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The Racial Impact of Voter Identification Laws in the 2012 Election

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. Since 2008, many state legislatures have passed new voting laws that require voters to show state-issued photo identification before being allowed to cast a valid ballot. This essay evaluates the potential effects of these laws on young people (ages 18-29) of color. Numerous studies show that racial minorities possess photo identification cards at much lower rates than whites. Because young people and lower-income people are also less likely to have photo identification, young people of color are likely to be disproportionately demobilized by these new laws. In this memo, we present several estimates of the extent of this demobilization among these young potential voters. We find that overall levels of turnout among young racial minorities is likely to be significantly reduced in the states that have passed these laws, and perhaps falling below 2004 and 2008 levels. These new laws may also dilute the political potency at the ballot box of these minority groups, potentially shifting election outcomes in competitive races. Extensive voter mobilization and education efforts will be crucial to ensure high levels of turnout among young people of color in November 2012.

Just as President Obama's first term in office began, Republican-controlled state legislatures around the country attempted to enact new voting laws that increase restrictions on the kinds of identification that citizens must show before being allowed to vote. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, such proposals were considered by 34 states in 2011, and in 32 states in 2012.¹ As of this writing, nine states now have laws in place that require citizens to show government-issued photo identification before casting a valid ballot.² In addition, eight other states have enacted similar measures that request photo identification before voting, but offer a limited set of alternatives to voters who are unable to provide identification. Importantly, all but two of these new laws have been passed since the 2008 presidential election. These laws have often been met with fierce opposition. In accordance with the Voting Rights Act, the Justice Department has refused to grant pre-clearance to the laws passed in South Carolina

¹ <http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/voter-id.aspx>

² Three of these states—Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas—must take additional steps before these laws can go into effect. Mississippi's new law was passed via the citizen initiative, and the state legislature must first pass implementing legislation. In addition, each of these states will need preclearance from the Justice Department pursuant to the Voting Rights Act. Furthermore, the Wisconsin law was declared unconstitutional, although the state intends to appeal.

and Texas, and the Wisconsin law was declared unconstitutional earlier this year. Legal action is ongoing in other states, including Pennsylvania. This essay takes a closer look at these laws to evaluate their possible effects on turnout among youth of color between the ages of 18-29 in the 2012 election.

Our analyses suggest two possible consequences of new photo-identification laws. First, **voter turnout among young people of color may be significantly reduced.** Large proportions of minority youth—for instance, as many as 16 percent of Latinos and 25 percent of African Americans—do not currently possess government-issued photo identification, which is likely to reduce the overall number of young minority voters. There are reasons to believe that even fewer minority youth possess government-issued photo identification, which could further reduce turnout levels among this age group.³ Second, because racial minorities hold photo identification at disproportionately lower rates than whites, **new photo identification laws may dilute the influence of young minority voices at the ballot box, which could shift election outcomes in competitive races.**

These potential consequences are particularly noteworthy given the current electoral context. The 2008 presidential election featured the highest levels of turnout among young blacks since 18-year-olds received the right to vote. Overall, 43 percent of youth between the ages of 18 and 29 were first-time voters. The largest increases occurred among black and Latino youth: 45 percent of young black voters and 63 percent of young Latino voters cast ballots for the first time.⁴ Many of these young and first-time voters were mobilized and energized by the historic nature of the Obama candidacy. It may be challenging to replicate these high levels of turnout in 2012 even without these new voting laws in place. Though these laws are likely to disproportionately demobilize all minority youth, they may have more severe consequences for young blacks than they will for other age and racial groups. This creates additional challenges for sustaining high levels of participation and highlights the need for campaign, community, and civic organizations to devote increased efforts to mobilizing this population in November as well as contest these laws over the long-run.

Limited Data Impacting Our Analysis

At the outset, we want to note that there are a variety of challenges associated with ascertaining the likely consequences of these laws. It is difficult to determine exactly how many Americans currently have valid government-issued photo identification. Only a few national surveys investigate the rates at which Americans hold photo identification, and these surveys do not contain large enough samples to accurately assess how IDs are distributed across age and racial groups. Furthermore, because national surveys usually only include a few thousand respondents, we do not know whether there are differences across states. We readily admit that there are likely to be important differences in how many youth of color possess photo identification across states and different racial groups. We also do not know how photo IDs are distributed across likely voters and nonvoters.

All of these are important limitations. However, it is perhaps more important to ascertain the potential effects of these new photo identification requirements. To do so, this analysis utilizes the best available

³ The figures listed are for *all* African American and Latino adults. Because older people hold photo identification at higher rates than younger people, it is likely that these figures overstate the true levels of identification among black and Latino youth, for instance. Furthermore, national surveys have not paid much attention to accurately measuring rates of photo identification among youth of color. Outside of these ballpark figures for black and Latino youth, it is largely unclear how many youth that identify as Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander, and with other racial and ethnic minority groups possess photo identification.

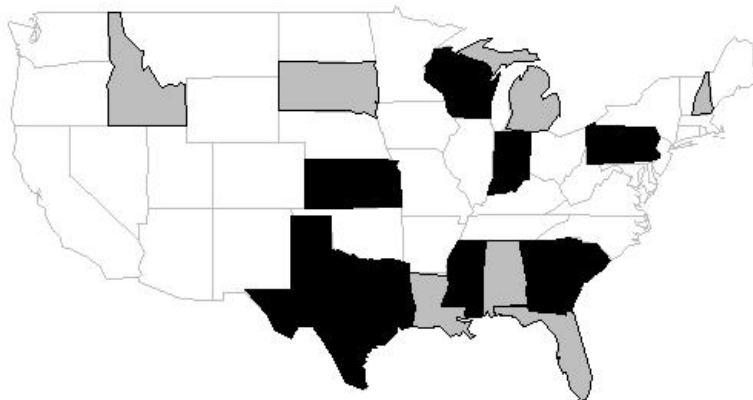
⁴ http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_08_exit_polls.pdf

estimates of access to photo ID, which are provided by the Brennan Center and have been supported through a variety of other private and state-funded studies.⁵ Across a variety of contexts and election years, a range of researchers have reached similar conclusions about the disparities in the rates of photo identification. Furthermore, as we will discuss in greater detail, estimates of the potential magnitude of voter demobilization are somewhat sensitive to our expectations about the rate of turnout in 2012 in the absence of photo identification laws. Given these limitations, rather than presenting a single statistic that we feel best quantifies the most likely scenario for 2012, this memo evaluates a range of *possible* impacts of new photo ID laws.

State Photo ID Laws and Voter Turnout

Prior to the 2008 election, just two states—Georgia and Indiana—required voters to show government-issued photo identification before casting a valid ballot. Since then, many other states have followed suit. The map in Figure 1 shows the states that have passed photo identification laws. States shown in black *require* citizens to show photo identification, while states shown in gray ask for photo identification but have some limited alternatives available to citizens who do not possess photo ID or choose not to show it.⁶ We include both sets of states in our analysis, though we acknowledge that photo identification laws are likely to have a stronger impact in those states shown in black that *require* voters to present photo ID before casting a valid ballot.

Figure 1: States with Voter Photo Identification Laws



States shown in **black** require photo identification to cast a valid ballot. States shown in **gray** request photo identification but make available a limited set of alternative arrangements if voters do not have or choose not to show photo identification. Hawaii is not shown but would be shaded in gray. *Note:* Alabama, Mississippi, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Texas all require preclearance from the Justice Department before these laws can go into effect.

The Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law has performed the best study to date of the availability of photo identification. In a large national study, the Brennan Center found that 11% of American citizens did not possess government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license, state ID card, military ID, or passport. Moreover, there were significant differences by race. For instance, only 9% of whites lacked photo identification, compared with 25% of blacks and 16% of Latinos.⁷

⁵ http://www.brennancenter.org/content/section/category/voter_id.

⁶ These typically involve signing an affidavit as to one's identity, or having a poll worker vouch for a voter's identity.

⁷ The Brennan Center report cautions against making much of the finding for Latinos due to a relatively small sample size.

There are reasons to suspect that these differences are even greater among young people. For instance, the Brennan Center report also found that lower income populations were also less likely to hold a valid photo ID: for instance, only 15% of respondents earning less than \$35,000 had a photo ID.⁸ Younger people have lower incomes than older populations, and these income disparities are especially great among minority youth. Moreover, even respondents under the age of 25 who had a current photo ID were much less likely to have their current address and other information on the identification card; in states with voter identification laws, such an ID may not be regarded as valid.⁹

These patterns are not confined to the Brennan Center study. Other smaller surveys and studies in states such as Indiana, Minnesota and Pennsylvania reach similar conclusions.¹⁰ For instance, examining rates of photo identification possession in Indiana, Matt Barreto and his colleagues found that 84.2 percent of white registered voters had valid photo identification, compared with just 78.2 percent of black registered voters. Moreover, young people in Indiana (18-34 years old) possessed valid photo ID at lower rates than all other age groups. The similarities across a wide variety of studies boost our confidence in using the Brennan Center figures as baseline rates of photo identification possession.

In addition, the Justice Department cited similar racial disparities in Texas when striking down Texas's attempt to institute a new restrictive photo ID law.¹¹ According to the letter sent to Texas from Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez, the data show that “a Hispanic voter is 46.5 percent more likely than a non-Hispanic voter to lack these forms of [photo] identification.” This contributed to the Justice Department's decision that Texas “has not met its burden of proving that . . . the proposed requirement will not have a retrogression effect” on the racial minority groups' access to the franchise.

Voter Turnout in 2004 and 2008

We use actual voter turnout rates from 2004 and 2008 to guide our estimates of the possible effects of the photo identification laws. Because no state had photo identification laws in 2004, and only two states had photo ID laws in effect in 2008, these turnout rates enable us to calculate how many minority youth would be likely to vote in 2012 if there were no photo identification laws. We can then compare these numbers to

⁸ As with many public opinion surveys, low-income individuals were underrepresented in the study, which suggests that the income differences in photo identification are even greater than those reported

⁹ “Citizens Without Proof”, authored by the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law (available at http://www.brennancenter.org/page/-/d/download_file_39242.pdf).

¹⁰ See, for instance, “To Assure Pride and Confidence in the Electoral Process”, authored by The National Commission on Federal Election Reform (available at <http://f1.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/election2000/electionreformrpt0801.pdf>); “The Disproportionate Impact of Indiana Voter ID Requirements on the Electorate”, authored by the Washington Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (available at http://depts.washington.edu/uwiser/documents/Indiana_voter.pdf); “The Disproportionate Impact of Voter-ID Requirements on the Electorate—New Evidence from Indiana”, authored by Matt Barreto et al. (available at http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/papers/PS_VoterID.pdf); “Voter ID Requirements and the Disenfranchisement Of Latino, Black and Asian Voters”, authored by Matt Barreto et al. (available at http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/research/Voter_ID_APSA.pdf); “Survey of the Performance of American Elections”, authored by R. Michael Alvarez et al. (available at http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Election_reform/Final%2520report20090218.pdf); a July 2012 article published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “Voter ID Law May Affect More Pennsylvanians Than Previously Estimated”, authored by Bob Warner (available at http://articles.philly.com/2012-07-05/news/32537732_1_voter-id-new-voter-id-cards); and “Voter Identification in Minnesota”, authored by the Minneapolis City Council Standing Committee on Elections (available at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-096009.pdf>).

¹¹ March 2012 letter from Attorney General Eric Holder to the State of Texas denying preclearance under the Voting Rights Act (available at http://brennan.3cdn.net/fe6a21493d7ec1aafc_vym6b91dt.pdf).

our estimates of how many black youth actually *will* vote in 2012 to assess how many minority youth are affected by these laws. These calculations will also be useful in gauging the potential electoral impact of these restrictions.

We perform two sets of calculations to ascertain levels of likely turnout. These calculations use the U.S. Census Bureau's national turnout figures for minority youth between the ages of 18 and 24 in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections.¹² As mentioned above, it may be difficult for turnout in 2012 to replicate 2008 levels given the historic nature of the 2008 election. However, turnout among these groups has increased in each of the last several elections, and thus it is probably reasonable to suspect that 2012 turnout would be somewhere between 2004 and 2008 levels if no photo identification laws had been implemented. This strategy introduces one complication, however; the Census does not publish data on rates of turnout among Native American or Pacific Islander youth. Thus, as a conservative strategy, we calculate potential levels of turnout under the assumption that turnout among these groups is equivalent to turnout among Latino youth, who turn out to vote at lower rates than black and Asian American youth. If baseline rates of turnout among Native American and Pacific Islander youth would in fact be higher than for Latino youth, the number of demobilized Native Americans and Pacific Islanders would only increase.

The next step is to estimate how many fewer minority youth could be expected to turn out to vote as a result of these photo identification policies. As mentioned above, the Brennan Center study shows that 11 percent of Americans do not possess a government-issued photo ID.¹³ What's more, the Brennan Center estimates that as many as 25 percent of African Americans and 16 percent of Latinos do not possess a photo ID, compared with 9 percent of whites. Without one, residents of these states will not be permitted to vote.¹⁴ For each racial group, we calculate a range of possible effects using these four figures. For instance, for black youth, we use the 2004 baseline level of turnout to estimate how many fewer black youth would turn out to vote if 9 percent, 11 percent, 16 percent, and 25 percent of black youth do not possess photo identification. We do that same thing using the 2008 baseline level of turnout. We repeat this procedure for young Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders. Though we lack precise measures of how photo identification is distributed across states and age and racial groups, as we acknowledged earlier, this procedure provides a sense of what we can expect based on the best estimates currently available.

Potential Demobilization among Black Youth

Column 1 of Table 1 shows the size of the black youth population in each state based on 2011 Census estimates. Columns 2 and 3 show the likely numbers of black voters in the 2012 election without any photo identification laws. The calculations for column 2 are based upon the national black youth turnout rate in the 2004 presidential election, and the calculations for column 3 are based upon the national black youth turnout rate in the 2008 presidential election. We will compare the estimates shown in columns 2-4 to our estimates of turnout after accounting for the possible impact of voter identification laws. The differences

¹² Note that our analysis focuses on blacks between the ages of 18 and 29 (rather than 18 and 24). However, because blacks 25 and older are more likely to vote than younger blacks, using the figures for 18 to 24 year olds only will provide more *conservative* estimates of the likely consequences of these laws.

¹³ http://www.brennancenter.org/page/-/d/download_file_39242.pdf.

¹⁴ Some states will allow voters without photo identification to cast provisional ballots, yet it is unclear whether citizens without photo identification will risk the possible humiliation of having their identity challenged in a public place in exchange for casting a provisional ballot.

between the numbers shown in Table 1 and our new estimates will reflect the likely consequences of these new requirements.

Table 1: Baseline Estimates of Black Youth (ages 18-29) Voter Turnout, 2012

	1	2	3
	Black youth population (2011 estimate)	Predicted number of 2012 black youth voters (based on 2004 national black youth turnout rate)	Predicted number of 2012 black youth voters (based on 2008 national black youth turnout rate)
<i>Alabama*</i>	240,795	105,950	125,936
<i>Florida</i>	586,606	258,107	306,795
Georgia	559,233	246,063	292,479
<i>Hawaii</i>	7,196	3,166	3,764
<i>Idaho</i>	2,381	1,048	1,245
Indiana	110,392	48,572	57,735
Kansas	34,597	15,223	18,094
<i>Louisiana</i>	289,968	127,586	151,653
<i>Michigan</i>	258,501	113,740	135,196
Mississippi*	210,353	92,555	110,015
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	3,164	1,392	1,655
Pennsylvania	262,708	115,592	137,396
South Carolina*	242,317	106,619	126,732
<i>South Dakota</i>	2,810	1,236	1,470
<i>Tennessee</i>	206,241	90,746	107,864
Texas*	558,989	245,955	292,351
Wisconsin*	72,306	31,815	37,816

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 population estimates (column 1); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2004 (column 2); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2008 (column 3).

Table 3 shows the results when 2008 levels of turnout are used as a baseline level of turnout. Unsurprisingly, the potential demobilizing effects are even more substantial. These estimates suggest that between 170,000 and 475,000 or more young blacks may not cast valid ballots in these states in the November 2012 election.

Table 2: Possible Reduction in Black Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2004 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-9,535	-11,654	-16,952	-26,487
<i>Florida</i>	-23,230	-28,392	-41,297	-64,527
Georgia	-22,146	-27,067	-39,370	-61,516
<i>Hawaii</i>	-285	-348	-507	-792
<i>Idaho</i>	-94	-115	-168	-262
Indiana	-4,372	-5,343	-7,772	-12,143
Kansas	-1,370	-1,674	-2,436	-3,806
<i>Louisiana</i>	-11,483	-14,034	-20,414	-31,896
<i>Michigan</i>	-10,237	-12,511	-18,198	-28,435
Mississippi*	-8,330	-10,181	-14,809	-23,139
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-125	-153	-223	-348
Pennsylvania	-10,403	-12,715	-18,495	-28,898
South Carolina*	-9,596	-11,728	-17,059	-26,655
<i>South Dakota</i>	-111	-136	-198	-309
<i>Tennessee</i>	-8,167	-9,982	-14,519	-22,687
Texas*	-22,136	-27,055	-39,353	-61,489
Wisconsin*	-2,863	-3,500	-5,090	-7,954

Table 3: Possible Reduction in Black Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2008 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-11,334	-13,853	-20,150	-31,484
<i>Florida</i>	-27,612	-33,747	-49,087	-76,699
Georgia	-26,323	-32,173	-46,797	-73,120
<i>Hawaii</i>	-339	-414	-602	-941
<i>Idaho</i>	-112	-137	-199	-311
Indiana	-5,196	-6,351	-9,238	-14,434
Kansas	-1,628	-1,990	-2,895	-4,524
<i>Louisiana</i>	-13,649	-16,682	-24,265	-37,913
<i>Michigan</i>	-12,168	-14,872	-21,631	-33,799
Mississippi*	-9,901	-12,102	-17,602	-27,504
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-149	-182	-265	-414
Pennsylvania	-12,366	-15,114	-21,983	-34,349
South Carolina*	-11,406	-13,940	-20,277	-31,683
<i>South Dakota</i>	-132	-162	-235	-367
<i>Tennessee</i>	-9,708	-11,865	-17,258	-26,966
Texas*	-26,312	-32,159	-46,776	-73,088
Wisconsin*	-3,403	-4,160	-6,051	-9,454

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Source: Author's calculations.

Potential Demobilization among Latino Youth

Tables 4-6 report the results of a similar analysis for Latino youth. Unsurprisingly, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Texas have the largest pools of potential young Latino voters, though Latinos also comprise significant portions of the youth electorate in states like Tennessee and Wisconsin as well.

Table 4: Baseline Estimates of Latino Youth (ages 18-29) Voter Turnout, 2012

	1	2	3
	Latino youth population (2011 estimate)	Predicted number of 2012 Latino youth voters (based on 2004 national Latino youth turnout rate)	Predicted number of 2012 Latino youth voters (based on 2008 national Latino youth turnout rate)
<i>Alabama*</i>	47,716	9,734	13,074
<i>Florida</i>	798,812	162,958	218,874
Georgia	197,334	40,256	54,070
<i>Hawaii</i>	27,970	5,706	7,664
<i>Idaho</i>	38,669	7,888	10,595
Indiana	82,633	16,857	22,641
Kansas	64,620	13,182	17,706
<i>Louisiana</i>	46,492	9,484	12,739
<i>Michigan</i>	90,476	18,457	24,790
Mississippi*	21,241	4,333	5,820
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	8,433	1,720	2,311
Pennsylvania	164,893	33,638	45,181
South Carolina*	59,502	12,138	16,304
<i>South Dakota</i>	5,478	1,118	1,501
<i>Tennessee</i>	70,225	14,326	19,242
Texas*	1,941,629	396,092	532,006
Wisconsin*	73,582	15,011	20,161

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 population estimates (column 1); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2004 (column 2); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2008 (column 3).

Tables 5 and 6 show the potential demobilizing effects of these laws on turnout among young Latinos. Should Latinos turn out to vote at rates similar to 2004, between 68,000 to nearly 200,000 Latinos could be demobilized across these states. And should they turn out to vote at rates similar to 2008, the estimated effect could be greater than 250,000. One hundred thousand Latino youth in Texas alone, for instance, could be demobilized as a consequence of these new voting restrictions.

Table 5: Possible Reduction in Latino Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2004 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-876	-1,071	-1,557	-2,434
<i>Florida</i>	-14,666	-17,925	-26,073	-40,739
Georgia	-3,623	-4,428	-6,441	-10,064
<i>Hawaii</i>	-514	-628	-913	-1,426
<i>Idaho</i>	-710	-868	-1,262	-1,972
Indiana	-1,517	-1,854	-2,697	-4,214
Kansas	-1,186	-1,450	-2,109	-3,296
<i>Louisiana</i>	-854	-1,043	-1,517	-2,371
<i>Michigan</i>	-1,661	-2,030	-2,953	-4,614
Mississippi*	-390	-477	-693	-1,083
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-155	-189	-275	-430
Pennsylvania	-3,027	-3,700	-5,382	-8,410
South Carolina*	-1,092	-1,335	-1,942	-3,035
<i>South Dakota</i>	-101	-123	-179	-279
<i>Tennessee</i>	-1,289	-1,576	-2,292	-3,581
Texas*	-35,648	-43,570	-63,375	-99,023
Wisconsin*	-1,351	-1,651	-2,402	-3,753

Table 6: Possible Reduction in Latino Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2008 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-1,177	-1,438	-2,092	-3,269
<i>Florida</i>	-19,699	-24,076	-35,020	-54,719
Georgia	-4,866	-5,948	-8,651	-13,517
<i>Hawaii</i>	-690	-843	-1,226	-1,916
<i>Idaho</i>	-954	-1,165	-1,695	-2,649
Indiana	-2,038	-2,491	-3,623	-5,660
Kansas	-1,594	-1,948	-2,833	-4,426
<i>Louisiana</i>	-1,146	-1,401	-2,038	-3,185
<i>Michigan</i>	-2,231	-2,727	-3,966	-6,198
Mississippi*	-524	-640	-931	-1,455
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-208	-254	-370	-578
Pennsylvania	-4,066	-4,970	-7,229	-11,295
South Carolina*	-1,467	-1,793	-2,609	-4,076
<i>South Dakota</i>	-135	-165	-240	-375
<i>Tennessee</i>	-1,732	-2,117	-3,079	-4,810
Texas*	-47,881	-58,521	-85,121	-133,002
Wisconsin*	-1,815	-2,218	-3,226	-5,040

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Source: Author's calculations.

Potential Demobilization among Asian American Youth

Tables 7-9 consider the potential effects among Asian American youth. As Table 7 shows, there are significant numbers of Asian American youth in states such as Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Table 7: Baseline Estimates of Asian American Youth (ages 18-29) Voter Turnout, 2012

	1	2	3
	Asian American youth population (2011 estimate)	Predicted number of 2012 Asian American youth voters (based on 2004 national Asian American youth turnout rate)	Predicted number of 2012 Asian American youth voters (based on 2008 national Asian American youth turnout rate)
<i>Alabama*</i>	11,033	2,582	3,067
<i>Florida</i>	82,838	19,384	23,029
Georgia	59,797	13,992	16,624
<i>Hawaii</i>	62,477	14,620	17,369
<i>Idaho</i>	3,829	896	1,064
Indiana	26,698	6,247	7,422
Kansas	15,518	3,631	4,314
<i>Louisiana</i>	15,714	3,677	4,368
<i>Michigan</i>	50,898	11,910	14,150
Mississippi*	5,646	1,321	1,570
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	5,460	1,278	1,518
Pennsylvania	77,538	18,144	21,556
South Carolina*	11,611	2,717	3,228
<i>South Dakota</i>	2,079	486	578
<i>Tennessee</i>	17,812	4,168	4,952
Texas*	178,274	41,716	49,560
Wisconsin*	34,906	8,168	9,704

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 population estimates (column 1); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2004 (column 2); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2008 (column 3).

Tables 8 and 9 report the levels of possible demobilization based on our expectations about Asian American youth turnout, and our assessments of how many Asian American youth possess photo identification. Our estimates suggest that anywhere from 13,000 to 46,000 Asian American youth in these states could be demobilized as a result of new photo identification laws.

Table 8: Possible Reduction in Asian American Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2004 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-232	-284	-413	-645
<i>Florida</i>	-1,745	-2,132	-3,101	-4,846
Georgia	-1,259	-1,539	-2,239	-3,498
<i>Hawaii</i>	-1,316	-1,608	-2,339	-3,655
<i>Idaho</i>	-81	-99	-143	-224
Indiana	-562	-687	-1,000	-1,562
Kansas	-327	-399	-581	-908
<i>Louisiana</i>	-331	-404	-588	-919
<i>Michigan</i>	-1,072	-1,310	-1,906	-2,978
Mississippi*	-119	-145	-211	-330
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-115	-141	-204	-319
Pennsylvania	-1,633	-1,996	-2,903	-4,536
South Carolina*	-245	-299	-435	-679
<i>South Dakota</i>	-44	-54	-78	-122
<i>Tennessee</i>	-375	-458	-667	-1,042
Texas*	-3,754	-4,589	-6,675	-10,429
Wisconsin*	-735	-898	-1,307	-2,042

Table 9: Possible Reduction in Asian American Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2008 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-276	-337	-491	-767
<i>Florida</i>	-2,073	-2,533	-3,685	-5,757
Georgia	-1,496	-1,829	-2,660	-4,156
<i>Hawaii</i>	-1,563	-1,911	-2,779	-4,342
<i>Idaho</i>	-96	-117	-170	-266
Indiana	-668	-816	-1,188	-1,856
Kansas	-388	-475	-690	-1,079
<i>Louisiana</i>	-393	-481	-699	-1,092
<i>Michigan</i>	-1,273	-1,556	-2,264	-3,537
Mississippi*	-141	-173	-251	-392
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-137	-167	-243	-379
Pennsylvania	-1,940	-2,371	-3,449	-5,389
South Carolina*	-291	-355	-516	-807
<i>South Dakota</i>	-52	-64	-92	-144
<i>Tennessee</i>	-446	-545	-792	-1,238
Texas*	-4,460	-5,452	-7,930	-12,390
Wisconsin*	-873	-1,067	-1,553	-2,426

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Source: Author's calculations.

Potential Demobilization among Native American Youth

We now consider the possible effects among Native American youth. As mentioned earlier, these analyses are a bit more tentative because the estimates of Native American turnout rates from previous elections are less certain. For our analyses of Native American and Pacific Islander youth, we assume that turnout rates would be similar to the turnout rates for Latinos. (Latino youth turn out at lower rates than white, black, and Asian American youth.) If Table 10 underestimates baseline turnout for Native Americans, the demobilizing consequences will be even greater than those reported in Tables 11 and 12. Native Americans comprise especially large portions of the youth electorate in states like South Dakota.

Table 10: Baseline Estimates of Native American Youth (ages 18-29) Voter Turnout, 2012

	1	2	3
	Native American youth population (2011 estimate)	Predicted number of 2012 Native American youth voters (based on 2004 national Latino youth turnout rate)	Predicted number of 2012 Native American youth voters (based on 2008 national Latino youth turnout rate)
<i>Alabama*</i>	4,259	869	1,167
<i>Florida</i>	7,928	1,617	2,172
Georgia	3,767	768	1,032
<i>Hawaii</i>	862	176	236
<i>Idaho</i>	3,328	679	912
Indiana	2,417	493	662
Kansas	4,886	997	1,339
<i>Louisiana</i>	5,196	1,060	1,424
<i>Michigan</i>	9,765	1,992	2,676
Mississippi*	2,718	554	745
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	524	107	144
Pennsylvania	3,070	626	841
South Carolina*	2,987	609	818
<i>South Dakota</i>	14,443	2,946	3,957
<i>Tennessee</i>	2,764	564	757
Texas*	14,768	3,013	4,046
Wisconsin*	9,559	1,950	2,619

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 population estimates (column 1); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2004 (column 2); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2008 (column 3).

Tables 11 and 12 show the potential demobilizing consequences of photo identification laws on Native American youth turnout. These analyses indicate that between 1,700 and 6,400 Native American youth may not turn out to vote due to these new requirements.

Table 11: Possible Reduction in Native American Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2004 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-78	-96	-139	-217
<i>Florida</i>	-146	-178	-259	-404
Georgia	-69	-85	-123	-192
<i>Hawaii</i>	-16	-19	-28	-44
<i>Idaho</i>	-61	-75	-109	-170
Indiana	-44	-54	-79	-123
Kansas	-90	-110	-159	-249
<i>Louisiana</i>	-95	-117	-170	-265
<i>Michigan</i>	-179	-219	-319	-498
Mississippi*	-50	-61	-89	-139
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-10	-12	-17	-27
Pennsylvania	-56	-69	-100	-157
South Carolina*	-55	-67	-97	-152
<i>South Dakota</i>	-265	-324	-471	-737
<i>Tennessee</i>	-51	-62	-90	-141
Texas*	-271	-331	-482	-753
Wisconsin*	-176	-215	-312	-488

Table 12: Possible Reduction in Native American Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2008 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-105	-128	-187	-292
<i>Florida</i>	-196	-239	-348	-543
Georgia	-93	-114	-165	-258
<i>Hawaii</i>	-21	-26	-38	-59
<i>Idaho</i>	-82	-100	-146	-228
Indiana	-60	-73	-106	-166
Kansas	-120	-147	-214	-335
<i>Louisiana</i>	-128	-157	-228	-356
<i>Michigan</i>	-241	-294	-428	-669
Mississippi*	-67	-82	-119	-186
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-13	-16	-23	-36
Pennsylvania	-76	-93	-135	-210
South Carolina*	-74	-90	-131	-205
<i>South Dakota</i>	-356	-435	-633	-989
<i>Tennessee</i>	-68	-83	-121	-189
Texas*	-364	-445	-647	-1,012
Wisconsin*	-236	-288	-419	-655

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Source: Author's calculations.

Potential Demobilization among Pacific Islander Youth

Our final set of analyses examines how these laws may affect Pacific Islander youth. Table 13 shows our assessment of baseline levels of turnout among this group. Though Pacific Islanders do not comprise an especially large portion of the national electorate, they do comprise a large segment of the youth electorate in states such as Hawaii, in which the new photo identification requirements could be especially consequential for the 2012 election.

Table 13: Baseline Estimates of Pacific Islander Youth (ages 18-29) Voter Turnout, 2012

	1	2	3
	Pacific Islander youth population (2011 estimate)	Predicted number of 2012 Pacific Islander youth voters (based on 2004 national Latino youth turnout rate)	Predicted number of 2012 Pacific Islander youth voters (based on 2008 national Latino youth turnout rate)
<i>Alabama*</i>	513	105	141
<i>Florida</i>	2,572	525	705
Georgia	1,408	287	386
<i>Hawaii</i>	25,394	5,180	6,958
<i>Idaho</i>	635	130	174
Indiana	467	95	128
Kansas	513	105	141
<i>Louisiana</i>	397	81	109
<i>Michigan</i>	542	111	149
Mississippi*	311	63	85
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	88	18	24
Pennsylvania	718	146	197
South Carolina*	633	129	173
<i>South Dakota</i>	116	24	32
<i>Tennessee</i>	763	156	209
Texas*	4,668	952	1,279
Wisconsin*	414	84	113

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 population estimates (column 1); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2004 (column 2); U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Studies November Voting Supplement, 2008 (column 3).

Tables 14 and 15 display the numbers of Pacific Islander youth that could be demobilized as a result of these new requirements. Due to the significant Pacific Islander population in Hawaii, the highest levels of demobilization of Pacific Islander youth occur in that state. Altogether, between 700 and 2,700 Pacific Islander youth could be demobilized in these states by these new photo identification requirements.

Table 14: Possible Reduction in Pacific Islander Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2004 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-9	-12	-17	-26
<i>Florida</i>	-47	-58	-84	-131
Georgia	-26	-32	-46	-72
<i>Hawaii</i>	-466	-570	-829	-1,295
<i>Idaho</i>	-12	-14	-21	-32
Indiana	-9	-10	-15	-24
Kansas	-9	-12	-17	-26
<i>Louisiana</i>	-7	-9	-13	-20
<i>Michigan</i>	-10	-12	-18	-28
Mississippi*	-6	-7	-10	-16
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-2	-2	-3	-4
Pennsylvania	-13	-16	-23	-37
South Carolina*	-12	-14	-21	-32
<i>South Dakota</i>	-2	-3	-4	-6
<i>Tennessee</i>	-14	-17	-25	-39
Texas*	-86	-105	-152	-238
Wisconsin*	-8	-9	-14	-21

Table 15: Possible Reduction in Pacific Islander Youth Turnout in 2012 Assuming 2008 Turnout Levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	91% rate of photo ID possession	89% rate of photo ID possession	84% rate of photo ID possession	75% rate of photo ID possession
<i>Alabama*</i>	-13	-15	-22	-35
<i>Florida</i>	-63	-78	-113	-176
Georgia	-35	-42	-62	-96
<i>Hawaii</i>	-626	-765	-1,113	-1,739
<i>Idaho</i>	-16	-19	-28	-43
Indiana	-12	-14	-20	-32
Kansas	-13	-15	-22	-35
<i>Louisiana</i>	-10	-12	-17	-27
<i>Michigan</i>	-13	-16	-24	-37
Mississippi*	-8	-9	-14	-21
<i>New Hampshire*</i>	-2	-3	-4	-6
Pennsylvania	-18	-22	-31	-49
South Carolina*	-16	-19	-28	-43
<i>South Dakota</i>	-3	-3	-5	-8
<i>Tennessee</i>	-19	-23	-33	-52
Texas*	-115	-141	-205	-320
Wisconsin*	-10	-12	-18	-28

States in **bold** have strict photo ID laws in place for November 2012 and require voters to show photo identification before voting. States in *italics* request photo identification but provide a limited number of alternative provisions. States marked with * have passed photo identification requirements but as of this writing the laws will not be in effect in November 2012.

Source: Author's calculations.

Implications

The picture that emerges from this analysis demonstrates the clear potential political impact of new photo identification laws. Several implications result from these estimates. First, these figures indicate that new photo identification laws threaten to demobilize substantial numbers of minority youth. Without these young voters, the election results in 2012 will not reflect to the same degree the voices of a population that is often marginalized from both electoral and institutional forms of politics. Indeed, turnout levels among youth of color—especially in states with sizable populations of minority youth—may fall below 2004 and 2008 levels. Turnout levels among black youth may be affected especially dramatically given the historic level of turnout among black youth in 2008 and their low levels of access to photo identification.

Second, racial differences in access to photo identification suggest that voter ID restrictions will dramatically alter the racial composition of the 2012 voting population. The disproportionate potential impact of these laws on racial minorities suggests that their political voices will be further marginalized relative to white political preferences. For instance, if the Brennan Center estimates of rates of photo ID possession are correct, blacks will be demobilized at nearly three times the rate as whites. Whatever turnout advantages black youth had over white youth in 2008 are sure to be eliminated, and recent increases in turnout among Latino and Asian American youth may be lost. Moreover, younger minority voters are likely to be affected by these laws to greater degrees than older minority voters. Younger voters often have distinct political views from older voters, and the disproportionate demobilization of this younger bloc could alter the character of the racial minority voting electorate in 2012.

It is also worth noting that many young people seem not to know about these laws. A recent survey by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement found that 44 percent of young voters were unsure about the photo identification law in their state.²⁰ This is a disturbing statistic because it implies that many youth are uninformed about the identification they will need to cast a valid ballot in the November election. Moreover, the results of this study help to reaffirm our confidence in the analysis shown here because the lack of information is likely to be an additional hurdle toward mobilizing turnout even among minority youth who would otherwise participate in the election.

Electoral Consequences

These new laws could have significant electoral consequences. One fourth (six out of 24) of the House races that the Cook Political Report (July 26, 2012) rates as “toss ups” fall in states with photo identification requirements, and ten of the 32 races that are rated as “lean Republican” or “lean Democratic” are in these states. Given the fierce battle for partisan control of Congress, these new photo identification requirements could be electorally salient.

One such place is Georgia’s newly redrawn 12th congressional district. The district is currently represented by Democrat John Barrow, who won 56% of the vote in 2010. The new district is about 35% black, but now includes more Republican voters than before.²¹ Consequently, the Cook Political Report classifies this race as “leans Republican”, indicating that Barrow’s re-election chances are in jeopardy. With such a sizable black population in this district, mobilizing voters in spite of the state’s photo identification laws could go a

²⁰ <http://www.civicyouth.org/romney-trails-among-young-adults/>

²¹ <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Joint/reapportionment/Documents/congprop2-stats.pdf>

long way toward helping Barrow retain his seat. A significant number of the district's nearly 275,000 black and Latino residents could be demobilized as a consequence of Georgia's photo identification requirements.

Though President Obama carried Wisconsin handily in the 2008 election, John Kerry won the state by an extremely narrow margin in 2004. The 2010 gubernatorial and midterm elections indicate that Wisconsin will be a battleground state in 2012. Republican Scott Walker won the 2010 gubernatorial race by 124,000 votes, and statewide, Republican congressional candidates received 227,000 more votes than their Democratic opponents. Reductions in black voter turnout due to the new photo ID laws, then, may threaten Obama's reelection chances in Wisconsin. Additionally, because most blacks in Wisconsin are concentrated in the Milwaukee area, Democratic congresswoman Gwen Moore (who represents the Fourth District, encompassing all of urban Milwaukee) may be more vulnerable in 2012 than she has been in previous elections. In 2010, she won her district by about 82,000 votes, but blacks make up approximately 35 percent of her district's population, while Latinos comprise another 15 percent. There are more than 350,000 racial minorities in her congressional district. The disproportionate demobilization of nearly half of the district's residents implies that new photo ID laws could make this race considerably more competitive than it has been in previous elections.

Furthermore, Democratic congressman Steve Cohen won the 9th district of Tennessee by 66,000 votes in the 2010 election, yet blacks and Latinos together constitute about 70 percent of this Memphis district's population. Disproportionate reductions in their turnout could be a difference-maker; for instance, if 25 percent of this adult population did not turn out to vote due to not having photo identification, more than 75,000 minority votes could be lost.

Appendix: More Research is Needed

As states have adopted increased voting restrictions, political campaigns, community organizations, and concerned citizens have wondered about the possible consequences of these new measures. This report introduces new estimates to describe how these laws may demobilize black youth. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the potential effects we have discussed in this report.

No one set of estimates shown above is better than the others. Unfortunately, there is a lot that we don't know. Some of the limitations of our estimates are technical in nature. One key assumption of this analysis concerns what base rate of turnout we would expect in 2012 in the absence of voter ID laws. If we chose a base rate of turnout that is too high, we will have overestimated the potential demobilizing impact of voter identification requirements. On the other hand, if we chose too low a turnout rate, we will underestimated the potential effects. Second, the estimates shown here depend on the Brennan Center's estimates for the availability of photo identification. If access to photo ID is greater than they estimated, the effects will be smaller than those shown here. Conversely, if the center overestimated access to photo ID, the actual effects will be larger than the estimates reported here.

Furthermore, the estimates generated from our analysis assume that likely voters and likely nonvoters have equal access to photo identification. If nonvoters are disproportionately unlikely to have photo ID, then our estimates overstate the magnitude of the likely effects. On the other hand, if states with more stringent processes for obtaining photo IDs also have a disproportionate share of likely voters without photo identification, the numbers here are conservative estimates of the actual effect. Finally, we note that the effects of these new laws on voter turnout also depend on the ways in which state and local authorities enforce the new requirements.

But there are still other obstacles. One challenge to evaluating the impact of photo identification laws is that these laws have been in place for only a short period of time. Only Georgia and Indiana had such restrictions in place for the 2008 presidential election. Moreover, each federal election is characterized by its own unique context that also has consequences for voter turnout and other forms of political behavior. As a result, it is difficult to examine the overall effects until many such elections have occurred. But given the profound importance of the right to vote, we emphasize the urgency in providing a more systematic accounting of the relationship between photo identification restrictions and voter turnout.

As of now, the data simply do not exist to evaluate these effects in a more comprehensive and precise manner. The U.S. Census Bureau is the gold standard for ascertaining population-level data. Indeed, its semiannual November Voting Supplement to the Current Population Studies includes data collected from interviews with over 100,000 people nationwide. However, these data are not comprehensive enough to provide detailed descriptions of statewide political participation by both race and age subgroups. Nor do most public opinion surveys enable researchers to investigate how voter turnout varies across racial groups among young people, for instance. For people interested in the political behavior and attitudes of youth, and for others who are interested in how certain politics affect the youngest generation of adult citizens, there are virtually no resources currently available to answer some of the most pressing questions of the day.

To move forward requires investing in public opinion surveys and other studies that are exclusively focused on young people, and especially young people of color. These are extremely difficult populations to research via traditional survey methods; young people are less likely to have landline telephones but change addresses more frequently. And given the minority status of blacks and Latinos, greater effort is required to

contact a sufficient number of young people of color for researchers to examine statistical patterns between laws like photo identification requirements and behaviors of interest such as voter turnout. Studying young people is an expensive proposition, but can we afford not to?