I am writing to ask for your help with the British Election Study, which has been carried out at every general election for over forty years. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is being conducted by the University of Essex together with the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), an independent research institute registered as a charity.

The interview covers a wide range of topics about life in Britain and no special knowledge is needed to answer any of the questions. We want to speak to people from all walks of life, of all ages and with all sorts of interests, whether they are planning to vote in the election or not. The results of the study will be published. They have considerable educational value and will be used, for example, by students in schools and colleges.

Your address was chosen from the Post Office’s list of addresses by a scientific sampling method to ensure we get a representative picture of people living in Britain. No other address can take your place.

An interviewer will visit you shortly to explain more about the study. He or she will select one person in your household to take part and arrange a suitable day and time to speak to them. All interviewers carry an identification card which includes their photograph and the NatCen logo at the top of this letter. All replies are treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

I do hope you will be able to help. Even if you are unsure, please let the interview start and see how you get along, as you will be free to stop at any time. As a way of saying ‘thank you’, I enclose a book of stamps and I shall send the person who is interviewed a £10 gift voucher.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Professor David Sanders
University of Essex

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