To test the implications of my model, I utilize data from the Maxwell Poll from Syracuse University. The poll includes data on federal aid status, voter behavior, and party identification from a nationally representative sample from 2004-2007. The survey also includes detailed information on the type of aid the respondent receives and whether the respondent, someone in the household, or both receive aid from a given program.

My model predicts that heterogeneity in administrative barriers will alter the vote-buying (or negative vote-buying) power of aid. Previous work dichotomizes aid as either means-tested or universal, with entitlements falling into universal aid. Means-tested aid is thought to diminish turnout while universal aid is often thought to mobilize voters. However, I argue that this conceptualization of aid is lacking in two important ways. Firstly, entitlements are meaningfully distinct from other forms of universal aid, such as FEMA or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Beneficiaries are *entitled* to their benefits because they made a costly effort to obtain them. To be eligible for entitlements, one must put forward a costly effort, either by serving in the United States military (GI Bill) or paying into the program until age 65 (Social Security).

Secondly, the traditional dichotomy of aid-types implies that means testing is the most important institutional factor when evaluating aid-based voter behavior. This fails to consider the meaningful administrative barriers imposed by universal aid programs, such as disability insurance or unemployment. Neither program is means-tested, but I argue that the burden of proof for eligibility is comparable to that of means tested programs. According to the Social Security Administration, to apply for disability insurance, one must provide:

* Both a Social Security Number and proof of age
* Names, addresses, and phone numbers of doctors, caseworkers, hospitals, and clinics that provided care and dates of all visits
* Patient ID numbers pertaining to all visits
* Names and dosages of all the medications taken
* Medical records from doctors, therapists, hospitals, clinics, and caseworkers
* Laboratory and test results
* A summary of past employment and a recent W-2 form or federal tax return
* Documentation of any other benefits, permanent or temporary, such as worker’s compensation or military pensions

After submitting an application, applicants are required to sit for a disability interview, after which their application will be approved or denied.

This is not to say that means testing may not be particularly degrading or result in a unique reduction in self-efficacy, but that certain universal programs are not without high costs to applicants and that these costs are remarkably similar to that of means tested programs. In other words, it is challenging to disaggregate the effects of means-testing from the effects of administrative burden on aid recipients. Means-tested programs often require the same financial statements—to determine poverty status, not assess lost income—proof of citizenship and age for the recipient and any dependents, proof of residency if the program is state-administered, and an interview. Given these similarities, I do not dichotomize between means-tested and universal aid.

Consider Table [TABLE NUMBER] below, which sorts self-reported voting frequency by aid type. Universal and entitlement programs have a higher percentage of recipients reporting that they “always” vote than means-tested types. However, means-tested voters are also, by definition, low-income voters and low-income voters are *a priori* less likely to turn out to vote than wealthier voters. EITC recipients and public housing recipients are the most likely of income-tested aid recipients to say they “always” vote. This is notable because arguably public housing and EITC place the lowest administrative barrier of the means-tested programs included here on recipients. A full breakdown of the eligibility and application requirements for each aid-type listed here can be found in Appendix [].

TABLE [] ABOUT HERE

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Always** | **Usually** | **Sometimes** | **Not At Al** |
| **Welfare** | 57% | 27% | 14% | 2% |
| **Food Stamp** | 58% | 24% | 16% | 3% |
| **WIC** | 61% | 25% | 13% | 2% |
| **Medicaid** | 62% | 23% | 13% | 3% |
| **Public Housing** | 66% | 29% | 5% | 0% |
| **EITC** | 66% | 24% | 8% | 2% |
| **Disability** | 68% | 19% | 9% | 3% |
| **Unemployment** | 69% | 23% | 6% | 2% |
| **Medicare** | 80% | 14% | 4% | 2% |
| **Social Security** | 80% | 15% | 4% | 1% |
| **Government Pension** | 83% | 12% | 4% | 1% |