*Estimated difference in treatment effect for subgroup voters
relative to voters outside the subgroup*



*Grey bars represent 95% confidence intervals

TREATMENTS APPEAR TO BE RELATIVELY MORE EFFECTIVE AMONG **WOMEN** THAN AMONG **MEN**



*Grey bars represent 95% confidence intervals

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS?

- *It's something about the **particular tactics** that we deployed...*
 - Women in Pennsylvania are more likely to be influenced by social pressure, loss aversion, and/or endowed progress.
- *It's something about the **particular channels** that we used...*
 - Women in Pennsylvania are more likely to react positively to (or less likely to react negatively to) texts and digital ads.
- *It's something about the **particular election** we tested in...*
 - Women in Pennsylvania are easier to turn out for a lower-salience municipal election in an off-cycle year.
- *It's just a **bunch of noise**...*

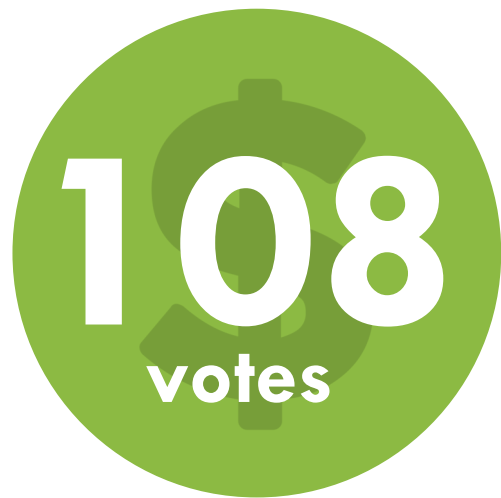
COST-PER-VOTE ANALYSIS

SMS TREATMENTS REMAIN THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE IN DOLLAR-PER-VOTE TERMS

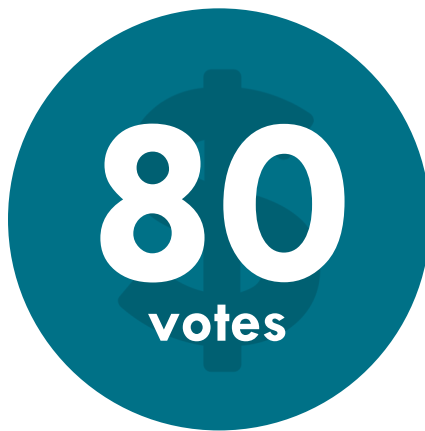
TREATMENT	COST PER VOTE	VOTERS REACHED	TURNOUT EFFECT (PP)	NET VOTES GENERATED	TOTAL SPEND
SMS - Social Pressure	\$9.28	123,900	0.65	801	\$7434.00
SMS - Endowed Progress	\$12.44	127,385	0.48	615	\$7643.10
Dig - Endowed Progress (Low)	\$19.42	40,075	0.26	103	\$2003.75
Dig - Endowed Progress (High)	\$44.63	39,918	0.45	179	\$7983.60

**Excludes the fixed cost of the digital match and assumes unit cost of \$0.065 per SMS contact*

FOR EVERY \$1000 SPENT ON EACH TACTIC, THAT ROUGHLY TRANSLATES INTO...



*Social
pressure text*



*Endowed
progress text*



*Endowed
progress digital*



*Social pressure
digital*



*Loss aversion
digital*

...assuming unit costs of \$0.06 per text and excluding the cost of the digital match.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

- ***Endowed progress is an effective way to generate votes at scale – and a promising alternative to social pressure messaging***
 - SMS: No difference in the effect sizes of social pressure and endowed progress over SMS
 - Digital: Endowed progress outperformed social pressure – possibly because the digital social pressure was not “personalized”
- ***There are diminishing returns to increasing the average spend for digital ads***
 - 4X the spend translated to roughly 2X the turnout effect
 - Women may respond better to digital than men (for reasons unknown)
- ***SMS remains the most cost-effective way to generate votes at scale***
 - On a cost-per-vote basis, the endowed progress SMS script outperformed the digital ad variant by a factor of roughly 2