



## **CALTECH/MIT VOTING TECHNOLOGY PROJECT**

A multi-disciplinary, collaborative project of  
the California Institute of Technology – Pasadena, California 91125 and  
the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

**TITLE**                      **Racial Differences in Election Administration**

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**Key words:**

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# Racial Differences in Election Administration

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# Summary of talk

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- Election administration data
- Turnout differences
- Reasons for not registering and voting (Census Bureau data)
- Voting administration and race (Pew/MIT Survey)
  - Lines
  - Voter identification



# What questions are we interested in?

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- Do different racial groups have different experiences voting?
  - Getting information about the election
  - Getting to the polls
  - Checking-in
  - Using the equipment
  - Trusting the count
- Do different racial groups turn out at different rates?
- Do different racial groups vote differently?

# What data do we have?

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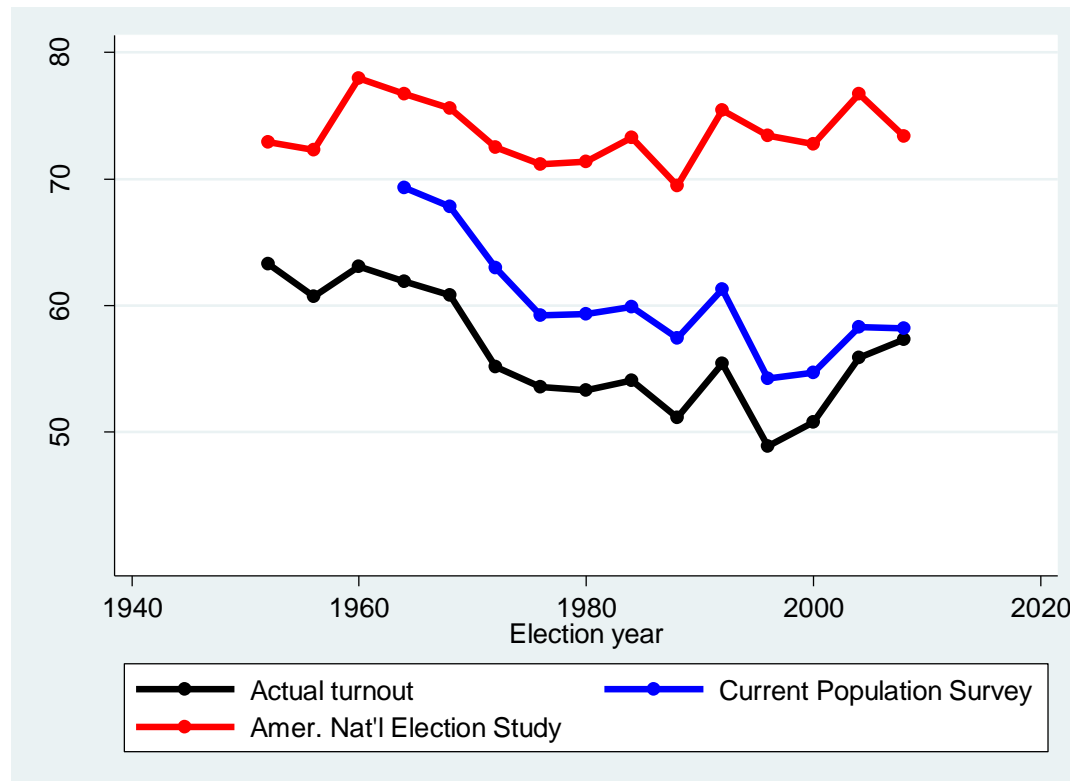
- Election returns
- Official voter registration data
- Aggregate Census Bureau Data
- Public opinion surveys
  - U.S. Census Bureau: Current Population Survey, Voter and Registration Supplement
  - American National Election Studies
  - Pew/MIT Survey of the Performance of American Elections

# Turnout differences

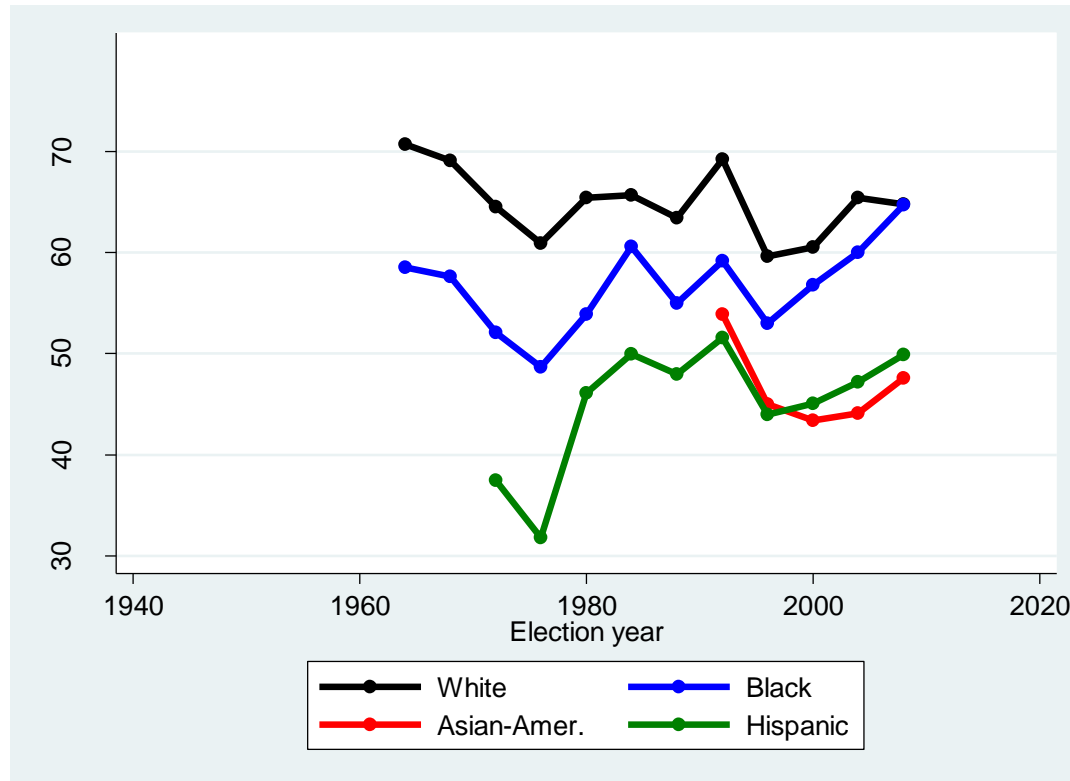
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# Turnout Comparison by Data Sources



# Turnout by Race



Source: CPS, V&R Supplement



# Turnout by race/age groups (pct.)

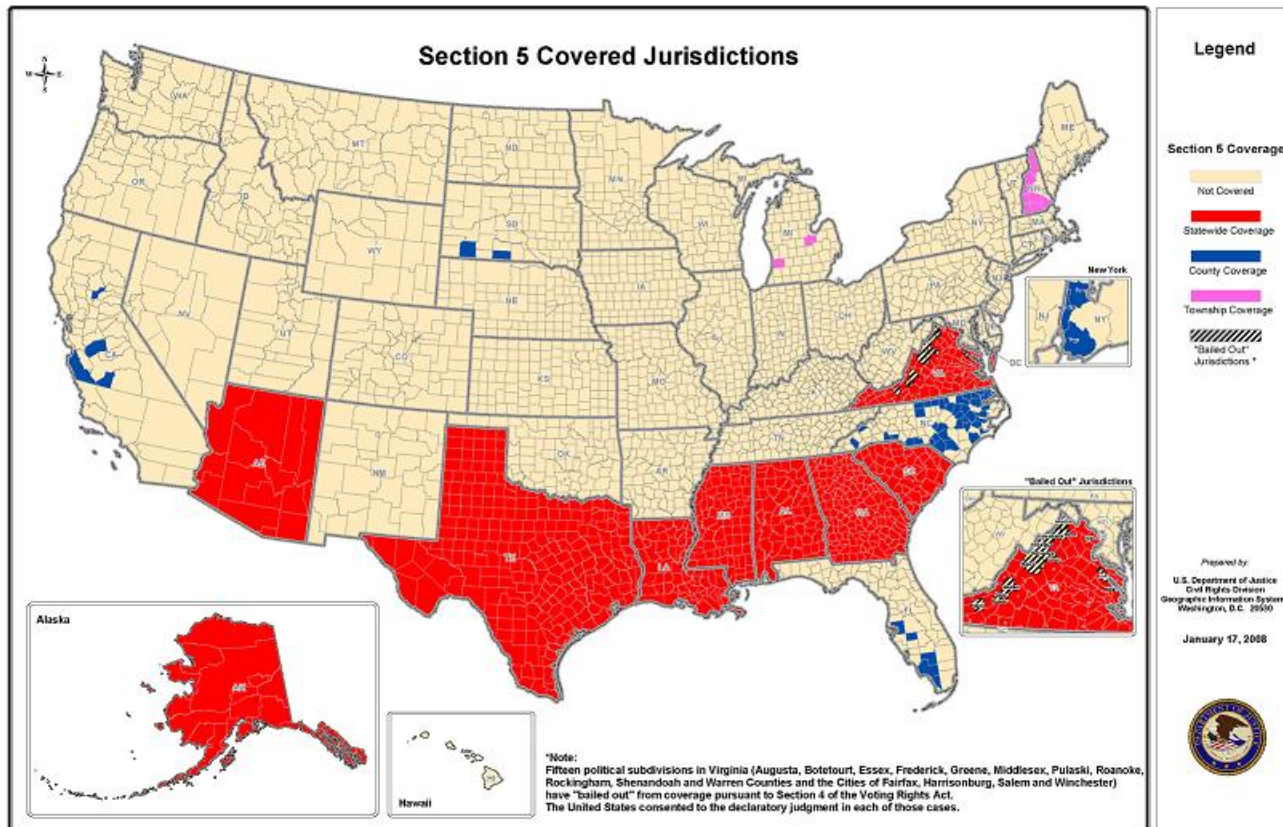
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	1972	2004	2008
White, 18-24	51.9	47.5	43.8
Black, 18-24	34.7	44.0	52.3
Hispanic, 18-24	30.9	33.0	38.8
White, 65+	64.8	72.2	71.5
Black, 65+	50.6	65.9	68.0
Hispanic, 65+	26.7	57.0	56.0

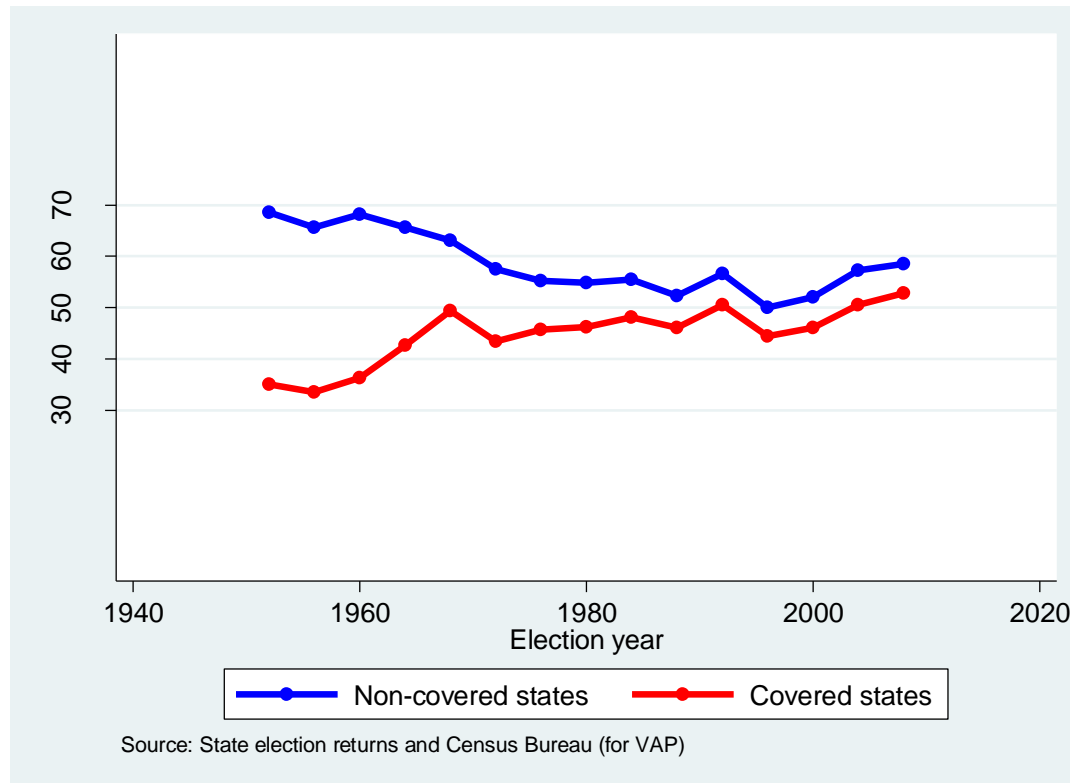
Source: CPS, V&R Supplement



# Section 5 Covered Jurisdictions



# Turnout differences



# Turnout Differences by Preclearance Status

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	Race	
	White	Non-White
Covered	61.6%	64.2%
Not covered	65.1%	58.7%

Source: CPS, V&R Supplement



# Reasons for Not Registering and Voting

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# Reasons for Not Registering, Current Population Survey

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- Which of the following was the MAIN reason you were not registered to vote?
  - Did not meet registration deadlines
  - Did not know where or how to register
  - Did not meet residency requirements
  - Did not live here long enough
  - Permanent illness or disability
  - Difficulty with English
  - Not interested in the election or not involved in politics
  - My vote would not make a difference
  - Not eligible to vote
  - Other reason



# Reasons for Not Registering, by Race

	White	Black	Hisp.
Didn't meet reg. deadline	14.6%	18.1%	16.0%
Didn't know how/where to register	3.5%	4.2%	5.3%
Didn't meet residency requirement	3.7%	2.9%	6.1%
Permanent illness/disability	5.2%	8.2%	4.2%
Difficulty w/ English	1.0%	0.8%	3.2%
Not interested in the Election	42.6%	31.2%	31.7%
My vote wouldn't make a difference	4.3%	3.7%	2.2%
Not eligible to vote	7.1%	12.7%	16.5%
Other reason	18.1%	18.4%	14.9%



# Reasons for Not Voting, Current Population Survey

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What is the main reason you did not vote?

- Illness or disability (own or family's)
- Out of town or away from home
- Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)
- Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference
- Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule
- Transportation problems
- Didn't like candidates or campaign issues
- Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location)
- Bad weather conditions
- Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long
- Other





# Reasons for Not Voting, By Race

	White	Black	Hisp.
Illness or disability	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Out of town/away from home	9.5%	7.3%	8.4%
Forgot to vote (or send for abs. ballot)	2.6%	3.6%	2.6%
Not interested/my votes wouldn't count	15.0%	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
Too busy/conflicting schedule	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>26.7%</b>
Transportation problems	2.6%	5.5%	2.7%
Didn't like candidates/issues	<b>15.1%</b>	4.9%	8.2%
Registration problems	6.1%	6.5%	7.6%
Bad weather	0.2%	1.3%	0
Inconvenient hours/polling place/lines	2.6%	3.8%	4.4%
Other	11.7	14.6%	12.7%



# Administration and Race

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# Mode of Voting

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	On Election Day	In-person before Election Day	Absentee/ by mail
White	63.2% (70.4%)	16.7% (13.3%)	20.1% (16.4%)
Black	63.9% (69.3%)	24.3% (23.5%)	11.8% (7.1%)
Hispanic	60.8% (70.8%)	25.9% (16.5%)	13.3% (12.7%)

Sources: Pew/MIT survey  
(CPS V&R Supplement)



# Experience at the polls: Questions on the MIT/Pew survey

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- How difficult was it to find your polling place to vote? (Very difficult, Somewhat difficult, fairly easy, very easy)
- How well were things run at the polling place where you voted? (Very well, okay, not well, terrible)
- Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote? (yes/no)
- Approximately, how long did you have to wait in line to vote?
- Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended? (Yes/no)
- How confident are you that your vote in the General Election was counted as you intended? (Very confident, somewhat confident, Not too confident, not at all confident)
- Were you asked to show picture identification, such as a driver's license, at the polling place this November? (yes/no)



# Summary of problems/experience

	White	Black	Hispanic
Not “very easy” finding polling place*	9.1%	14.8%	21.5%
Polling place not run “very well”	17.7%	24.1%	14.9%
Problem with registration	1.9%	3.8%	4.1%
Lines (minutes)*	14.4	33.1	18.3
Problem with voting equipment	2.2%	2.9%	1.5%
Not “very confident” vote was counted at cast*	30.7%	22.1%	23.7%
Asked to show photo identification*	52%	72%	64%

# Lines

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Survey	White	Black	Hispanic
Pew/MIT, Nov '08	12.9	29.3	15.7
Pew/MIT, Super Tuesday '08	4.2	6.5	3.6
Pew/MIT, Nov '07	2.2	5.6	3.0
CCES, Nov '06	21.1	30.9	29.0

Controls for the state of residence

# Voter Identification

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# Support for Photo ID laws

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- Do you support or oppose any of the following proposals for new ways of voting or conducting elections? . . . Require all people to show government issued photo identification when they vote
- Nationwide, 76% support
  - By race: 76% of Whites, 77% Blacks, 79% Hispanics
  - By party: 65% of Dems, 77% Ind., 90% Rep.
  - By ideology: 58% of Liberals, 76% Mod., 90% Cons.
  - By state: 61% in Mass. 88% in Hawaii
  - By existing requirement: 81% where it's used, 76% where it's not



# Variability of Voter ID Laws

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- Photo ID required (5%)
- Photo ID requested, but not required (6% of voters)
- ID Required of all first-time voters (6%)
- Some ID required (32%)
- “HAVA only” (52%)

Source: [electionline.org](http://electionline.org)



# Frequency of Being Asked for ID

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	Total	White	Black	Hisp.
Photo ID mentioned in law	87%	85%	96%	91%
Photo ID not mentioned in law	51%	47%	67%	64%

# What ID do people show?

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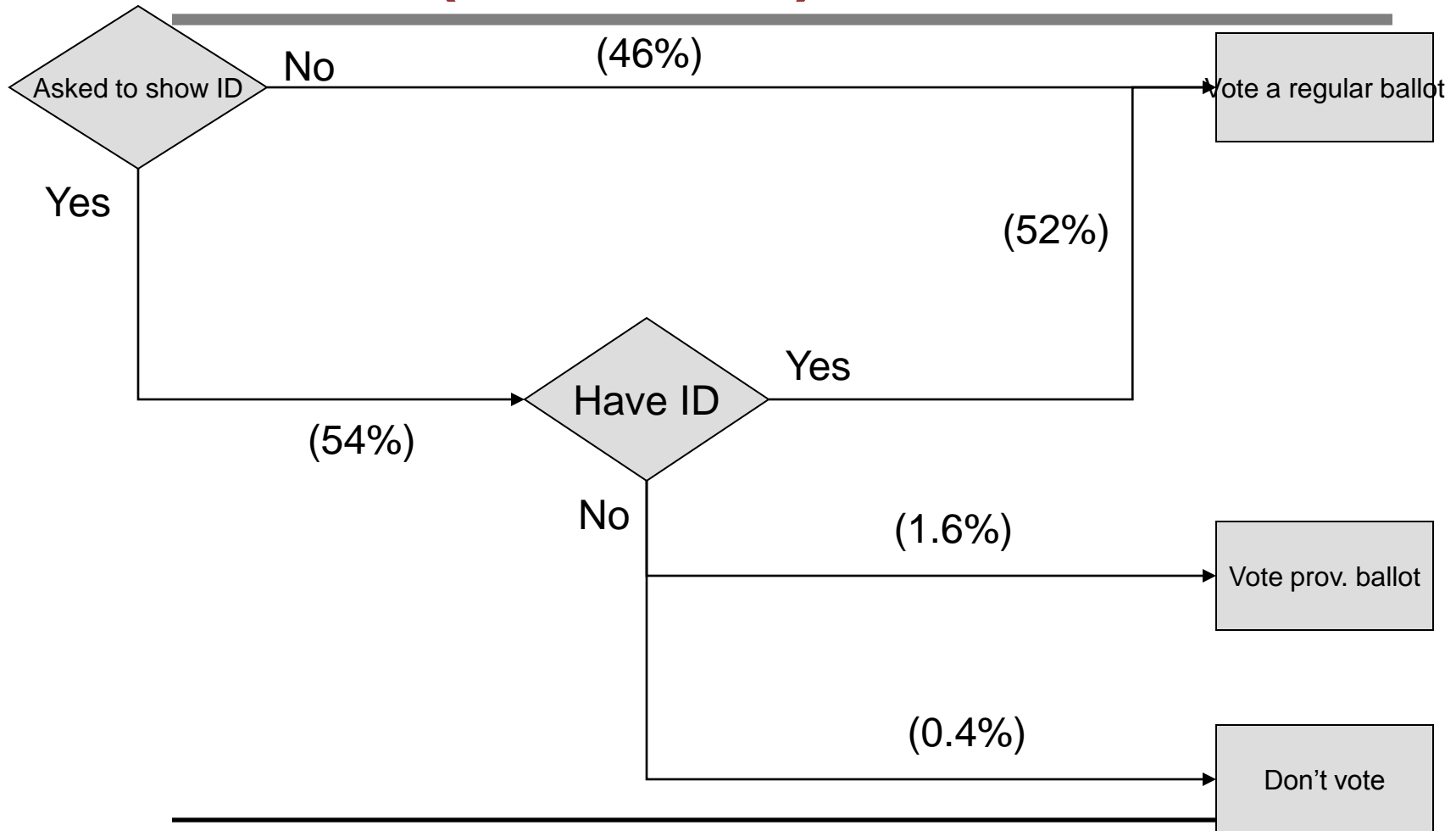
	Photo ID mentioned in law	Photo ID not mentioned
Drivers license	92%	86%
Voter registration card	2%	7%
Other gov't ID	5%	4%
Passport	0.3%	1%
All other	1%	1%

# Who Has a Drivers License?

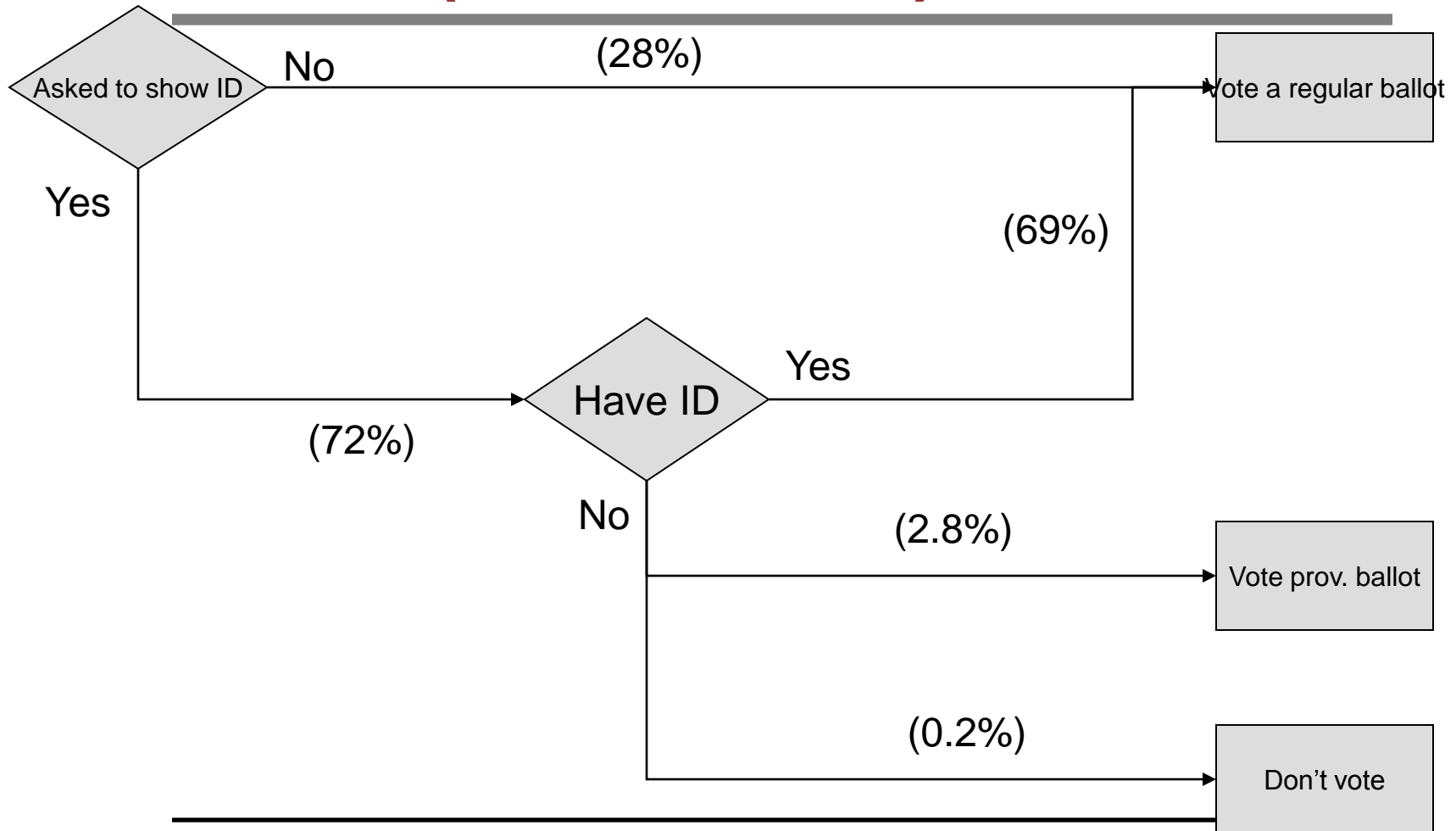
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	All	White	Black	Hisp.
Any drivers license	94%	97%	81%	84%
DL w/ current name, address, unexpired	84%	87%	70%	74%

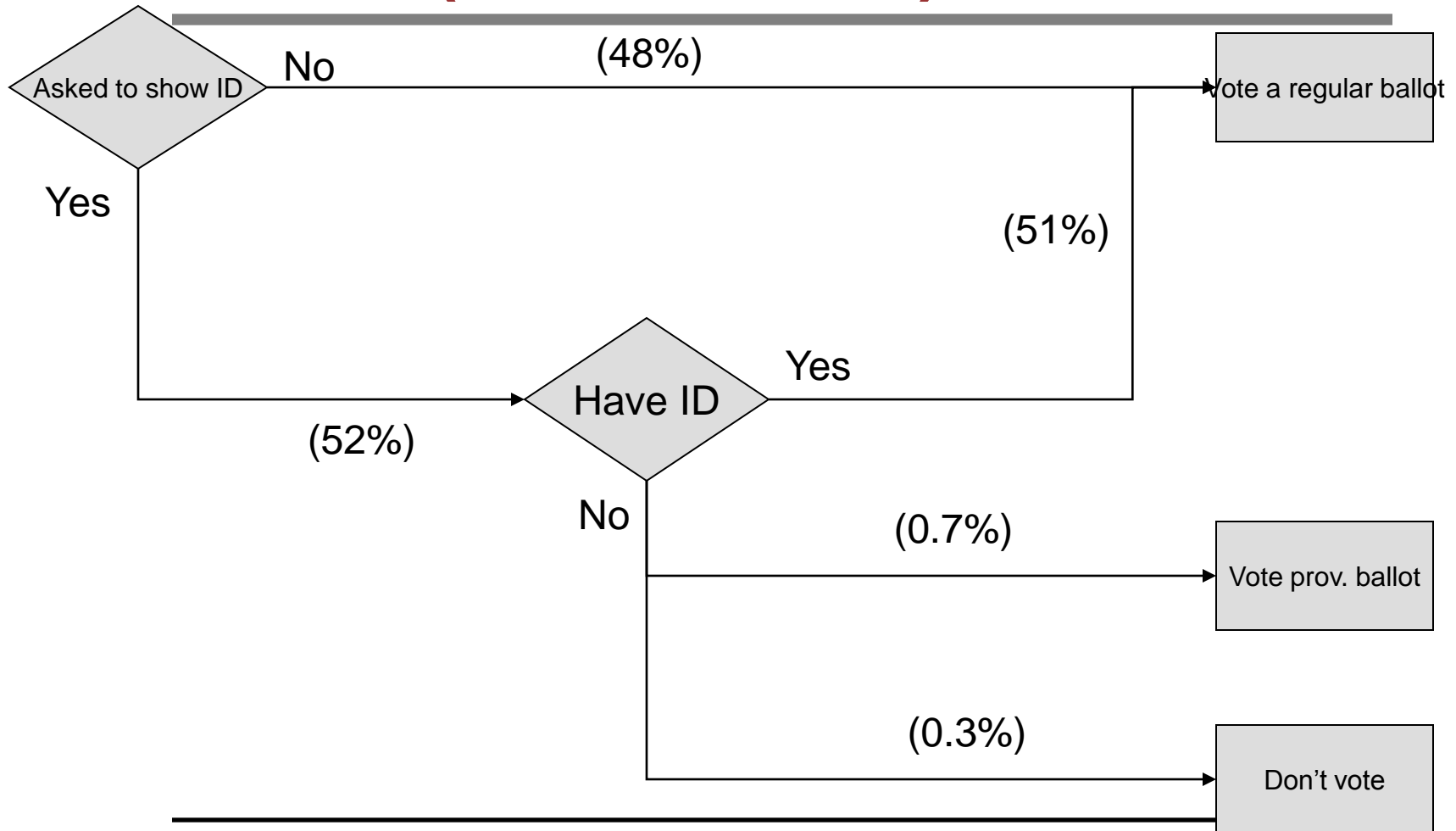
# What Happens After the ID is shown (all voters)



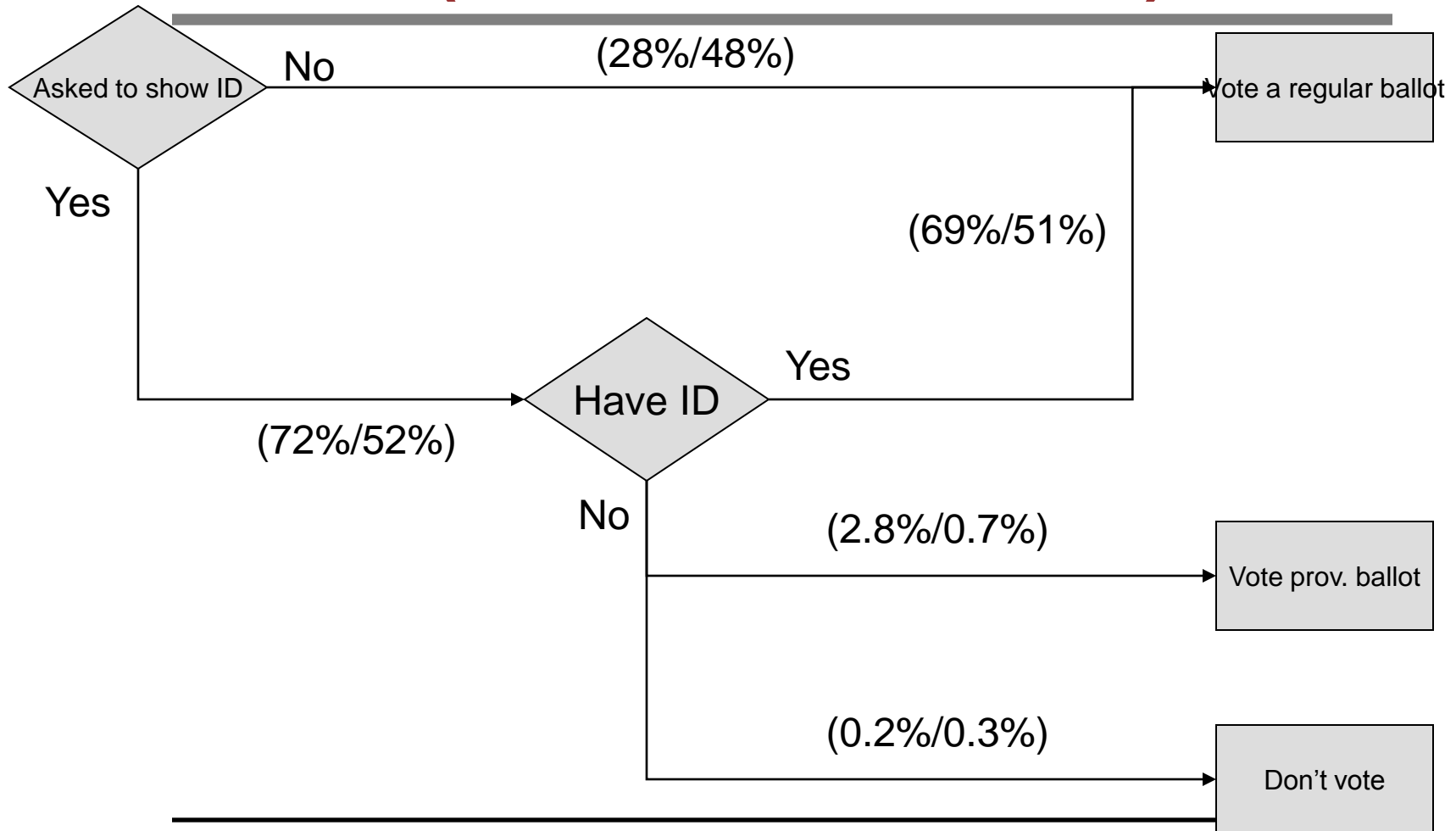
# What Happens After the ID is shown (Black voters)



# What Happens After the ID is shown (White voters)



# What Happens After the ID is shown (Black/White voters)





# Conclusions

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- Turnout differentials are declining
  - Differentials may be greatest in non-covered jurisdictions
- Many of the differences are not of the terrible *vs.* great variety, but of the OK *vs.* great variety
- Much of the experience is the same by race
- African Americans wait in longer lines to vote
  - Not clear why
- Non-whites are asked to show ID more often
  - Discretion plays some role
  - Greater tendency to vote provisionally

# Some links

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- My e-mail address
    - [cstewart@mit.edu](mailto:cstewart@mit.edu)
  - Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project
    - [vote.caltech.edu](http://vote.caltech.edu)
  - Current Population Survey, 2008 Voting and Registration Supplement
    - <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.htm>  
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  - American National Election Studies
    - <http://www.electionstudies.org/>
  - Pew/MIT Study on the 2008 Election Experience
    - <http://vote.caltech.edu/drupal/node/231>
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