

Title: **Show Them the Money: The Effect of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Intergenerational Patterns of Voter Participation**

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Abstract: People who have more money are more likely to participate in politics. Despite clear evidence of this income bias in political participation, few have been able to isolate the causal effects of income. Moreover, no work has explored whether income narrows or exacerbates participatory inequality or has effects that span multiple generations. In this paper, we begin to fill these gaps by exploring the causal effect of exogenous unconditional cash transfers across two generations. Our approach employs a natural quasi-experiment that leverages the opening of a casino in Western North Carolina, which distributed a portion of its profits to some qualifying citizens, but not others. Using difference-in-difference and individual fixed effects models, we show that an additional \$4,000 per year increases children in the poorest households' later-life voter turnout noticeably—substantially narrowing participatory inequality. However, income transfers have no effect on adult-aged recipients, whose voting patterns appear to be locked-in. These results suggest that income differences play a key role in influencing levels of political inequality in the United States. They further imply that models of voting resources should be updated to formally incorporate life course dynamics.