



July 21, 2016

National Science Foundation
Division of Social and Economic Sciences
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230, USA

To Whom It May Concern:

We write in support of the Prof. Alberto Simpser and Prof. Kenneth Greene's application for NSF funding for the study "How Does Vote Buying Shape Voting Behavior and the Quality of Elections?". Our organization, the *Instituto Nacional Electoral* or INE, is charged with running national and local elections in Mexico. Over the past year, we have worked very closely with Prof. Simpser on other projects, under the aegis of a high-level agreement between our organization and ITAM, signed by both INE's President and ITAM's Provost. ITAM is one of the best regarded universities in the country. The agreement makes it possible to jointly conduct and support research and field interventions with Prof. Simpser and his team.

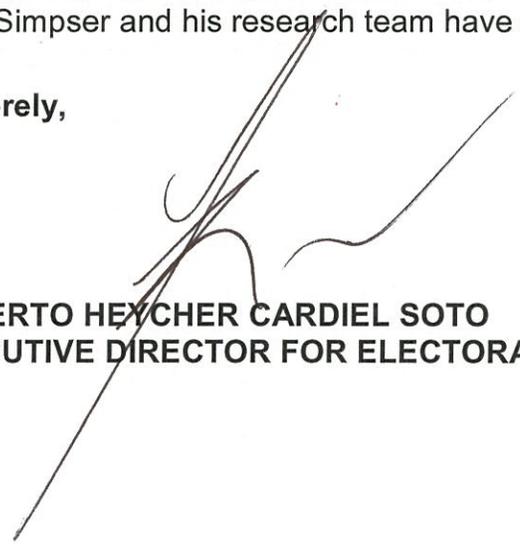
As we have expressed on numerous occasions to Prof. Simpser, credible knowledge about vote buying based on solid empirical evidence is a great unmet need of our organization. Accusations of vote buying by political parties are a major issue in Mexican elections and, whether they are or are not true, they have the potential to harm public confidence in electoral institutions and in election outcomes. As the most publicly-visible electoral authority in the country, we very much need to understand how often vote buying occurs and what effects it has on the civic and democratic attitudes of citizens, on their trust in our institution and in the government, on their behavior as voters, and on the effectiveness of legitimate campaigning by political parties. Anecdotes about, but it is not easy to answer these questions with evidence, and therefore we believe the work of external researchers with expertise in social science and statistical methodology, as well as up to date on the best available scholarship, is crucial.

We are familiar with the details of the project and consider it to be of the utmost importance. We are particularly keen on the four-wave panel design, as it will make it possible to follow individuals over time, to observe their attitudes and vote intentions before and after campaign events and vote buying offers, and to

therefore draw believable conclusions about what causes what. The focus on a single municipality will make it possible for the researchers, and for us once they share their results, to put together our deep qualitative knowledge with the quantitative findings. The in-depth focus on a single municipality will yield knowledge that could not be gleaned from the many existing single-wave cross sectional surveys that contain one or two questions about vote buying. The panel component is probably the most unique and the most useful aspect of the project. A broad-based national survey would also be helpful as a complement, especially if run on the same election and if it uses some of the same questions about vote buying.

In sum, we believe this project has the potential to provide information that we, and many governmental agencies, could effectively use to better understand the nature of the vote buying phenomenon and its effects, and to take appropriate policy action. Under the INE-ITAM agreement, we at INE are in a position to share our extensive trove of data relating to elections, our expertise and knowledge of the field, and our ample experience in the Mexican electoral arena, with the research team (always protecting, of course, the privacy of individuals as the law requires). Prof. Simpson and his research team have our complete support.

Sincerely,



ROBERTO HEYCHER CARDIEL SOTO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL TRAINING AND CIVIL EDUCATION