

Voter Preregistration Programs

Dr. Michael P. McDonald, Associate Professor
George Mason University ■ 4400 University Drive - 3F4 ■ Fairfax, VA 22030-4444
703-993-4191 (office) ■ 703-993-1399 (fax) ■ mmcdon@gmu.edu (e-mail)

Voter Preregistration Programs

– EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

This report is an examination of Florida’s and Hawaii’s ‘preregistration’ programs, which permit eligible persons as young as sixteen years old to register to vote so that they are registered when they attain voting age. Thousands of young people in these states take advantage of preregistration, and preregistration appears to have positive and persisting long-term effects on their voting propensities. Based on interviews with election administrators and data analysis, preregistration is recommended to be best implemented as a component of a broader program of student civic education and student poll worker recruitment. Success of preregistration is maximized when election officials and educators act as partners. A major impediment to the success of these programs is that participation by educators is voluntary. As policy makers consider how to implement preregistration programs elsewhere, providing for means of ensuring participation by educators, such as requiring preregistration as a component of a mandatory high school civics curriculum, will likely result in the most robust implementation of preregistration.

Voter Preregistration Programs

– ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS –

This report is graciously funded by the Pew Charitable Trust Making Voting Work Project. Assistance in compiling this report was provided by George Mason University graduate students Matthew Thornburg, for data analysis, and Tyler Culberson, for legal research. This report is also made possible by the dedicated efforts of many election administrators who graciously agreed to discuss and provide information about their dedication to preregistration programs. In Hawaii, I would like to thank Kevin Cronin, Chief Elections Officer of Hawaii; Glen Takahashi, Elections Administrator, Office of the City Clerk, City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii; Rex Simmons, Voter Services, Office of Elections, State of Hawaii; Ciress Cuevo, Voter Services, Office of Elections, State of Hawaii. In Florida, I would like to thank Dr. Brenda Snipes, Supervisor of Elections of Broward County; Gino Herring, Voter Education Director, Broward County; Tonya Edwards, Voter Education/High School Voter Registration Coordinator, Broward County; Kherri Anderson, Martin County Supervisor of Elections Office; Charmaine Kelly, Deputy Elections Chief, Palm Beach County; Lucie Valendez, Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office; Linda Tankle, Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office; Pat Hollarn, former Supervisor of Elections Oskaloosa County; and Charmaine Kelly, Deputy Elections Chief, Palm Beach County.

This research was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Any views, opinions or estimates expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Trusts. They also do not necessarily reflect the positions of the election administrators interviewed for this report.

Table of Contents

Overview	1
Recommendations	4
Florida and Hawaii Case Studies	6

Florida

Background	8
Supervisor of Elections Case Studies	10
Broward County	11
Martin County	14
Orange County	15
Oskaloosa County	16
Palm Beach County	18
Voter File Analysis of Florida's Preregistration Program	20
Yearly Number of New Preregistrations and Purged Records	20
Preregistration Purging Analysis: 2000 to 2004	28
Estimating the Effect of High School Civics Education Programs through a Matching Analysis	30

Hawaii

Background	35
Hawaii Office of Elections Case Study	36
Voter File Analysis of Hawaii's Preregistration Program	39
Yearly Number of New Preregistrations and Purged Records	39
Assessing the Performance of Hawaii's Preregistration Program	43
Endnotes	46

Overview

In nearly all American states voting is a two-step process. An eligible voter must first register before being allowed to cast a ballot. Federal and state governments have experimented with ways to lower the barrier that voter registration imposes on American citizens trying to participate in elections. The federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 mandates that states cannot have a registration deadline greater than thirty days. Most states have shorter registration deadlines, with some adopting same-day registration, which permits eligible persons to register and cast their ballot on the same day. The federal National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires states to distribute voter registration forms at various public offices, including driver's license offices, which is why the law is often referred to as "Motor Voter." Many other voter registration laws exist among the states designed to promote voter registration.

The purpose of this report is to investigate a policy known as "preregistration" whereby persons as young as 16 years-old are permitted to register to vote so that they will be registered when they become of voting age. Florida and Hawaii are the only two states that have implemented preregistration laws for more than one election. For the purposes of investigating the implementation of this policy, these states' well-established programs are likely the best source of information. Recent trends are towards adoption of preregistration by more states. Oregon adopted preregistration for 17 year olds in 2007.¹ According to the National Conference of State Legislatures' Database of Election Reform Legislation, in 2009, California, North Carolina, and Wyoming adopted some manner of preregistration and similar legislation was introduced in eight other states.²

These preregistration laws are distinguished from states' laws that permit 17 year-olds to register and in some cases participate in primaries if they will turn age 18 by the general election. Different from these laws, Florida and Hawaii allow a young person to preregister when they become a required age and their eligibility is not directly tied to attaining voting age at the time of a specific election. In the manner, preregistration drives can be designed to operate on an ongoing basis in off-years when there is no scheduled federal or statewide election.

Policy makers and public interest groups are interested in ways to increase youth turnout, which is chronically lower than older persons. For example, the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey reports that in the 2008 presidential election the turnout rate for citizens age 18-29 was 51 percent, compared to a 62 percent turnout rate for citizens age 30-44 and 69 percent for citizens age 45 and older.

Preregistration laws may be reasonably expected to increase youth voter turnout if voter registration poses a significant barrier to youth voter participation. Voter registration burdens first-time voters who are unfamiliar with voter registration laws and who may inadvertently disenfranchise themselves by missing a

registration deadline. Political campaigns also tend to target persons already registered to vote for their persuasion and voter mobilization efforts since many campaigns, particularly at the state and local level, do not have resources to conduct large-scale voter registration drives. Election and school officials may tie preregistration activities to a civics education curriculum, which may further stimulate participation, perhaps by educating youth about the unfamiliar voter registration process.³

There are also reasons to be skeptical that preregistration programs will increase youth voter turnout. People register to vote when they are interested in voting.⁴ For example, that filling out a voter registration form at a drivers license office is not directly tied to the act of voting is an explanation of why Motor Voter did not increase voter turnout.⁵ Persons who fill out voter registration forms as an election nears have a greater propensity to vote since their act of registering is associated with their intent to vote.⁶ A sixteen year old who fills out a voter registration form may have no intention to vote in future elections. Those who may be interested in voting may be motivated to register when the opportunity presents itself close to an election. Furthermore, many sixteen year olds may have left their home address where they were first preregistered before their first opportunity to vote in order to attend college, join the military, or otherwise move. These transients who preregister may need to re-register in their new state or locale of residence. Finally, if preregistration is promoted by authority figures, rebellious students may be turned off by a message urging them to register and vote.⁷

Preregistration programs as conceived and implemented must register a sufficient number of young people if they are to impact youth voting. In both Florida and Hawaii, election officials are tasked with implementing their states' preregistration programs. There are no clear mandates on how these programs are to be implemented. As a consequence, Florida County Supervisors of Elections conduct preregistration programs by various methods. Hawaii has centralized statewide election administration, but here too, state election officials have conducted their preregistration program by various methods over the years. These outreach programs are focused primarily on high schools since this is where most of the target population can be found. Outreach activities by election administrators include preregistration drives conducted in schools by election administrators or faculty and student volunteers, holding Rock-the-Vote style school assemblies where students are given registration applications and instructed how to properly fill them out, and mailing a voter registration application to graduating high school seniors.

The effectiveness of these programs is assessed by analyzing voter registration records to identify the number of young persons who preregister, the number who vote, and the number who may be purged from the voter registration rolls because they may have moved. In Florida, additional information available on the state's voter registration files permits an examination of the program's efficacy

among persons by gender and race. Where budgets are available from election administrators, we develop cost estimates of these programs to determine which may be the most cost effective in preregistering the most number of young persons on a per-dollar basis.

Recommendations

Based on the experiences reported by election administrators interviewed and the data analyzed for this report, the following recommendations are offered:

- 1. Preregistration is most successful when it occurs with face-to-face contacts between young people and election administrators or other volunteers.** Simply enacting a preregistration law is insufficient to engage young people to preregister. As evidence, election administrators in Orange County, Florida and Hawaii report low return rates when mailing out registration forms to persons eligible for preregistration and Hawaii drivers license offices typically generate preregistrations for less than one percent of all Hawaii citizens sixteen and seventeen years old. In comparison, the overwhelming majority of preregistrations are generated through programs with face-to-face contact implemented within schools. Election administrators report dispensing with programs that require action by a prospective preregistrant, such as mailing back registration forms, in favor of programs where individuals are engaged by election administrators or volunteers in high schools or other settings. Election administrators report preferring to recruit young people speak to their peers about the importance of voting, as election administrators consider a young person to be a more credible source of information by their peers. A further benefit of face-to-face contact is that the accuracy and completeness of information on voter registration applications can be verified when a young person registers, thus better ensuring a registration form is properly processed.
- 2. Facilitate coordination between election and school administrators.** Election administrators consistently report that they achieve the highest levels of success when an active principal, staff or faculty member serves as a school liaison for election administrators. This observation echoes a report commissioned by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) which finds their “Kids Voting [a program designed to encourage parent voting and long-term student civic engagement] programs vary from community to community depending on the amount of volunteer support and the discretion of district administrators and individual teachers.”⁸ Some Florida election administrators have facilitated cooperation with public schools through resolutions passed by local school boards directing schools to engage with a preregistration program. Without directives, school administrators work to achieve their own goals and may participate in civic education programs with election administrators on an ad hoc basis.
- 3. Participation should be solicited from private schools, juvenile delinquency facilities, and home schools.** Not all eligible preregistrants can be found in the public school system. Election

administrators report outreach to private schools and juvenile delinquency facilities. Home schooled children present a special problem in that election administrators express reservations about implementation of a non-partisan program in such a setting. Some election administrators arrange field trips to election offices for home schooled children to address this issue. Even the most comprehensive outreach program will fail to include all eligible preregistrants, such as those who have dropped out of school, so other registration means should continue to be made available, such as preregistrations permitted at NVRA agencies.

- 4. Make preregistration part of a broader civics education program.** Election administrators view preregistration as part of an integrated civics education program that further fosters closer ties between school and election administrators. Election administrators report developing broad civics education curriculums that may include classroom lectures, educational videos, mock elections, and school visits by local candidates. Election administrators report successfully recruiting students as poll workers through the bridges they build with schools, such as student committees that conduct preregistration drives. As a further payoff, good relations between election and school administrators help ensure that polling places located in schools open on time on Election Day.
- 5. Respect school administrators' goals and schedules.** Election administrators and school administrators work on different calendars which must be negotiated into harmony. What works for election and school administrators in one jurisdiction may not work in another. For example, while some jurisdictions report success by engaging schools in a registration competition, other jurisdictions' school administrators desire to limit competitive activities between their schools. Some schools work with election administrators to funnel student poll worker salaries to school and club events, while others prefer that students are paid directly.
- 6. Anticipate the electoral calendar.** Preregistration is tied to young peoples' interest in the election, especially presidential elections. On-going yearly preregistration activities do yield applications and appear to have turnout effects. However, the volume of preregistrations will increase in presidential election years. Election and school administrators should plan accordingly to meet varying demand.
- 7. Allow election administrators to design programs for their jurisdiction.** One size does not fit all for election administrators. For example, a large jurisdiction may be able to devote more staff time towards a preregistration program, but will also face the challenge of coordinating a program with many schools. These large jurisdictions may need to design a program that recruits and engages volunteers. A smaller jurisdiction with fewer schools may design a program that relies more on staff visits to schools.

Florida and Hawaii Case Studies

An assessment of voter preregistration programs was conducted in Florida and Hawaii. The research method employed a multi-modal approach of archival searches, site visits, phone interviews, and analysis of voter registration data.

Archival searches were conducted to develop a legislative history of these preregistration laws. These historical documents illuminate the original intent of these laws and how they might have been modified since their inception to address perceived defects.

Site visits with Hawaii election officials were conducted on February 17th and 18th of 2009 with follow-up phone and e-mail correspondence. Site visits with Florida election officials were conducted on May 14th and 15th of 2009. Since it was not practical to visit all 67 Florida local jurisdictions, supplemental phone interviews were conducted in the month of June. These site visits and phone interviews were conducted with officials primarily responsible for implementing a jurisdiction's preregistration program and with managing the voter registration database. Election administrators were queried about how they implement the program, their assessment of its effectiveness, and the related costs.

Statewide voter registration data provide a means to independently assess the effectiveness of preregistration programs. The number of preregistrants, the number who voted after they became eligible, and the number purged from voter registration rolls can be tabulated from these data. Statewide Florida voter registration files from 1999 through the present were obtained from the Office of the Secretary of State. These data permit us to conduct our own analysis. Hawaii restricts access of their voter registration database to government officials and political campaigns. Here, Glen Takahashi, who maintains Hawaii's statewide voter registration file, graciously provided statistics on preregistrants.

The case studies of Florida and Hawaii's pre-registration programs proceed as follows. Each case study begins with a historical and legal narrative of the program. Next, the effectiveness of the program is analyzed, paying specific attention to various ways in which the state and its localities have implemented the program.

Florida

Background

Florida is a large state with a decentralized election administration system. Each of the state's 67 counties has a Supervisor of Elections who is responsible for registering voters and running elections. The Florida Division of Elections within the Office of the Secretary of State coordinates statewide election activity.

Florida by long-standing law permits eligible seventeen year olds to register to vote and subsequently vote when they turn eighteen. This was true even for 20 year-olds prior to the passage of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment which lowered the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen.⁹

Florida amended their law in 2007 to extend preregistration to 15 and 16 year olds with a valid drivers license, which was intended to fill a perceived gap in NVRA implementation.¹⁰ Fifteen year-olds who receive a drivers' license are not required under Florida law to renew their license for up to six years. These young persons would not be eligible to fill out a voter registration form and thus would miss their opportunity to register via Motor Voter. The enacted law is as follows:

A person who is otherwise qualified may preregister on or after that person's 17th birthday or receipt of a valid Florida driver's license, whichever occurs earlier, and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person's 18th birthday.

In 2008, the law was further amended to provide equal access to all young people.¹¹ The driver's license requirement was dropped and the preregistration age was lowered to age sixteen. This change effectively meant that fifteen year olds were no longer eligible to preregister. Florida's current law is as follows:

A person who is otherwise qualified may preregister on or after that person's 16th birthday and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person's 18th birthday.

The Florida Divisions of Elections Rule 1S-2.033, F.A.C. requires Supervisors of Elections to conduct voter education and outreach activities in each public high school and college campus within their county. Supervisors of Elections have, on their own initiative and on a voluntary basis, extended their outreach activities to private schools, elementary and middle schools, and juvenile detention facilities. Supervisors of Elections are required by law to report many activities, including their outreach activities, to the Florida Department of State.¹² The state reports on these activities in a biennial report on voter education programs during an election cycle.

Supervisor of Elections Experiences

These Supervisor of Elections offices conduct outreach activities in the schools within their county. These activities are reflective of Florida's "bottom up" decentralized election administration system. Each Supervisor of Elections is

tasked with performing outreach, but no guidance is given as to how to implement such activities.

Although all 67 Supervisors of Elections are required to conduct school outreach programs, the biennial activity reports published by the Florida Division of Elections indicate some do not report any outreach activities, either for a failure to conduct such activities or a failure to report. In 2002 “a total of 47 counties reported one or more efforts at voter education” and in 2004 “almost every” county reported.¹³ No response rates for voter outreach activities were provided in the 2006 and 2008 reports, which may indicate that all counties are now reporting activities. This pattern of increasing the scope of outreach appears consistent with interviews conducted of Supervisor of Elections staff. Since the 2000 election, Supervisor of Elections staff report implementing new and innovative school outreach programs, some of which explicitly include registration drives targeted to high school students, many of whom are eligible to preregister, though it is largely impractical for election administrators to segregate students of voting age. The increase in reported activities is also consistent with the total number of preregistrations, which increased significantly between 2000 and 2008.

These registration drives take various forms. Supervisor of Elections staff may visit schools and conduct registration drives in classrooms or student assemblies. They may recruit high school staff and students to conduct registration drives on their own. These volunteer-oriented registration drives may occur in school public areas, may be a part of a classroom curriculum, or may be conducted during a student assembly. In some instances, schools compete with one another to register the most students, with the number of registrations verified by Supervisor of Elections staff through a secure mail delivery system. Registration forms may be made available in school libraries or other public locations. The Supervisor of Elections office may provide a registration form – perhaps along with an absentee ballot application – by mailing a form to every graduating senior through address lists provided by the schools, inserting registration forms into diploma covers or other graduation packets, and by conducting registration drives at graduation practice ceremonies. Election administrators may use one or more of these outreach strategies.

Supervisor of Elections offices expend money in various ways to support their outreach programs that may include registration drives targeted at populations eligible for preregistration. Staff time can be substantial for larger jurisdictions that may task one or more employees with implementing their county’s program. Registration forms must be provided, in some cases mailed out, and in some cases a means to return the forms to election administrators must be provided. Volunteer-oriented registration drives may require training sessions and supporting training materials. Volunteers and registrants may be provided other incentives to participate in the program, such as logoed banners, posters, t-shirts, backpacks, stadium cups, stickers, pens and pencils, and candy. For the

counties with registration competitions between schools, award trophies need to be produced.

Beginning in 2006, total expenditures for all school outreach programs are reported in the Florida Division of Elections biennial reports. No expenditure breakdowns are provided for specific activities. In 2006, election officials reported spending \$308,000 on school outreach programs. In 2008, election officials reported spending \$398,000 on school outreach programs, 87 percent coming from county funds. As this implies, some counties report fundraising for these programs separate from county funds. For example, Oskaloosa County implements their school outreach programs through a non-profit organization called 'Kids Vote, Too' that receives no funding from the county government. Martin County reports that a donation from a local citizen funded \$5,000 of their \$5,360 'Pledge to Vote' program implemented in 2008. With 845 registrations generated in 2008, Martin County's program cost \$6.34 on a cost per registration basis. Other Supervisor of Elections staff interviewed for this report declined to provide similar cost estimates for their programs.

An overall cost estimate can be constructed on a per preregistration form basis by dividing the total reported expenditures for these education outreach programs by the number of preregistrations. In 2008, \$398,000 was reported spent on these outreach programs and 86,902 preregistrations were generated from seventeen and sixteen year olds, yielding a cost of \$4.58 per preregistration. Care should be taken in interpreting this number since this estimate is likely in error by an unknown amount. Factors that may lead to a cost over-estimate include spending by Supervisor of Elections offices on unrelated programs in grade and middle schools, and spending on the registering of eighteen year olds as a byproduct of these activities. Factors favoring an under-estimate include preregistrations generated through NVRA agencies or third party registration drives, and under-estimates of staff time towards outreach activities. Still, that this overall estimate is of similar magnitude to Martin County's program suggests that the preregistration program costs the state of Florida somewhere around \$5 per preregistration. It should be further noted that these costs may not include the cost of processing a preregistration application. Interviewed election administrators declined to provide a cost estimate to process each registration form.

Supervisor of Elections Case Studies

On-site interviews were conducted in Broward County on May 13, 2009 and Palm Beach Counties on May 12, 2009. Phone interviews with Martin, Orange, and Oskaloosa election administrators were conducted in the month of June on an on-going basis. The Florida Division of Elections biennial reports highlight the education efforts conducted by these jurisdictions, suggesting that their programs are among the most robust in the state. Attempts to contact other Supervisor of Elections offices were either unsuccessful or the staff member contacted was generally non-responsive to questions about their program. The purpose of these interviews is to assess best practices in implementing preregistration programs,

so non-responsive jurisdictions likely do not have robust programs that may contribute to an understanding of preregistration implementation best practices and challenges.

Broward County

Broward County is a populous county situated along Florida's southeast Atlantic coast with a population of 1.6 million people, according to the 2000 census. The county conducts a high school education program that includes preregistration with cooperation from the Broward County School Board. A site visit was conducted at the Broward Supervisor of Elections office on May 14, 2009. In attendance were Dr. Brenda Snipes, Supervisor of Elections of Broward County; Gino Herring, Voter Education Director; and Tonya Edwards, Voter Education/High School Voter Registration Coordinator.

The Broward Supervisor of Elections office developed their current school outreach program in 2004, the first full year that Dr. Snipes served as Supervisor of Elections for the county. As a former principal of C. Robert Markham Elementary School, Dr. Snipes cultivated her contacts with Broward County School Board to promote a resolution adopted by the School Board directing the public schools to work with the Supervisor of Elections on their school education outreach efforts. The resolution calls for a voter registration week to promote preregistration in the high schools.

A benefit of having School Board involvement is that it facilitates coordination between the Board of Supervisors and the school administrators. Broward County is a large jurisdiction with many schools. The Supervisor of Elections staff makes presentations about preregistration and other outreach activities to committee meetings of principals and schools' social studies chairs. Broward County's private schools are also invited to participate. These outreach activities help ensure representatives of each school, consisting of 1-2 teachers and 4-6 students, attend a training workshop on how to conduct a school voter registration drive.

Participants of the voter registration workshop are trained on how to properly fill out a voter registration form and how to use the schools' pony courier system to return forms to the Supervisor of Elections office in a timely manner. Participants are given a packet of registration forms; "I registered" stickers; logoed t-shirts, pens, pencils, candy, and backpacks; promotional posters and flyers; and a report form to accompany the pony system envelope. They are further instructed on how to vote and whom to contact if they have questions or problems. Finally, they are deputized to be official Supervisor of Office registration drive workers. Attendees are reminded of which schools in the past registered the greatest number of students. The schools are encouraged to compete to register the most students. To ensure a level playing field for the competition, schools are segregated into six tiers based on school size.

Supervisor of Elections staff noted that a school's preregistration drive success is predicated on an active person, usually a social studies teacher, to implement the program in a school. When a school fails to send a representative to the workshop, contact is made with the school's principal. Staff again noted that the principal's leadership and support is critical for a successful preregistration program. An engaged principal will locate a volunteer; if a principal is unresponsive, a school may not participate in the program.

These teacher and student deputized volunteers decide how to implement their voter registration drive during the School Board-declared voter registration week. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these drives are most effective when they are part of a school assembly or other classroom activity where all students in attendance are given a registration form and are guided through the process of completing it. They are less successful when a registration table is set up in a common area, which students must actively seek out in order to preregister.

Third party registration drives are viewed as a problem. Representatives from these organizations have fraudulently identified themselves as Supervisor of Elections staff and offered payment for registration forms collected through school preregistration programs. These representatives are incentivized to do so when they are paid for the number of completed forms that they collect. Supervisor of Elections staff have discovered such activity after the fact when teachers or students ask them for payment promised by these third party representatives. The t-shirts and other logoed materials thus serve to identify volunteers in their schools as official representatives of the Supervisor of Elections during the preregistration drives, in addition to rewarding those who volunteer to implement the program.

Election administrators have limited staff and rely on school staff and students to help implement their preregistration program. These volunteers are not professionally trained election administrators and may occasionally make errors in offering advice on how to properly fill out a registration form. On the positive side, because schools are judged by the number of completed forms that are accepted, there is an incentive for school staff and students who conduct the voter registration drives to ensure all forms are properly completed. The Supervisor of Elections staff noted that forms collected through schools tend to be complete, and they can more easily correct incomplete forms because they know where to contact a registrant with a problem registration application.

The Supervisor of Elections staff view preregistration activities as a component of their broader state-mandated education outreach to the public schools. In addition to preregistration, Broward County election administrators actively recruit student poll workers. They distribute vote reminder stickers to lower grade students, ostensibly to remind parents to vote. However, the stickers are so popular that high school students request them, too. They run mock elections in schools. They even organized a strictly non-partisan field trip to an early voting

polling location for students old enough to vote in the 2008 general election so that they could experience their first vote with their fellow students.

Together, these activities are seen as building stronger ties between the Supervisor of Elections office and school administrators. In the summer, the Supervisor of Elections office offers teachers a workshop on the entire electoral process, through which they receive in-service credit. These ties help to ensure the approximately 300 (out of 800) polling places located in schools are open at 5:30 a.m. Election Day morning.

These preregistration activities are seen as an integral component of a broader outreach effort to schools, perhaps the most significant is recruitment of student poll workers. The Supervisor of Elections office recruits student poll workers from their student volunteers in their preregistration drives, through telephone calls to principals, and by word of mouth. Broward Supervisor of Elections recruited enough student poll workers to place a student in each of the county's 800 polling places, with the best students assigned as troubleshooters for an election equipment problem call-in hotline. In a way, too, student poll workers contribute to the total number of preregistrations since poll workers must be registered to vote in Florida and occasionally some students are preregistered in order to participate as a poll worker.

Student poll workers from the same school are kept together during poll worker training. They are invited back to receive more training if they so desire. Broward County staff lauded these student poll workers, remarking on their willingness to show up on time, their technical capabilities with the voting equipment, and their interest in the electoral process. They also noted that Broward County's retiree community appreciates the presence of young poll workers.

Students and schools benefit from the student poll worker program. Poll working serves to fulfill students' required community service. In one reported instance, a student volunteer's college application was looked upon favorably due to their involvement with the program. Money that would have been earned by students under age eighteen is given to the schools (those eighteen and older are paid directly). Schools may effectively give this money back to volunteering students in the form of special school-issued money for internal school purchases. In other cases, the money is used for campus-wide events. One year, Pompano Beach High School would not have been able to hold a prom without the money generated by the poll worker program.

There is little anecdotal evidence to suggest that poll workers are retained within Broward County to work as poll workers after they graduate. However, some student poll workers have worked as many as four elections while in school. Poll workers who remain in the area after they graduate from high school have been observed working on local campaigns.

Martin County

Martin County is a mid-sized county along Florida's southeastern coast with a population of 139,000 people. The county has five public high schools and one private high school. A phone interview with Kherri Anderson with Martin County's Supervisor of Elections office was conducted on June 19, 2009. Ms. Anderson graciously provided an electronic copy of a report she authored entitled "2008 Students 'Pledge to Vote' Campaign" transmitted on June 19, 2009.

Prior to 2005, the Supervisor of Elections conducted no outreach program to specifically encourage preregistration in area schools. In 2005, the incoming Supervisor of Elections, Vicki Davis, a former school board member, commissioned a study of youth participation, particularly out of concern of low youth voting in the 2004 presidential election. The office conducted on-campus focus groups with students and school officials and analyzed their elections data. The recommendations from this study culminated in the development of the county's "Pledge to Vote" program.

Working with the school board, the Board of Supervisors office convened a meeting of students from the county's schools, both high school and college. Students requested a competition to create a public service video announcement on why voting was important to them. Students also requested the establishment of a preregistration competition among their schools, similar to Broward County's.

For their preregistration activities in 2008, students held registration drives in school common areas and classrooms. A "Pledge to Vote" banner was distributed to each campus to help direct students to these registration drive locations. Students also planned campus assemblies where the featured speakers were candidates and current elected officials. At these assemblies, Martin County election administrators passed out registration forms, stepped students through the registration process, and collected completed forms. At these assemblies, Ms. Anderson reports that students received a voter guide, a door hanger with voting instructions, t-shirt, stadium cup, pen, lollypop, pocket-sized constitution, and a pencil. Many of these items included a "Pledge to Vote" logo. Students signed a "We Pledge to Make a Difference" banner which was displayed at campuses until the conclusion of the 2008 presidential election.

At graduation, graduating seniors were given a voter registration and absentee ballot application in their diploma covers. The absentee ballot applications were well-received by students and parents.

Ms. Anderson reports the total cost of the program was \$5,360, of which \$5,000 was offset by a donation for a local philanthropist. The Supervisor of Elections staff time was estimated to be equivalent to one 40 hour a week full-time employee working for two months. In 2008 the "Pledge to Vote" program registered 845 students, out of a pool of 2,345 eligible students. On a cost per

registration basis, the program cost \$6.34 per registration. No further breakdown of the age of these registrants was provided.

The “Pledge to Vote” program generated 20 student poll workers. Student poll workers were paid \$150 directly for their service. Schools were not interested in receiving money earned by student poll workers.

The “Pledge to Vote” program institutionalized a student advisory committee that meets monthly during the school year at the Supervisor of Elections office. The committee consists of 11-15 students, at least one from each school. Students may be recruited from the schools by school officials, or they may volunteer. All students interested in serving on the committee are accepted as members. Members served as liaisons to their schools, where peer-to-peer contact is deemed important. Many served as poll workers.

Orange County

Orange County is a large county in central Florida consisting of 1.1 million people according to the 2000 census. Phone interviews with Supervisor of Elections office staff were conducted with Lucie Valendez on June 19, 2009 and Linda Tankle on June 29, 2009.

For at least the past twenty years, Orange County Supervisor of Elections staff has conducted outreach programs into the high schools that include preregistration. Prior to the passage of the NVRA, the Orange County Supervisor of Elections office deputized students and teachers to conduct voter registration drives within their schools and to track voter registration applications. Following NVRA, the Supervisor of Elections office interpreted the new law as prohibiting the tracking of voter registration forms. Ms. Tankle reported that NVRA weakened the County’s pre-registration program. The Supervisor of Elections office was no longer able to measure success and had less coordination with their volunteer registrars in the schools. However, she did not know to what degree this loss of effectiveness was offset by increased access to voter registration at NVRA agencies.

The Supervisor of Elections office does not officially coordinate with the county’s School Board. The office notifies the School Board of its intent to carry out its state-mandated education activities. The office then coordinates with principals at a principals’ meeting. Individually, public and private school principals are requested to identify a staff or faculty member to act as a liaison between the office and the school. The liaison is typically a senior class advisor, student government advisor, or civics teacher. There is no direct outreach to home-schooled children, though the office does conduct requested tours of their facilities, at which preregistration may occur.

Preregistration activities are implemented through registration drives in the high schools. The Supervisor of Elections office works with school officials to

determine a best time to conduct their registration drives in accordance with the school's calendars. These drives may occur any time during the school year.

Orange County election administrators stated that a key for the program's success is the level of "excitement" from the school liaison. These liaisons and student volunteers conduct their schools' voter registration drives, with training provided by the Supervisor of Elections office. In addition, Orange County Supervisor of Elections Bill Cowles makes presentations to classrooms and school assemblies upon request, and office workers may be on-hand to conduct voter registration drives during these school visits. These visits are tailored to the school, and may include a presentation before a large assembly or an individual classroom.

In the past, the Supervisor of Elections mailed out registration forms to all graduating seniors. The cost of the mail program was estimated between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to reach 8,000 to 12,000 seniors in a given year. This program was discontinued in 2009 because there was no way to measure the effectiveness of the program. Ms. Tankle cited that "face-to-face contact" is perceived to be more effective as another reason why the mail back program was discontinued. While registration forms are no longer mailed out, registration forms are placed in graduating senior packets distributed by the schools.

Ms. Tankle expressed concern over future implementation of these preregistration drives in accordance with new provisions in Florida Code Title IX, 97.0575(1) that require a "third party voter registration organization" to name a registered agent who is responsible for providing the names of individuals engaged in operations for voter registration activities. Third party organizations are defined in 97.021(36) as "any person, entity or organization soliciting and collecting voter registration applications." Exemptions are given for people registering persons in their immediate household and for employees of NVRA agencies. These exemptions do not include school officials or students. Registering participants in accordance with this law may become a part of future registration drive training.

Unlike some other jurisdictions, at the request of school principals, the schools do not compete to see which school can preregister the most students. According to Ms. Tankle, school administrators feel that there is already too much competition among the county's schools.

Oskaloosa County

Oskaloosa County is a midsized county on Florida's panhandle with a population of 170,000 persons, according to 2000 census. The county implements its preregistration program through a non-profit organization called Kids Vote, Too. Dissatisfied with civic education programs offered by existing organizations, former teacher and then-Supervisor of Elections Pat Hollarn, Carol DeBolt of the *Florida Daily News*, and retired Superintendent of Education Dr. Mabel Jean

Morrison created the program in 1998. A phone interview about Kids Vote, Too was conducted with Ms. Hollarn on May 27, 2009.

Kids Vote, Too was conceived as a volunteer organization that performs its activities without support from the Oskaloosa County government. The non-profit organization is funded by corporate sponsors, licensing, and by other novel means, such as by selling a cookbook. The program is licensed to other jurisdictions (for example, Escambia County, Florida) under a three-tier pricing scheme, and these proceeds are used to help fund Oskaloosa's program.

Kids Vote, Too is a comprehensive civic education program, of which preregistration is a component. The curriculum is approved by the Oskaloosa County School Board and adopted for use in the public schools. Because the program is officially sanctioned by the Oskaloosa School Board, a coordinator is assigned by each school to work with the Supervisor of Elections in implementing Kids Vote, Too. Typically, the coordinator is a social studies teacher. The county's three private schools and the Department of Juvenile Justice also participate in the program.

The county's home school community briefly participated in the program. Ms. Hollarn noted that these efforts were discontinued due to indications that students were told whom to vote for, which was deemed inappropriate for a non-partisan civic education effort. This episode illustrates that oversight of the program's implementation may be weakened when there are fewer direct lines of authority, such as with a home schooling program. However, this episode also illustrates that a comprehensive preregistration program targeting public and private high schools will fail to include all eligible younger persons, such as those taught in home schools or those who are high school drop outs.

Kids Vote, Too is conducted twice a year in Oskaloosa schools. The classroom curriculum is web-based so that teachers can download material for their class instruction. The curriculum is structured to culminate in student assemblies that include election administrators. The program's curriculum is tailored to each grade level. For example, for high school students it is renamed Teens Vote, Too and has a specific program for preregistration. Oskaloosa County is home to Eglin Air Force Base – a major presence within this mid-sized county – and the curriculum incorporates "Vote with a Vet," a program designed to honor American military personnel through voting. To make a relevant connection with students, an educational video is updated each election year that includes interviews with young service personnel from Eglin Air Force Base. As a part of the program, simulated elections are conducted on election equipment used by the county or are conducted via the internet. Students vote for such elected offices as president, sheriff, and school superintendent as well as school issues such as whether to require school uniforms.

The oreregistration component of the Kids Vote, Too is implemented in high school curriculum. Students complete forms at student assemblies where Supervisors of Elections representatives are on-hand to distribute, to instruct students how to complete forms, and to collect forms. Forms are also made available in high school libraries. Completed forms are then delivered through the school courier system to the Supervisor of Elections office. The high school that generates the highest percentage of registrations is recognized. The curriculum is designed to encourage parents to register, too, particularly for younger students who are too young to preregister.

Unlike Broward County, Oskaloosa County does not recruit student poll workers as a component of their high schools outreach program. A reason cited by Ms. Hollarn is a lack of need for poll workers. Many retired military personnel live in the county and these individuals readily volunteer to be poll workers. She expressed further reservations about student poll workers as being unreliable. The few that do volunteer are used by Oskaloosa County as gophers and for other odd work.

Ms. Hollarn does not report problems with third party voter registration drives. She believes that these outside organizations are not active in her jurisdiction because the Supervisor of Elections office registers nearly all eligible persons who want to vote.

Palm Beach County

Palm Beach County is a populous county along Florida's southeast Atlantic coast with a population of 1.3 million people according to the 2000 census. The county conducts a high school education program that includes preregistration. A site visit with Charmaine Kelly, Deputy Elections Chief, was conducted at the Palm Beach Supervisor of Elections office on May 13, 2009.

The Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections office has implemented their preregistration program in at least two different manners. In 2001, the office obtained from the Palm Beach County School Board mailing labels for all 17 year olds in the public schools. The office sent a registration form to all these students and tracked their return rates. Ms. Kelly was unable to provide a specific number of returned forms, but characterized the number as low and deemed the mail-back program ineffective. The office has not since used this approach.

Currently, the Palm Beach Supervisor of Elections office teams staff with volunteers to conduct preregistration drives in the county's high schools during the election when interest is high, and before the book closing (close of registration). The League of Women Voters also participates in these preregistration drives. Ms. Kelly described the importance of including a young staff person as a representative of the Supervisor of Elections office during preregistration drives in order to better relate to high school students. A

challenge is when preregistration drives are conducted during the working day in the run-up to the election, when staff time is limited.

The Supervisor of Elections office works directly with the public and private schools to arrange to send their representatives to make a presentation to classes or a student assembly. Unlike Broward and Oskaloosa counties, the office does not work directly with the Palm Beach School Board – the public schools therefore participate on a voluntary basis. This may result in scheduling conflicts between the preregistration drives and mandated school activities, such as student testing. Ms. Kelly stressed the importance of accommodating school schedules, but recognized that this needed to be balanced against limited staff resources.

The Supervisor of Elections office conducts other outreach activities. Student organizations and student governments have organized their own voter registration drives with assistance from the office. In 2004, the office aired public service announcements about preregistration on local radio. Further public education is needed, as illustrated by phone calls to the office from parents of 16 year-old preregistrants worried that their child was fraudulently registered.

Ms. Kelly characterized the success of the preregistration program as being tied to the election cycle. Registrations increase during presidential elections and decrease during off-years. She reported that the Supervisor of Elections office generated approximately 800 applications in 2008. However, the March, 2009 statewide voter file indicates 5,660 preregistrations applications were processed in Palm Beach County in 2008. It may be that third party registration activities targeted at places where young people may be found, such as festivals and fairs, account for the difference.

Voter File Analysis of Florida's Preregistration Program

Florida's statewide voter registration file provides data to measure the effectiveness of the state's preregistration program. The file contains demographic and election administration information for every registered voter in the state. A registrant's birth date, coupled with their date of registration, identifies if a registrant preregistered when they were age 17 or younger. Further demographic information identifies a registrant's gender and race or ethnicity, which aids analysis of preregistration gender or racial or ethnic effects. Finally, the file identifies elections where a registrant voted, which may determine if preregistration's end goal of promoting youth voter turnout is realized. Three voter registration files obtained from the Florida Secretary of State are analyzed: January, 2001; February 2005; and May, 2008. These files are selected because they contain individual registrants' voting history for the previous presidential election most proximate to a voter file.¹⁴

A difficulty in working with voter registration files is that they contain many records of people who have since moved from the residence where they were registered at. This is termed "deadwood" by election administrators. Deadwood registrants may be removed or "purged" from the voter rolls under provisions of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 if they have notified their local election officials that they have moved, become ineligible, or are non-responsive to a mailed notice from election administrators and have not voted in two federal general elections.¹⁵

Deadwood and purging may be particularly pertinent issues for preregistrants since these high school age students may leave their home jurisdiction when they turn 18 years old, perhaps to attend college, for example. Any registrant who moves, but does not notify election administrators in their previous jurisdiction, will remain on the voter rolls for at least two federal general elections. There is no way by analyzing voter file data to distinguish a registrant who continues to reside at their address but does not vote from one who truly constitutes deadwood. The analysis that follows finds that despite their presumably greater transience, Florida's preregistrants are only slightly more likely to be purged from the voter rolls than all persons of voting age, and that many preregistrants continue to vote in many following elections.

Yearly Number of New Preregistrations and Purged Records

Florida has permitted preregistration for 17 year-olds since lowering the voting age to 17 in 1971. There are two recent modifications to this implementation. A 2007 law extended preregistration to young persons with a valid driver's license, which effectively lowered the preregistration age to 15, for those with a learners' permit. A modification to this law in 2008 removed the driver's license requirement and lowered preregistration age to 16 for all persons, regardless if they possessed a drivers' license. Effectively 15 year-olds were no longer permitted to preregister.

A person is identified as a preregistrant if their date of registration occurred prior to their 18th birthday. While this is a straightforward calculation, data entry errors for a registrant's birth date or registration date confound these data. These errors are perhaps most apparent when observing a small number of preregistrations among 15 and 16 year-olds for the recent years in which these young people were not allowed to preregister under Florida law.

Few, 15 year-olds preregistered during the period of 2007-2008 when they were permitted to do so. The February, 2009 Florida voter file records that only 28 applications by 15 year-olds were processed in 2008 and that none were processed in 2007. These numbers are not much greater than the yearly single digit number of preregistrations by 15 year-olds in previous years, which might be attributable to birth date or registration date data entry errors.

In contrast, the number of pre-registrations among 16 year-olds increased substantially in 2008, the first year that these young people were permitted to preregister. From 2005 to 2006, the number of 16 year-old preregistrants increased from 295 to 479 in 2006. It rose to 608 in 2007, and then 9,176 in 2008.

Prior to 2007, only 17 year-olds were permitted to preregister. The 295 seemingly incorrect preregistrations in 2006 (and unreported numbers for previous years) among 16 year-olds is likely caused by data entry errors. The larger number of seemingly incorrect 16 year-old preregistrations is consistent with the greater number of ways to incorrectly enter dates. A registrant incorrectly identified as a 15 year-old preregistrant may be the product of a year data entry error in their birth or registration date. In contrast, a registrant may be incorrectly identified as a 16 year-old by year, month, or day data entry errors in their birth or registration date. The relatively small number of such errors, and their presumed randomness, suggest that these errors should not greatly affect the analysis that follows.

The effect of Florida's preregistration program may be best observed for 17 year-olds, who have been eligible to preregister since 1972. The number of new preregistrations generated in each year from 1992-2008 is plotted in Figure 1. These numbers are plotted for three voter registration files: 2001 (denoted by a blue line), 2005 (green), and 2009 (red) files.

These three voter files reveal a general upward trend in the number of new preregistrations over the past decade and a half. Our best estimate of the number of new preregistrations, drawn from the most proximate voter registration file, is that the number of new preregistrations has increased from almost 30,000 in 2000, to a little over 65,000 in 2004, to nearly 78,000 in 2008. This upward trend is consistent with Supervisor of Elections interviews that indicate counties have generally implemented more robust high school outreach programs in recent years, particularly following the 2000 presidential election.

The number of new preregistrations appears to surge in high stimulus presidential election years. The number of new preregistrations increased from the proceeding year in the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential elections and the number declined in the years following the 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004 presidential elections. Interestingly, the number of new registrations does not surge again in midterm elections, where the presence of other federal and state elections might spur interest. Indeed, the number of preregistrations tends to decrease to the lowest intra-presidential election levels in midterm elections and not in odd-numbered years where no statewide elections are on the ballot. The 2002 election is an exception to this pattern, however it is difficult to disentangle any surge and decline from the general upward trend in new preregistrations from 2000 to 2004. The surge and decline pattern suggests that a presidential election is the primary motivator for youth preregistrations, even so that it stimulates activity in the run up to the election and in its aftermath.

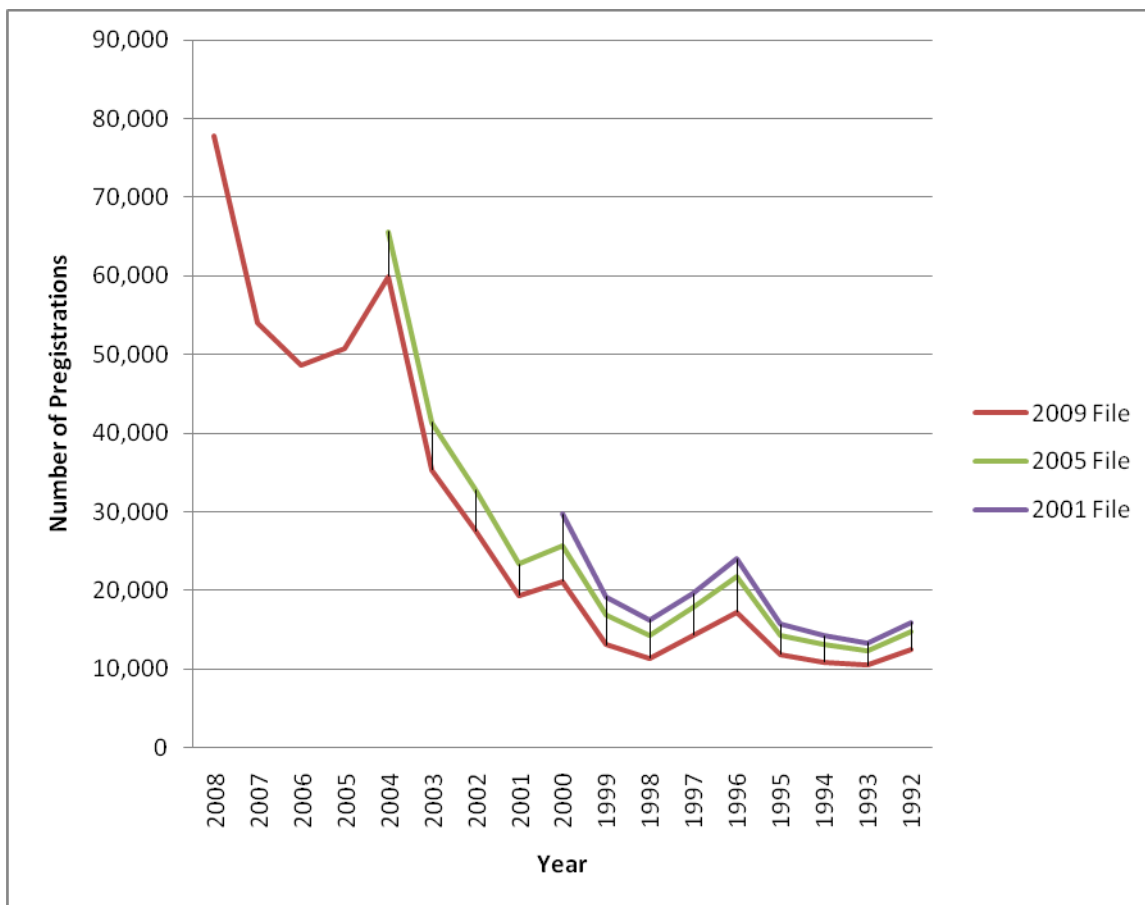


Figure 1. Florida Preregistrations, 1992-2008 (17 year olds only)

To control for population growth, the number of new preregistrations plotted in Figure 1 can be expressed as a percentage of all Florida citizens age 17 in a given year.¹⁶ To control for purging as best as possible, the highest number of preregistrants in any given year is used in the numerator of the percentage. This percentage is plotted in Figure 2 and tells a similar story as Figure 1.

Preregistrations have generally been increasing over time and tend to peak in presidential election years. Figure 2 provides additional context to the penetration of the policy to cover all seventeen year olds. In 2008, a presidential election with the highest turnout rate since 1964, the percentage of preregistrations among citizens age seventeen reached their highest level of 34 percent, which was up only slightly from 31 percent in 2004, another high stimulus election. For citizens age sixteen, 4.2 percent preregistered in 2008. A significant number of eligible 16 and 17 year olds do not preregister, even in a high stimulus presidential election.

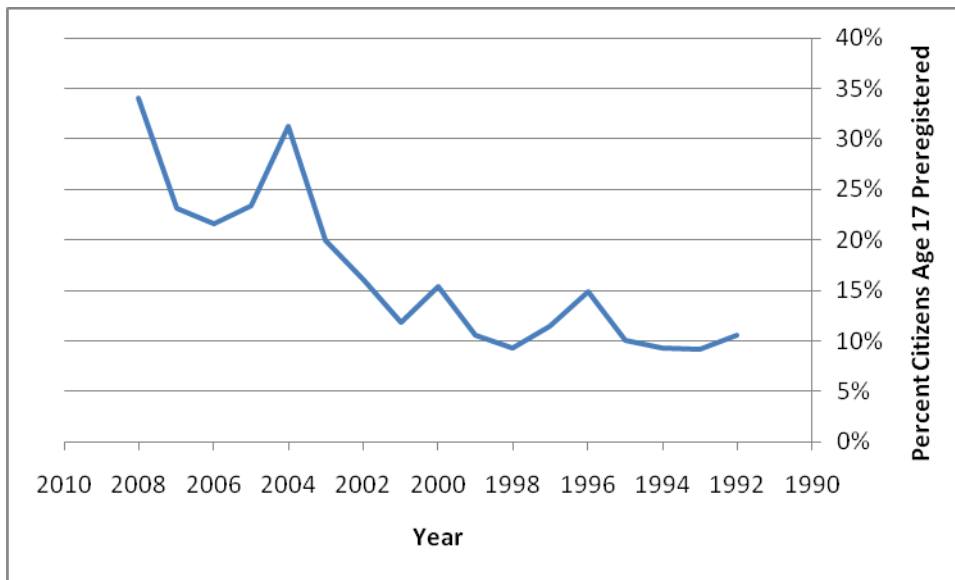


Figure 2. Florida Preregistrations as Percentage of Citizens Age 17, 1992-2008 (17 year olds only)

It may be that preregistration is ineffective and a waste of resources because young people are preregistered, but do not vote, and are eventually purged from the voter file. Patterns of purging are also evident in Figure 1. Each voter registration file reports more preregistrations in a given year than the number reported in succeeding files. The difference in the number of preregistrations reported in a file compared to a later file is an indicator of the number of preregistrations that have been purged between the two voter registration files. For example, between 1992 and 2004, 49,197 preregistrations recorded on the 2005 file were purged from the 2009 voter file. Between 1992 and 2000, 45,129 preregistrations recorded on the 2001 file were purged from the 2009 voter file.

Figure 1 indicates that the number of purged preregistrations in a given year is relatively constant, as measured by the gap between the lines. Since the total number of new preregistrations is increasing in recent years, the number of purged preregistrations expressed as a percentage of total preregistrations is therefore decreasing. Our best estimate is that 29 percent of new preregistrations generated in 2000 – as recorded on the 2001 voter file – were purged by 2009, and only 10 percent of new preregistrations generated in 2004 – as recorded on the 2005 vote file – were purged by 2009. From these past patterns, we might

expect that approximately one in ten of the preregistrations generated in 2008 will be purged from the voter registration files by 2012 and approximately three in ten will be purged by 2016. These purge rates among preregistrants are only slightly higher than those for persons age 18 and older who register through the regular process. Our best estimate is that 26 percent of new registrations for persons of voting age generated in 1996 – as recorded on the 2001 file – were purged by 2009, and 8 percent of new registrations generated in 2004 – as recorded on the 2005 file – were purged by 2009.

Preregistration Voting Analysis

These registration statistics demonstrate that a substantial number of persons who preregister remain on the voter registration rolls for a substantial period of time after they become of voting age and are not simply purged after one or two elections. Perhaps most importantly, many of these individuals vote. Their voting patterns can be assessed by examining records of the elections that all registered voters participated in. The effect of Florida's preregistration programs on voter turnout can be assessed by comparing the voting rates of persons who preregister with persons who are of the same age of those who preregister, but registered after they turned eighteen. For example, consider a seventeen year old who preregisters in 2003. This individual can be compared with persons in their age cohort that were also seventeen in 2003, but registered in 2004 or afterwards when they were age eighteen or older and registered through the regular process.

Figures 3 through 5 plot the percent of registrants who turned seventeen in a given year who voted. Each figure provides a registration turnout rate trend line for preregistrants (blue line) and for persons in the same age cohort who registered when they were age 18 or older (red line). Each figure presents data from the 2009, 2005, and 2001 Florida voter files, from which participation rates in the 2008, 2004, and 2000 presidential elections are plotted.

Evident from Figures 3 through 5 is an apparent beneficial effect of preregistration on voter turnout. From the 2009 voter file, Figure 3 shows that persons who preregistered has a registration turnout rate in the 2008 election of 4.7 percentage points more than those who registered after they turned 18. From the 2005 voter file, Figure 4 shows preregistrants were 2.0 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2004 election. From the 2001 voter file, Figure 5 shows preregistrants were 3.6 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2000 election.

There appears to be a direct beneficial effect of preregistration in presidential election years. Registration turnout rates for all registrants generally increase in the presidential election year most proximate to a voter file, which is consistent with research that shows those who register closest to a registration deadline for an election are most likely to vote in that election.¹⁷ For the 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential elections, those who preregister in a presidential election year

and become eligible to vote in that election are more likely to do so in the presidential election than those who turn 18 in that same year and register through the normal process. In 2008, those who preregistered were 2.0 percentage points more likely to vote. In 2004, those who preregistered were 1.9 percentage points more likely to vote. In 2000, those who preregistered were 10.1 percentage points more likely to vote.

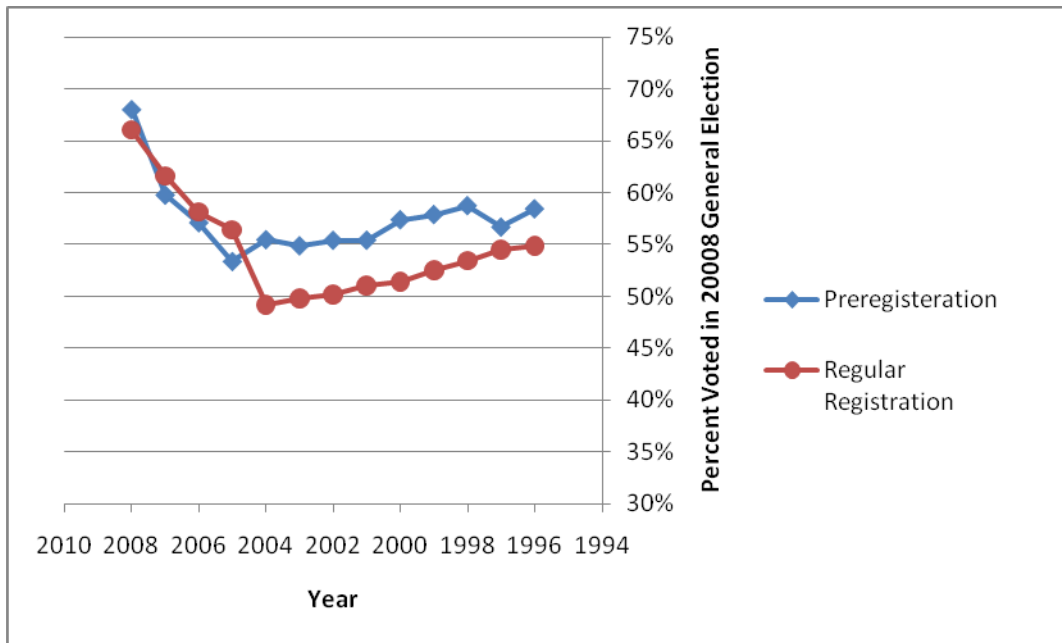


Figure 3. Cohort Comparison: 2009 Florida Voter File

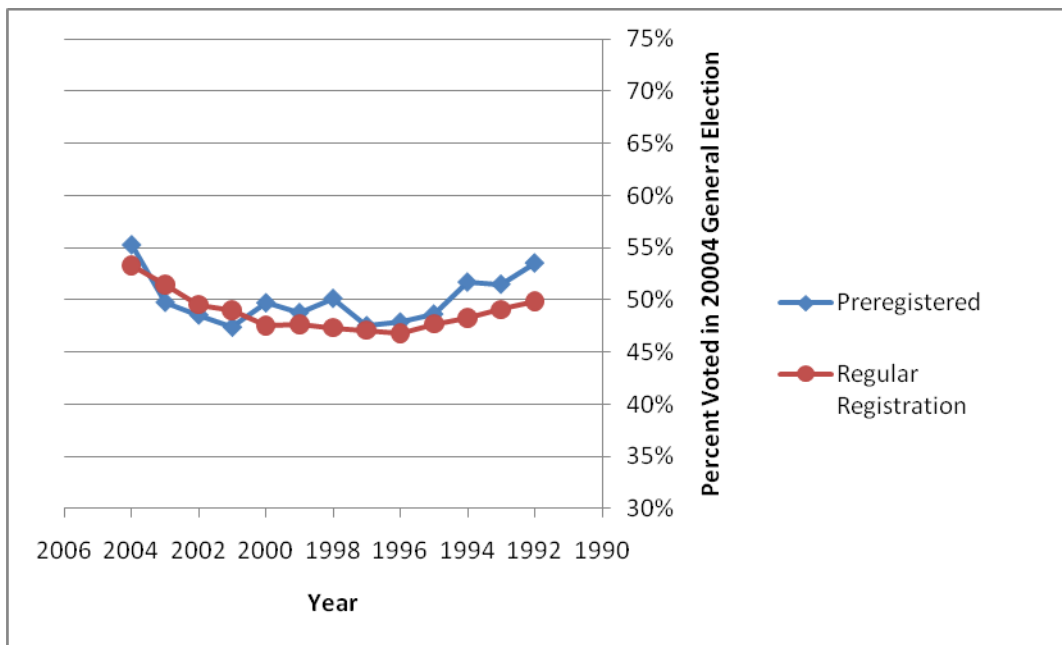


Figure 4. Cohort Comparison: 2005 Florida Voter File

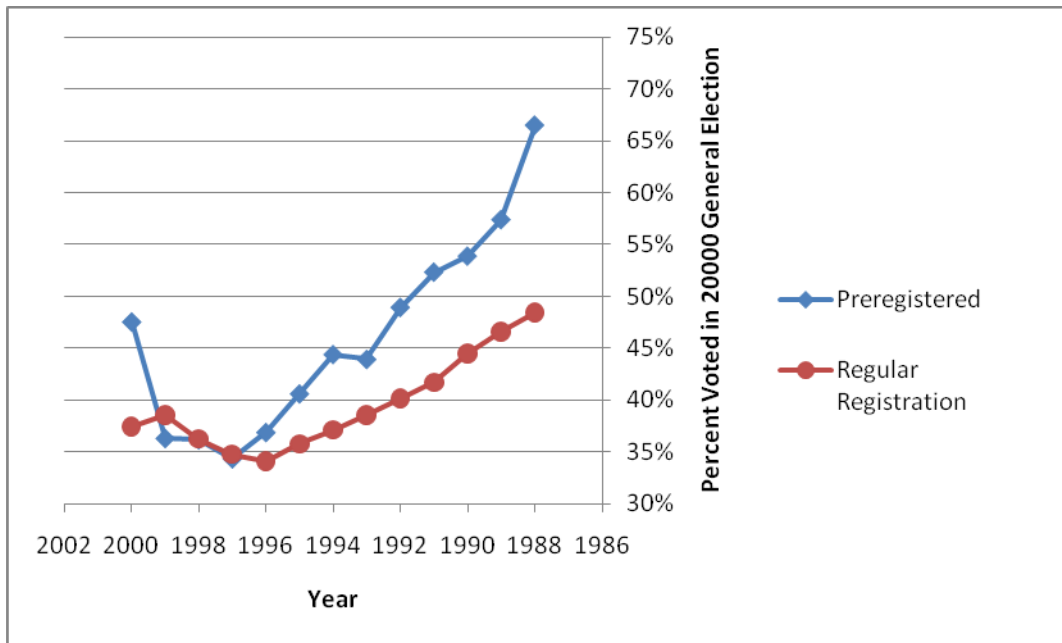


Figure 5. Cohort Comparison: 2001 Florida Voter File

Figures 6 through 8 duplicate Figures 3 through 5 for registrants who identify themselves as “Black” on their Florida voter registration application. When compared to Figures 3 through 5, the statistics presented in Figures 6 through 8 suggest that preregistration has a greater effect for African-Americans. While turnout rates for African-Americans tend to be lower in comparison to Figures 3 through 5, as is expected given numerous studies finding a similar pattern of lower turnout,¹⁸ the gap is larger in a positive direction between African-Americans who preregister and their age cohort peers who register later through the normal process. From the 2009 voter file, Figure 6 shows African-Americans who preregistered were 5.2 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2008 election than those who registered after they turned 18 (compared to 4.7 for all persons). From the 2005 voter file, Figure 7 shows African-American preregistrants were 3.0 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2004 election (compared to 4.7 for all persons). From the 2001 voter file, Figure 8 shows that African-American preregistrants were 3.8 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2000 election (compared to 3.6 for all persons).

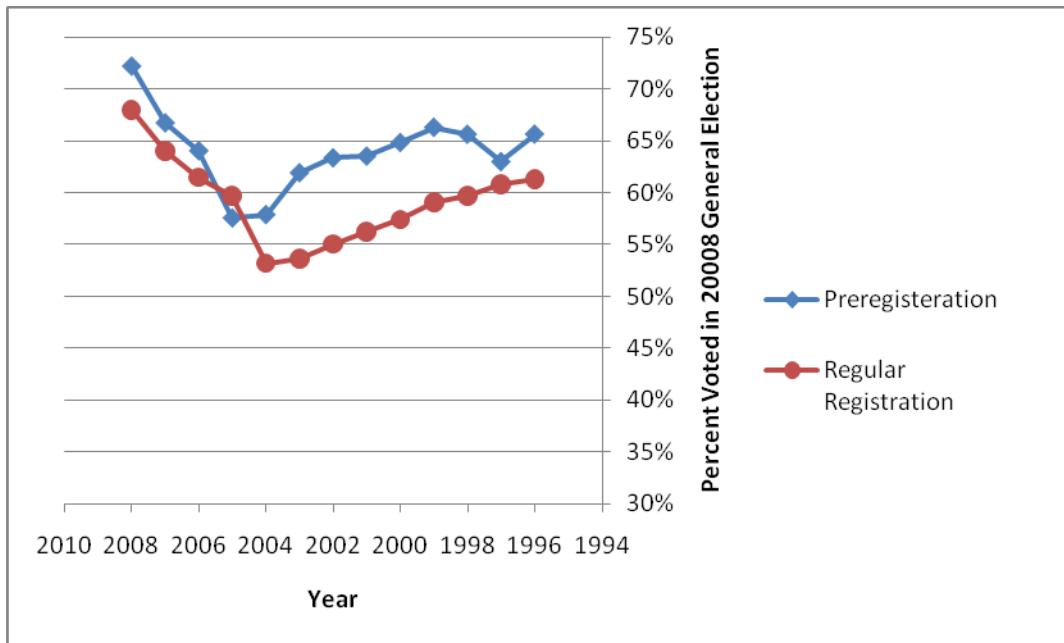


Figure 6. African-American Cohort Comparison: 2009 Florida Voter File

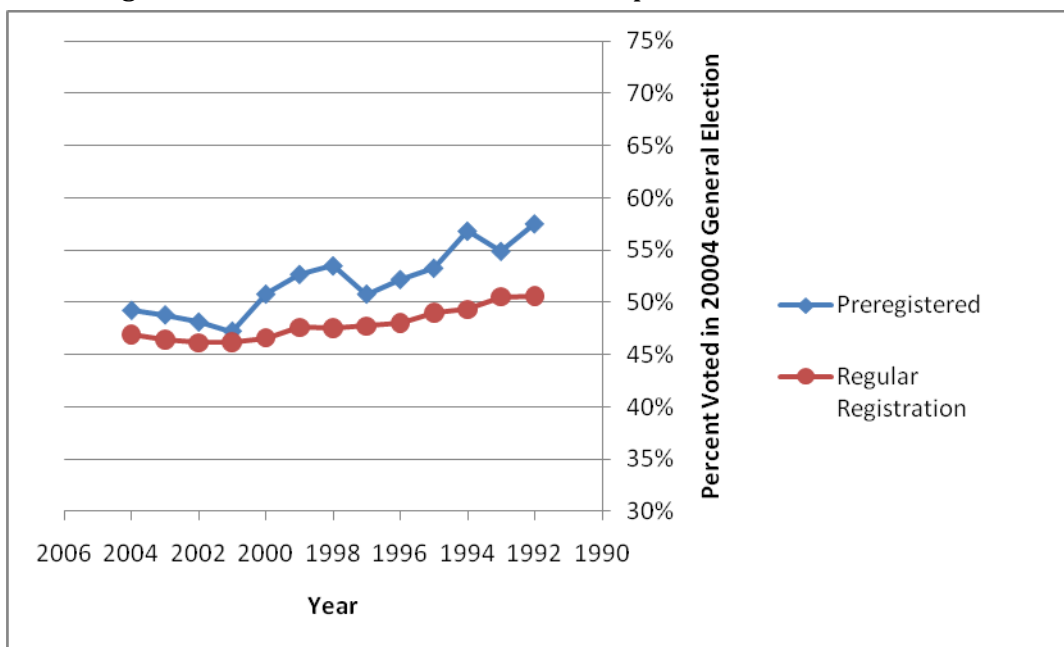


Figure 7. African-American Cohort Comparison: 2005 Florida Voter File

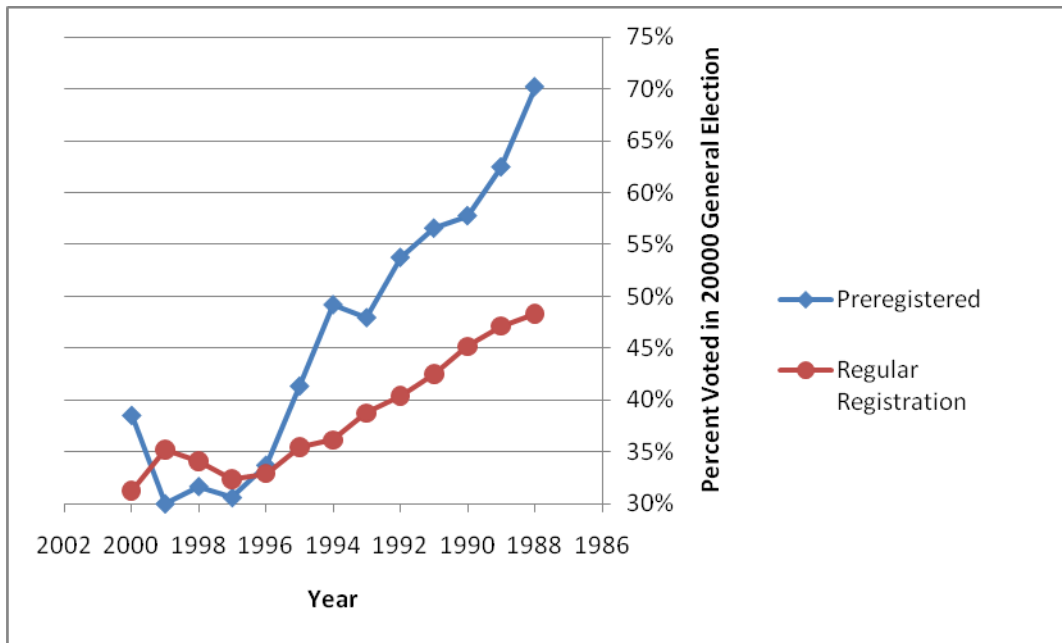


Figure 8. African-American Cohort Comparison: 2001 Florida Voter File

Preregistration Purging Analysis: 2000 to 2004

A curious pattern emerges from the analysis for each of the three voter registration files. For all three voter files, those who registered through the normal process exhibit a higher turnout rate in the non-presidential election years between the previous pair of presidential elections than preregistrants. For example, in the 2005 voter file, persons age seventeen between 2001 and 2003 who registered through the normal registration process had *higher* turnout rates in the 2004 election than their peers who preregistered. This effect is operative only for turnout in the pair of presidential elections most proximate to the date of the voter file. For the 2009 voter file, persons age seventeen between 2001 and 2003 who registered through the normal registration process had *lower* turnout rates in the 2008 presidential election. Again, what is most curious is how this inverted pattern of higher turnout between the two most recent presidential elections manifests itself in every voter file.

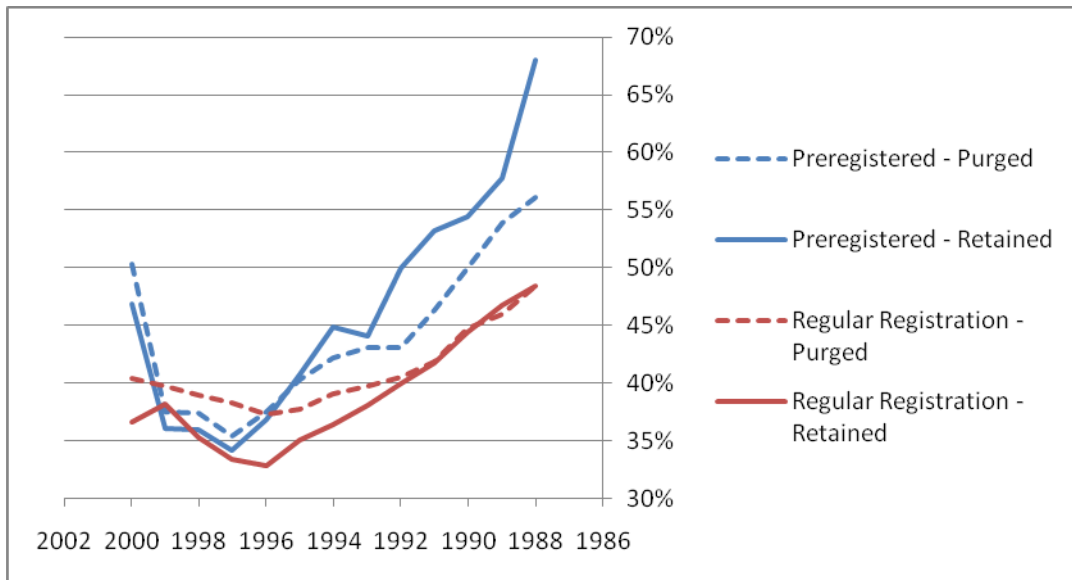


Figure 9. Cohort Comparison: 2001 and 2005 Florida Voter Files Purge Analysis

A likely explanation for this pattern resides in purging of registration records from the voter rolls between voter files. The 2001 and 2005 files have unique identifiers for each registered voter which allows us to track purging between these two elections. (Unfortunately, new identifiers were assigned to records in the 2009 file, compared to the 2005 file.) Figure 8 presents for each age cohort the percentage of registrants who voted in the 2000 presidential election. Preregistrants who were retained and appear on both the 2001 and 2005 files are represented by a solid blue line. Preregistrants that were purged are represented by a dashed blue line. Regular registrants that were retained are represented by a solid red line and those who were purged are represented by dashed red line.

The statistics in Figure 9 demonstrate that purged registrants tend to have higher turnout rates than those registrants that were not purged, at least for age cohorts who turned seventeen after 1995. Persons who registered through the regular registration process have a greater turnout rate compared with those who were retained than those who preregistered. Prior to 1995, preregistrants who were purged have lower turnout rates than those who were retained, while those who registered through the regular registration process have virtually identical voter turnout rates.

These statistics suggest that the puzzling pattern identified here is due to higher turnout rates among those persons who are purged from the voter registration rolls, particularly among persons who registered through the normal voter registration process.

Estimating the Effect of High School Civics Education Programs through a Matching Analysis

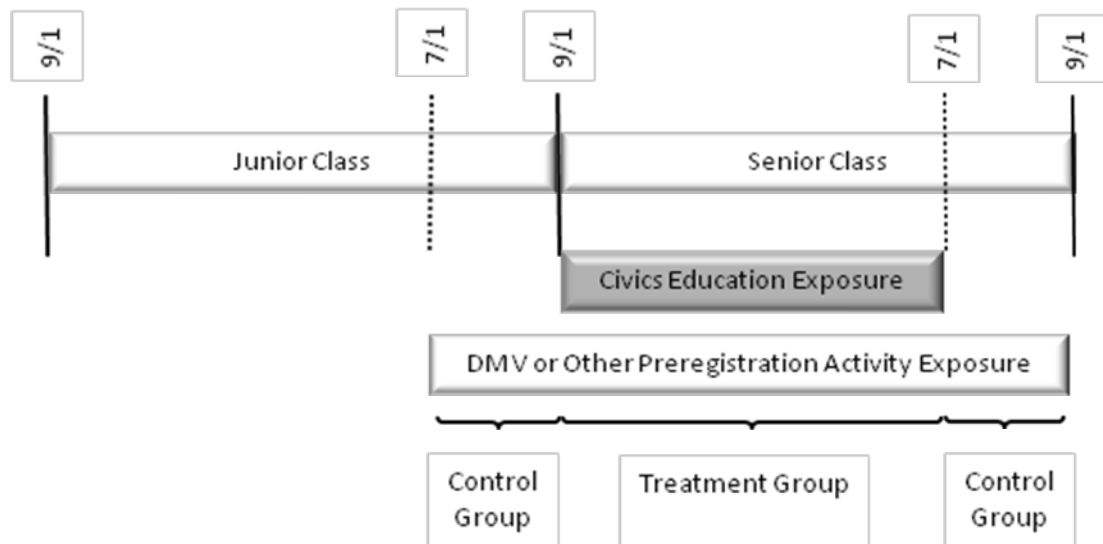


Figure 10. Identifying Exposure to Preregistration Through High School Programs

Civic education programs conducted by Supervisor of Elections staff in Florida's high schools often include preregistration drives. The voter turnout stimulus may thus arise from exposure to civic education programs and not directly to preregistration. To further isolate these potential effects of high school civic education programs, turnout rates for persons who preregistered when they were age 17 and in high school can be compared to those in the same high school class who registered in the summer before and after their senior year.

The conceptualization of this comparison is diagrammed in Figure 10. Seventeen year-olds are permitted to preregister on an on-going basis through the Department of Motor Vehicles or other NVRA agency, or through their own initiative or a contact with a third party registration drive. Seniors in high schools may also preregister as a consequence of a preregistration drive guided by election administrators, which has a civics education component.¹⁹ Ideally, all 17 year-olds who preregister during the school year would be exposed to the civics education treatment only, but preregistrants influenced by a civics education program cannot be distinguished from those who register by means outside the schools. The best that can be done is to compare those preregistrants in a senior class who preregister during the school year between September 1 and July 1 – the treatment group – with those who preregister in the summer months prior to and following their senior year – the control group.²⁰ A comparison of these treatment and control groups, while sub-optimal, will under-estimate any potential effect from high school preregistration programs because some preregistrants in the treatment group will be persons who preregistered through other means.

This analysis can be implemented using a statistical technique known as matching.²¹ Formally, the treatment effect, τ , is estimated by the following formula of the average treatment effect for the treated (ATT):

$$\tau | (T = 1) = E\{E(Y_i | X_i, T_i = 1) - E(Y_i | X_i, T_i = 0) | T_i = 1\} \quad \text{Equation (1)}$$

Where, T is the treatment. For an individual, i , $T_i = 1$ (the treatment group) if a person was preregistered when they were age 17 and in high school and $T_i = 0$ (the control group) if a 17 year-old preregistered in the summer before or after their senior year. For these matching criteria or covariates are denoted by X_i , and include a registrants' race, gender, and zip code.

An exact match is employed, whereby each person who preregistered during the school year of a given race and gender, within each zip code, is randomly matched with a person in the same high school class of the same race and gender, within the same zip code, who registered in the summer before or after their senior year.²² A match using the zip code helps ensure that high school students are exposed to the same civics education program within their school, though we cannot fully assign students to schools where school districts do not align with zip codes or students may attend public or private schools. A zip code match further mitigates some of the confounding influence of unmeasured socio-economic factors. The match assignment is made with replacement, meaning that a person who registered in the summer after they graduated from high school may be randomly assigned to more than one preregistrant. Matching with replacement ensures that the mathematical expectation in Equation (1) is estimated without bias.

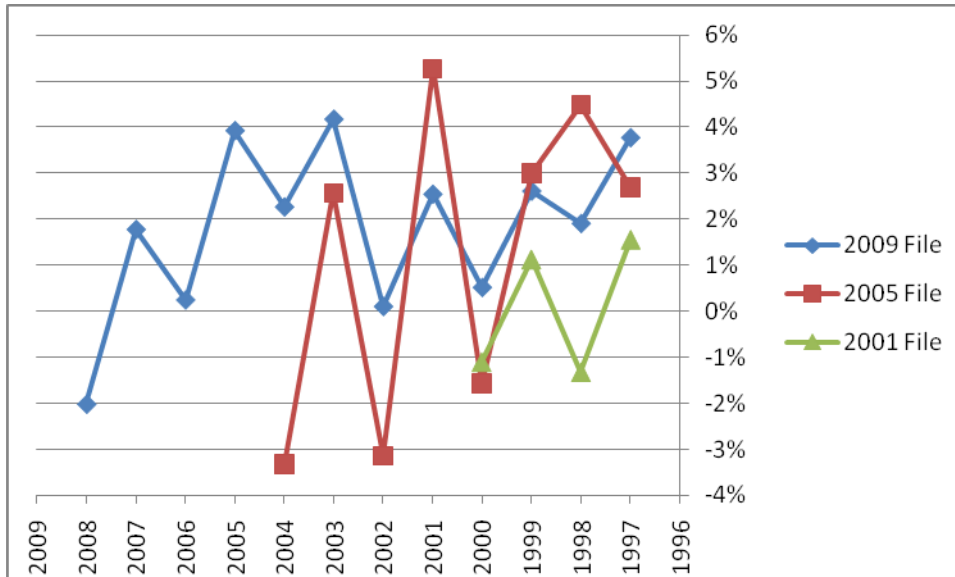


Figure 11. Estimated Voter Turnout Effects of Florida High School Preregistration Programs through a Matching Analysis, 1997-2008

The estimated voter turnout effects of Florida High School Preregistration Programs from our matching analysis are presented in Figure 11. The results from 1997-2009 from all three voter files are plotted. The estimated voter turnout effect is plotted for participation in the presidential election immediately preceding the date of the voter file, i.e., the 2008 presidential election for the 2009 file, the 2004 election for the 2005 file, and the 2000 election for the 2001 file. Since voter registration files with several thousand potentially matched records are analyzed, the number of matches ranged between 2,615 and 34,097, with about half of the classes containing more than 10,000 matches. Thus, the standard errors on the estimated effects tend to be low. All of these estimates are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level except for those estimates that are close to zero.²³

The estimates in Figure 11 when aggregated across all years generally show a net *positive* turnout effect for school preregistration programs. For the 2009 file, a net positive 1.4 percentage point effect of high school preregistration programs on 2008 turnout rates is estimated across all years analyzed. For the 2005 file, a similar net positive 1.5 percentage point effect on 2004 turnout rates is estimated across all years analyzed, and for the 2001 file, a net negative -0.8 percentage point effect on 2000 turnout rates is estimated across all years analyzed. The net negative effect in 2000 may be an artifact of weaker high school preregistration programs prior to 2000, as reported by Florida's election administrators. For the past two presidential election cycles, these invigorated efforts in Florida's high schools appear to have a modest positive voter turnout effect. Because the treatment group is contaminated with preregistrants in the control group, this modest positive effect is almost assuredly a low-end estimate.

While there is generally a net positive effect, the estimates in Figure 11 show a *negative* effect of high school preregistration programs for the presidential election immediately preceding the date of the voter file. For example, when analyzing the 2009 file, the estimated turnout effect for the 2008 election is -2.0 percentage points. This may be a consequence of the higher voting propensities of registrants who register closer to a registration deadline preceding an election.²⁴ Thus, preregistrants who are registering in the summer after their senior year in a presidential election year may be stimulated to register and vote.²⁵ Yet, these negative effects interestingly vanish over time. For example, according to the 2009 voter file, high school preregistration programs had a positive turnout effect on 2004 turnout rates, while according to the 2005 voter file, the programs had a negative turnout effect. The previously purging analysis suggests that these over-time changes are attributable to higher propensity voters registered during the summer being removed from the voter file.

We further cannot tell from this analysis what substitution effects, if any, high school preregistration drives create. It may be that all seniors who preregister through a high school preregistration drive would have done so otherwise using the normal registration process. However, some may have not, and their voter

turnout rate would have been zero. In other words, this analysis can *only* examine turnout effects of those who preregistered, and cannot estimate turnout effects of preregistration on persons who would not have otherwise registered to vote.

Hawaii

Background

Hawaii is a relatively small state with highly centralized election administration. The Hawaii Office of Elections is responsible for running elections throughout the entire state. The office runs all federal, state, and local elections on a two-year elections calendar. Apart from special elections, there are no elections within the state in an odd-numbered year. Processing voter registrations is the responsibility of city and county clerks. However, state law directs that the Hawaii Office of Elections, "...shall be responsible for the maximization of registration of eligible electors throughout the State."²⁶

In 1977, Hawaii adopted a law as part of a broad overhaul of the state's election code that permitted voter registration for eligible persons who "will be eighteen years of age by the date of the next election."²⁷ Since all Hawaii state and local elections are held concurrent with the two-year federal election calendar, effectively a person as young as 16, who would be age 18 by the next election, would have been eligible to preregister.

Hawaii's current preregistration law was adopted in 1993. Similar to the 1977 law, persons as young as 16 years-old are permitted to register so that they may vote when they become of legal age. However, preregistration is not tied to attaining voting age in advance of a specific election.

The 1993 law began its journey through the legislative process in the Hawaii Senate. A Senate Committee on Judiciary report stated that Senate bill (S.B 280) as submitted would have extended preregistration to all 17 year-olds, and decoupled preregistration from the election calendar.²⁸ The committee received testimony in support of the bill from Hawaii Lt. Governor Cayetano – then responsible for administering Hawaii's elections – and an unnamed private citizen.

Finding a "need to encourage voter registration at or before the time a person comes of age" the committee amended the bill to extend preregistration to anyone, regardless of their age. Theoretically, a person could be preregistered as soon as they were born. The bill as reported was unanimously passed the Hawaii Senate, with four abstentions.

In testimony to the House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary, Hawaii Lt. Governor Cayetano recommended that "preregistration be extended no earlier than 16 years of age" because "permitting preregistration below 16 years of age would impose difficulties due to the burden of maintaining the accuracy of, and ensuring the validity of, preregistrations that could remain on our system for many election cycles."²⁹ The choice of 16 as the threshold age for preregistration

appears to be consistent with then-current Hawaii voter registration practices, since some 16 year-olds were eligible to preregister under the 1977 law.

The final adopted bill reconciled between the two chambers reflected Lt. Cayetano's House testimony and amended the Hawaii state code to provide for preregistration as follows:

“A person who is otherwise qualified to register and is at least sixteen years of age but will not be eighteen years of age by the date of the next election may preregister upon satisfactory proof of age and shall be automatically registered upon reaching age eighteen.”³⁰

During House Committee on Judiciary hearings, the Hawaii League of Women Voters “wholeheartedly” supported preregistration, advocating that “provisions in this bill” would permit outreach to “students in private and public schools.”³¹ Yet, there are no specific provisions in the legislation mandating outreach to high school students. The Hawaii Office of Elections conducts preregistration activities in Hawaii's high schools, known as the Young Voter Registration Program (YVRP), under the auspices of their general mandate to maximize registration of all eligible electors.

Hawaii Office of Elections Case Study

Site visits with Hawaii election administrators were conducted on February 17-18, 2009. In attendance at the February 17, 2009 meeting at the Hawaii Division of Elections Office interview were Rex Simmons, Voter Services, Office of Elections, State of Hawaii; Ciress Cuevo, Voter Services, Office of Elections, State of Hawaii. A separate discussion was conducted with Kevin Cronin, Chief Elections Officer of Hawaii; Hawaii. A February 18, 2009 meeting was held at the office of Glen Takahashi, Elections Administrator, Office of the City Clerk, City and County of Honolulu.

The Young Voter Registration Program has been implemented by various methods over the years. The traditional method is for the Hawaii Office of Elections to solicit a volunteer from each high school in the state to act as a liaison to implement the YVRP within their high school. A letter is sent to each high school principal requesting the nomination of a volunteer. A typical volunteer is a student activities coordinator or a social studies teacher. Principals are not required to name a volunteer and may not do so. Interviewed Hawaii election administrators consistently characterized the success of a high school's implementation of the YVRP as being dependent on an “energetic” volunteer. A representative of the Hawaii Office of Elections works with the volunteer, primarily by delivering voter registration forms to the volunteer. Registration forms are tracked so it is possible to assess the number of pre-registrations that are added to Hawaii's voter rolls by the YVRP.

In the past, the Lt. Governor's Office was responsible for conducting Hawaii elections and implementing the YVRP. Rex Simmons, currently with the Hawaii Office of Elections, was previously responsible for implementing the YVRP in the Lt. Governors' office in the early 1990s, starting in 1991. The program was implemented in a slightly different fashion than its current incarnation. Student activities coordinators were expected by staff in the Lt. Governors' office to serve as YVRP liaisons. Mr. Simmons recounted that Lt. Governors' office staff speculated that the program would be more effective if conducted in a high school civics class. To implement this change, the then-current procedure to have one person, the student activities coordinator, as the expected YVRP liaison was replaced with the now-current solicitation of high school principals for a volunteer, who might be a civics teacher.

That some public schools currently fail to appoint an YVRP liaison suggests that a clear line of responsibility has a benefit in assuring each school will implement the program. Countervailing this benefit, it may be those civics teachers or other persons who now serve as YVRP liaisons tend to be more effective in implementing the program's goals than student activities coordinators. Without records documenting the program's effectiveness prior to this change in the program, it is impossible to assess if this implementation change improved the program's performance.

Hawaii Office of Elections officials have implemented three programs other than the traditional Young Voter Registration Program to conduct preregistration and civics educational outreach to students. In 2002, the Hawaii Office of Elections teamed with teen-oriented Sassy Magazine to conduct Rock the Vote style school assemblies to encourage voter registration. In 2006, the Hawaii Office of Elections officials mailed an application to each graduating public school senior in place of the traditional YVRP program, which was implemented in the usual manner for private schools. In 2008, the Hawaii State Student Council acted as liaisons to their schools, in place of the traditional YVRP volunteer high school faculty member. The performance of these programs is discussed in detail in the following analysis of the Hawaii voter registration file.

Hawaii election officials interviewed for this report believe that the YVRP program is best located in a high school civics class where it could be combined with instructional material about the importance of voting. A concern of such an approach is that some students would not be included since civics is not a required high school course. Another barrier mentioned is that the Hawaii Department of Education has priorities other than implementing the YVRP, primarily meeting No Child Left Behind standards.

The Hawaii Office of Elections also runs a student poll worker program, in addition to the YVRP. Hawaii law requires that poll workers be registered to vote.³² Preregistration thereby provides students an opportunity to be eligible to

be poll workers. The Hawaii Office of Elections staff sends a letter to principals notifying them that members of student organizations can raise money for their organizations if they serve as poll workers. Bilingual students are especially encouraged to participate. These student organizations must have non-profit status. While the Hawaii Office of Elections staff finds that the poll worker recruitment is valuable to staff polling places, they do not report that this activity results in an on-going retention of poll workers. The poll worker recruitment program results in a small but unknown number of pre-registrations when a prospective student is not previously registered to vote.

Voter File Analysis of Hawaii's Preregistration Program

The effectiveness of the Hawaii's preregistration program and the effectiveness of the Office of Elections preregistration activities can be analyzed through the number of preregistration applications generated, the voter registration applications the Hawaii Office of Elections has provided to schools through their Young Voter Registration Program, the number of these applications that translate into an actual registration, and the number of these registrants who vote or whose records are subsequently purged from the rolls because they move.

By state law, access to Hawaii's voter registration file is restricted for election and government purposes, in accordance with rules adopted by the chief election officer.³³ A request to gain access to the statewide voter file for this report was denied. However, Glen Takahashi, Elections Administrator, Office of the City Clerk, City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii generously provided requested statewide voter file summary statistics for this report. Ciress Cuevo, Voter Services, Office of Elections, State of Hawaii, further provided statistics on the number of registration forms the Office of Elections distributes and collects through the YVRP.

Statistics on preregistrations are generated from queries directly into Hawaii's statewide voter system in May, 2009. There are a number of benefits from working with these data. All transactions or changes to records in the system are logged, so it is possible to accurately measure the number of new preregistrations recorded in a given year, the number of those records that might be purged, and the voting history of all preregistrants regardless of whether they were subsequently purged from the voter file. Furthermore, aggregated NVRA source data – where a voter registered – are available for preregistrants which are otherwise unavailable on public voter files by federal law. A drawback is that individual level analyses, such as the matching analysis of Florida's voter file, cannot be conducted with these aggregate data.

Yearly Number of New Preregistrations and Purged Records

The yearly number of new preregistrations, from 2000-2008, drawn from the Hawaii voter file is plotted in Figure 12. The total number of preregistrations is plotted as the sum of those generated through the Department of Motor Vehicles (blue) and all other registration sources (red).

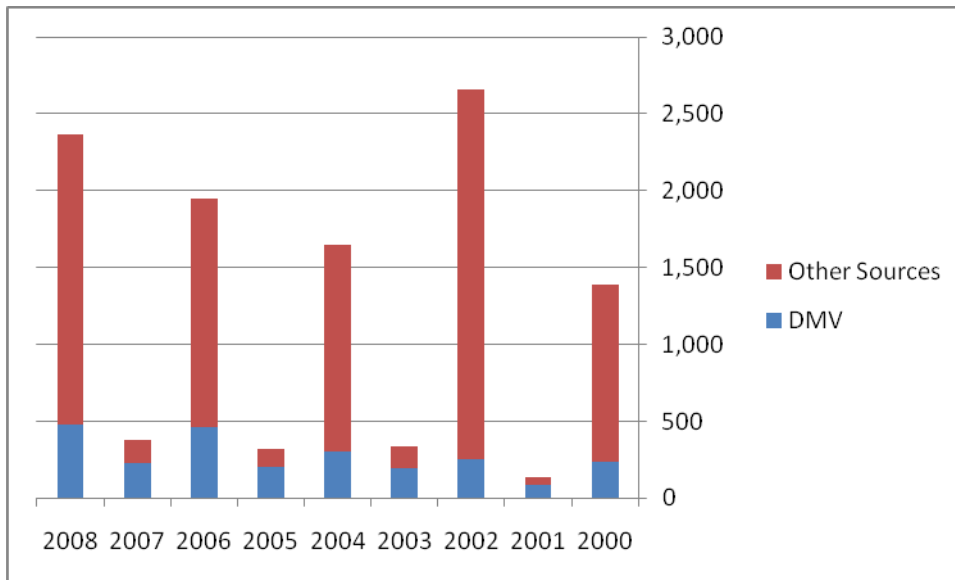


Figure 12. Hawaii Preregistrations by Source, 2000-2008

A stark pattern emerges in the number of new preregistrations. The total number of preregistrations is significantly higher in even-number election years than in odd-numbered non-election years. Much of the increase in the number of preregistrations can be attributed to preregistration generated from “other sources,” which greatly outnumber those from the DMV in election years. Still, DMV preregistrations also follow a surge and ebb pattern.

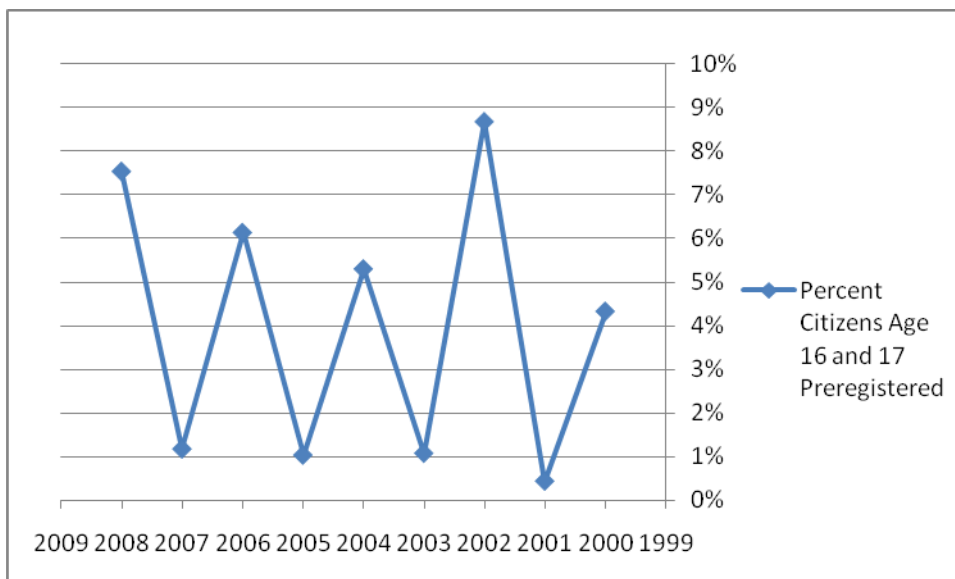


Figure 13. Hawaii Preregistrations as Percent of Citizens Age 16 and 17, 2000-2008

In Figure 13, the total number of preregistrations in Figure 10 is presented as a percentage of an estimate of Hawaii citizens age 16 and 17.³⁴ The surge and decline pattern following the election cycle is again evident in Figure 13, as expected. These statistics suggest that despite Hawaii’s Office of Elections’

implementation of the YVRP, the coverage of the program is low. Even if 16 year-olds are removed from the denominator of the percentage – although they are eligible to preregister and are included in the total number of preregistrants – the percentages of citizens seventeen years old alone still would do not exceed 18 percent, which is about half of the coverage of Florida’s program. Without the YVRP, these percentages would likely be much lower, as less than 1 percent of citizens age seventeen and sixteen register through the DMV, even in years where there appears to be little preregistration activity occurring through the YVRP.

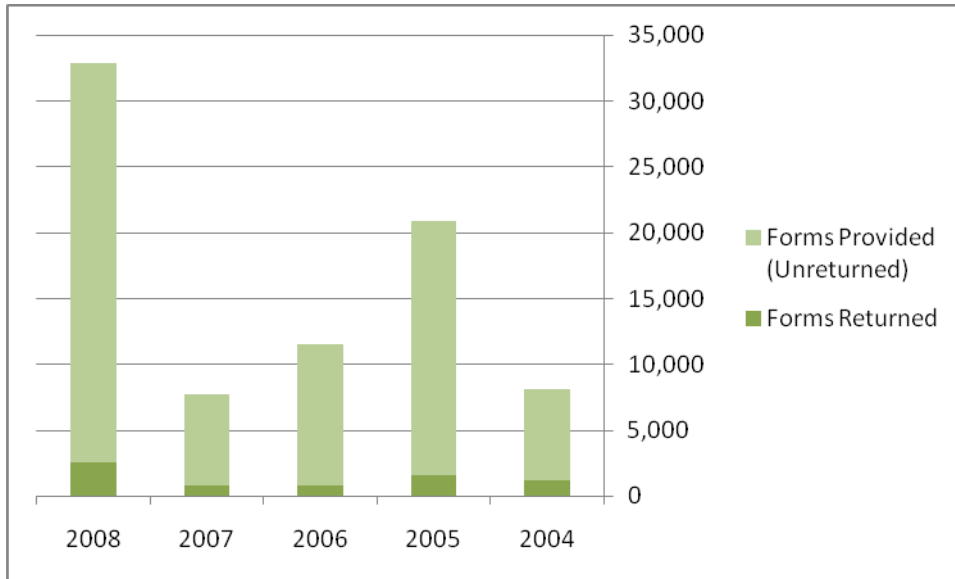


Figure 14. Hawaii Office of Elections Registration Forms Delivered to Schools, 2004-2008

The Hawaii Office of Elections began tracking the number of registration forms sent out to schools and returned by students in 2004. These statistics are provided in Figure 14. The number of unreturned voter registration applications is identified in light green and the number of returned forms is in dark green. There is are seeming contradictions between Figure 12 and Figure 13, particularly where the number of applications returned to the Hawaii Office of Elections exceeds the number of preregistrations generated from non-DMV registration sources according to the voter file. However, there is no way to indentify the number of applications returned to the Office of Elections that are from eighteen year olds or that may have been rejected.

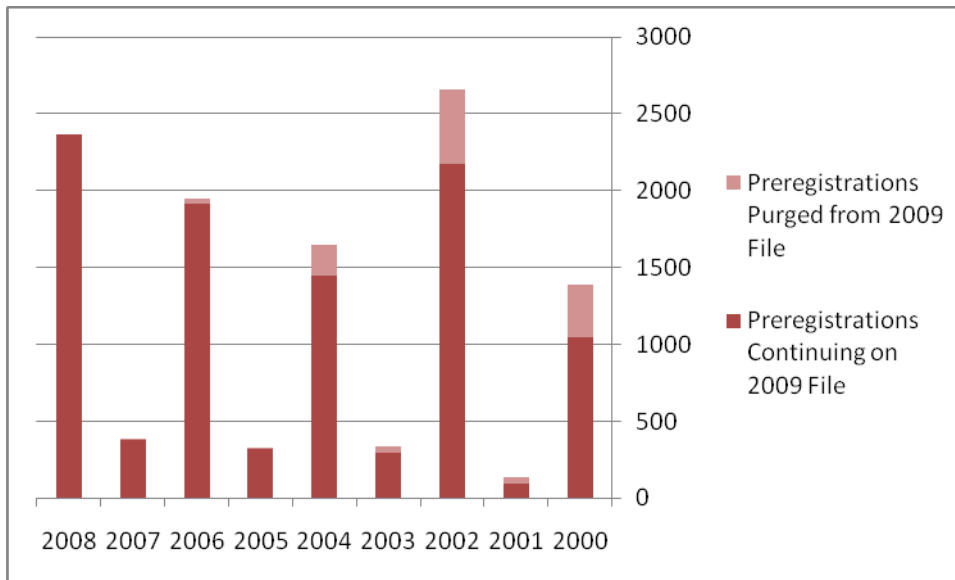


Figure 15. Hawaii Preregistrations Purged from 2009 File, 2000-2008

It may be that young people who preregister soon vanish from the voter file because they have moved. Figure 15 shows like Florida this is not the case. In Figure 15, the number of preregistrations in a given year that have been purged from the Hawaii statewide voter file by May, 2009 is plotted. While these records may be “purged,” the record itself is retained in the voter file. Thus, these statistics represent an accurate accounting of continuing (dark red) and purged (light red) preregistrations. By 2009, 25 percent of the new preregistrations recorded in 2000 were purged from the voter file and 12 percent of the new registrations recorded in 2004 were purged. These purging rates among preregistrants are similar to Florida presented in Figure 1, which may come as a surprise to Hawaii election officials who reported that they believed that Hawaii’s youth are prone to leave the state, and thus might reasonably expected to be purged from the Hawaii voter file at a higher rate than Florida.

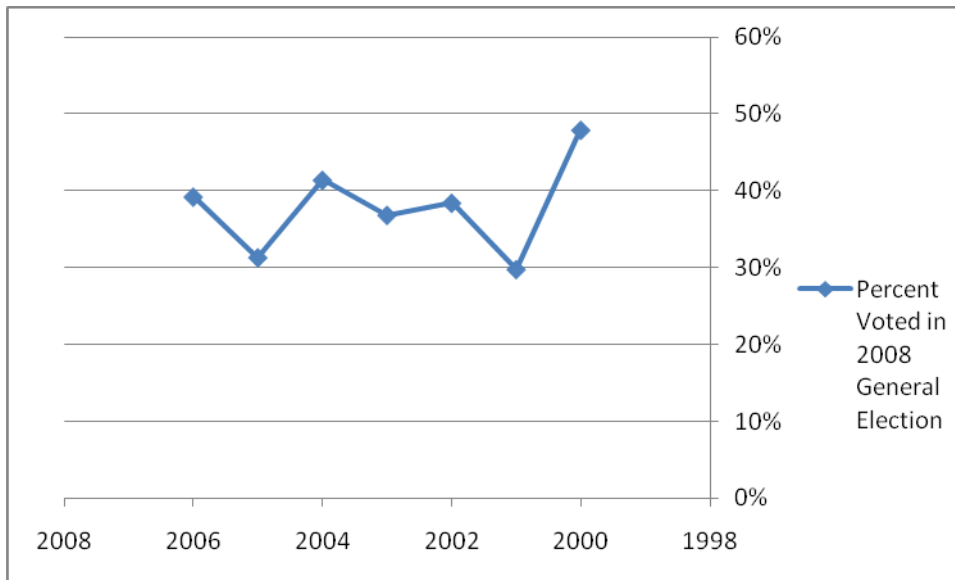


Figure 16. Hawaii Preregistrations Purged from 2009 File, 2000-2008

Figure 15 plots the percentage of preregistrants in a given year who voted in the 2008 presidential election. Statistics from 2007 and 2008 are not presented as Hawaii allows 16 year olds to preregister. Turnout rates for 2007 and 2008 years may be misleading since those who may have preregistered in these years but were still ineligible to vote cannot be distinguished from these aggregate statistics. These turnout rates vary between 30 percent and 48 percent, and are generally higher among persons who preregistered in a presidential election year. These turnout rates are lower than comparable Florida's preregistrant turnout rates presented in Figure 3 (blue line), which vary between 58 percent and 65 percent. However, Hawaii's 2008 overall turnout rate among those eligible to vote was 17 percentage points lower.³⁵ Thus, the predominance of the difference is likely due to varying levels of campaign activity in the highly competitive Florida and the relatively uncompetitive Hawaiian elections.

Assessing the Performance of Hawaii's Preregistration Program

The statistics presented in Figures 12 through 15 permit an analysis of the different implementation methods that have been used in Hawaii. Three programs have been implemented in place of traditional Young Voter Registration Program. In 2002, the Hawaii Office of Elections teamed with teen-oriented *Sassy Magazine* to conduct Rock the Vote style school assemblies to encourage voter registration. In 2006, the Hawaii Office of Elections officials mailed an application to each graduating public school senior in place of the traditional YVRP program, which was implemented in the usual manner for private schools. In 2008, the Hawaii State Student Council acted as liaisons to their schools, in place of the traditional YVRP volunteer high school faculty member.

In 2002, *Sassy Magazine* – a now defunct teen magazine – conducted a Rock the Vote style campaign in the state's schools. Pre-registration was component

of high school student assemblies that featured music and celebrities. The largest number of preregistrations, 2,406, were generated from non-DMV sources in this year. Unfortunately, the number of registration forms that were distributed through the YVRP is not available prior to 2004, so construction of a return rate for distributed forms is unavailable. There are no cost estimates for this program, either. Like Rock the Vote, *Sassy Magazine* likely conducted these student assemblies both as a means to increase youth voter registration and to promote their publication.³⁶

In 2006, the Hawaii Office of Elections mailed an information brochure and accompanying voter registration application to every graduating Hawaii senior. The addresses were provided by the Hawaii Department of Education and no addresses were available for students attending private schools. The brochure and a registration form were also published in *Transition Magazine*, a Hawaii publication for high school students among whose stated goals is to, “provide a bridge for students transferring from high school into higher education.”³⁷ Figures provided by the Hawaii Office of Elections indicate 10,110 graduating seniors and 412 returned applications, or a return rate of 4.1 percent. The postage cost of mailing these brochures was estimated to be \$14,386, which translated into \$34.92 for each returned application.

The 2006 experience provides an experiment to test the efficacy of mailing registration forms. While public school graduating seniors were mailed forms, private schools did not provide their graduation lists and therefore continued their participation using a traditional YVRP volunteer liaison. 1,437 forms were distributed to the private schools and of these, 426 applications were returned, for a return rate of 29.7 percent, compared with the return rate of 4.1 percent for the mailed registration applications. There may be reasons why preregistration programs in private schools are generally more effective, for example, school administrators may have more resources to devote to the Young Voter Registration Program. However, due to this poor performance compared to the traditional Young Voter Registration Program and the costs associated with mailing registration forms, Hawaii Office of Elections officials indicated that they would not implement a mail program again.

In 2008, the Hawaii State Student Council undertook the YVRP as their project for the year. The Hawaii State Student Council is an organization of public high school students selected by various appointing mechanisms, such as by election, by a school’s student government or by nomination by a high school teacher or principal. Each high school has one member, though larger schools may select more than one member.³⁸ Each student member of the Hawaii State Student Council acted as the YVRP liaison for their school. There were 32,856 registration forms distributed to the schools, of which 2,557 were returned.

The small volume of preregistration applications generated through impersonal means such as the DMV and the comparable poor performance of the mail

program among public high schools compared to the regular Young Voter Registration Program operated in private schools in 2006 underscore the importance for face-to-face contact to promote preregistration among young people. The most successful 2002 – notably a low turnout midterm election – and 2008 programs are distinguished in that they were the most collaborative between the Hawaii Office of Elections and the schools. In 2002 the collaboration took the form of Rock-the Vote style student assemblies and in 2008 it took the form of a comprehensive student-organized project that covered all public high schools. These programs' greater success may be attributed to a broader civic education component, where young people are educated about the process and relevance of registering to vote.

Endnotes

¹ See Oregon Code 247.016.

² See <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16588>, accessed November 18, 2009. The California law is 2009 Cal. Stats, Chapter 364. The North Carolina bill is H908 and was signed into law in August, 2009. The Wyoming law is 2009 Wyo. Sess. Laws, Chap. 100.

³ See: Kevin Milligan, Enrico Moretti, and Philip Oreopoulos. 2004. "Does Education Improve Citizenship? Evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom." *Journal of Public Economics* 88: 1667-1695.

⁴ Robert S. Erikson. 1981. "Why Do People Vote? Because They Are Registered." *American Politics Quarterly* 9: 259-76.

⁵ Stephen Knack. 1995. "Does 'Motor Voter' Work? Evidence from State-Level Data." *The Journal of Politics* 57(3): 796-811.

⁶ James Gimpel, Joshua J. Dyck, and Daron R. Shaw. 2007. "Election year stimuli and the timing of voter registration." *Party Politics* 13(3): 351-74.

⁷ M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi. 1974. *The Political Character of Adolescence: The Influence of Families and Schools*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁸ Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kiouisis. 2006. "Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform." The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Working Paper 49, p.12.

⁹ For example, see Florida Opinion Attorney General, 070-91, July 29, 1970.

¹⁰ "Politics: Registration; Florida May Take Motor Voter Step Further." *The New York Times*, Feb 25, 2006.

¹¹ Anya Kamentez. "You're 16, You're Beautiful and You're a Voter." *The New York Times*, February 6, 2008.

¹² County Supervisors of Elections are required to submit reports to the Department of State pursuant to Section 98.255 of the Florida Statutes. Reports for the 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 election cycles are available at <http://election.dos.state.fl.us/reports/index.shtml>, Accessed April 28, 2009.

¹³ See Report on Voter Education Programs During the 2002 Election Cycle, p. 4, available at <http://election.dos.state.fl.us/reports/index.shtml>, accessed April 28, 2009; Report on Voter Education Programs During the 2004 Election Cycle, p. 4, available at <http://election.dos.state.fl.us/reports/index.shtml>, accessed April 28, 2009.

¹⁴ Voter files may have missing data if counties did not provide information to the state, particularly prior to federal Help American Vote Act state mandates to create a statewide voter registration list. Data are available for all counties on the 2005 and 2009 voter files, though voting history data were obtained directly from Lee County to complete coverage for the 2005 voter file. Voter registration records on the 2001 voter file are missing for the counties of Calhoun, Glades and Liberty. These three are relatively small counties, with combined 2000 census populations of approximately 20,000 persons, so their exclusion in the 2001 file does not greatly affect the analysis that follows. Records from these counties are analyzed in the 2005 and 2009 voter files.

¹⁵ See Federal Code Title 42, Chapter 20, Subchapter I-H, Sec. 1973gg-6(c)

¹⁶ The estimate of citizens age sixteen and seventeen are constructed by applying the estimate of citizens age 16 and 17 to the Census Bureau's yearly July 1, population estimates. These estimates are then projected forward to Nov. 1 of a given year.

¹⁷ Gimpel et al., 2007, *supra*.

¹⁸ For example, see any Current Population Survey, November Registration and Voting Reports available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html>, accessed July 12, 2009.

¹⁹ There is no way to determine by examining voter registration records if a person was held back one or more grades or had an accelerated graduation. However, by matching only those registrations occurring in the summer after a typical high school graduation, we are assured that students who remain in high school for another year and are in a succeeding class that is exposed to preregistration do not contaminate the estimation of the treatment effect.

²⁰ For the 2000-2010 calendar, see: <http://www.flboe.org/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/calendar.pdf>. There is some local variation to counties' school years. Most schools years end the middle of June. The end of a school year is extended in the analysis to June 30 to capture registrations that may be generated by registration drives at high school graduation ceremonies. If there is a positive effect of these high school civics education programs, this slightly extended school year will capture some registrations that are not associated with high school civics programs and the estimated ATT effect will be lower than actual.

²¹ See Jasjeet S Sekhon. forthcoming. "Multivariate and Propensity Score Matching Software with Automated Balance Optimization." *Journal of Statistical Software*; DB Rubin. 1974. "Estimating Causal Effects of Treatments in Randomized and Nonrandomized Studies." *Journal of Educational Psychology* (66): 688–701; GT Fechner (1966 [1860]). *Elements of Psychophysics*, Vol 1. Rinehart & Winston, New York. Translated by Helmut E. Adler and edited by D.H. Howes and E.G. Boring.

²² We practically exclude persons with a recorded unknown race or gender because the number of potential matches is too small.

²³ The estimates that did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level are for the 2009 file [for the classes of 2006, 2002, 2000, and 1998] and for the 2001 file [for the classes of 1999 and 1998]. The estimates that did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance at the $p < .10$ level are for the 2009 file [for the classes of 2006, 2002, and 2000]. Because these standard errors are small, these estimates that did not reach levels of statistical significance are commonly close to an estimated treatment effect of zero.

²⁴ Gimpel at al., *supra*.

²⁵ Florida Statutes Section 1003.21 (1)(a)2 specifies September 1 as the cutoff date for a child to enter grade school. Almost all members of this class are 18 years old. The matching analysis excluded any individuals who had not turned 18 by the date of the election.

²⁶ Hawaii Code, Volume 1 §11-2(b).

²⁷ This language is determined through 1993 legislation amending Hawaii Code, Volume 1 §11-12(a) and through documents obtained from the Hawaii state library of the 1977 legislative deliberations. The Hawaii state library did not provide the text of the 1977 adopted law.

²⁸ Senate Committee on Judiciary, Standing Committee Report No. 243, March 4, 1993.

²⁹ Testimony of Benjamin J. Cayetano, Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawaii, To the House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary, On Senate Bill 230, S.D. 1 Relating to Elections, March 19, 1993.

³⁰ Hawaii Code, Volume 1 §11-12(b).

³¹ Testimony of The League of Women Voters of Hawaii, House Committee on Judiciary, SB 280, SD 1 Relating to Elections, March 19, 1993.

³² Hawaii Code, Volume 1, §11-72(b)(1).

³³ See Hawaii Code §11-14(b) and §11-97.

³⁴ The estimate of citizens age 16 and 17 are constructed by applying the estimate of citizens age 16 and 17 to the Census Bureau's yearly July 1, population estimates. These estimates are then projected forward to Nov. 1 of a given year.

³⁵ See http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2008G.html, accessed July 15, 2009.

³⁶ Michael Hoover and Susan Orr. 2007. "Youth Political Engagement: Why Rock the Vote Hits the Wrong Note" in *The Fountain of Youth: Strategies and Tactics for Mobilizing America's Young Voters*, Daniel M. Shea and John C. Green, eds. New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

³⁷ See <http://transitionhawaii.com/about>, Accessed February 29, 2009.

³⁸ Article X, Section 2 of the Hawaii Constitution provides that the Hawaii State Student Council select a non-voting member to the Hawaii Board of Education.