Can informational videos increase trust in elections?

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What you need to know:

Public information videos can – but don't always – increase trust in elections. Videos can increase election trust among people of all political stripes, independents, Republicans and Democrats alike. These videos typically explain the policies, procedures, and technology that ensure that ballots are counted accurately, often featuring election officials.

How we learned this:

In mid-November 2022, in collaboration with election officials in Texas, Georgia, Colorado, and Los Angeles County, we surveyed 3,038 eligible voters nationwide, plus an additional 1,467 eligible voters in TX, 1,224 in GA, 1,379 in CO, and 1,230 in Los Angeles County. Survey respondents were randomly assigned to watch an election public information video, or to view a "control" video on an unrelated topic.

Results:

People in...	**Percent increase in eligible voters who agree they trust their state's elections "some" or "a lot"**	**What they watched**
Texas	13.0	SOS 101: Voting Systems in Texas
Georgia	7.7	Secure the Vote: Voting System
Colorado	4.6	A fact-based video
Los Angeles County	7.5	A video featuring the county registrar as the trusted source of information
Colorado	No significant impact	A bipartisan video featuring current and former Secretaries of State of Colorado
Los Angeles County	No significant impact	Informational Instagram graphics https://toolkit.lavote.gov/instagram-

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People in…	Percent increase in eligible voters who agree they trust their state's elections "some" or "a lot"	What they watched
		posts/
Texas	No significant impact	An appearance on Fox news by a Texas official
Nationwide	2.5 increase in percentage who report they trust how elections are run in other states, 2.9 increase in percentage who trust election officials	Democracy Defended ad from Virginia or "Phil in the Blanks" from Maricopa County in Arizona
Notes: All results are statistically significant: Large enough that they would not be produced by random chance alone in 95 out of 100 cases. Increases in trust did not vary by party.		

How can election officials act on these findings?

Viewing the videos linked in this report shows that they do not require extravagant production value or complex plots; they typically feature registrars or Secretaries of State explaining election protections in a straightforward way so that the public can learn key facts from a trusted source. Officials then post them on their websites, social media, and share them through community networks.

What we don't know yet

How long do increases in trust last? Why do some videos work, and not others? What are the best ways to deliver these messages? Could other messengers like poll workers, faith leaders, elected leaders, or celebrities strengthen election trust? We are conducting additional research studies during this election in order to answer these questions.

Learn more

+ ElectionLine blog
+ Yankelovich research brief on the survey experiments
+ Full report on the 2022 national Yankelovich Center survey on trust (https://yankelovichcenter.ucsd.edu/)