Marin County Voter Survey

June Primary Election Analysis

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I. Executive Summary

Voter turnout in Marin County in the June 2012 primary election was 49.81% of registered voters. Why did 50.19% registered voters not cast a ballot on June 5?

Marin County voters who <u>did not vote</u> in the June 5th primary election said:

- For **54%** voting was "inconvenient to my schedule."
- **42%** were "not interested" in the election.
- **37%** just forgot to vote.
- **64%** don't care what friends and family think about their non-voting.
- They understand that who votes matters:
  - 77% said that non-voters are not the same as voters, and that this matters to the result.
- **26%** don't know what percentage of voter participation is needed for democracy
  - Only 19% said voter turnout has to be above 75%
- They were not confused by Top 2 or new polling place locations

Why so much lack of interest and forgetfulness? The June election was an uncontested presidential primary for both the Democratic and Republican parties. There was also little of local importance on the ballot to motivate voters. Data show that only competitive presidential primaries in the County have historically had high levels of voter turnout.

Generating high voter turnout in <u>any</u> election other than a presidential contest is a challenge. Presidential elections raise expectations for turnout levels which are unattainable in other elections.

However, there are things that officials in Marin County can do to help voters during low interest elections, and to maintain what are comparatively high rates of voter participation into the future.
- More voter education about election processes for 18-24 year olds and those earning less than $25,000 annually

## II. Electoral context for the June 2012 primary election in California

Voter turnout in Marin County in the June 2012 primary election was 49.81% of registered voters. The question that this report investigates is: Why did 50.19% registered voters not cast a ballot on June 5th? Was the level of turnout in June unusual? Were distinctive factors at play?

For Marin County voters, and for California voters, the June 5th election was an uncontested presidential primary for both the Democratic and Republican parties. President Barack Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney were on the ballots for their respective party's nomination. President Obama faced no challengers from his party and by June Romney had locked up the Republican nomination. When the presidential primary came to California, the party nomination races drew little interest and provided little motivation for voters to turnout. Statewide turnout was 31% of registered voters.

To add to the lack of voter interest in national politics, the June primary election was distinctive in that it featured little of local importance to motivate Marin County voters. Neither San Rafael nor Novato, the two largest cities in Marin, had city council seats open or measures on the ballot. In the 10th Assembly District the press called the race before the election by naming the projected top two finishers. There were only two contested races for County Supervisor, Districts 2 and 4; in District 3, the incumbent Supervisor ran unopposed. There were no controversial city, county or state measures on the ballot.

When voters perceive elections as not interesting there is little motivation for them to overcome what scholars refer to as the "costs" of voting. The costs of voting for voters are, among other things, time to gather information and study the candidates and measures, time for travel to a polling place or to drop off a mail ballot, lost wages for being late to or missing work, parking, childcare, gas or bus fare, etc… Because of these costs, rational choice scholars have called voting an irrational activity. Alan Gerber, political scientist at Yale University, has put the issue well:

> Among the most striking features of democratic political systems is the participation of millions of voters in elections. Why do large numbers of people vote, despite the fact that, as Hegel once observed, "the casting of a single vote is of no significance where there is a multitude of electors"?

Fig. 1 Marin County Primary Election Voter Turnout 1992 - 2012
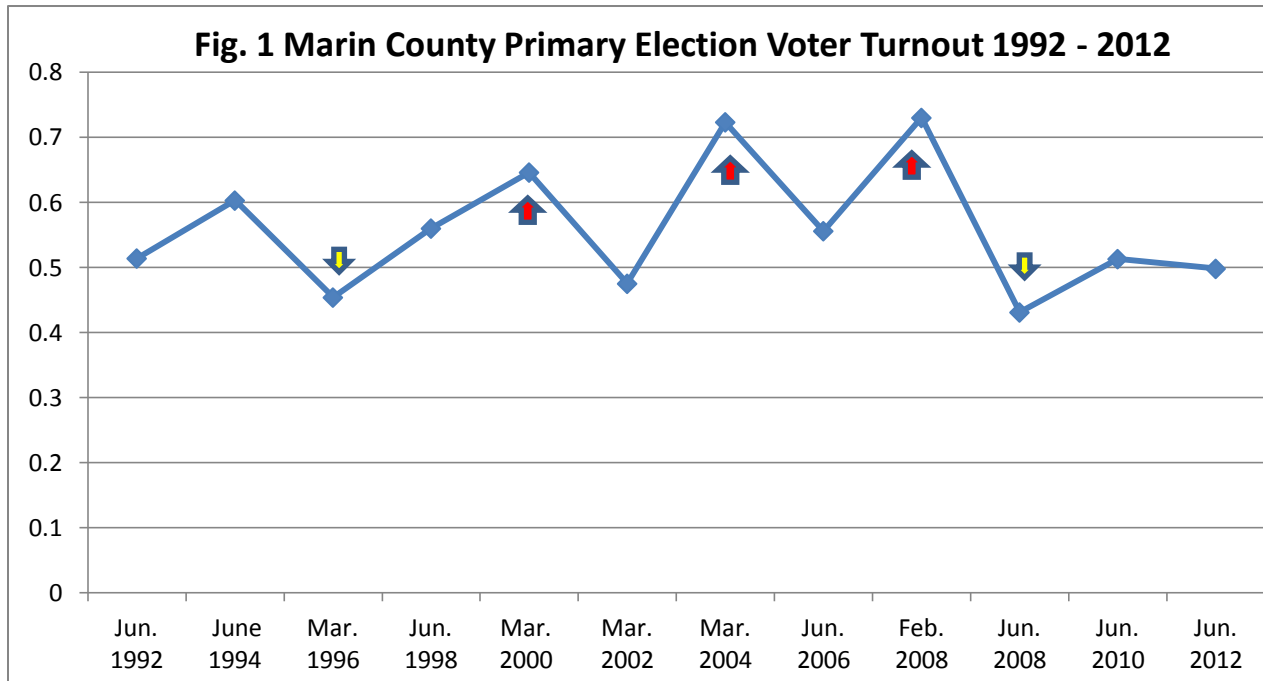
[Note: 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2010 are Midterm election years.]

In the years 2000, 2004, and 2008, presidential primaries in California were competitive and have the highest levels of turnout compared to other June elections in the past 20 years - as shown by the red arrows in Figure 1. The two exceptions shown with yellow arrows are discussed below.

First, importantly, in 2000 and 2004 there was no June primary. California had March presidential primaries and then the November general election. However, in 2008 voters faced a situation unprecedented in 20 years of elections in California when, only four months after the February presidential primary, there was another election in June. Turnout plummets 30 points.

Second, the March 1996 was a primary election similar to the recent primary – like this year, the Democratic presidential candidate in 1996 was the incumbent, Bill Clinton, and the Republican, Bob Dole, had the nomination safely in hand by the time Californians voted. Turnout in March 1996 was 42%.

A critique of this state of affairs is that it may make sense for March or June, but not for November.

Figure 2 provides historic Marin County data for turnout in November elections. Again, only in 2004 and 2008, presidential election years, is turnout at its highest point. All the other data points show lower turnout.

Simply said, presidential elections raise turnout expectations to what are in other elections unattainable heights.

Research has shown that type of election (e.g. local, gubernatorial, presidential, etc…) is the single greatest predictor of voter turnout. Bergman and Yates (2011) found mail voters are 34% more likely to vote in a general than primary election during presidential election years.

Fig. 2 Marin County Election Turnout in November 2001 - 2011
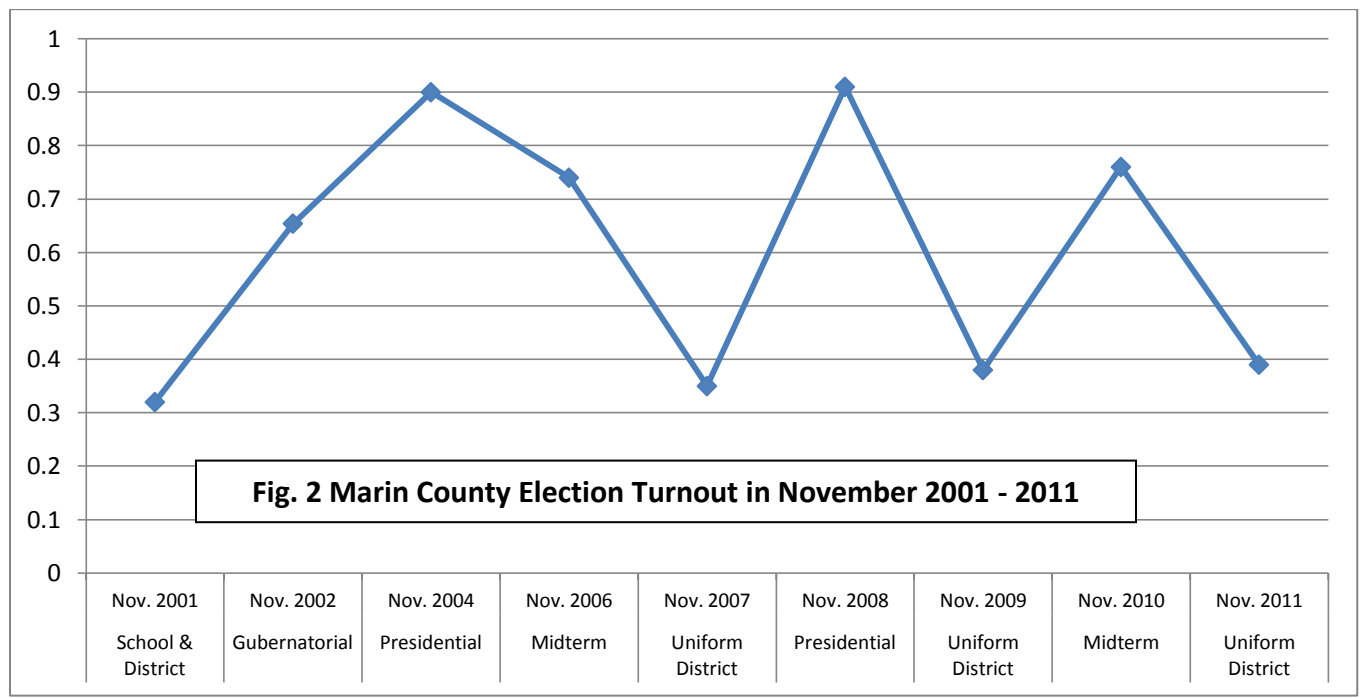
III. Research & scholarship on voter turnout

The survey of Marin County voters included questions that were informed by recent research and scholarship on voter turnout. Survey questions are noted throughout this section as appropriate.

REDISTRICTING
Do voters on the short end of the district split, so to speak, vote less? Winburn and Wagner (2010) suggest that placing voters in districts outside of their natural community of interest results in significant informational disadvantages, however, voters living in redistricted areas show no significant differences in their activities at the ballot box.

> Q3k. It was too confusing this time.

PRECINCT PLACEMENT
Haspel and Knotts (2005) provide a new measure of voting costs by using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools to calculate the distance between the residence and polling place for registered voters. Using this measure to predict turnout at the individual level, they found that small differences in distance from the polls can have a significant impact on voter turnout. They also found that moving a polling place can affect the decision to vote.

> Q3c. I had a new polling place that I couldn't find.

PROCESS KNOWLEDGE
Numerous studies document an association between education and civic participation. Most recently Milligan et al (2004) find a strong and robust relationship between education and voting in the United States, but not in the United Kingdom (UK). Results indicate that registration rules present a barrier to participation. However, earlier work (Johnston and Pattie 2003) from the UK indicates that even without the registration barrier, turnout was very much lower than predicted by models. Johnston and Pattie found that about 55% of non-voters did so deliberately whereas 45% were unable to vote because of what they claimed were circumstances beyond their control. Johnston and Pattie document a major change in people's attitudes to elections over time, and suggested that easier means of voting may ensure that a substantial proportion of them turn out at subsequent elections.

> Q3b I did not receive my Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot.
> Q3d. I did not receive my mail ballot.
> Q12. There should be more voter education done about the election process itself. Where to vote, when to vote, and how to vote is very complicated stuff that is just not explained sufficiently.

INTEREST & CYNICISM
Bromley and Curtice (2004) investigate whether low turnout is the result of increased cynicism among voters, and whether politics as reported by an increasingly critical media is responsible. Findings show that recent low levels of turnout for elections is not due to the impact that the tone of media coverage may be having on voters' attitudes. The increasing reluctance of voters with little interest in politics to read a newspaper at all is most problematic.

> Q3e. I was not interested.
> Q3i. I don't know enough about what is on the ballot.
> Q5. There are uninformed voters out there. Those uninformed voters should just stay home.

PARTISAN REPRESENTATION & OUTCOMES
Piven and Cloward (2000) attribute declining voter participation to the demobilization of the American electorate by the political parties, and inability or reluctance to remobilize by the parties.

> Q3l. The whole process turned me off.
> Q7. Non-voters are the same as voters. So it really doesn't matter who shows up to vote – we all want the same result.

MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES
The fact that many citizens fail to vote is often cited to motivate others to vote. Psychological research on descriptive social norms suggests that emphasizing the opposite—that many <u>do</u> vote—would be a more effective message. In two get-out-the-vote field experiments, Gerber and Rogers (2009) find that messages emphasizing low expected turnout are less effective at motivating voters than messages emphasizing high expected turnout. The results suggest that voter mobilization efforts should emphasize high turnout, especially when targeting occasional and low rate of participation voters. More generally, their findings suggest that the common lamentation regarding low participation may undermine turnout.

> Q3f. My vote doesn't matter.
> Q9. In your opinion, what percentage of registered voters in Marin County would need to turn out to vote in order for the process to be good enough for democratic representation?
> Q10. What do you think voter turnout was as a percentage of registered voters in Marin County this past election on June 5th?

REMINDERS
Dale and Strauss (2009) document that impersonal, noticeable messages can succeed in increasing the likelihood that a registered voter will turn out by reminding the recipient that Election Day is approaching. The results from their experiments demonstrate a strongly positive and statistically significant effect of reminding people to vote through text messaging. The effect on raising turnout is in the range of 3% to 4%.

Most recently, Malhotra et al (2012) found unsolicited emails sent from the registrar consistently increased turnout among registered voters. The treatment effects are small, but statistically significant. In contrast, identical messages sent from a fictional voter mobilization organization had no measurable effect.

> Q11. How many pieces of mail did you receive from the Registrar of Voters that had to do with voting, your polling place, voting by mail or any aspect of the upcoming election?

CIVIC DUTY & SOCIAL PRESSURE
Scholars have suggested that one reason people vote is because of a desire to adhere to social norms. Specifically, voting is widely regarded as a citizen duty, and citizens worry that others will think less of them if they fail to participate in elections. Voter's sense of civic duty has long been a leading explanation of voter turnout. However, testing the link between the power of social norms on civic duty and the act of voting is very difficult, and scholars have only recently begun to tackle this work. Gerber et al (2008) did a large-scale field experiment involving several hundred thousand registered voters that gets at ways of testing these ideas. They observed substantially higher turnout among those who received mailings promising to publicize their turnout to their household or their neighbors.

Kam (2007) reports that when subtle reminders of citizen duty appear in campaign discourse, citizens respond. Individuals who are reminded of citizen duty are more likely to learn where the candidates stand on issues, to think more about the candidates, and to search for information in an open-minded way. The results suggest that how citizens think about politics is flexible, rather than fixed, and can be shaped in consequential ways by the nature of elite appeals during election campaigns.

> Q3h. My friends and family don't vote, so why should I.
> Q6. Voting, like jury duty, is our civic responsibility. Citizens can be fined for failing to show up for jury duty; the same should be true for failing to vote.
> Q8. If my friends and family knew that I did not vote, that would bother me.

FUN

Can the festive, social environment surrounding old-fashioned elections be recreated in ways that increase voter turnout? What would it mean to change the polling environment? Might it change the way that people regard participation in the electoral process?

Historically, on Election Day, the festival took place immediately outside the polling place, on the front lawn of the local middle school. A large tent was set up surrounded by signs encouraging people to enjoy free snacks, drinks, and raffles. A cotton candy machine attracted a steady stream of children, and a professional DJ played upbeat, family-friendly music. People of all ages milled about the party tent. Young children snacked and played catch. Elderly couples took advantage of the chairs around the tent to sit, listen to the music, and eat the free sandwiches we provided. The free food relieved some harried parents of dinner preparation that evening, and they mingled with their friends and neighbors. People at the party seemed aware of the event prior to coming to the polls to vote. They had read the flyer, received the calls, or heard about the various advertised activities from other residents.

Addonizio et al (2007) explored the feasibility of creating a more celebratory and community-focused atmosphere at the polls. Their findings showed that a festival held in a context where the expected base rate of voting is 50% would produce a turnout rate of 56.5%—a 6.5 percentage-point increase. In a low-turnout (10%) context, the increase in turnout would be 2.6 percentage points.

> Q3g. Election Day is not fun anymore.

HAVING A PLAN

Nickerson and Rogers (2010) show that facilitating the formation of a voting plan can increase turnout by 4.1%. Among single-eligible-voter households, the formation of a voting plan increased turnout among persons contacted by 9.1%. Having a voting plan means that (a) voters know what time they will vote, (b) where they will be coming from, and (c) what they will be doing beforehand.

> Q3a. It was inconvenient to my schedule.
> Q3j. I just forgot to vote.
> Q16. How many registered voters live in your household?

IV. Results – Findings and Analysis

Section A provides results for question set 3a through 3m (see Appendix C for the survey instrument). Section B provides results for the remaining survey questions. Demographic data regarding survey respondents is in Appendix A.

<u>Section A REASONS FOR NOT VOTING</u>

The main reason why turnout was low in June 2012 in Marin County is because for a majority of voters (54%) the election was inconvenient to their schedule. Responses indicate that non-voters were out of town, traveling, working, or busy. This response is somewhat surprising given that the overwhelming majority of non-voters are mail voters – 76%. However, schedule inconvenience does not only relate to going to a polling place, it also has to do with having the time and inclination to acquire sufficient information to mark a ballot - both in terms of process (the "how to" of marking a ballot) and content (the "who and what" to vote for). People might also be less likely to overcome scheduling difficulties to vote because of a lack of interest in the election – the reason that 42% failed to cast a ballot – and indeed there is a significant relationship between the two (Pearson -.131, p = 0.05, 2-tailed).

Table 1 provides results for the reason options that were asked in the survey.

TABLE 1 – Reasons for Not Voting

Reason	Percent
1. Inconvenient to my schedule	54%
2. Was not interested	42%
3. Just forgot to vote	37.1%
4. Don't know enough about what is on the ballot	37%
5. My vote doesn't matter	18%
6. The whole process turned me off this time	17.5%
7. Did not receive Voter Information Pamphlet & Sample Ballot	15%
8. It was too confusing this time	12%
9. Election Day is not fun anymore	11%
10. Did not receive my ballot in the mail	10%
11. Had a new polling place I could not find	4%
12. Health (highest % in "other")	3.9%
13. Friends and family don't vote – why should I	1%

[Note: does not sum to 100%; respondents were allowed multiple reason selections.]

There is a significant correlation for non-voters between not receiving the Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot and having a new polling place that they could not find, since polling location information is typically printed on the pamphlet this finding would be a logical result of missing information for non-voters (Pearson .237, p = .01).

Also, those that did not get the Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot were significantly more likely to report not getting a mail ballot (Pearson .569, *p* = .01), another logical result that may indicate a problem with mail delivery, moving, or failure to keep official mail (i.e. as opposed to throwing it out with junk mail).

One of the other strong associations is between being turned off by the whole process and not being interested in it as well (Pearson .330, *p* = .01), and based on the Piven and Cloward work cited in the previous section this combination of factors likely stems from the lack of party mobilization that occurred in California for the June primary election. In fact, because California is a decidedly "blue" (Democratic) state, voters in the state are frequently off the national party's radar. Democrats spend little to no time and money (read: advertising) in the state because Obama's victory is a foregone conclusion and it would make no sense to spend here when the money is direly needed in other swing states where the contest between the two candidates is close. Likewise, for the Republicans, the state's electoral votes are unlikely to go to the GOP's presidential candidate, so spending time and money here also makes no sense.

There is a modest relationship between not receiving the Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot and friends and family not voting being influential on the non-voter (Pearson .137, *p* = .01). The link between missing information and not voting like ones family may be related to numerous voters living in a household that did not receive official information, or did not realize that they had received the information.

Finally, there appears to be a small relationship (Pearson .104, *p* = .05)between respondents reporting that Election Day is not fun anymore and not being able to find their polling place; perhaps for those for whom going to the polls was a social occasion this has become somewhat diminished in their view.

Table 2 in Appendix B provides these and more results.

*   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *

Section B. OTHER NON-VOTING FACTORS

1. LACK PROCESS KNOWLEDGE

- Young, low income, and minority non-voters in Marin County feel there should be more voter education done about the election process itself.

For **68% of 18 – 29 year olds**, where to vote, when to vote, and how to vote is very complicated stuff that is just not explained sufficiently. In terms of education attainment, 67% of voters with less than a high school education want more voter education, and 60% with some college or vocational education do as well.

In terms of income, **70% of low income** voters (less than $25,000 annually) want more voter education, and 65% of those earning $50,000 to $75,000 annually do.

57% of Decline-to-State registered voters want more voter education and 51% of liberals do.

2. MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES

- What constitutes appropriate levels of turnout in Marin County is mystifying for most non-voters in the County, but is affected by income level.

Middle and low income voters do not feel less than 50% turnout is good enough for democratic representation. While for 15% to 22% of upper income voters (greater than $125,000 annually) turnout of less than 50% is good enough for democratic representation.

26% don't know what percentage of voter participation is needed for democracy. Only 19% said voter turnout has to be above 75%.

3. REMINDERS

- The lack of agreement across all categories of non-voters regarding how many pieces of official mail they receive from the Registrar of Voters (ROV) is striking.

Equal percentages across gender, race/ethnicity, age, and income claimed to receive one, two, three or more pieces of mail from the ROV. Voters simply do not perceive, recognize, understand or distinguish official ROV from candidate mailings with the mail that they get having to do with how to vote, where to vote, voting by mail.

67% of those with no high school education claimed to receive one official piece of mail.

4. CIVIC DUTY & SOCIAL PRESSURE

- Appeals to civic duty and social pressure do not work with Marin County non-voters.

72% did not agree that voting is like jury duty, and that citizens should be fined for failing to meet this civic obligation.

In terms of social pressure, 71% of men and 59% of women said it wouldn't bother them if friends and family knew that they did not vote. This sentiment increases with age, as 57% of 18 – 24 years olds versus 72% of those older than 60 said it would not bother them. A greater percentage, 72%, of Republicans versus 61% of Democrats, feel no social pressure.

5. INTEREST & CYNICISM

- Lack of interest in the June 5th election was cited by 42% of non-voters as the reason they failed to cast a ballot. But that feeling does not extend to a cynical attitude about others who may not vote because they are uninformed. Non-voters are almost evenly split about whether uninformed voters should just stay home.

39% believe uninformed voters should just stay home – 50% do not. Across race and ethnicity, 65% of Hispanics do not believe uninformed voters should stay home, but 67% of Blacks[1] and 53% Asians do. Among those older than 60 years of age, 63% do not agree that uniformed voters should stay home.

6. PARTISAN REPRESENTATION & OUTCOMES
- Non-voters know voting matters to the outcome, except those with less than a high school education and the poor.

Table 3: Do you agree or disagree: non-voters are the same as voters - it doesn't matter who shows up

	White	Hispanic	Asian	Black	18-24	>60	No HS	<$25k
Agree	13%	33%	23%	67%	21%	14%	41%	42%
Neither	9%	0	0	0	9%	6%	5%	5%
Disagree	78%	67%	77%	33%	70%	80%	55%	53%

When the political parties do not mobilize, educate and inform voters, the poor and uneducated suffer more than their educated, more affluent counterparts in terms of understanding the implications and (negative) consequences of non-voting. [The result for Blacks is indeterminable (see fn2).]

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[1] The number of Blacks respondents in the sample makes generalizations somewhat suspect and must be applied cautiously.

V. Conclusion – Recommendations

Elections are a sporadic event in American democracy; this can cause inconvenience for voters. For voters who do not pay close attention, and even perhaps for those who do, elections can seem random and the preparation for these events can be overwhelming. There is election content material about candidates and propositions to master; then there is election process material to master - about how to cast a ballot, where to vote, and when to vote. For each election all of the content material and some of the process material will be different. It's like going to get a Driver's License and having to take the test each time – with new material! Elections can be similarly stressful, especially for the young, the poor, and the uneducated.

Voters make assessments about their time, interest, and contribution to an upcoming election. Depending on how the scale tips, they will or will not cast a ballot. Scholars say this is a rational behavioral process. In Marin County in the June 5th election, many voters appeared able to accurately assess whether their vote mattered. Furthermore, many were disinterested when it did not matter.

What can tip the scale and make a non-voter into a voter in another primary election?

- **Demystify the election process**

Off-cycle and primary elections (particularly in California) have virtually no partisan mobilization component. Some other entity has to fill the void, especially in order to educate young, poor, and minority voters about process.   By process is meant the "how to" vote. NOT the "what to" vote.

- **Assist voters in making a plan**
  - Provide digital tools on web site
    - Links to smartphone Maps, Calendar, Alarm (schedulers)

Voters need to be encouraged to "make a voting plan." In their plan, the voter should answer these questions: 1) What time will I vote? 2) Where will I be coming from when I go to vote? 3) What will I be doing before I go to vote?

Having a plan could help the 54% for whom it was inconvenient to their schedule to vote, and for some of the 37% who just forgot to vote. From Nickerson and Rogers (2010) we know that the impact could be as much as 4.1%. Among the 32% of Marin County single-eligible-voter households, the formation of a voting plan could increase turnout by as much as 9.1%.

- **Reminders work**

Send email reminders when mailings go out and/or when information is posted to the ROV website.

The secret to successful education has been described somewhat humorously as: "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you told them." Certainly marketers and advertisers know the value of repetition. Furthermore, educating voters what to expect in the number and look of official mailings, and encouraging them to hang on to official election material until the election, helps busy people keep track of what to expect and lets them know what to do with it.

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Appendix A - Respondent Demographics

Ideology	Percent
Liberal	43.4
Moderate	42.8
Conservative	13.8

Education	Percent
< High School	.9
HS grad	8.0
Some college/ vocational	22.2
College grad	44.3
Grad school	24.7

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White	84.4
Hispanic	7.2
Asian	4.3
Black	.9
Other/Mixed	3.2

Annual HH income	Percent
< $25,000	7.7
$25-$49,999K	13.6
$50K-$74,999K	14.7
$75K-$99,999K	17.2
$100K-$124,999K	12.8
$125K-$149,999K	7.3
$150K-$199,999K	8.4
>$200K	18.3

Number of reg voters per HH	Percent
One	32.5
Two	49.3
Three	10.4
Four	5.0
Five or more	2.8

Party	Percent
Democrat	53.0
Republican	14.4
Decline to State	27.7
Other	5.0

Age	Percent
18-24	12.3
25-29	5.2
30-44	21.1
45-59	31.6
60+	29.8

Gender	Percent
Male	43.7
Female	56.3

Appendix B: Table 2 - Correlations (Methodological notes next page. See #2 for explanation of table.)

		Q3A. Inconvenient to my schedule	Q3B. Did not receive Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot	Q3C. Had a new polling place that I couldn't find	Q3D. Did not receive my mail ballot	Q3E. Was not interested	Q3F. My vote doesn't matter	Q3G. Election Day is not fun anymore	Q3H. Friends and family don't vote - why should I?	Q3I. Don't know enough about what's on ballot	Q3J. Just forgot to vote	Q3K. It was too confusing this time
Q3B. No Voter Information Pamphlet & Sample Ballot	Pearson	.079										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129										
Q3C. Had a new polling place that I couldn't find	Pearson	.051	.237**									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.328	.000									
Q3D. Did not receive my mail ballot	Pearson	.062	.569**	.307**								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.233	.000	.000								
Q3E. Was not interested	Pearson	-.131*	-.085	.004	-.107*							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.100	.942	.039							
Q3F. My vote doesn't matter	Pearson	.053	-.005	.061	-.025	.233**						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.304	.920	.241	.638	.000						
Q3G. Election Day is not fun anymore	Pearson	.062	-.040	.104*	.092	.123*	.269**					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.235	.448	.046	.080	.019	.000					
Q3H. Friends and family don't vote - why should I?	Pearson	-.075	.137**	.140**	-.025	-.072	.125*	.065				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.146	.008	.007	.632	.164	.015	.212				
Q3I. Don't know enough about what's on ballot	Pearson	.020	-.063	-.010	-.036	.270**	.159**	.191**	.064			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.701	.227	.853	.494	.000	.002	.000	.221			
Q3J. Just forgot to vote	Pearson	-.055	.090	.085	.027	.012	-.050	.083	.127*	.092		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.286	.083	.099	.602	.810	.339	.113	.014	.078		
Q3K. It was too confusing this time	Pearson	-.023	.009	.019	.048	.128*	.061	.140*	.065	.180**	-.028	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.677	.873	.720	.381	.018	.263	.010	.227	.001	.606	
Q3L. Whole process turned me off	Pearson	-.074	-.060	-.017	-.065	.330**	.211**	.230**	-.044	.265**	-.010	.188**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.172	.270	.752	.234	.000	.000	.000	.421	.000	.852	.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).   **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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<u>Appendix B – Methodological Notes</u>

1. Sample & Margin of Error
The survey was conducted by Survey and Policy Research Institute (SPRI) at San Jose State University by telephone August 6 through 30, 2012. The sample was obtained from the Marin County Registrar of Voters from the Registrar's voter file. Voters for whom the Registrar has phone numbers and who did not vote on June 5th, 2012, were selected; 24,000 total records met this criteria and were used. The survey of 358 non-voters has a sampling error of +/- 5 percent at a 95% confidence level.

2. Explaining the Correlation Matrix
Correlation between two variables (factors) is not necessarily causality. The descriptive power of correlation analysis is its potential for predicting information about the values on one variable given information on another variable. With the multivariate data matrix shown in Table 2 on the previous page, we single out every possible pair of variables and calculate a correlation coefficient for each pair. Each cell in Table 2 is occupied by a correlation coefficient between the variables represented by the particular row and column that the cell occupies. For example, the cell in Table 2 that is five rows down and three columns over is occupied with a correlation coefficient of $r = .307$, representing the correlation between the variables Q3C and Q3D. The correlation coefficient "r" can range from -1.00 to +1.00, when $r = +1.00$ that signifies a perfect positive relationship ($r = -1.00$ a perfect negative one). Rarely, if ever will two variables have a perfect correlation, and if they did that could likely indicate a problem with the data or the variables. A correlation of $r = 0$ indicates no relationship at all between the variables. The first important thing to look for is the * (asterisk) which indicates there is a statistically significant relationship. If there is, then the r value tells us the amount of variation between the variables that is being explained by their relation to each other. So in the example of .307** between Q3C and Q3D, not receiving a mail ballot explains about 30% of the variation in not being able to find a polling place. And the significance at $p = .01$ tells us that we are 99% sure of the accuracy of the prediction regarding the relationship.

Why Pearson Correlation is used with Dichotomous Data
Phi
The categories for each of the Q3 variables are given as a value of either 0 or 1 and the Pearson's Correlation is then applied to the data. It should be noted that because the values 0 and 1 are arbitrary assigned to the categories the sign of the phi coefficient is of minimal use.   It only indicates which diagonal had the greater concentration of scores. To estimate phi use the formula:

$$\phi = \frac{a(d) - b(c)}{\sqrt{(a+b)(c+d)(a+c)(b+d)}}$$

Phi coefficients in SPSS
Since the phi coefficient is simply the special case of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation applied to two dichotomous variables, the coefficients produced by CORRELATIONS SPSS command are phi coefficients when two dichotomous variables are involved.

INTRO1: Good (afternoon/evening). I'm calling from San Jose State University. We're conducting an important study about voting in Marin County. May I please speak with [NAME]?
Your name was randomly selected for this study from the list of registered Marin County voters who did NOT vote in the primary election this past June.

 INTRO2: Great! This survey is completely voluntary, confidential and poses no risk to you in any way. If we come to a question you don't want to answer, just tell me and we'll move on.

Q3. Now I am going to read a list of reasons. For each one, please tell me if this was an important consideration that influenced your decision NOT to vote in June. [Mark all that apply]

OPTIONS: Yes/No/Respondent says DID vote in June [*Not Eligible Thank You*]   DK/Refused
It was inconvenient to my schedule (Was this an important reason for you, or not?)
I did not receive my Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot
I had a new polling place that I couldn't find
I did not receive my mail ballot
I was not interested
My vote doesn't matter
Election Day is not fun anymore
My friends and family don't vote, so why should I?
I don't know enough about what's on the ballot
I just forgot to vote
It was too confusing this time [if select, ask why & fill in open-ended comments]
The whole process turned me off [if select, ask why & fill in open-ended comments]
Is there any other reason that you did not vote in the June election this year? [other (fill in comments)]

Q4 What was the MOST important consideration that influenced your decision not to vote in June?
[Open-ended] ["DO NOT READ LIST UNLESS RESPONDENT ASKS"]
It was inconvenient to my schedule
I did not receive my Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot
I had a new polling place that I couldn't find
I did not receive my mail ballot
I was not interested
My vote doesn't matter
Election Day is not fun anymore
My friends and family don't vote, so why should I?
I don't know enough about what's on the ballot
I just forgot to vote
It was too confusing this time [if select, ask why & fill in open-ended comments]
The whole process turned me off [if select, ask why & fill in open-ended comments]
Is there any other reason that you did not vote in the June election this year? [other (fill in comments)]

Q5 Here are several statements about voting. For each one, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

Here's the first one: "There are uninformed voters out there. Those uninformed voters should just stay home." Would you say that you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?
(1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat disagree, 5 = strongly disagree)

Q6 Here's the next one: "Voting, like jury duty, is our civic responsibility. Citizens can be fined for failing to show up for jury duty; the same should be true for failing to vote." Would you say that you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

Q7 Here's the next one: "Non-voters are the same as voters. So it really doesn't matter who shows up to vote – we all want the same result." Would you say that you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

Q8 Here's the last one: "If my friends and family knew that I did not vote, that would bother me." Would you say that you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

Q9 In your opinion, what percentage of registered voters in Marin County would need to turn out to vote in order for the process to be good enough for democratic representation? (If respondent is not sure, say: "Please give me your best guess.") [Open-ended, fill in percentage]
Q10 Please tell me what you think voter turnout was as a percentage of registered voters in Marin County this past election on June 5th? (If respondent is not sure, say: "Please give me your best guess.") [Open-ended, fill in percentage]
Q11 To the best of your recollection, how many pieces of mail did you receive from the Registrar of Voters that had to do with voting, your polling place, voting by mail or any aspect of the upcoming election? [READ RESPONSES]
a. One
b. Two
c. Three
d. other (fill in)

Q12 Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with this statement: "There should be more voter education done about the election process itself. Where to vote, when to vote, and how to vote is very complicated stuff that is just not explained sufficiently." Would you say that you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

Q13. Although political labels are never precise, generally speaking would you describe yourself as liberal, moderate, or conservative?
Q13A. [IF liberal] Would that be VERY liberal, or not very liberal?
Q13B. [IF conservative] Would that be VERY conservative, or not very conservative?
Q14. What is the highest level of school you have completed? Grade school or less….Some high school…High school graduate…Some college or vocational school ….College graduate (BA, BS)… Graduate school.

Q15. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself? [Interviewer codes response]: White/Caucasian/European, Hispanic/Mexican-American/Latino, Asian/Middle Eastern/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Other (specify)]

Q16: Including yourself, how many registered voters live in your household?
1=One
2=Two
3=Three
4=Four
5=Other (fill in)

Q17. Would you be willing to be contacted later by a researcher for a follow-up interview? Yes/No

Q18. Finally, and of course confidentially, please stop me when I mention a range that describes your annual household income.
1 = Less than $25,000 per year
2 = More than $25,000 but less than $50,000 per year
3 = More than $50,000 but less than $75,000 per year
4 = More than $75,000 but less than $100,000 per year
5 = More than $100,000 but less than $125,000 per year
6 = More than $125,000 but less than $150,000 per year
7 = More than $150,000 but less than $200,000 per year
8= More than $200,000 per year
9 = Refused

GENDER: [BY OBSERVATION, DO NOT ASK UNLESS YOU NEED TO]
1=Male
2=Female

Age: information recorded from voter rolls
Party: information recorded from voter rolls