

A stylized graphic of the American flag is positioned on the left side of the page. It features a dark blue field with a white five-pointed star in the upper left, and three horizontal stripes (two red, one white) below it. The graphic is partially obscured by a large, dark blue, semi-circular shape that overlaps the right side of the flag. The background of the page is split: the top right is a solid dark red, and the rest is white.

# **Easier Voting Methods Boost Youth Turnout**

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## **Executive Summary**

Results originating from this analysis reveal that easier voting methods increase youth turnout. For instance, young people are substantially more likely to vote if they are able to register to vote on Election Day. In addition, allowing people to vote early in person at convenient locations also has a positive, although smaller and not statistically significant, effect on youth voting, as does voter registration at state motor vehicle agencies (a provision of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993). There is mixed evidence about the effects of unrestricted absentee voting on youth participation, whereby this method has a significant negative effect on turnout during presidential election years and a significant positive effect on turnout during midterm congressional election years. In contrast, voter registration by mail (also a provision of the NVRA) has a negative effect on turnout (although the result is not statistically significant) and thereby does not appear to have the power to stimulate youth turnout in elections. Furthermore, in addition to boosting voter turnout, some alternative voting methods influence the mobilization activity by political parties. In particular, young people are significantly more likely to be contacted by a political party in states with election day registration. Similarly, mail-balloting and in-person early voting also have a positive (although not significant) effect on the rate of party contact among young people. Overall, this analysis shows that some alternative voting methods have the potential to alter the political landscape by changing the way that young people participate in elections, the way that political parties mobilize voters, as well as who participates in elections.

## Introduction

Imagine the convenience of voting in an upcoming election while at the local supermarket, shopping mall, or popular department store; the ease of automatically receiving a ballot in the mail and simply mailing in your vote; or the accessibility of registering to vote and casting a ballot on the same day and at the same location. Alternative voting methods such as unrestricted absentee voting, in-person early voting, election day registration, and mail-balloting are becoming increasingly popular throughout the nation. As a result, the 'cost' of voting has been reduced and casting a ballot has become virtually hassle-free in a number of states.

This report represents an initial inquiry into the effect that these relatively new and convenient voting procedures have on electoral participation among those who are least likely to vote-- young citizens. For instance, the percentage of people who vote between the ages of 18-24 has dropped from a high of 52 percent in 1972 to a low of 37 percent in 2000, representing an overall decline of 15 percentage points; adjusting for the percentage of *citizens* who vote between the ages 18-24, turnout has dropped from 55 percent in 1972 to 42 percent in 2000, representing a decline of 13 percentage points (CIRCLE 2002). Similarly, the percentage of people registered to vote among this segment of the population has declined by approximately 14 percentage points since 1972 (U.S. Census 2002). Recent voting reforms reduce the amount of time and effort required for registering to vote and casting a ballot, thereby increasing the potential for greater participation in elections.

## Voting Reform

The Motor Voter bill, passed by the federal government in 1993 and instituted nationwide in 1995, represents a significant step toward making voting easier by allowing citizens to register by mail or at a variety of convenient, public sites such as state motor vehicle offices. Most recently, however, legal reforms in some states are targeting the second step of the voting process-- casting a ballot. More than two-dozen states nationwide are trading-in old voting laws for new and more convenient laws, with the hope of increasing turnout in elections (See Table 1). Unrestricted absentee voting, existing in nearly two-dozen states, allows citizens to vote absentee, no excuses required, as long as they request an absentee ballot. In addition, more than one-dozen states have some form of in-person early voting enabling citizens to cast a ballot at the county clerk's office or at a satellite location usually 14-40 days prior to Election Day, depending upon the state. Currently, Oregon represents the only state with all-mail-ballot elections at the federal level where all registered citizens automatically receive a ballot in the mail that can be mailed-in or dropped-off to the election administrator by Election Day. Six states have provisions for election day registration which allows people to do two things at once, register to vote and cast a ballot on the same day and often at the same place (Note: North Dakota does not have a voter registration requirement).

**Table 1 Notes:** Data originating from personal telephone interviews with state election officials, Spring 2000. North Dakota does not have a voter registration requirement. Currently, Oregon is the only state with mail-balloting at the federal level. Note that this information may be slightly different from other sources based on the variations and strict definitions of the individual voting procedures in the states.

**Table 1: Alternative Voting Methods in the American States, By Year of Implementation**

State	Unrestricted Absentee Voting	In-Person Early Voting	Election Day Registration	Motor Vehicle Registration	Mail Registration
Alabama				1995	1995
Alaska	1970	1980		1992	1976
Arizona	1992	1993		1984	1992
Arkansas	always	1996		1988	1995
California	1978			1995	1976
Colorado	1992	1992		1988	1995
Connecticut				1995	1990
Delaware				1995	1976
Florida				1995	1995
Georgia				1995	1995
Hawaii	1970	1970		1992	1988
Idaho	1994	1970	1994	1992	1995
Illinois				1995	1995
Indiana				1995	1992
Iowa	1991	1991		1992	1976
Kansas	1996	1996		1995	1976
Kentucky				1995	1972
Louisiana				1992	1995
Maine	1990		1974	1990	1984
Maryland				1992	1974
Massachusetts				1995	1995
Michigan				1976	1995
Minnesota			1974	1988	1974
Mississippi				1992	1992
Missouri				1995	1982
Montana	2000			1992	1972
Nebraska	1994	1994		1995	1988
Nevada	1960	1994		1988	1992
New Hampshire			1994	1995	1995
New Jersey				1995	1976
New Mexico	1994	1994		1992	1994
New York				1992	1976
North Carolina	2000	2000		1984	1994
North Dakota	1998				
Ohio				1992	1978
Oklahoma	1992	1992		1995	1995
Oregon	1983		1976-1988	1992	1976
Pennsylvania				1995	1976
Rhode Island				1995	1995
South Carolina				1992	1988
South Dakota				1995	1988
Tennessee		1994		1995	1976
Texas		1991		1992	1972
Utah	1992			1995	1976
Vermont	1993	1993		1992	1990
Virginia				1995	1995
Washington	1976			1992	1994
West Virginia				1992	1984
Wisconsin	2000		1976	1995	1976
Wyoming	1999		1992	1995	1995

## **Data and Analyses**

Using aggregate state-level data combined with individual-level data originating from the American National Election Studies (ANES) surveys 1972-2000, I examine the effects that the relatively new and convenient voting methods have on youth voting activity and partisan mobilization in the U.S. Probit models are used to explore the data and determine the extent to which voting reforms in the states increase youth turnout and stimulate mobilization by the political parties among young people. I consider both mobilization and participation in presidential and midterm congressional elections separately given the different stimuli associated with these two contests, and the fact that Presidential elections attract a significantly larger number of voters.

In the first analysis, I examine the direct effect that alternative voting methods have on youth electoral participation by exploring the rate of individual voter turnout among 18-24 year olds. The goal in this analysis is to determine whether recent voting reforms stimulate electoral participation among this segment of the population. In the second analysis, I examine the indirect effect that alternative voting methods have on electoral participation by exploring mobilization activity by political parties among young citizens. The goal in this particular examination is to determine whether voting reforms influence the rate and extent of youth mobilization by the parties. For instance, are young citizens more likely to be contacted by political parties in states where voting is made easier by alternative voting methods?

In each of the models, I account for a multitude of factors affecting both

mobilization activity and youth voting such as electoral competitiveness, party contact, individual characteristics and resources, along with state voting laws (See Appendix B for variable descriptions, sources, and coding). In addition, I incorporate variables representing each election year into the models to control for unique, year-specific factors that may influence the rate of youth voting activity and/or party contact.

## **Findings**

According to a recent survey conducted by the U.S. Census, younger adults were more likely to report that they did not vote in the 2000 presidential elections because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules compared with older adults (Jamison, Shin, and Day 2002, 10). Therefore, it is not surprising that early voting procedures represent an attractive option to young voters. Results from the probit analyses appearing in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 reveal that some alternative voting procedures have a significant and positive impact on youth turnout. These tables show the probit coefficients and standard errors, along with the marginal effects of each determinate on the individual probability of youth voting and party contact, holding all other causes constant.

**Table 2: Predicting Individual-level Voter Turnout Among Young People during Presidential Election Years, 1972-2000**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Effect on Probability of Voting (in percentage point differences)
<b>Electoral Competitiveness:</b>			
Presidential vote margin	.002	.004	5
Senatorial vote margin	.000	.001	1
Gubernatorial vote margin	-.002*	.001	-4
% Uncontested congressional elections	-.002	.002	-6
<b>Mobilization:</b>			
Party contact	0.662****	.102	22
<b>Individual Characteristics (resources):</b>			
High income	.167***	.069	5
High education	.769****	.067	28
High mobility	-.087*	.067	-3
Strong partisan	.386****	.089	13
Unemployed	-.158	.128	-6
Race (African American)	-.038	.104	-2
Southern state	-.230***	.097	-8
<b>Legal Structure:</b>			
In-person early voting	.046	.186	2
Election day registration	.444***	.152	14
Unrestricted absentee voting	-.143*	.104	-5
Motor vehicle registration	.155	.131	5
Mail registration	-.034	.086	-1
Mail-Balloting	1.37**	.696	40

Model Specifications and diagnostics:

Number of observations= 1718

LR Chi2 (25) = 321.41 (probability <.000)

Pseudo R2 = .1385

McKelvey-Zavoina R Square = .3005

Proportion predicted correctly = .6854; (null model = .5937)

Proportional reduction in Error = .2878

**Notes:** One-tailed tests; \*<=.1; \*\* <=.05; \*\*\*<=.01; \*\*\*\*<=.001. Dummy variables for the election years that were included in the models are excluded from this table. The data originates from state election officials, the U.S. Census, and the ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2000.



**Table 3: Predicting Individual-level Voter Turnout Among Young People during Midterm Election Years, 1972-2000**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Effect on Probability of Voting (in percentage point differences)
<b>Electoral Competitiveness:</b>			
Senatorial vote margin	-.000	.001	--
Gubernatorial vote margin	-.001	.001	--
% Uncontested congressional elections	-.001	.003	-1
<b>Mobilization:</b>			
Party Contact	.494****	.119	5
<b>Individual Characteristics (resources):</b>			
High income	.123*	.096	1
High education	.588****	.094	6
High mobility	-.292****	.096	-3
Strong partisan	.645****	.113	7
Unemployed	-.388**	.200	-4
Race (African American)	-.268**	.166	-3
Southern state	-.295**	.137	-3
<b>Legal Structure:</b>			
In-person early voting	.239	.244	3
Election day registration	.386**	.212	4
Unrestricted absentee voting	.336***	.126	4
Motor vehicle registration	.003	.163	--
Mail registration	-.115	.110	-1

Model specifications and diagnostics:

Number of observations= 1321

LR Chi2 (22) = 237.81 (probability <.000)

Pseudo R2 = .1937

McKelvey-Zavoina R Square = .8831

Proportion predicted correctly = .8327; (null model = .8244)

Proportional reduction in Error = .0498

**Notes:** One-tailed tests; \*<=.1; \*\* <=.05; \*\*\*<=.01; \*\*\*\*<=.001. Dummy variables for the election years that were included in the models are excluded from this table. The data originates from state election officials, the U.S. Census, and the ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2000.

The results in Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that election day registration, unrestricted absentee voting, and mail-balloting have a statistically significant and positive impact on youth participation. Notably, the analysis shows that election day registration boosts youth voting activity in presidential elections by an estimated 14 percentage points, and by an estimated 4 percentage points in midterm congressional elections, even when controlling for contact by political parties. Similarly, and consistent with prior survey research, mail-balloting in Oregon is popular among young people and appears to have a substantial effect on electoral participation-- boosting youth turnout by an estimated 40 percentage points during presidential elections (Southwell and Burchett 1997, 56). According to this analysis, these particular reforms have the potential to have a powerful impact on youth participation in our electoral system.

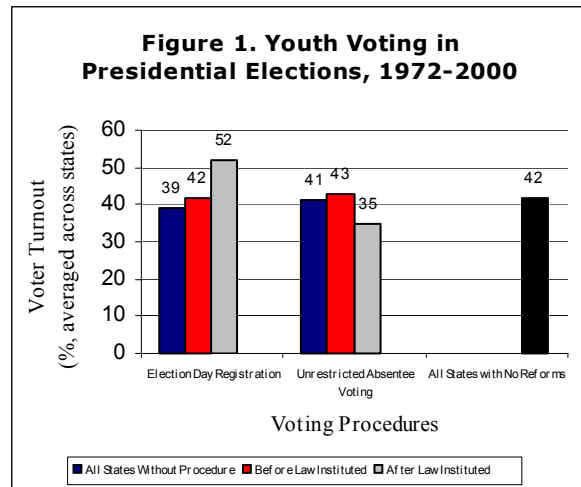
Interestingly, unrestricted absentee voting has a positive and significant impact on youth turnout in midterm congressional elections, boosting turnout by an estimated 4 percentage points, but has the opposite effect on turnout in presidential elections. Evidently, unrestricted absentee voting stimulates turnout among young citizens during the comparatively low-profile midterm elections when individuals are otherwise less inclined to vote. Given the lower levels of turnout in midterm congressional elections, individuals tend to be less motivated to vote during non-presidential election years and thereby may be less likely to make the effort to go to the polls and more likely to cast an absentee ballot by mail. In addition, the analysis reveals that in-person early voting and motor vehicle registration have a positive, but insignificant, impact on youth turnout in elections. Voter registration by mail, however, has a negative (although not

statistically significant) impact on youth turnout. Apparently mail registration, along with unrestricted absentee voting during presidential elections, does not have the power to get young people to vote. The other variables in the model behave as expected for the most part with party contact, partisan strength, high education, and high income having a statistically significant and positive impact on turnout, and with low electoral competition, unemployed, high mobility, southern state, and African American race having a negative effect on participation.

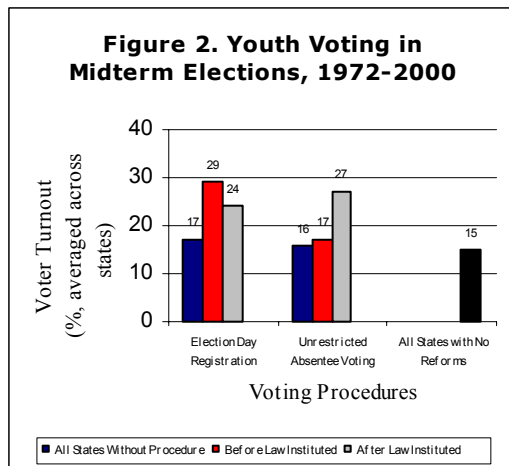
Figures 1 and 2 provide a visual image of the impact that some voting procedures have on youth electoral activity. For instance, these charts compare the impact that election day registration and unrestricted absentee voting have on the frequency of youth voting within the states where these laws exist, both before and after the laws were instituted, as well as among all states without these voting procedures. For instance, Figure 1 reveals that election day registration has a positive impact on voter turnout in presidential elections both within the states where this law exists and across all the states. In contrast (See Figure 2), during midterm congressional elections, states with election day registration experience lower turnout after the institution of this law (29% before law; 24% after law). However, when compared to all other states without this procedure average youth turnout in these states is greater in both presidential elections (39% in all states without this law; 52% with law) and in midterm congressional elections (17% in all states without this law; 24% with law).

Once more, similar to the results in Tables 2 and 3, Figures 1 and 2 show

that states with unrestricted absentee voting experience lower turnout in presidential elections after the institution of this procedure (43% before law; 35% after law), but experience significantly greater turnout in midterm congressional elections following the institution of this



law (17 % before law; 27% after law). Notably, however, states with unrestricted absentee voting experience greater turnout in midterm congressional elections, compared to all other states without this voting procedure (16%). Lastly, the



charts provide a comparison of the average youth turnout in all states without any voting reforms over the time period from 1972-2000.

According to the data in the charts, states without any voting reforms experience lower rates of youth voting (42% in presidential elections; 15% in midterm congressional

elections) compared to the states with election day registration (52% in presidential elections; 24% in midterm congressional elections) and unrestricted absentee voting (35% in presidential elections; 27% in midterm congressional elections), with the exception of unrestricted absentee voting during presidential election years. Significantly, these charts reveal that some alternative voting methods can have a positive impact on youth turnout in federal elections.

**Table 4. Predicting Party Contact Among Young People during Presidential Election Years, 1972-2000**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Effect on Probability of Voting (in percentage point differences)
<b>Electoral Competitiveness:</b>			
Presidential vote margin	-.003	.005	-3
Senatorial vote margin	.000	.001	--
Gubernatorial vote margin	-.001	.001	-3
% Uncontested congressional elections	-.001	.002	-1
<b>Individual Characteristics (resources):</b>			
High income	.148**	.084	3
High education	.163**	.082	3
Strong partisan	.085	.108	2
High mobility	-.081	.082	-2
<b>Legal Structure:</b>			
In-person early voting	.105	.224	2
Election day registration	.432***	.164	11
Unrestricted absentee voting	-.060	.126	-1
Motor vehicle registration	.059	.160	1
Mail registration	-.093	.103	-2
Mail-Balloting	.229	.632	5

Model Specifications and diagnostics:

Number of observations= 1718

LR Chi2 (21) = 28.58 (probability <.1244)

Pseudo R2 = .0229

McKelvey-Zavoina R Square = .6009

Proportion predicted correctly = .8818; (null model = .8818)

Proportional reduction in Error = .0000

**Notes:** One-tailed tests; \*<=.1; \*\* <=.05; \*\*\*<=.01; \*\*\*\*<=.001. Dummy variables for the election years that were included in the models are excluded from this table. Data originates from state election officials, the U.S. Census, and the ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2000.

**Table 5. Predicting Party Contact Among Young People during Midterm Election Years, 1972-2000**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Effect on Probability of Voting (in percentage point differences)
<b>Electoral Competitiveness:</b>			
Senatorial vote margin	-.002**	.001	-4
Gubernatorial vote margin	-.001	.001	-1
% Uncontested congressional elections	-.003	.003	-7
<b>Individual Characteristics (resources):</b>			
High income	.057	.091	1
High education	.332****	.090	8
Strong partisan	.476****	.108	12
High mobility	-.111	.091	-3
<b>Legal Structure:</b>			
In-person early voting	.224	.273	6
Election day registration	.611***	.197	18
Unrestricted absentee voting	-.193*	.140	-4
Motor vehicle registration	-.124	.172	-3
Mail registration	-.078	.105	-2

Model Specifications and diagnostics:

Number of observations= 1321

LR Chi2 (18) = 77.48 (probability <.000)

Pseudo R2 = .0696

McKelvey-Zavoina R Square = .5818

Proportion predicted correctly = .8516 (null model =.8509)

Proportional reduction in Error = .0051

**Notes:** One-tailed tests; \*<=.1; \*\* <=.05; \*\*\*<=.01; \*\*\*\*<=.001. Dummy variables for the election years that were included in the models are excluded from this table. Data originates from state election officials, the U.S. Census, and the ANES Cumulative Data File, 1948-2000.

In addition to influencing youth participation in elections, alternative voting methods also influence partisan mobilization activity. For instance, the findings in Tables 4 and 5 reveal that young citizens are more likely to be contacted by a political party in states with election day registration by an estimated 11 percentage points in presidential elections, and by an estimated 18 percentage points in midterm congressional elections. This represents a key finding because when people are mobilized they are more likely to vote (Green and Gerber 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). In fact, the election of Governor Jesse Ventura in Minnesota is a prime example of what can happen when coordinated youth mobilization efforts are combined with voting reforms such as election day registration (Hartman 1999). In light of these results, it is not surprising that the parties seek to mobilize the youth population in states with election day registration at higher rates than in states without this procedure, given the substantial number of young citizens who are not registered to vote. In contrast, while in-person early voting and mail-balloting have a positive effect on party contact, the other voting reforms in the model do not have a statistically significant impact on partisan mobilization strategy.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this study shows that young people are more likely to vote in states with less restrictive voting procedures. Specifically, 18-24 year olds are more likely to vote in states with election day registration and, to a lesser extent,

unrestricted absentee voting. Mail-balloting also appears to have a positive and substantial impact on youth voting activity in the state of Oregon. So, while not all voting reforms designed to increase turnout in elections are effective, some of these procedures have important implications for our political system. After all, any small change in the composition of the active electorate can affect the outcome of the election, especially in closely contested races.

Furthermore, changes in the legal structure of voting may affect candidate campaign strategy, election dynamics, and the nature of public policy. For instance, the findings in this report indicate that political candidates, parties, and organizations would be wise to mobilize young citizens in states where voting reforms exist, particularly in states with election day registration. Moreover, those seeking youth electoral support would likely benefit by boosting voter registration rates among young people in states with convenient voting procedures. Convenient and accessible voting methods may also encourage candidates to alter their campaign rhetoric and focus on policy issues that tend to be more important to younger voters, such as higher education and employment, instead of emphasizing issues that are typically more relevant and important to older voters such as social security and Medicare. In addition, independent and other third party candidates may attract greater support in states with voting methods that help facilitate and boost youth voting activity since somewhere between 24 and 44 percent of young people identify themselves politically as Independents (Hinds 2000).

This report demonstrates that alternative voting methods can have an



important effect on youth participation and on our electoral system. However, due to the fact that so many young people are not registered to vote, the potential for recent voting reforms to have a greater impact on youth participation in elections is not yet realized. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that these procedures are relatively new. Therefore, as alternative voting methods become more popular nationwide and further institutionalized in the states, and as more young people register to vote, they could have a more substantial and widespread impact on electoral turnout. Furthermore, it is ironic that the states with alternative voting procedures are the same states that typically experience greater turnout regardless of easier voting procedures (especially states with election day registration, i.e. See Figures 1 and 2), thereby the impact that these laws have on electoral participation is somewhat muted (Fitzgerald 2001, 86). Consequently, if these reforms were to be adopted in more states nationwide (states with lower-levels of turnout, and with less dense and more diverse populations) their impact on youth participation may be more profound.

This subject is ripe for future research. For instance, a more in-depth examination of state voting laws and their effects on American electoral activity and the political process would explore a diversity of data sources, analytical models, and election types, as well as include interviews and surveys with political candidates, election administrators, governing officials, and young citizens. Ultimately, additional research on this topic can help citizens, scholars, and policy makers come to a more informed conclusion about the consequences that voting reforms bring in their wake, and their potential for contributing to a more participatory and representative electorate.

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## Appendix A

It is important to note that this indicator of electoral activity by survey respondents is not validated for every year thus, the accuracy of the responses is questionable to some extent. A recent study reveals that approximately 15-25 percent of survey respondents overreport voting activity. However, according to the evidence, this methodological consideration has not had a dramatic effect on the quality of results or nature of the relationships derived from using self-reported measures of voting activity (Katosh and Traugott 1981). Other studies examining self-reported measures of voting have found that those most inclined to over report voting activity are those who are highly educated and are most supportive of the regime norm of voting. Also, research has consistently revealed that African Americans are only slightly more likely to over report voting compared to whites. (Abramson and Claggett 1992; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986).

## Appendix B

### Aggregate Data

**Presidential vote margin.** Source: Richard Scammon, *America Votes* (Washington, DC: Government Affairs Institute, 1972-2000). Coding: Numerical margin of victory between two major party candidates.

**Senatorial vote margin.** Source: Richard Scammon, *America Votes* (Washington, DC: Government Affairs Institute, 1972-2000). Coding: Numerical margin of victory between top two major party candidates.

**Gubernatorial vote margin.** Source: Richard Scammon, *America Votes* (Washington, DC: Government Affairs Institute, 1972-2000). Coding: Numerical margin of victory between top two major party candidates

**Uncontested House seat.** Source: Richard Scammon, *America Votes* (Washington, DC: Government Affairs Institute, 1972-2000). Coding: Percentage of U.S. House seats that are uncontested.

**Voter registration by mail.** Source: Human SERVE, *The Book of the States*, FEC reports. Coding: 1 if the procedure exists in the state, 0 if otherwise.

**Voter registration at motor vehicle agencies.** Source: Human SERVE, *The Book of the States*, FEC reports. Coding: 1 if the procedure exists in the state, 0 if otherwise.

**Election day registration.** Source: Telephone conversations with state election officials, Spring 2000. Coding: 1 if law exist in the state, 0 if otherwise.

**Unrestricted absentee voting.** Source: Telephone conversations with state election officials, Spring 2000. Coding: 1 if law exists in the state, 0 if otherwise.

**In-person early voting.** Source: Telephone conversations with state election officials, Spring 2000. Coding: 1 if law exists in the state, 0 if otherwise.

### **Individual-Level Survey Data**

All individual-level data are taken from the American National Election Studies Cumulative Data File, 1948-2000.

**Voter turnout.** *Question wording:* "In talking to people about the election we find that a lot of people weren't able to vote because they weren't registered or they were sick or they just didn't have time. How about you, did you vote in the elections this November?" Coding: 1 if yes, 0 if otherwise.

**Young age.** *Question wording:* "What is the month, day, and year of your birth?" Coding: 1 if between the ages of 18-24, 0 if otherwise.

**Income.** *Question wording:* "Please look at this page and tell me the letter of the income group that includes the combined income of all members of your family living here in [year] before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income." Coding: 1 if 34-100 percentile (equivalent to \$34,000+ in 2000), 0 if 0-33 percentile (equivalent to \$0-34,000 in 2000).

**Education.** *Question wording:* "What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?" Coding: 1 if some college or advanced degree, 0 if no college (high school or less).

**Unemployed.** *Question wording:* "We'd like to know if you are working now, temporarily laid off, or are unemployed, retired, permanently disabled, a homemaker, a student, or what?" Coding: 1 if unemployed, 0 if otherwise.

**Black.** Observed by interviewer. Coding: 1 if Black, 0 if otherwise.

**Partisan strength.** *Question wording:* "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or not very strong (Republican/Democrat)?" (If Independent, other, or no preference) "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" Coding: 1 if strong partisan, 0 if weak partisan, Independent, or apolitical.

**Mobility.** *Question wording:* "How long have you lived here in your present (city/town)?" Coding: 1 if 10 years or less, 0 if greater than 10 years.

**Party contact.** *Question wording:* "The political parties try to talk to as many

people as they can to get them to vote for their candidates. Did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign?" Coding: 1 if contacted, 0 if not contacted.

**Southern state.** Observed by interviewer: Coding: 1 if lives in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, or Virginia, 0 if otherwise.

## Appendix C

To ease the interpretation of the results, the final entry in each of the tables represents the conversion of the probit coefficients into marginal probabilities. Similar to Rosenstone and Hansen (1993, 73), I translate each probit coefficient into the effect of each variable on the probability of voting and of party contact. For each variable, I calculate the probability that each individual will participate, or be contacted by a political party, under two scenarios: first assuming that the variables take the higher value, then assuming that the variables take the lower value. For example, the variable representing education is coded 1 for a college education and above, and coded 0 for a high school degree or less. The reported effect in the tables is the difference between the two estimated probabilities, or a percentage point difference.





