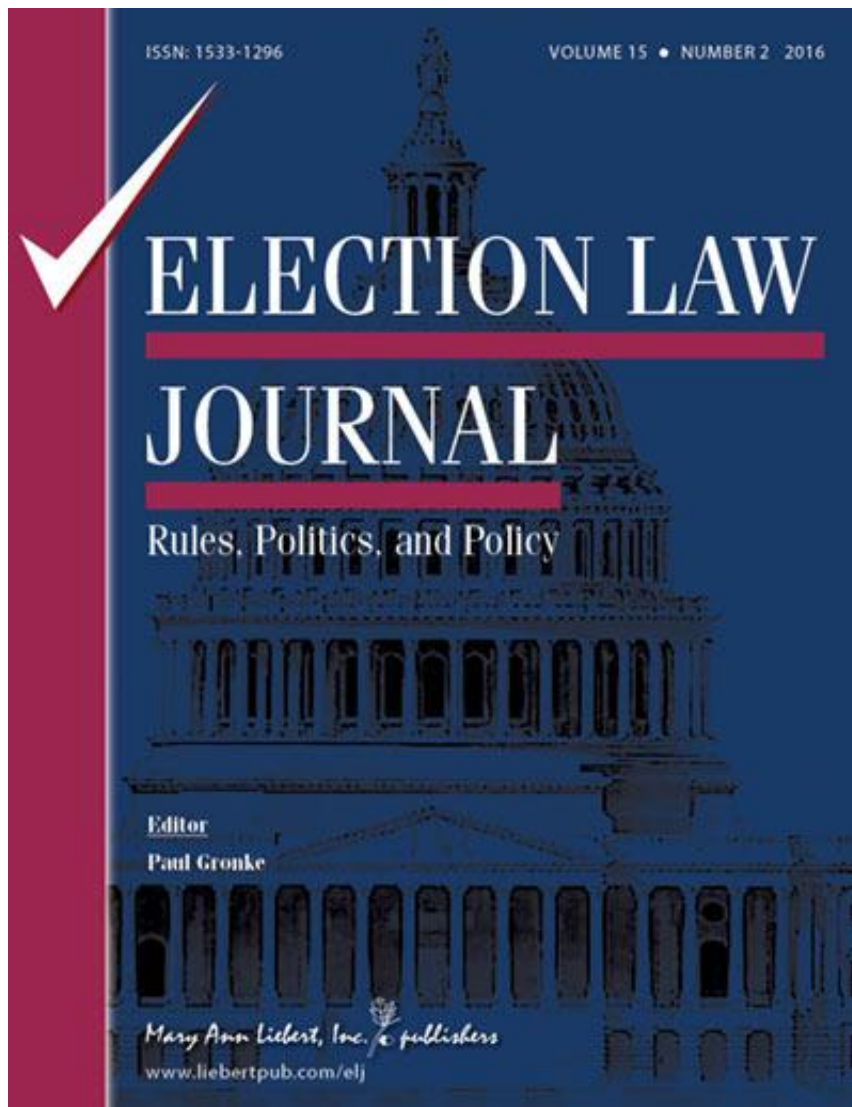


# Does publicizing incentive programs increase political donations?

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Field studies designed to assess the impact of promoting political contribution incentives, such as public matching funds and tax credits, showed that nonpartisan publicity did not affect the likelihood that individuals would make a contribution or the amount they would donate. Possible reasons why the use of nonpartisan messages to publicize incentives did not attract new donors or increase contributions are examined in an article in *Election Law Journal*.

Coauthors Michael Schwam-Baird, Costas Panagopoulos, Jonathan Krasno, and Donald Green, Columbia University, Fordham University (New York, NY), and University of Binghamton, NY, suggest that more partisan messages promoting contribution incentives may have a greater effect on donor behavior. In the article entitled "Do Public Matching Funds and Tax Credits Encourage Political Contributions? Evidence from Three Field Experiments Using Nonpartisan Messages"), the authors emphasize the important lessons to be learned from this study related to campaign finance policy.

"While hundreds of millions of dollars are being raised by presidential candidates this cycle from small donations, the reality is that below the presidential level, the campaign finance system remains very biased toward a small number of donors," says *Election Law Journal* Editor Paul Gronke, Reed College (Portland, OR). "The experiments in this article demonstrate that by use of modest public matching funds, we can significantly increase contributions by Americans of modest means."

**More information:** Michael Schwam-Baird et al, Do Public Matching Funds and Tax Credits Encourage Political Contributions? Evidence from Three Field Experiments Using Nonpartisan Messages, *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* (2016). [DOI: 10.1089/elj.2015.0321](https://doi.org/10.1089/elj.2015.0321)

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