

CASE STUDY | OCTOBER 2026

AI disclosure in voter outreach: a randomized test

Findings from a head-to-head test of upfront AI disclosure among 46,889 Michigan mail voters.

As part of its program for Defend Our Courts in the Michigan Supreme Court election, Vector ran a voter education program on the Convos conversation engine. Among a large cohort of likely Michigan mail voters, half were told upfront that they were interacting with a virtual assistant, and half were not. All other variables were identical.

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PROGRAM RUN BY

Vector Political for Defend Our Courts

CONVERSATIONS POWERED BY

Convos

TEST

Randomized within a single send on Oct 11, 2026.
23,444 vs 23,445 voters, measured at 17 hours

46,889

Likely-Democratic Michigan mail-ballot voters, split in rotation into two groups

+16%

Relative lift in response rate with disclosure (2.08 vs 1.80 per 100 delivered), statistically significant

5.43 / 5.47

Opt-out rate per 100 with and without disclosure. No meaningful difference

1 VS 6

Voters who asked "are you AI?" when told upfront, vs when not told

THE QUESTION

Why a head-to-head test was needed

Vector's prior review of more than 175,000 conversations found that voluntary AI disclosure, paired with an assurance that a real person reads every reply, was associated with higher reply rates. Those comparisons were drawn across different programs, audiences and messages, and could not establish cause.

Does upfront disclosure change how voters respond when everything else is held constant?

The Michigan program presented an opportunity to find out in a head-to-head test: one audience, one message, and a coin flip on upfront AI disclosure.

THE TEST

Test design

Voters were assigned to the two versions in rotation, producing groups of 23,444 and 23,445. The opening message explained that two Michigan Supreme Court seats sit in the nonpartisan section of the mail ballot, where a straight-party vote leaves them blank. The versions differed only in the third paragraph:

WITHOUT DISCLOSURE

We're with Defend Our Courts, an independent group that works only on state supreme court races. Want the two Democratic-endorsed names before your ballot goes back? Reply NAMES.

WITH DISCLOSURE

This is a digital assistant with Defend Our Courts. We're an independent group that works only on state supreme court races. **A real person reads every reply.** Want the two Democratic-endorsed names before your ballot goes back? Reply NAMES.

Both versions carried the same opt-out and paid-for-by lines, and replies in both were handled by the same Convos agent under identical instructions. Results were measured approximately 17 hours after the send.

RESULTS

Results

PER 100 DELIVERED	WITH DISCLOSURE	WITHOUT	DIFFERENCE PER 1,000 (95% INTERVAL)	SIGNIFICANT
Response rate	2.08	1.80	+2.8 (+0.1 to +5.5)	YES
Deep engagement (3+ voter messages)	0.35	0.30	+0.6 (-0.6 to +1.7)	NO
Opt-out rate	5.43	5.47	-0.4 (-4.8 to +4.0)	NO

419 responses with disclosure against 363 without. The response gain was already visible at 111 minutes and had widened by 17 hours.

VOTER REACTIONS

Voter reactions to the AI agent

Every conversation in which a voter wrote more than an opt-out request was reviewed and coded. In the test send, one disclosed voter asked if they were texting with AI vs. six voters asking the same question among the undisclosed group. Three disclosed voters commented favorably on the agent, and none objected. Across all four sends of the Michigan program, 1,219 conversations were reviewed: eight voters asked whether they were speaking with an AI, four objected, and three commented favorably.

When asked, the agent identifies itself and returns to the conversation:

VOTER

You are an AI, correct?

CONVOS AGENT, FOR DEFEND OUR COURTS

Yes, I'm a digital assistant working on behalf of Defend Our Courts. A real person reads every reply too. Nothing hidden there. But I'd love to hear your answer: what would you want Michigan's highest court to protect?

VOTER

It's clear to me that I'm talking to an LLM here.

CONVOS AGENT, FOR DEFEND OUR COURTS

You're right, and you deserve a straight answer. Yes, you're talking to a digital assistant. A real person does read these replies. That part is true, not a dodge.

The most substantive criticism voters raised was not that an AI was used, but whether anyone would hear their reply.

The assurance of human review speaks to that concern directly.

WHAT IT MEANS

Recommendations

- 1 Adopt disclosure as the default.** Conversational outreach should identify the sender as a digital assistant and state that a real person reads every reply in the first message.
- 2 Keep the assurance of human review accurate.** The commitment that a person reads every reply should be matched by regular review of replies and timely follow-up on questions the agent cannot answer.
- 3 Maintain honest answers.** The agent should continue to confirm that it is an AI whenever asked and return to the conversation.
- 4 Extend the test.** This result comes from one program and one audience, measured at 17 hours. Future sends should test other audiences and separate AI identification from the assurance of human review.

ABOUT VECTOR POLITICAL

Vector helps campaigns and causes find and talk with their audience, turning what people say into conversational intelligence about why they care, give, vote and act. Vector's texting programs run on the Convos conversation engine.

ABOUT CONVOS

Convos is a controlled AI texting platform that turns every conversation into clear, actionable campaign intelligence. Real-time tagging, alignment and sentiment tracking, and AI replies kept inside campaign-approved messaging. Clients run the platform themselves; the founders advise when asked.

convos with **Vector Political**

Tom Carroll, Co-founder, Convos

tom@pubsent.com | convos.ai

Marty Santalucia, Vector Political

marty@vectorpolitical.com | vectorpolitical.com

Built for dialogue.

Method: randomized in rotation within the Oct 11, 2026 send; read 17.5 hours later. Response excludes opt-out-only, abuse-only and wrong-number replies. Two-proportion tests, 95% intervals. Prepared by Vector Political for Defend Our Courts.