

My name is Matt Duell, and I have a doctorate in Political Science from SUNY Stony Brook, as well as years of experience working in data analysis and quantitative research for political organizations and campaigns. Given the concerns expressed by organizations in Texas towards the first version of this report, the Texas Democratic Party has asked me to independently verify their analytical methods and results and make recommendations on improvements to the report. My role was to provide an impartial review of the data, the analytical approach, and the code used to generate their findings, and provide additional analysis as I saw fit.

In the course of this review, given the data shared with me, I found no evidence that the methodology, code, or results generated by the rest of this report were seriously flawed. However, there were some improvements I felt could be made. First, I suggested additional clarity on whether any process was used to identify and/or remove outliers from the dataset. Second, and most importantly, I felt that the original report was too narrowly focused. The expressed goal of the report was to gauge the quality of the electoral programs in the state, but once the discrepancy between paid and volunteer contact success rates was identified, most of the rest of the report is used to attempt to analyze why the discrepancy exists. While this is important work, and I suggested some other hypotheses that could be investigated in the future, I also felt that it deviated from the overall goal of the report. The report effectively presents two measures of program effectiveness: contact success rate and turnout impact of contacts. Both are important diagnostic tools, and if measures can be taken to maximize them, they can have a large impact on the success of electoral endeavors. However, there are other ways that canvass programs show value that deserve attention, and I present some of that analysis below.

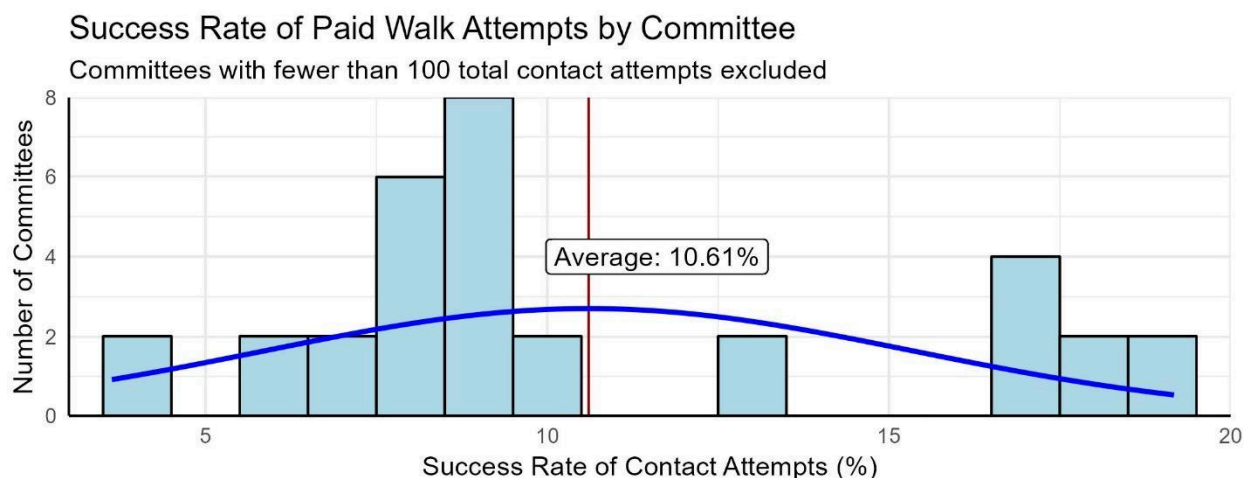
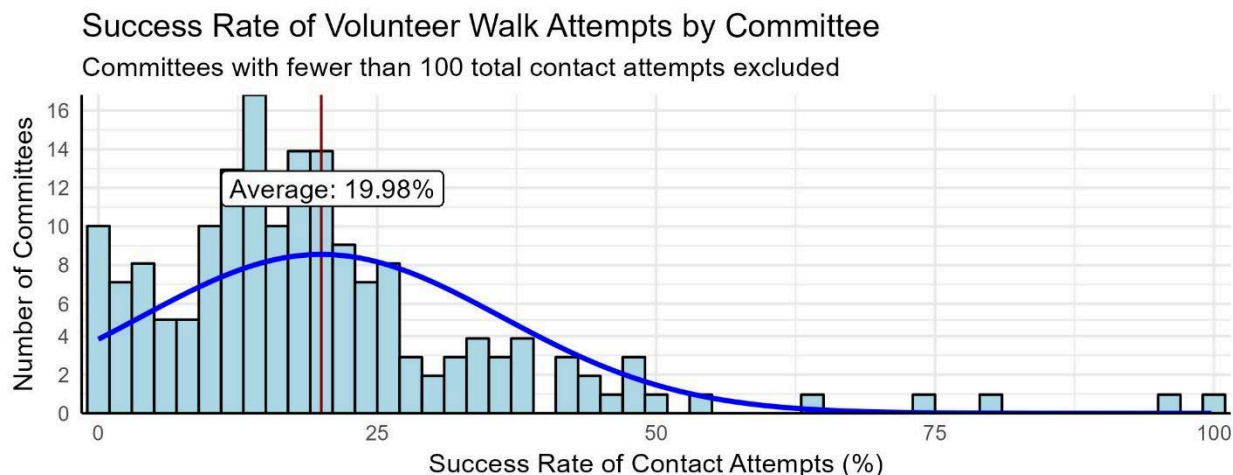
In academic work and in policy evaluation, the burden of proof lies, rightly, on those claiming the effectiveness of an intervention, and to differentiate those effects from chance or alternative explanations. Given this precedent, I attempt to identify places where paid canvass programs succeed despite lower contact success rates. Though this data is observational in nature and causal inference would be a much more complicated undertaking, nonetheless, I believe I identify some areas in which paid canvass programs added value not captured in the original report.

First, I wanted to investigate the number of voters uniquely contacted by paid and volunteer canvassing. Even if paid canvassing has a lower contact success rate, regardless of why that rate appears, if unique voters are being activated by those attempts, then paid canvasses are demonstrating value not reflected in the original report. Of the approximately 2.35 million paid walk attempts, about 1.5 million individuals were attempted, with an average of 1.56 attempts per person. Of those 1.5 million individuals, approximately 1.1 million were not attempted by volunteers. Of the 1.1 million uniquely-attempted individuals, just over 135,000 (12.1%) were successfully contacted at least once. Volunteers, meanwhile, made roughly 2.74 million contact attempts in total, with an average of 1.53 attempts per person. Of those, volunteers attempted to contact 1.41 million people that paid canvassers did not, 345,000 (24.4%) of which were successfully contacted at least once. I also note how many counties were uniquely targeted by paid or volunteer canvass programs. This information is summarized in the table below. In addition to contacting 135,000 voters that otherwise would not have been reached face-to-face, only paid canvass programs reached potential voters in Atascosa and Medina counties.

	<i>Total Attempts</i>	<i>Unique Voters</i>	<i>Unique Voters Successfully Contacted (% of unique voters)</i>	<i>Unique Counties Targeted</i>
<i>Paid Walk</i>	2,351,304	1,116,641	135,106 (12.1%)	2
<i>Volunteer Walk</i>	2,752,906	1,412,919	345,169 (24.4%)	34

Next, I was interested in examining contact success rates at a committee level instead of at the individual level. While returning to the contact success rate problem may seem like a diversion, I believe

it acts as an important proxy in this case. If some committees demonstrated contact success rates significantly higher than the average, it might suggest that there are some trainings, quality control standards, or other practices that work particularly well and could be disseminated to increase success rates more widely. I present the results of this investigation below.



While there are only 16 committees who ran paid canvass programs (after removing those who had fewer than 100 contact attempts), some of those committees overperformed expectations, with closer to a 20% contact rate. I recommend that the TDP have some follow-up conversations with these committees and attempt to learn why they are performing differently than their peers, and whether there are any transferable practices which can be adopted by others. It is also a possibility that they are due to some quirk that is out of committee control, such as a particularly active community of voters or highly-salient local race. Extensive interviews with the committees running paid canvass programs will help identify which hypothesis is correct.

There are a few points of interest that I feel the need to comment on. The averages for contact rates above are different than what is presented in the rest of the report – this is a function of aggregating at the committee level and the threshold I've chosen to remove outliers. Another result worth noting is that a few volunteer committees reported contact success rates over 70%. While I consider these statistically unlikely, although not impossible, I have chosen to leave them in, as removing them does not

dramatically shift the mean of the distribution. Additionally, these committees represent only 0.24% of total volunteer contact attempts.

In conclusion, my independent review confirms that the methods and results presented in the remainder of this report are consistent with accepted standards and practices for this type of analysis. Given the constraints on budget and available data, I have provided additional analysis that highlights potential strengths and benefits of paid programs—both those publicly reported here and those privately delivered to the TDP. I have also made recommendations for improvements to this report and for potential future research avenues.

- Matt Duell, PhD