

MEMO

From: Grecia Lima, National Political Director, Community Change Action

Date: 2023.08.17

RE: The complexity of democracy

Friends:

In 2022, with abortion on the ballot, voters made it clear that their rights would not be taken away. We joined other leading progressive organizations to connect narrower fights like this with the importance of protecting all our freedoms — using tested messaging with trusted voices to reach deep into communities often left out of the conversation. In 2023 the work continues. We are fighting for the rights of women and for our democracy at large, while our opposition continues their tired tactic of stripping down civic participation as a means to cling to power.

As recent municipal-level wins show, our movement won't be silenced. Thanks to tireless organizing, [Issue 1 was defeated in Ohio](#), securing the state's system of passing constitutional amendments with a simple majority in voter-led initiatives. Our partner Ohio Organizing Collaborative knocked on more doors than any other grassroots organization in the state to propel this win. In Tennessee, expelled state representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were both re-elected to their seats in the state House — and our partner Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) Votes reached over [100,000 voters to successfully push pro-immigrant candidates to runoff elections](#). And, as Tucson Council Member Lane Santa Cruz faced a difficult primary challenge, our partner LUCHA in Arizona spoke to over 1,000 voters to successfully move her — as well as Mayor Regina Romero — to the general election. Both leaders are [crucial for delivering progressive policies](#) for our communities.

We must celebrate these wins — and also build on implications and lessons learned as we look to 2024. Early voter contact is becoming even more significant because of state-level democracy differences. **Given voting barriers and opportunities, voters in some states make their plans to vote well before Election Day, meaning voter contact programs need to peak earlier.**

Overall, in our 2022 analysis, we saw that voters who were canvassed by Community Change Action and our partners for the first time earlier in the course of the election cycle tended to overperform their expected turnout rate at a significantly higher level than voters canvassed shortly before Election Day. (Note: Early contact didn't mean additional contacts, since, given limited resources, most voters received only three canvassed touches.)

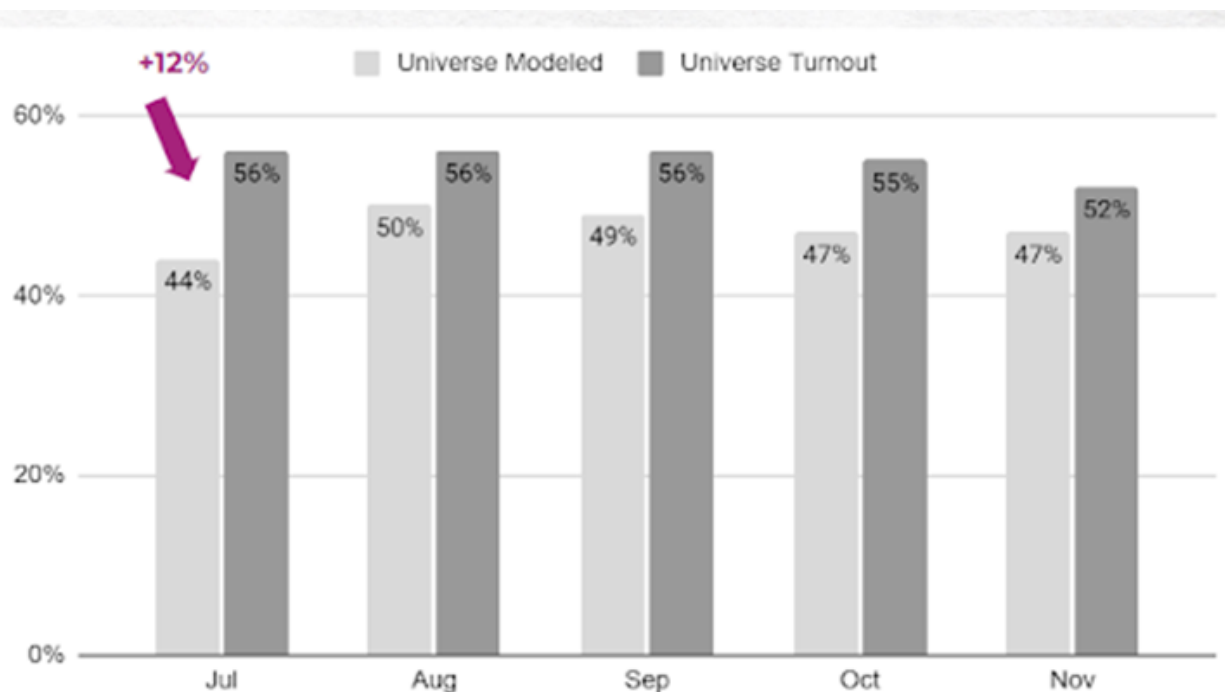


Chart compares CCA universe turnout against the Catalist model turnout based in the month first canvassed. Our universe overperformed model turnout at significantly higher rates when canvassed earlier in the cycle. In lieu of a program-wide randomized control trial we used the 2022 Catalist model turnout for comparison.

As always though, the devil is in the details. While the national trends point toward the power in early canvass and vote planning, the story is more complicated on a state-by-state basis. Arizona and Nevada, for example, have similar voting demographics but very different voting rules. In Nevada, voter contact pushes later in the cycle continued to have an impact, while in Arizona they did not. This difference can be attributed to the voting regulations of each state. Arizona has a strong vote-by-mail culture, so the program needed to peak earlier. Nevada, on the other hand, has same-day voter registration and a big push for early vote, creating urgency in the days and weeks before Election Day.

The bottom line: Field programs need to be flexible and responsive to the rules of each particular state, matching timing with voting barriers and voting opportunities. Our grassroots programs, imagined and executed hand-in-hand with state-based partners, are positioned to move with this flexibility — with the early investment needed to do so.

Yours in the fight,

Grecia Lima
 National Political Director, Community Change Action
 Executive Director, Community Change Voters