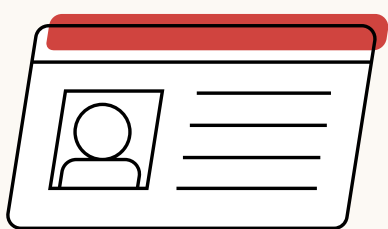


Race and Voter ID Laws: What We Know From Scholarly Literature



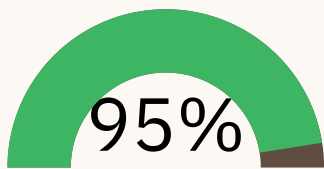
What are Voter ID Laws?

- Voter identification ("voter ID") laws require voters to present a form of identification before they can vote.
- Some voter ID laws require voters to present a government-issued ID, while others accept many different types of identification.



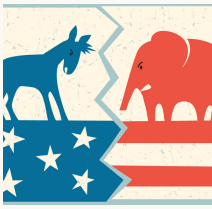
Why Are They Controversial?

- Opponents claim voter ID laws are enacted to prevent people of color from voting.
- Some compare voter ID laws to other laws that have been used to prevent people of color from voting, such as poll taxes and literacy tests.¹



Who Has Voter ID?

- Most registered voters (approx. 95%) possess voter ID. Almost all (approx. 99%) "likely" voters possess voter ID.
- However, registered voters of color are several percentage points less likely to have voter ID than White registered voters.²



Who Votes in Favor of Voter ID Laws?

- Between 2005 and 2013, more than 97% of Republican state legislators voted in favor of voter ID laws and 88% of Democrats opposed them.
- Republicans with more Black and Latino constituents are more supportive of voter ID laws than Republicans with fewer Black and Latino constituents.³



Who Gets Asked to Show Their Voter ID?

- Surveys consistently show that Black and Hispanic voters are more likely than White voters to be asked to show their voter ID.
- For example, voters of color in both Boston and New Mexico were 10-to-15 percentage-points more likely to be asked to show ID than White voters.⁴



Do Voter ID Laws Affect Voter Turnout?

- Most empirical research on the effects of voter ID laws find little evidence that voter ID laws suppress turnout in the aggregate or among racial minorities.
- This finding is not surprising, given that more than 9-in-10 registered voters have voter ID.⁵

Directions for Future Research

- Examine non-electoral effects of voter ID laws, such as whether they decrease racial minorities' sense of belonging and trust in government.
- Apply the methods used to study race and voter ID laws to consider racial disparities associated with other election reforms, such as cutbacks to early voting.

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2. Ansolabehere, Stephen. 2014. "Corrected Supplemental Report." *Marc Veasey, et al. v. Rick Perry, et al.* United States District Court, Southern District of Texas (2:13-cv-193), Document 600-1.
3. McKee, Seth C. 2015. "Politics is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation." *Research & Politics* 2: 1-7; Hicks, William D., Seth C. McKee, and Daniel A. Smith. 2016. "The Determinants of State Legislator Support for Restrictive Voter ID Laws." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 16(4): 411-31.
4. Atkeson, Lonna R., Lisa Ann Bryant, Thad E. Hall, Kyle Saunders, and Michael Alvarez. 2010. "A New Barrier to Participation: Heterogeneous Application of Voter Identification Policies." *Electoral Studies* 29(1): 66-73; Cobb, Rachael V., D. James Greiner, and Kevin M. Quinn. 2012. "Can Voter ID Laws Be Administered in a Race-Neutral Manner? Evidence from the City of Boston in 2008." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 7(1): 1-33.
5. Highton, Benjamin. 2017. "Voter Identification Laws and Turnout in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 149-67; Cantoni, Enrico, and Vincent Pons. 2021. "Strict ID Laws Don't Stop Voters: Evidence from a U.S. Nationwide Panel, 2008-2018." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 136(4): 2615-60.