

"Dollars on the Sidewalk: Should U.S. Presidential Candidates Advertise in Uncontested States?"

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Abstract: Presidential candidates in the United States do not intentionally advertise in states without rigorous competition for electoral votes. However, in some areas of non-competitive states, media markets overlap with battleground states, exposing these regions to political ads. These spillover advertisements allow us to examine the relationship between advertisements and campaign contributions, using data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project and the Federal Election Commission. Using propensity score matching within uncontested states, we find that 2008 aggregate giving in zip codes exposed to political ads was approximately \$6,800 (31.3 percent of mean contributions) more than in similar zip codes without advertisements. We examine the robustness of these results using two additional methodological specifications.