Title: Political partisanship influences behavioral responses to governors' recommendations for COVID-19 prevention in the United States

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Abstract
Voluntary physical distancing is essential for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Political partisanship may influence individuals' responsiveness to recommendations from political leaders. Daily mobility during March 2020 was measured using location information from a sample of mobile phones in 3,100 US counties across 49 states. Governors' Twitter communications were used to determine the timing of messaging about COVID-19 prevention. Regression analyses examined how political preferences influenced the association between governors' COVID-19 communications and residents' mobility patterns. Governors' recommendations for residents to stay at home preceded stay-at-home orders, and led to a significant reduction in mobility that was comparable to the effect of the orders themselves. Effects were larger in Democratic than Republican-leaning counties, a pattern more pronounced under Republican governors. Democratic-leaning counties also responded more to recommendations from Republican than Democratic governors. Political partisanship influences citizens' decisions to voluntarily engage in physical distancing in response to communications by their governor.

Data description
We use location data on over 500 million device-days to measure daily mobility at the county-day level across 3100 counties in 49 US states. We measure governors’ communications about COVID-19 using over 10,000 tweets from their official and personal Twitter accounts.

JEL codes: I12, I18, D72, H75