

# **Covid and Electoral Accountability**

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## **Abstract**

This paper studies the incentives of local politicians to provide information that supports citizen compliance with rules during the covid 19 pandemic. Focusing on Italian municipalities during the first wave of the pandemic, we combine data about local elections with novel data about individual mobility and local government communication on Facebook. We show that in municipalities where mayors were facing elections, local governments provided significantly more covid-related Facebook posts. We also find that more information provision caused a significant decrease in mobility. However, this effect seems to arise only in the northern and central regions of the country, but not in the south. Moreover, we do not find any effect of reduced mobility on key health outcomes such as excess mortality.