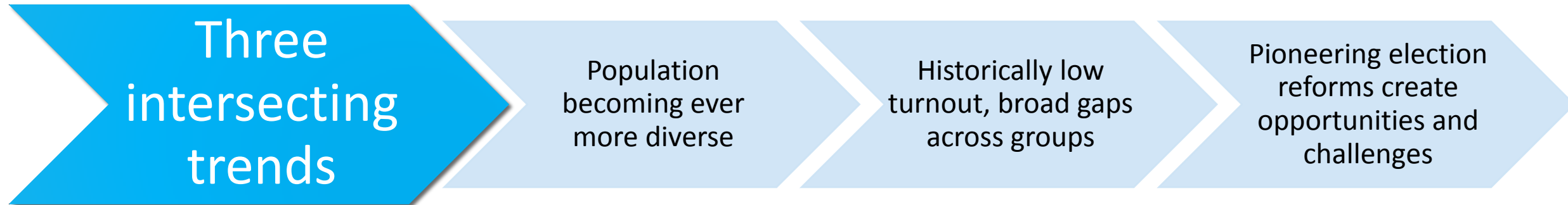


Research on Mobilizing Underrepresented Voters

THAD KOUSSER, UC SAN DIEGO

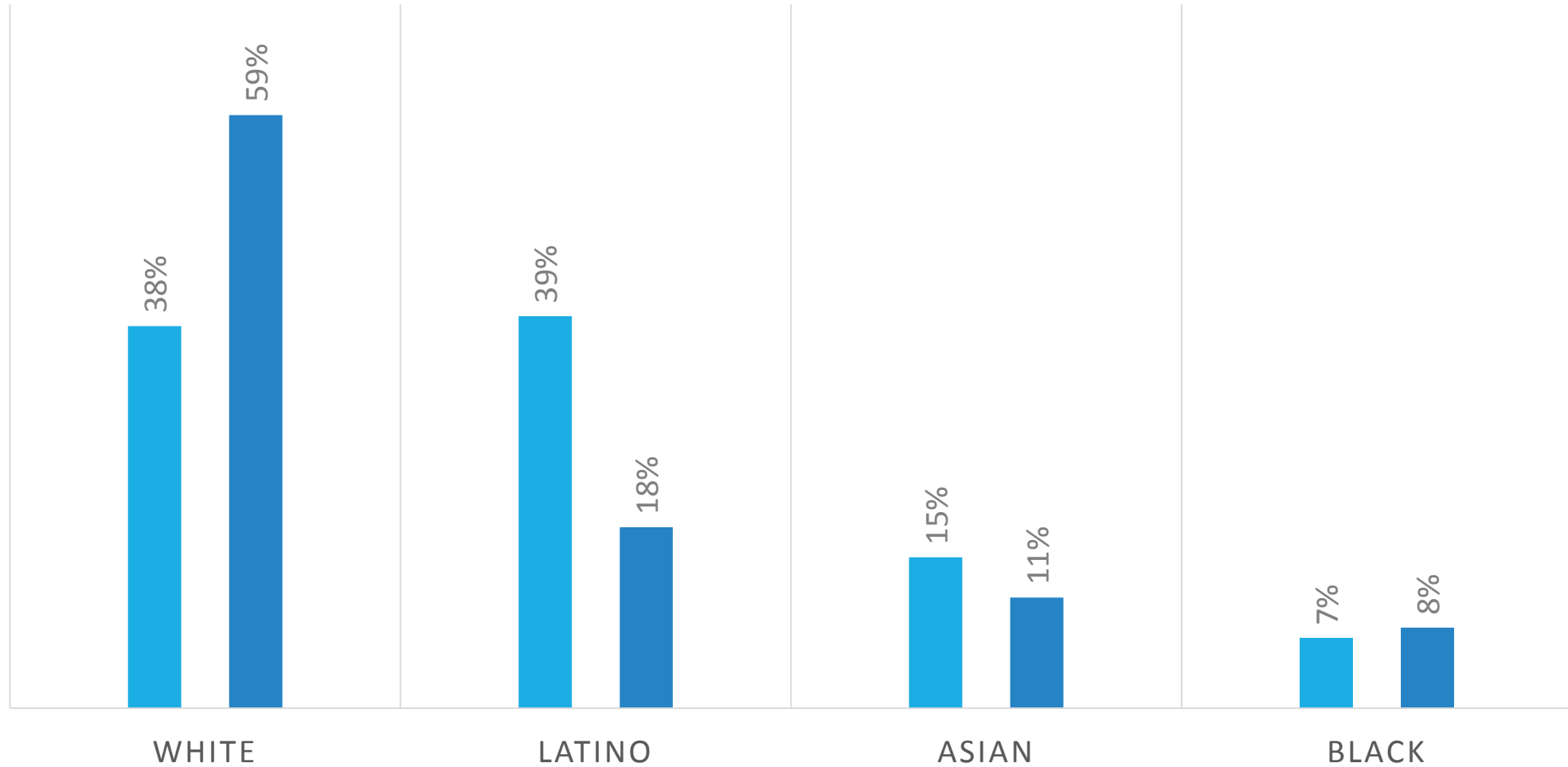
UC San Diego

Closing California's Participation Gaps

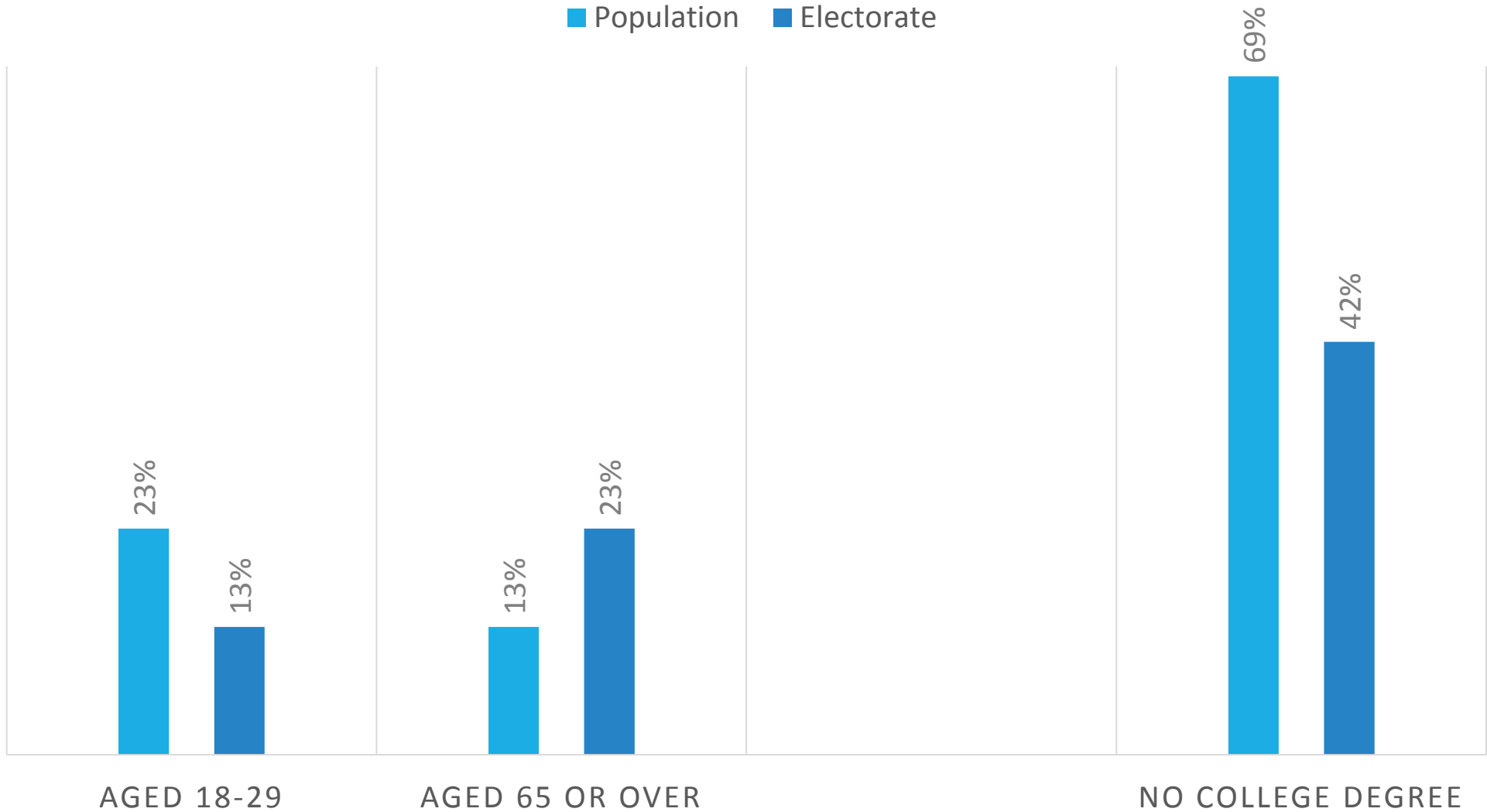


CALIFORNIA'S PARTICIPATION GAP, NOVEMBER 2014 (RACE AND ETHNICITY)

Population Electorate



CALIFORNIA'S PARTICIPATION GAP, NOVEMBER 2014 (AGE AND EDUCATION)



Closing California's Participation Gaps

Potential Solution 1 Research for a New Campaign Playbook

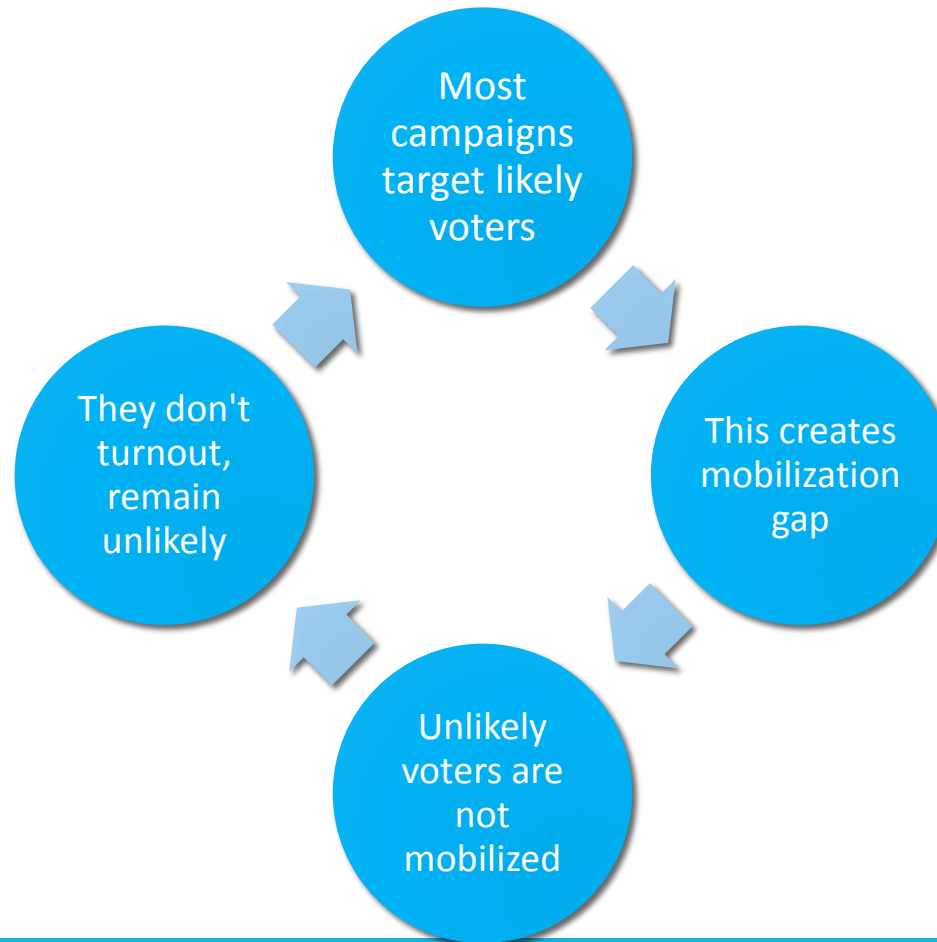
- End the vicious cycle of ignoring unlikely voters

Potential Solution 2 Optimizing New Election Laws

- Past studies point out need to monitor the participation gap
- Experimental studies to determine best practices
- UC-wide research collaboration to serve policymakers

Potential Solution 1

Research for a New Campaign Playbook

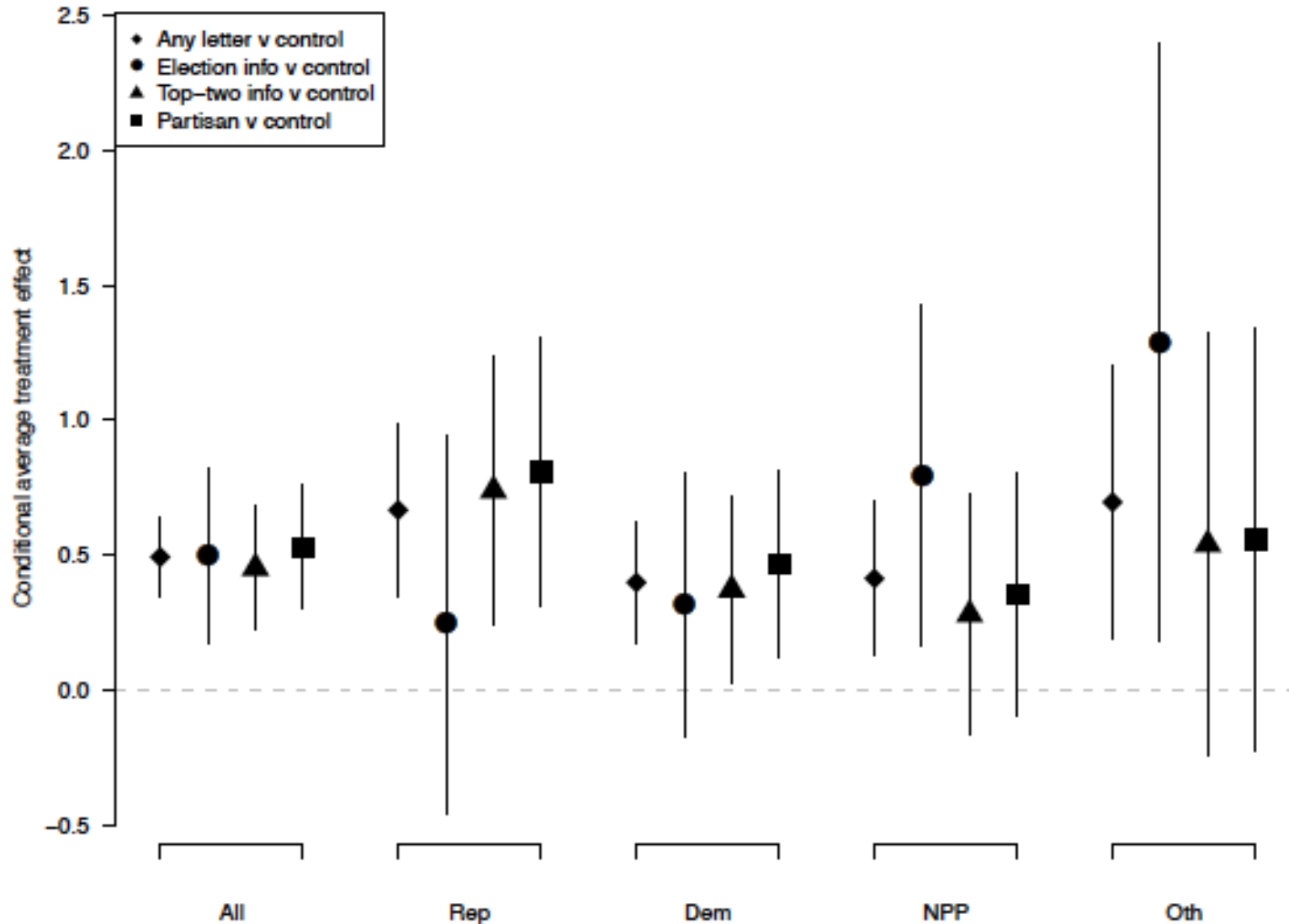


Ending the Vicious Cycle of Ignoring Unlikely Voters

Hill and Kousser (2016) targeted ~4 million Californians who voted in November 2012 but not in primary election. Ignored by campaigns.

- Randomly selected 150,000 of these voters to receive a letter urging them to turnout in the June 2014 California primary
- Partnered with California Common Cause, funded by the Hewlett Foundation
- With random treatment and control groups, comparing turnout rates shows true impact of mobilization

Mobilization Boosted Turnout (regardless of party or message)



Ending the Vicious Cycle

Unlikely voters **can** be mobilized as effectively as likely voters

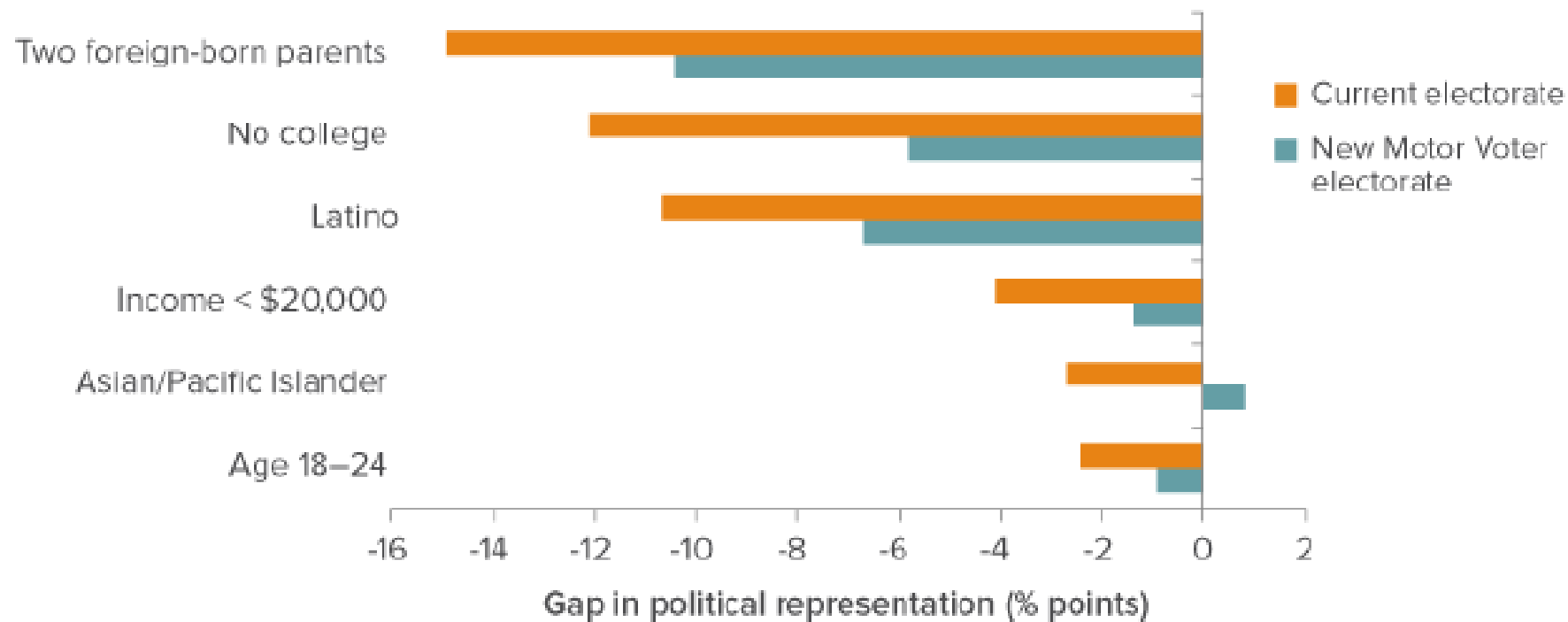
- Our experiment increased turnout by 0.5 percent, from 9.3% to 9.8%
- Twice the average effect of non-partisan mailings
- Garcia Bedolla and Michelson's 2012 *Mobilizing Inclusion* provides a handbook for turning out minority voters in California
- Abrajano, Junn, and Garcia Bedolla explore social media and traditional GOTV in 2014
- Gerber et al (2014) show that ex-felons can be mobilized

Will savvy campaigns change their conventional wisdom, capitalize?

Potential Solution 2

Optimizing New Election Laws

Figure 2. New Motor Voter has the potential to improve political representation for many groups



“But for substantial gains—and to achieve the more representative electorate highlighted in this report—there will have to be a significant and ongoing effort to reach out to these new registrants and get them to vote.”

Eric McGhee and Mindy Romero (2016) PPIC

Potential Solution 2

Optimizing New Election Laws

Senate Bill 450 relies on voting by mail and early voting to broaden participation

- Kousser and Mullin (2007) shows that in the **absence of outreach**, turnout drops in vote-by-mail precincts
- Arceneaux, Kousser, and Mullin (2012) shows that mobilization is more effective when polling place voting is an option
- Romero (2016) shows that young voters, Latinos less likely to vote by mail
- Point out the need to **expand and test** outreach efforts

UC-wide Effort Aimed at Narrowing California's Participation Gap

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