



CALTECH/MIT VOTING TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

A multi-disciplinary, collaborative project of
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TITLE Racial Differences in Election Administration

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Racial Differences in Election Administration

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Summary of talk

- 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?

- 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?

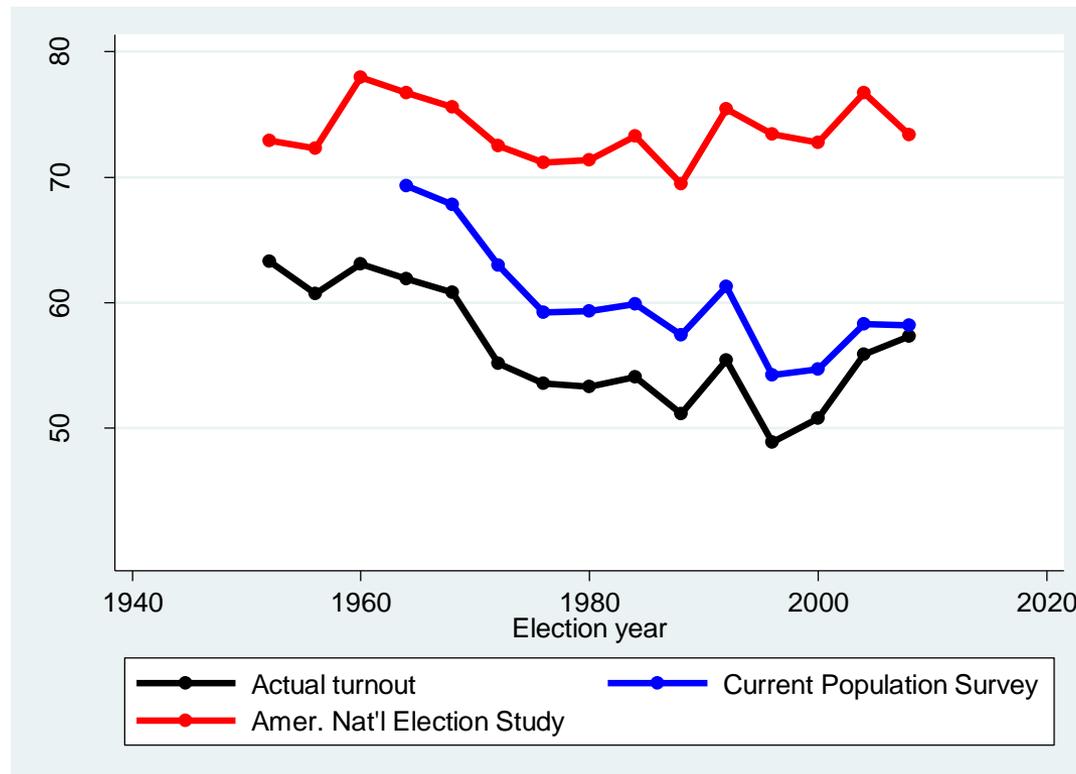
What data do we have?

- 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

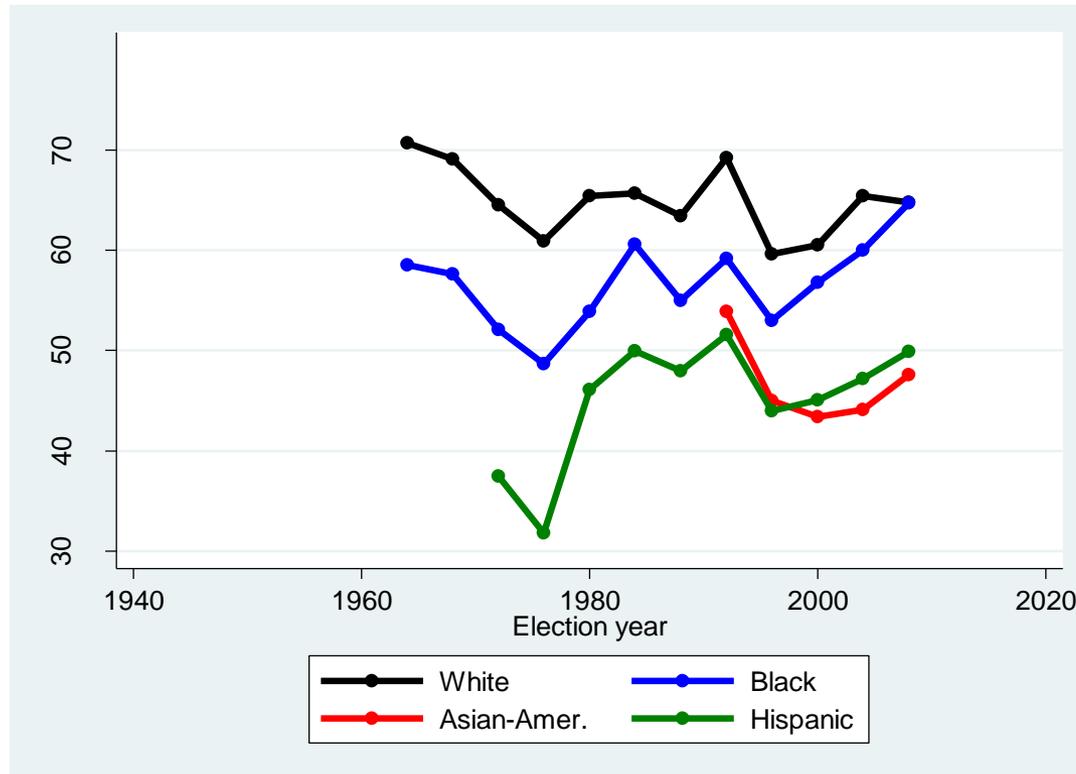
Turnout differences



Turnout Comparison by Data Sources



Turnout by Race



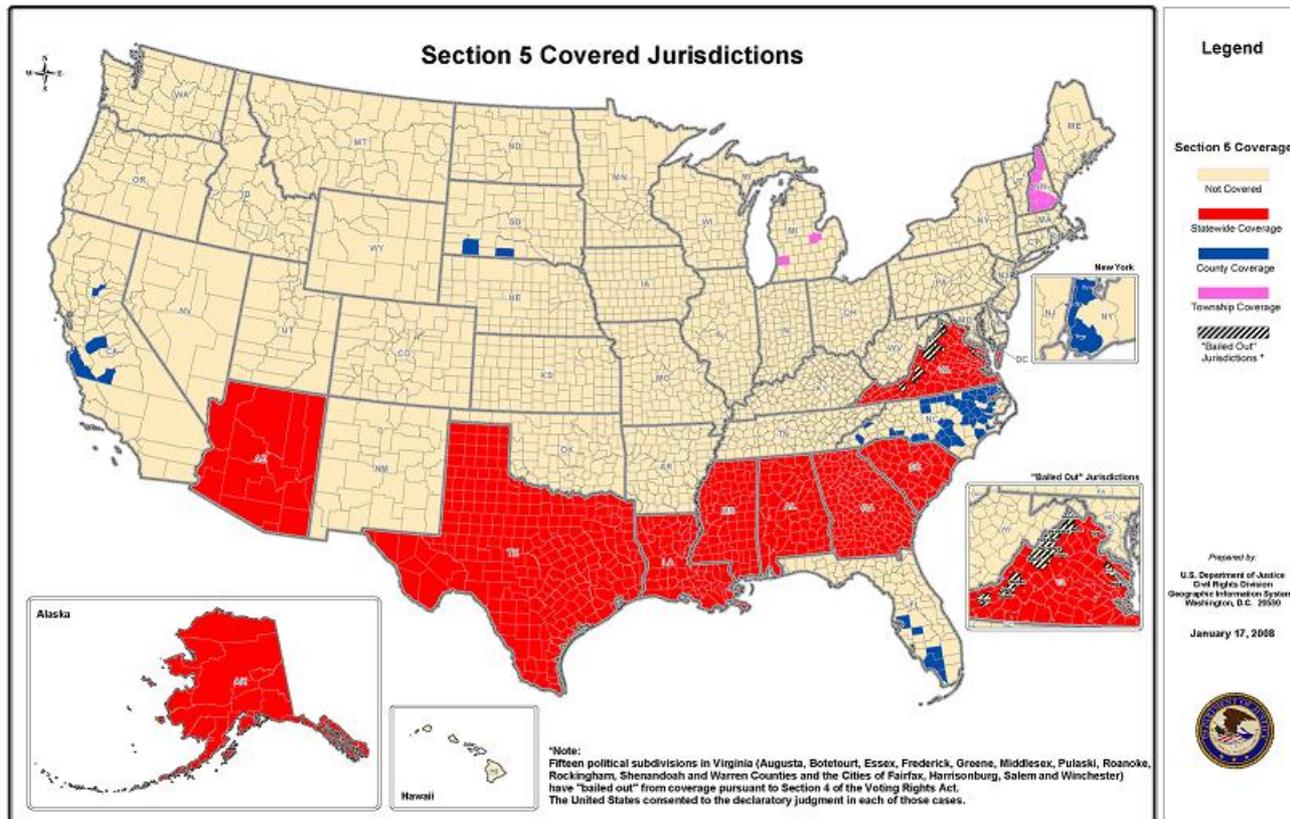
Source: CPS, V&R Supplement

Turnout by race/age groups (pct.)

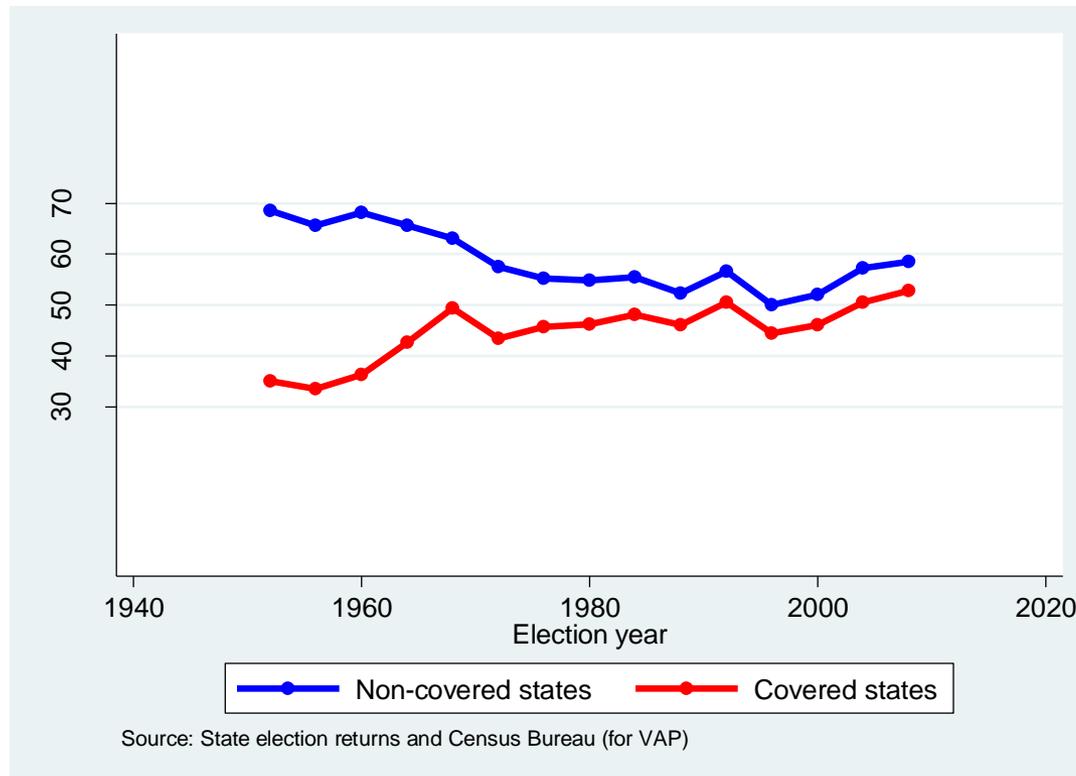
	1972	2004	2008
White, 18-24	51.9	47.5	43.8
Black, 18-24	34.7	44.0	52.3
Hispanic, 18-24	30.9	33.0	38.8
White, 65+	64.8	72.2	71.5
Black, 65+	50.6	65.9	68.0
Hispanic, 65+	26.7	57.0	56.0

Source: CPS, V&R Supplement

Section 5 Covered Jurisdictions



Turnout differences



Turnout Differences by Preclearance Status

	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



Reasons for Not Registering, Current Population Survey

- 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

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	16.0%	23.3%	11.7%
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%	9.8%	15.1%
Too busy/conflicting schedule	18.5%	19.5%	26.7%
Transportation problems	2.6%	5.5%	2.7%
Didn't like candidates/issues	15.1%	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



Mode of Voting

	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

- 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

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



Support for Photo ID laws

- 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

- 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

Frequency of Being Asked for ID

	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?

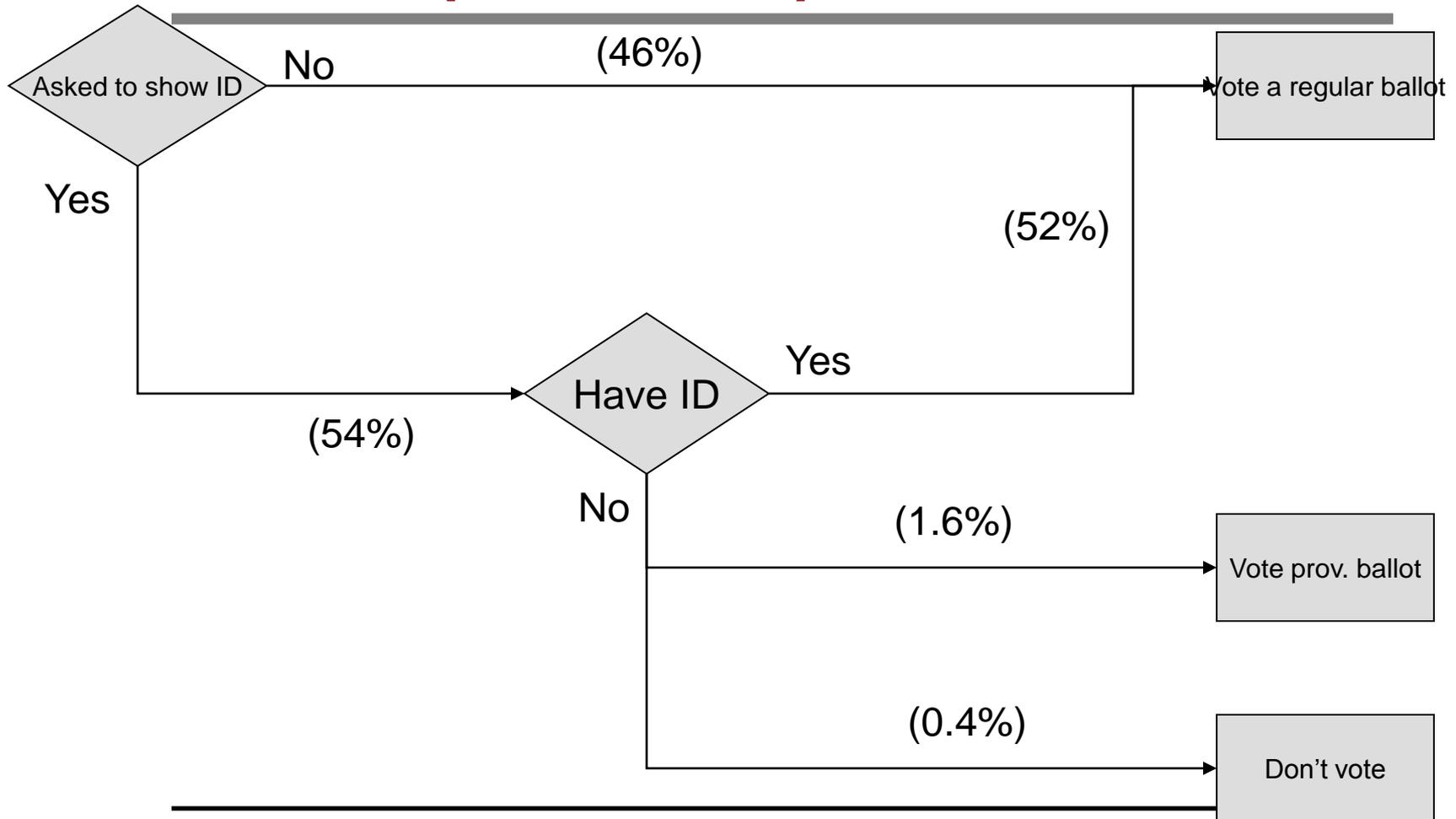
	Photo ID mentioned in law	Photo ID not mentioned
Drivers license	92%	86%
Voter registration card	2%	7%
Other gov't ID	5%	4%
Passport	0.3%	1%
All other	1%	1%



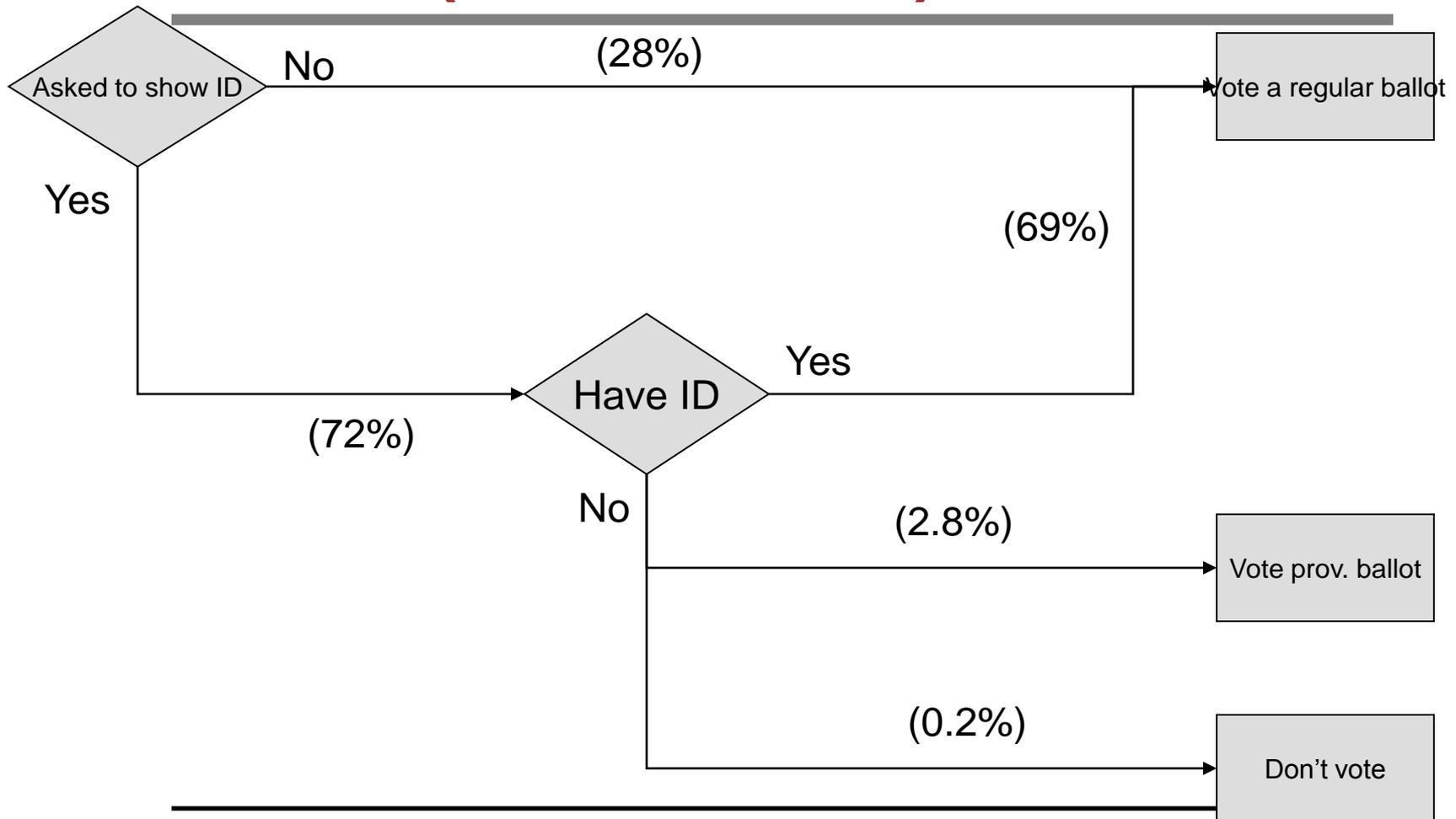
Who Has a Drivers License?

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

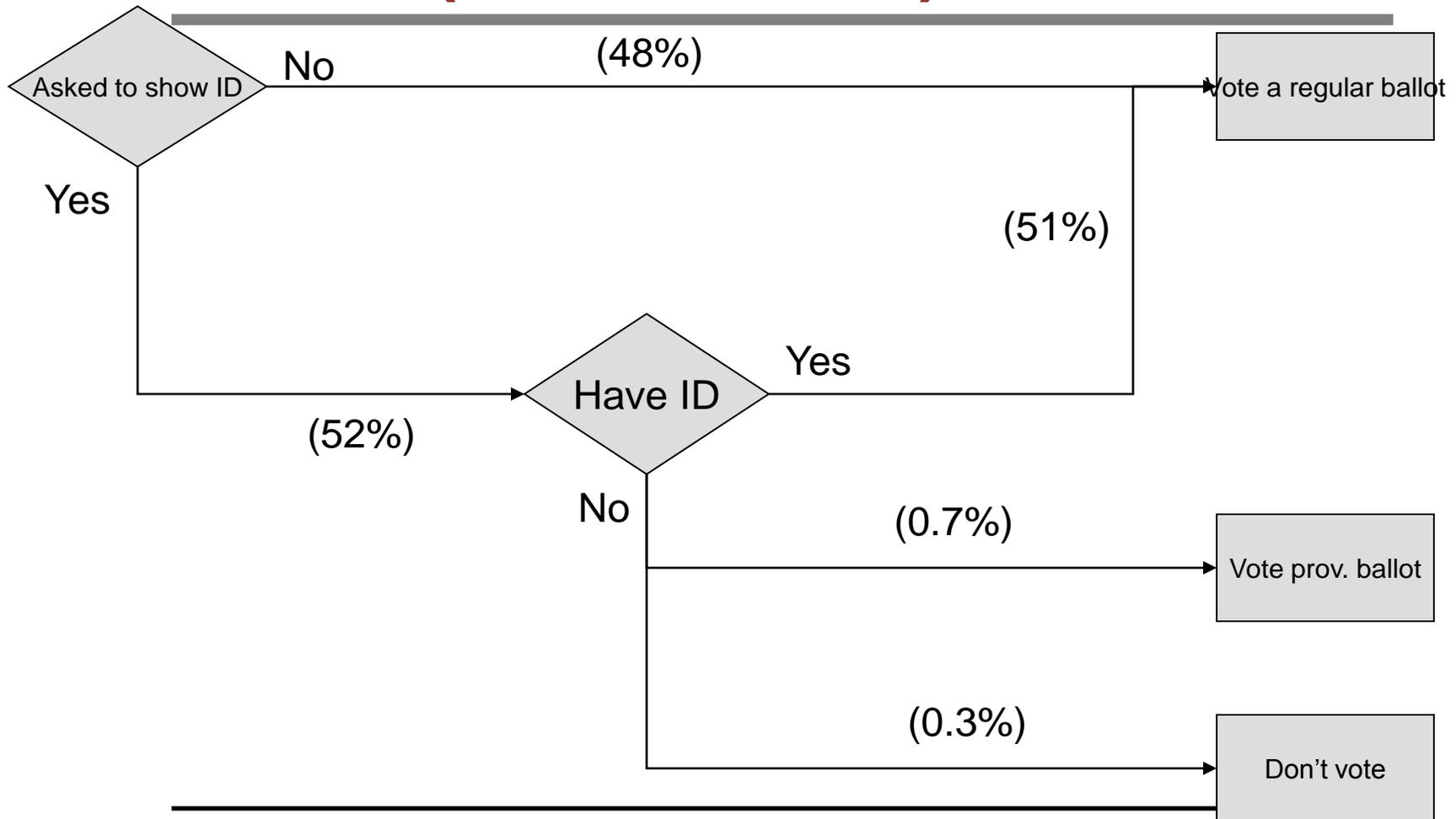
What Happens After the ID is shown (all voters)



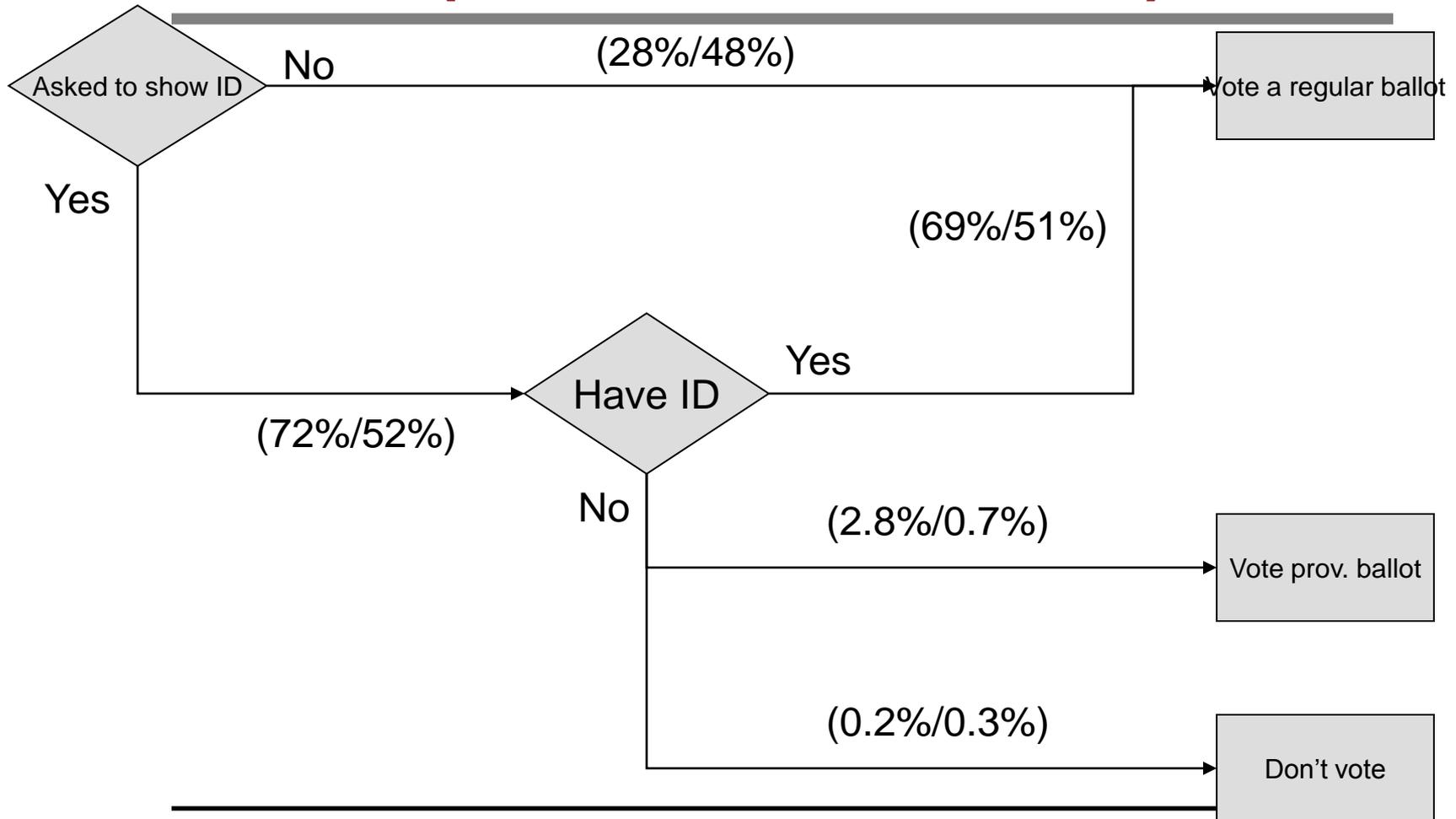
What Happens After the ID is shown (Black voters)



What Happens After the ID is shown (White voters)



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



Conclusions

- 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

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

