



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## Harnessing the Electoral Power of Black Joy

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As is often the case in U.S. elections, Black voter turnout will be crucial this fall. Voters in heavily Black cities like *Atlanta, Georgia*, and *Charlotte, North Carolina*, will decide whether to re-elect their Black mayors. In *New Jersey* and *Virginia*, Black voters will exert a powerful influence in gubernatorial and state legislative races, among other races around the country.

However, to drive voter turnout within these communities, it's imperative to recognize that in Black communities, voting is often a declaration of Black joy and a commitment to show up for one another. It's a celebration of the power of every individual and of the collective, as well as a remembrance of those who fought for enfranchisement. And despite the increasingly fraught environment of modern elections, generating a celebratory atmosphere that evokes these positive emotions encourages political engagement—and voter turnout.

As we document in our new book, *Party at the Ballot Box*, using packages of celebratory and educational materials to cultivate Black joy motivates Black turnout. Black voters, and especially Black women, are repeatedly told that their votes are important and are urged to turn out to vote. This project was more than that. It wasn't reminders to vote with the usual message about civic duty. The packages didn't talk about dire threats to democracy or the power of Black voters to influence election outcomes.