Examining Statewide Participation in Early Voting Regulations

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Research Question

What explains the variance among the states in regards to the choice to adopt early voting regulations?

The COVID-19 Impact

The global pandemic forced many states to adopt early voting legislation that did not previously abide by the provision. As a result, all 50 states would abide by some sort of early voting/absentee ballot legislation for the 2020 election cycle.

Background

Early voting first came to fruition during the Civil War as displaced soldiers required an outlet for casting their ballot. Like much of American public policy, early voting is shrouded in controversy due to partisan claims that the electoral procedure is susceptible to fraudulent ballot collection.

Updated Early Voting/Absentee Ballot Regulations Due to Covid-19	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z - Score	P > | z |	[95% Confidence Interval]
Black Population	4.20523	3.315578	1.27	0.205	-2.293184 | 10.70364
Education Levels (high school and some bachelors)	-3.980469	4.194362	-0.95	0.343	-12.20127 | 4.24033
Average Income	0.0000237	0.0000597	0.4	0.692	-.0000933 | .0001406
GDP Per Capita	-5.48E-07	8.20E-07	-0.67	0.504	-2.15E-06 | 1.06E-06
Partisan Composition of Legislature	0.5667973	0.9025613	0.63	0.53	-1.20219 | 2.335785

Voting by Mail	Coefficient	Staandard Error	Z - Score	P > | z |	[95% Confidence Interval]
Black Population	-55.33583	38.63325	-1.43	0.152	-131.0556 | 20.38395
Education Levels (high school and some bachelors)	7.49681	8.136725	0.92	0.357	-8.450879 | 23.4445
Average Income	0.0000582	0.0000894	0.65	0.515	-.0001169 | .0002334
GDP Per Capita	2.37E-07	1.30E-06	0.18	0.855	-2.31E-06 | 2.79E-06
Partisan Composition of Legislature	1.531106	1.729366	0.89	0.376	-1.858389 | 4.920601
State Budget Per Capita	0.000088	0.0003199	0.28	0.783	-.0005391 | .000715

Early Voting by State	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z - Score	P > | z |	[90% Confidence Interval]
Black Population	4.042067	3.351876	1.21	0.228	-1.471278 | 9.555413
Education Levels (high school and some bachelors)	-4.413108	4.359768	-1.01	0.311	-11.58429 | 2.758072
Average Income	0.0000375	0.0000614	0.61	0.542	-.0000635 | .0001385
GDP in Millions	-6.67E-06	5.35E-06	-1.25	0.212	-.0000155 | 2.12E-06
Partisan Composition of Legislature	0.3893639	0.9192549	0.42	0.672	-1.122676 | 1.901404
State Budget in Millions	0.0000714	0.0000597	1.2	0.232	-.0000268 | .0001696

Findings

While none of the regressions produced statistically significant results, the values for the black population produced the most meaningful results for all three regressions. The reasoning for this is unclear, however there has been efforts to suppress the black vote for political gain, as already demonstrated through gerrymandering.

Variables

- Dependents: Early Voting by State, Voting by Mail, Updated Early Voting/Absentee Ballot Regulations Due to COVID-19
- Independents: Black population, Education levels (High school and at least some bachelors), Average income, state GDP per capita, partisan composition of the state legislature, state budget per capita
- Data collected from all 50 states

Concluding Remarks

Being that only 8 states decline to implement early voting policy, the rigor of the regression was compromised due to small sample sizes. The upwards trend in convenience voting leads one to believe that research such as what was presented here will soon become obsolete. The success of early voting in terms of increasing voter turnout in the 2020 presidential election should lead more states to adopt no-excuse absentee ballots.