

## **Convenience Voting and Turnout: Reassessing the Effects of Election Reforms**

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### **Abstract**

Democratic systems are generally considered to function best when the electorate is a reflection of the citizenry. With that goal in mind, liberal policymakers often advocate electoral reforms that they expect will expand the electorate so that those on the periphery will be drawn in to participate in democratic governance. A recent award-winning article by Burden et al. (2014) finds that the electoral reform of “early voting” (absentee and early in--person) fails to increase a state’s voter turnout. They find that early voting, when implemented alone and not accompanied by Election Day or same-day registration, led to lower voter turnout in the 2004 and 2008 general elections. After replicating and extending their analysis, we reassess the issue of these seemingly unintended consequences bringing to bear new data and methods. Following Hur and Achen (2013), we re-weight Current Population Survey (CPS) data on state-level voter turnout to account for non-response and vote over-report bias encountered in these survey data, and expand our analysis to include the 2008 and 2012 General Elections. We also offer corrected and more refined measures of convenience voting based on states’ predisposition to facilitate absentee voting for eligible voters, relying on the early in-person (EIP) and absentee mail voting rules that states have implemented, and using data from the 2008 and 2012 CPS. Preliminary results show that “early voting” reforms – especially the possibility of weekend voting – do not exhibit the unintended consequence of depressing voter turnout.

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Democratic systems are generally considered to function best when the electorate is a reflection of the citizenry. With that goal in mind, liberal policymakers in the American states for more than three decades have advocated for electoral reforms that they expected would break down barriers to voting (Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1980), with the collective goal of expanding the electorate so that citizens on the periphery would be drawn in to participate in democratic governance. “Whenever we have a law that expands access to the ballot and makes it easier for people to register and to vote,” former Democratic Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick commented as he was signing a law in 2014 permitting early in-person voting to commence two years later in the Bay State (Schoenberg 2014), “it makes our democracy better.”<sup>1</sup> Dubbed collectively as “convenience voting,” these reforms to the election code are the latest effort by liberal reformers to try to make it easier for eligible citizens to register to vote and then cast a ballot. Collectively, their adoption across the American states has led to what one early voting scholar calls a “quiet revolution” (Gronke 2012), with millions upon millions of voters each election cycle shunning the custom of turning out to vote on Election Day and placing convenience over tradition.<sup>2</sup>

Every reform—electoral or otherwise—alters the “rules of the game” (Streb 2013; Norris 2004). Changes to the elections code, though, are almost by definition controversial, as political actors have a heightened concern about the electoral system being rigged to advantage their opponents (Hicks, et al. 2014). Ironically, some efforts at electoral engineering (Grofman and Lijphart 1986) result in unintended (Bowler and Donovan 2013), or even perverse consequences (Berinsky 2005), with outcomes running contrary to the goals of the reformers. To be sure, some advocates of the wave of convenience voting reforms aimed at lowering barriers to voter registration and increasing turnout—in particular, same day registration (SDR) or Election Day registration (EDR), no-excuse (aka, no-fault) absentee mail voting, and early in-person (EIP) voting—lament that these reforms have failed to mobilize less-engaged citizens to participate more in elections. More damning, they are often viewed by conservatives as diminishing the importance of a collective voting experience reaching its pinnacle on Election Day (Jacoby 2015), or worse, condemned for possibly opening the door to voter fraud (Fund and von Spakovsky 2012).

In this paper we challenge findings of recent studies casting doubt on the participatory benefits of convenience voting reforms. Specifically, we probe whether the two most common early voting reforms—EIP and no-fault absentee voting—both of which allow registered voters to cast non-precinct ballots prior to Election Day, exhibit a dampening effect on overall turnout across the states. Our analysis proceeds as follows. First, we review the scholarly literature on the adoption of convenience voting reforms in the American states and turnout, concluding with a discussion of the research design and coding decisions of the well-regarded article by Burden, et al. (2014) (hereafter BCMM). After replicating and extending the individual-level models of voter turnout using the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/05/massachusetts\\_gov\\_deval\\_patric\\_32.html](http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/05/massachusetts_gov_deval_patric_32.html)

<sup>2</sup> According to the CPS, in the 2000 General Election less than 5% of all respondents said they voted early in-person (EIP) prior to Election Day. By 2012, roughly 14% of voters nationwide said they had cast EIP absentee votes in the presidential election.

Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) data as modeled by BCMM, following Hur and Achen (2013) we offer our own weighted CPS models of the 2012 General Election to predict voter turnout, albeit with alternative coding of convenience voting reforms adopted by the states. In our next iteration of this paper, we plan to go beyond BCMM and other studies of convenience voting to specify whether convenience voting reforms have differential effects on the likelihood of minorities and the poor to turn out. For the moment, though, we conclude that once disaggregated and correctly specified, that adoption of no-excuse absentee voting and in-person early voting by the American states do not exhibit the unintended consequence of depressing voter turnout, and in fact, offering early voting on the weekends may enhance the likelihood turning out to vote.

## **The Effects of Convenience Voting on Turnout**

For more than three decades voting rights advocates across the American states have pushed for the expansion of what is generically referred to as convenience voting. The term convenience voting encompasses several reforms, and the minutia differentiating these laws can be quite dizzying. No-fault absentee voting, for instance, was first adopted in the late 1970s in California to enable any voter to request and cast mail ballots. More than 30 states now permit voters to request and mail a "no-excuse" absentee ballot. In the 1980s, Texas first allowed early in-person voting (which we refer to as EIP) weeks before Election Day at convenient locations, including inside malls.<sup>3</sup> Today, more than two dozen states allow all voters to cast early ballots at remote polling stations, which are frequently located in public facilities that may lie outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the voter's Election Day precinct.<sup>4</sup> Oregon, first, followed by Washington and most recently Colorado, have taken convenience voting to the next level, conducting all-mail ballot elections.<sup>5</sup> Other states -- while not going so far as to conduct exclusively vote-by-mail elections -- are proactively mailing absentee ballots to voters after placing registered voters on a "permanent" absentee voter list.<sup>6</sup>

Another set of reforms seek to minimize the costs of voter registration that might otherwise deter voters from participating (Mitchell and Wlezien 1995; Knack 1995; Rhine 1996; Highton 1997; McDonald 2007). Same-day voter registration (known as SDR), permitted in roughly a dozen states,

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<sup>3</sup> The lines are blurred between no-excuse absentee voting and in-person early voting when one considers that election officials in all states permit absentee voters -- excuse and no-excuse alike -- to request and cast an absentee ballot in-person at an election office. The distinction between no-excuse absentee voting and in-person early voting is then that election officials only provide the central election office as the in-person polling location for no-excuse absentee voters and provide additional satellite polling locations where any eligible person in the jurisdiction may vote in-person early (this latter voting procedure is akin to another Election Day voting innovation known as vote centers).

<sup>4</sup> Some excuse-required absentee ballot states permit local election officials to establish satellite absentee ballot polling locations; for example, Virginia (Code of Virginia 24.2-701(A)) permits local election officials to establish satellite general registrar's offices where persons with a valid excuse may request and cast an in-person absentee ballot.

<sup>5</sup> Some states permit local election officials to determine if they will conduct all-mail ballot elections, particularly for state and local elections. Some may establish all-mail ballot precincts for any election; for example, California (California Code Sec. 3005) allows local election officials to establish all-mail ballot precincts for precincts with less than 250 registered voters and Utah (Utah Code 20A-3-302) allows election officials the discretion to establish all-mail ballot precincts for any size precinct.

<sup>6</sup> More modestly, some election officials have sent mail ballot applications to all registered voters. Campaigns may also target voters with mail ballot drives.

enables an eligible citizen to register to vote and then cast a ballot on the same day (be it before the election at an early voting location, or even on Election Day itself -- known as Election Day Registration, or EDR).<sup>7</sup> North Dakota continues its reign as the only state not requiring citizens to register to vote, so it effectively has EDR (as well as SDR, as it also allows 15 days of EIP voting). On the horizon are new innovations such as Oregon's adoption in 2015 of opt-out voter registration for persons obtaining a driver's license.

Yet despite the widespread popularity of convenience voting, an increasingly common refrain among both the general public and some scholars is that no-excuse absentee and EIP voting might be civically corrosive. Some critics raise the concern that the reforms may "erode the election day tradition" (Goodman 2010). "Elections are more meaningful when voters act collectively, coming together at one time to make their political choices," Jim Jacoby (2015), a columnist for the Boston Globe, recently opined, as "the choosing should be done when the campaign ends — on a clearly defined Election Day, not a long-drawn-out election season." As voting becomes increasingly diffuse, critics of convenience voting claim that mobilization efforts by candidates, political parties, and nonprofit groups become less effective because of the mechanisms, which lead, inexorably, to lower turnout rates. Even some scholars who generally favor electoral reforms aimed at expanding the electorate maintain that there are "limits to electoral reform," finding that some reforms have not achieved their expectations (Bowler and Donovan 2013).

The scholarly literature examining empirically whether the adoption of convenience voting reforms increase the likelihood of voters casting ballots in an election is decidedly mixed. In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of states adopted in-person early voting reforms (Stein and Garcia-Monet 1997; Stein 1998; Neeley and Richardson 2001; Karp and Banducci 2000; 2001; Gronke, Rosenbaum, and Miller 2007; Kousser and Mullin 2007), as well as more permissive no-fault absentee voting, and even all-mail voting reforms (Berinsky 2005; Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott 2001). Early studies examining the impact of convenience voting laws reported that the overall impact on turnout was marginal or insignificant. For example, drawing on aggregate turnout data for federal elections spanning 1972 to 2002, Fitzgerald (2005) found that nearly all of the electoral reforms adopted by the states -- with the exception of Election Day registration and motor voter -- were not attracting voters to the polls. Others, such as Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott (2001), found that resource-rich Oregonians—registered voters who were older, more educated, and more politically engaged—were more likely to be "retained" as voters due to the state's transition to vote by mail.

One of the main conclusions of these early studies is that convenience voting reforms merely had substitution effects; that is, convenience voting "merely conveniences those who would

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<sup>7</sup> States with EDR extend this convenience to any eligible voter who casts a ballot prior to Election Day. For example, Minnesota (MN Code 203.04 Subdiv 4) permits persons to register and vote an absentee ballot in-person at an election office any time during the 46 day general election absentee ballot period. What may distinguish Minnesota from SDR states is *eligibility*: until 2014, Minnesota required an excuse to vote an absentee ballot, while SDR states do not require excuses for in-person voters.

have voted anyway” (Neeley and Richardson, 2001: 381). Low-propensity voters, in particular, were not any more likely than high-propensity voters to utilize the more liberalized modes of casting a ballot, as previous voting history remained one of the most powerful predictors of turnout (Hanmer and Traugott 2004; Southwell and Burchett, 1997, 2000). Indeed, some scholars noted the “perverse consequences of electoral reform” (Berinsky 2005), as it was unclear as to whether alternative modes of convenience voting were any “less costly than election-day voting” for those who took advantage of them (Stein 1998: 58). Arguing in 2008 that scholars had arrived at the consensus that “early voting does not increase turnout by bringing new voters into the system,” Gronke (2008: 432) summarizes that rather than expanding the electorate, if convenience voting has any mobilizing impact, it is that it encourages “regular voters to participate in lower intensity contests that they might otherwise skip.” In their summary of the literature in a 2010 review essay, Stein and Vonnahme (2010: 185) observe that early voting had an “insignificant or marginal effect on increasing the likelihood [that] an individual will vote.”

It should be noted that little research has systematically examined whether convenience voting reforms have other “compositional effects.” Berinsky (2005: 478, 482) claims that “this wave of reforms has exacerbated the socioeconomic biases of the electorate” and “do not correct the biases inherent in the electorate.” More recent studies, however, that draw on observed data from statewide voter files (Herron and Smith 2012; 2015; 2014), have found that EIP voters tend to differ from Election Day voters in terms of their race and ethnicity. In particular, Herron and Smith (2012; 2014; 2015) have found that in Florida and North Carolina—states that in the mid-2000s required counties elections administrators to offer up to 14 and 17 days of EIP voting, respectively, including on weekends—African Americans have consistently been more likely to go to early voting locations more than non-Hispanic whites.

### **“Unanticipated Consequences” of Early Voting?**

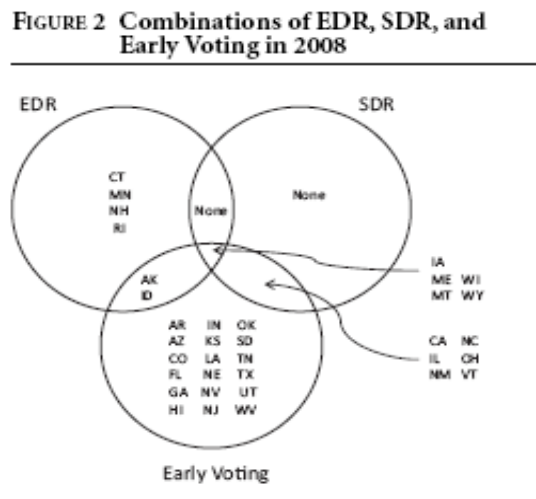
In a recent study that has gained considerable attention, BCCM contend that the adoption “early voting” by the states has failed to drive voters to the polls. Analyzing 2004 and 2008 individual-level data from the CPS to estimate turnout rates in the American states, BCMM (2014: 97) theorize that overall turnout in a state is likely to be dampened in those states that encourage “early voting” because it “turns a large-scale social activity that once took place on a single election day into a weeks-long process that diffuses public visibility.” Although BCMM (2014: 107) argue that “early voting demobilizes voters,” they do not provide much discussion about how candidates and parties in “early voting” states actually use vastly different mobilization strategies, depending what type of “early voter” they are trying to mobilize. Permanent absentee mail voters are targeted for “mobilization” very differently than those who go to the polls. In contrast, early voters choosing to cast their ballots in-person must physically turn out at non-precinct polling places.

Except for the obvious issue of temporality, the mobilization techniques used by candidates and campaigns to entice voters to the polls may be similar for those who choose to vote EIP and Election Day voters. BCMM’s dichotomous classification, however, implies in-person voters are

quite different than early voters. “Rather than building up to a frenzied Election Day in which media coverage and interpersonal conversations revolve around politics,” they (2014: 98) contend that if implemented on its own, “early voting makes voting a more private and less intense process.”<sup>8</sup> This is certainly not the case for voters casting early ballots in-person. Indeed, “campaigns’ get-out-the-vote efforts, location of field offices, party transfers, and other efforts aimed at stimulating turnout,” as BCMM (2014: 107) write, may be functionally the same exactly the same for voters casting EIP ballots as Election Day voters -- except that the former just occurs earlier. Indeed, there may be mobilization techniques available only to early voters, such as holding campaign rallies near early voting polling locations and incentivizing attendees to vote (McDonald and Schaller 2011; see also Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009).

BCMM define “early voting” quite broadly, co-mingling any voting method that permits a voter to cast a ballot before Election Day without having to show up to her geographically assigned, pre-determined local precinct. Their resulting dichotomous coding of early voting thus incorporates the two primary, but procedurally (in terms of election administration) and operationally (in terms of GOTV efforts) different methods of casting a ballot prior to Election Day—no excuse absentee voting and in-person early voting. In addition to their dichotomous measure of early voting, they include dichotomous measures of whether a state offered EDR or SDR. Their coding scheme, reproduced below in Figure 1, results in a simple Venn diagram.

**Figure 1: BCMM (2014) Venn Diagram**



<sup>8</sup> BCMM (2014: 98) write, “Social pressure is less evident, guidance on how and where to vote is less handy, and the prospect of positive social interactions at the polls is decreased. These reductions in stimulation—both strategic and nonstrategic mobilization—are greater than the modest positive benefits of additional convenience that accrue largely to those who would vote in any case.” One wonders what to make of the long lines during in-person early voting in Ohio in 2004 and Florida in 2008 and 2012, as there was considerable anecdotal and scholarly evidence to the contrary of heightened “positive social interactions” in these states during in-person early voting (Herron and Smith 2012, 2014, 2015; Gronke and Stewart 2013).

What is at once noticeable from BCMM’s Venn diagram is that only 35 states are included in the union of the three overlapping categories, and that both the category of SDR and the union of SDR and EDR contain no states. According to BCMM’s coding, 15 states are omitted entirely from the Venn diagram because they do not offer voters *any* form of convenience voting (EDR, SDR, or “Early Voting” – neither EIP nor no-excuse absentee).<sup>9</sup> This includes Oregon and Washington, “both of which essentially mandate voting by mail” (BCMM 2014: 99); although not included in their Venn diagram, Washington, D.C. is included in their models.

Furthermore, out of the seven possible sets in their Venn diagram, two of the sets are completely empty, and the union of “early voting” and EDR only captures two states—Alaska and Idaho. Logically, however, this union should also be empty, too. It makes little sense that an EDR state that also offers in-person “early voting”—as BCMM classify Alaska and Idaho as allowing—would not allow unregistered, eligible citizens to register to vote and then cast a ballot during the early voting period, but would allow them to wait to register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day. Indeed, our close reading of the election laws in these states reveals that BCMM miscode both states: Alaska does not have EDR or SDR, except for specifically qualified voters, and Idaho does explicitly extend SDR to early voters.<sup>10</sup>

BCMM’s research design raises numerous theoretical and conceptual issues, but we limit our focus to two of the more obvious issues. First, BCMM employ an overly crude measure of early voting—which either creates meaningless distinctions, or worse, meaningful misclassifications of different types of convenience voting. Second, as we discuss after replicating and extending their CPS turnout models, BCMM fail to use the survey weights provided by the CPS in their models, nor do they apply state-level turnout weights to account for non-response and vote over-report bias in the survey, as advised by Hur and Achen (2013).

We begin with a critical assessment with how BCMM conceptualize “early voting.” As displayed in a Venn diagram (Figure 1, above), BCMM collapse EIP and no-excuse absentee mail voting into a single category, as they classify “early voting” as including all voting practices that “eliminate the need for the voter to appear at a polling place” (BCMM 2015: 96).<sup>11</sup> These two

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<sup>9</sup> BCMM code states that offer no EDR, no SDR, no early in-person voting, and require voters to provide an “excuse” before receiving and casting an absentee as their residual category. As a result, BCMM’s analysis effectively ignores, for example, more than 6 million absentee ballots cast in those states in the 2008 presidential elections.

<sup>10</sup> Alaska did not have EDR in 2008. While eligible persons may register at “any time of the year” (Alaska Code Title 15, Sec. 15.07.040), they must register 30 days prior to an election to be eligible to vote in that election (Alaska Code Title 15, Sec. 15.07.070(d)). BCMM’s confusion appears to arise from presidential ballots, which are available to any otherwise eligible voter who moved 30 days prior to the election (Alaska Code Title 15, Sec. 15.05.012). Conversely, Idaho permits SDR at an “absent electors’ polling place” (Idaho Code 34-408A(3)), and permits any qualified voter to cast an absentee ballot (Idaho Code 34-1001).

<sup>11</sup> On a more technical front, although BCMM classify “no-excuse” absentee ballots as “early voting,” not all absentee mail ballots are cast prior to Election Day. In some states, absentee mail ballots that are postmarked on the day of the election are deemed valid by elections officials, even if they are received well after Election Day. These absentee mail ballots cast on Election Day -- no-excuse or otherwise -- are not “early voting,” yet BCMM classify them as such. Furthermore, even some states with Election Day deadlines for mail ballot return may allow voters to drop off ballots at designated locations -- polling places, special drop boxes, or election offices -- in-person, on Election Day. Indeed, one

methods of casting a ballot prior to Election Day are procedurally different with respect to how elections are administered, and operationally different with respect to how political campaigns run their GOTV efforts.

For BCMM (2014: 96), the critical distinction of an “early” ballot is that it “eliminate[s] the need for the voter to appear at a polling place on Election Day,” even though the transaction costs of in-person “early” voters may be identical to those of Election Day voters. Procedurally, however, EIP voting requires a voter to be physically present before an election official in order to cast a ballot. In contrast, no-excuse absentee voting, or any other variant of a ballot sent via the mail, necessitates that a voter be physically absent from the gazing eyes of local election administrators.<sup>12</sup> For instance, BCMM do not consider that the immediate verification process by an election official when casting an EIP ballot is very different than the verification process for a voter casting an absentee ballot by mail, which occurs well after the physical act of mailing in a ballot.

Operationally, campaigns target absentee mail voters—especially those who are “permanently” on an election administrator’s list to be mailed a ballot—differently than those who might physically go to an early voting location. The phrase “Souls to the Polls” has entered the election lexicon, as some candidates, political parties, or advocacy groups will go so far as to physically mobilize voters to the polls (Herron and Smith 2012). As such, the broad classification of early voting employed by BCMM blurs the different modes of early voting, especially the physical (or lack thereof) interaction a voter experiences with a campaign or election officials prior to casting a ballot. For BCMM, irrespective of the process or operation of voting, as long voters cast their ballots prior to Election Day, they are treated equivalently.

More problematic is that BCMM’s broad definition of “early voting” lacks nuance. BCMM (2014: 96) rightly acknowledge that not all mail ballots are the same, recognizing that in some states “voters must provide a justification before receiving absentee ballots, with wide variation in the stringency of the justifications.” They also recognize that some states automatically send absentee ballots for all elections if requested by the voter. But the Wisconsin team then proceeds to “code states with ‘no excuse’ absentee voting or permanent absentee voting (which allows voters to request absentee ballots for all elections, and the ballot is automatically sent) as early voting states” (BCMM 2014: 96). As such, BCMM treat “early” votes cast 45 days prior to Election Day by mail equivalently to those cast by a voter in person the day before Election Day. Whether or not a voter casts her ballot in person at an early voting center or mails the ballot and never confronts an elections official or is mobilized by a GOTV campaign, BCMM’s coding treats the procedurally and operationally distinct voting methods equivalently.

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may imagine a voter would “need” to drop a mail ballot at a polling place if they fill out their ballot on Election Day, thus the “need” to appear at a polling place is not necessarily “eliminated.”

<sup>12</sup> Somewhat curiously, in a more recent article, Burden disaggregates “early voting” into its two most common components -- in-person early and absentee mail (Burden and Gaines 2015).



When it comes to the creation of any state-level dummy variable, including those for convenience voting mechanisms, coding decisions are crucial. In their study of the impact of direct democracy on a variety of policy adoptions across the states, Bowler and Donovan (2004) criticize scholars who use a dichotomous measure of whether a state allows the initiative process, as the “simple dummy variable lumps into a single category states that make active and repeated use of the process with those that do not and states that have easy-to-use and hard-to-amend initiatives with those that do not.” Any dummy variable can create a false distinction, or a distinction without difference.

For example, a state statute may permit in-person early voting, but allow the implementation of that law to be interpreted and enforced by local election administrators. This can create much variance in the actual usage of EIP voting across a state—specifically with regard to the number of days, locations, and available hours—or worse, no usage at all in a state (even though it is technically permitted). Such is the case in Indiana, where the term “early voting” is not defined by state statute. At their discretion, county election administrators may permit voters to pick up and cast a no-excuse absentee ballot in-person prior to Election Day, but it is the local election officials who determine—if any at all—the days, hours, and locations for “early voting.” As such, the decision to code a state as an “early voting” state or not can result in considerable imprecision, as the institutions (EIP and no-excuse absentee) differ widely across (and even within) states.

There are many other curious groupings that result from BCMM’s dichotomous classification of states with “early voting” versus states with no “early voting.” For example, in their Venn diagram, Florida and Illinois are both considered “early voting” states, although Illinois is in a separate union as it also has SDR. In practice, though, the two states present a vastly different picture of “early voting.” In the 2012 General Election, for example, Florida’s 67 county Supervisors of Elections were required to offer in-person early voting over an eight-day period, starting and ending on the two Saturdays prior to the election, and offering at least 96 hours of early voting; some SOEs offered as many as 20 early voting locations across their county. Furthermore, in 2008, Florida voters in many counties had even more early voting days on which to cast a ballot (Herron and Smith 2014). Illinois, by way of contrast, in 2012 permitted local election administrators to allow voters to cast over-the-counter absentee ballots at designated offices that commenced on the 15th day preceding the election and ended on the 3rd day prior to the election. A local election official was not required to establish any early voting locations, or could choose to restrict the number of days and hours of operation. Such was the case in 2008, too. So, although Illinois technically allowed no-fault absentee and SDR, because the state’s 100 election administrators are not compelled to offer any EIP voting, the only guaranteed way for voters to register and vote on the same day is on Election Day.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, because BCMM combine EIP with no-fault absentee voting, it is not possible to distinguish among the several states that allow same day registration (SDR). For example in 2012,

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<sup>13</sup> For guidelines on early voting in Illinois, see <http://www.elections.il.gov/downloads/electioninformation/pdf/earlyvoting.pdf>

Ohio permitted eligible persons to both register to vote and cast a ballot on the same day at an election office during the first seven days of the 30-day early voting period allowed. According to the Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) 2012 post-election report, Ohio's so-called "Golden Week" saw more than 5,800 Ohioans both register and vote early, or 0.1% of all votes counted in the 2012 election. In contrast, North Carolina permitted (prior to a change to its law in 2013) eligible persons to register and vote at any early voting polling location during the 15 day early voting period running up to the election; in 2012, nearly 100,000 North Carolinians both registered and voted early, or 2.2% of all votes counted. North Carolina, compared to Ohio in the 2012 General Election, had a longer extended period of SDR, offered the option closer to the election when interest is highest, opened more locations; as a consequence, usage was more than 20 times greater than in Ohio. Golden Window periods such as those in California and Ohio (until 2014) occur further from Election Day and limit access to election offices only, compared to states that offer SDR in conjunction with in-person early voting at special polling locations. We may thus expect much greater usage of SDR on weekends or in the latter available days than the former, as the Ohio and North Carolina statistics show, as Golden Window states are different than other SDR states.

The imprecision of BCMM's broad "early voting" category can be easily visualized by looking at the percentage of early votes cast in each state. Figure 2, which draws on weighted CPS data from the 2008 General Election, plots the percentage of voters in the 50 states (plus Washington, D.C.) who said they "voted early," be it an absentee or in-person ballot. The 19 states (plus D.C.) with red colored bars are coded by BCMM as not having "early voting" in 2008. As such, these states should have no (or just a trivial number of) CPS respondents reporting that they voted before Election Day. Yet it is clear that several states BCMM coded as not having "early voting" in the 2008 General Election had considerable turnout prior to Election Day according to the CPS. Most notably, in Michigan<sup>14</sup> and South Carolina,<sup>15</sup> which do not appear in BCMM's Venn diagram (indicating that they coded the states as not have "early voting" (or EDR or SDR) in 2008), more than 20 percent of voters reported casting ballots prior to Election Day. Furthermore, in BCMM's Venn diagram Arkansas appears in the "early voting" category. Indeed, in 2008 Arkansas allowed EIP, and in its 2008 post-election study the EAC reports nearly 400,000 voters cast EIP ballots. However, in their 2008 model estimation, BCMM inadvertently exclude Arkansas from their "early voting" category. (As such, AR is stripped in Figure 2.) Conversely, in 2008 Maryland permitted no-fault absentee voting and North Dakota allowed both EIP and no-fault absentee voting, but neither state appears in BCMM's Venn diagram.<sup>16</sup> The two states, however, are correctly

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<sup>14</sup> The NCSL classifies Michigan as a "no-excuse" state, even though voters can vote absentee (by mail or in person) without an excuse if they are 60 or older, expect to be out of town on Election Day, physically unable to cast a ballot at the polls without assistance, or are unable to vote on Election Day because of their religious beliefs, and voters in Detroit may "request an absentee ballot through a smartphone app." NCSL, "Absentee and Early Voting," 2/11/2015. Available: [http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx#no\\_excuse](http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx#no_excuse).

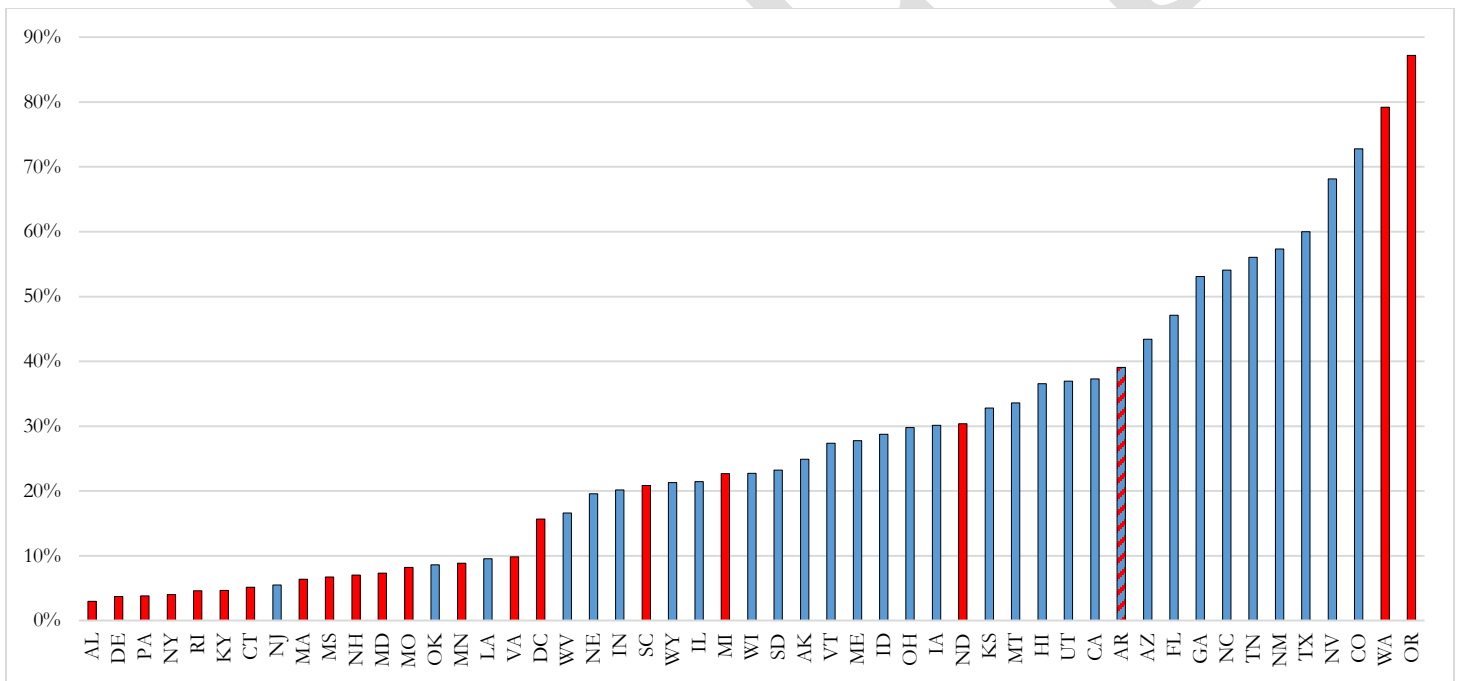
<sup>15</sup> South Carolina allows fairly permissive absentee ballot excuses, including being at work and unable to go to the polls on Election Day (South Carolina Code 7-15-320).

<sup>16</sup> According to the 2008 CPS, more than 30 percent of votes were cast early in 2008 in North Dakota, and more than 8 percent of votes were cast early in 2008 in Maryland.

coded in their 2008 model.<sup>17</sup> BCMM exclude Oregon and Washington from their Venn diagram, even though both permit their mail ballots to be returned early.

Furthermore, there are discrepancies related to BCMM’s coding of their voter identification requirement. For example, BCMM do not code Alaska as a state that requires voter ID in 2004, even though the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL 2014) reports that Alaska implemented a voter ID “request” law in 1980. Alabama, on the other hand, is accordingly coded by BCMM as a state requiring voters at the polls to provide a voter identification card, but it is not included in their 2008 coding with the other states requiring voters to show the same identification.

**Figure 2: BCMM Venn Diagram “Early Voting” States, by 2008 CPS “Early Voting” Turnout**



There are additional concerns with BCMM’s coding of states with EDR. In EDR states, unregistered but eligible citizens may register and vote on Election Day. Numerous scholars who study EDR find this policy is positively correlated with turnout rates (Highton 1997; Knack 1995; Mitchell and Wlezien 1995; Rhine 1996; McDonald 2008). BCMM (2014) include within their classification scheme states that have a little-known policy called “presidential ballots,” which permit certain eligible unregistered voters who miss the registration deadline to register and vote for

<sup>17</sup> BCMM do correctly code North Dakota as a state that has early voting, SDR, and EDR. Curiously, both the NCSL (2014) and Demos (2014) indicate that North Dakota has neither SDR nor EDR. Since North Dakota has no voter registration, one might reasonably code (as do BCMM) North Dakota as having both EDR and SDR.

presidential electors only. Rhode Island has a fairly permissible version of presidential ballots.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Alaska and Connecticut allow presidential ballots, but they restrict their usage to eligible citizens who are not otherwise eligible to vote in another jurisdiction due to a recent move.<sup>19</sup>

## **Modeling, Extending, and Remodeling “Early Voting” and Voter Turnout**

Before turning to our own investigation into the possible turnout effects of convenience voting reforms, we begin by replicating, and extending to the 2012 General Election, BCMM’s voter turnout models in which they use data from the 2004 and 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS). We follow BCMM lead, utilizing individual-level data collected by the CPS in their “Voting and Registration Supplement,” which is conducted by U.S. Census Bureau’s in November following a General Election. Our effort is only possible because BCMM graciously provided their replication code to their models, as well as the CPS data that they used. With little difficulty, we were able to faithfully replicate their turnout results for the 2004 and 2008 elections. Through the process of replicating their 2004 and 2008 models, we were able to explore in some detail their modeling choices, which revealed some of the coding issues as discussed above.

### ***Replication of BCMM***

Because of BCMM’s assistance in providing their code, we were also able extend their individual-level analysis to the 2012 General Election, using the raw data and utilizing BCMM’s classification scheme of Early Voting, EDR, and SDR derived from their Venn diagram. Table 1 displays BCMM’s model of voter turnout as applied to the 2012 General Election, again, using the same operationalization they used for their 2004 and 2008 analyses.

**[Table 1 about here]**

As Table 1 reports, the 2012 extension model using BCMM’s estimation is comparable to their 2004 and 2008 models. In short, if implemented alone in a state, “early voting”—using BCMM’s co-mingled but dichotomous classification—reduces the likelihood that a respondent will turn out to vote. However, if the co-mingled mechanisms of BCMM’s “early voting” are implemented along with SDR and EDR, these convenience voting practices had a positive impact on turnout in 2012.

Our effort at examining the effect of convenience voting reforms—and most notably, EIP voting—begins with the recoding of the dependent variable. BCMM code respondents’ self-reported vote such that persons who report voting are coded as having voted, and persons who report that

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<sup>18</sup> Rhode Island General Law 17-1-3; in 2012, the state reported 11,451 or 2.6% of Rhode Island’s 446,049 votes for president were by presidential ballots. The EAC survey has a slightly higher number of 11,459, illuminating that consistent reporting is another hazard of working with election data.

<sup>19</sup> Connecticut Code Chapter 145, Sec. 9-158b. State election officials do not track the number of presidential ballots and do not report statistics to the EAC. We contacted to two largest townships to obtain estimates of how often EDR is used for the top-of-the-ticket race, with no response as of this writing.

they “did not vote”, “did not know”, or “refused”, as having not voted. Scholars typically code respondents who offered “did not know” or “refused” as missing data and apply listwise deletion in their models, both examining the CPS (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 2013; Hur and Achen 2013), and the American National Election Study (ANES 2009). This definitional choice in operationalizing the dependent variable -- voting in an election or not -- might be a concern if it is biased, that is, if the “did not know” and “refused” respondents are systematically different than the self-reported “did not vote” respondents.

If BCMM’s intention behind their expansive definition of persons who did not vote was to increase the number of respondents for analysis, this desire is not followed through in other definitional choices. With respect to both socio-demographic and state-level institutional variables in their 2004 and 2008 models, they apply listwise deletion to missing data among independent variables, most notably household income, which has a high degree of missingness, that is, non-responses. In all, BCMM drop 9,670 respondents from their 2004 analysis and 11,693 from their 2008 analysis due to missing data in the independent variables. In some cases, we observe that missingness is BCMM’s coding choice, such as failing to include a value for DC’s electoral competitiveness measure in the 2008 analysis – and then dropping it from the model – but including DC in their 2004 model.

Another potential issue highlighted by Hur and Achen (2013), and explored in-depth by McDonald (2014), is the CPS voter over-report bias. As an example, consider that according to the CPS, Mississippi had the highest turnout rate in the 2012 election, a statistic that lacks face validity. McDonald (2014) documents how states’ over-report bias tends to be systematically higher or lower across elections. The systemic nature of the CPS over-report bias suggests that state level structural variables identifying election laws may be confounded by the over-report bias inherent in the CPS. Hur and Achen (2013) propose a reweighting of the CPS such that state level self-reported turnout rates equal McDonald’s (2007) voting-eligible turnout rates derived from aggregate data. We take this approach and apply these alternative weights to our estimation procedures.

### ***Alternative Models of Convenience Voting***

In our own effort to model voter turnout using CPS data from the 2008 and 2012 General Elections, we empathize with Burden and his coauthors, as it is not easy collecting data and making coding decisions concerning the adoption across the states of EDR, SDR, and “early voting.”<sup>20</sup> Logically, BCMM must have collected data on when states implemented each of these reforms—

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, the convoluted language of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission’s (EAC) Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAC 2012: 8) regarding Election Day and Same Day registration in the states <[http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Page/990-050%20EAC%20VoterSurvey\\_508Compliant.pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Page/990-050%20EAC%20VoterSurvey_508Compliant.pdf)>: “Twelve States including Alaska, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Wyoming indicated that they had Election Day Registration or Same Day Registration for the November 2012 presidential election. California, Colorado, Mississippi, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington reported a number of voters who were allowed to register and then to vote on the same day, but did not indicate that they have Election Day Registration or Same Day Registration” [sic].

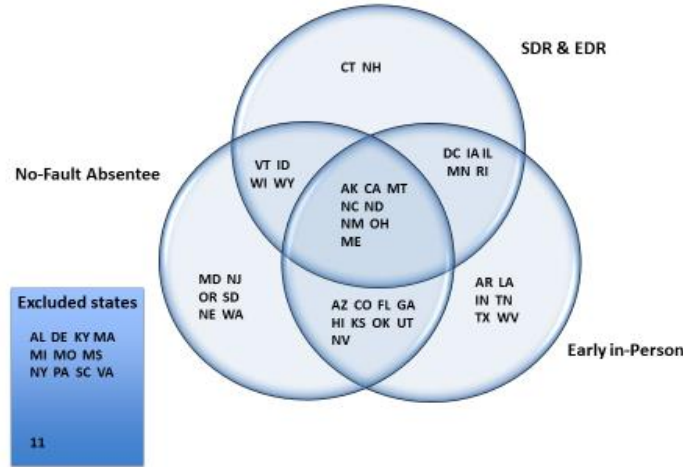
separately EDR, SDR, no-excuse absentee, and EIP—prior to collapsing states with either or both no-fault absentee and EIP voting into a single, dichotomous category. In contrast to BCMM, who co-mingle EIP and no-excuse absentee reforms by states in 2004 and 2008, we are interested in they have independent effects, and as such, we are left with trying to disaggregate their catch-all category of “early voting.” This has proven to be a prickly task.

For our analysis of the effects of early voting reforms on voter turnout, we began by obtaining the original CPS data for the 2012 General Election. We then supplemented the individual-level survey data with state-level convenience voting covariates, which we obtained from a dataset on election reforms assembled by Leighley and Nagler (2009) for The Pew Charitable Trusts’ “Make Voting Work” project, as well as data from the NCSL and Demos. We collected state-level data on the adoption of the following dichotomous state-level covariates:

- whether a state requires early in-person voting;
- whether a state requires early in-person voting on the weekend;
- whether a state allows permanent absentee voting;
- whether a state allows requires an excuse to vote an absentee ballot;
- whether a state allows Same Day and/or Election Day registration;
- whether a state requires voters to register at least 28 days before an election;
- whether a state has a strict photo ID requirement.

Most importantly, our coding scheme reconceptualizes BCMM’s dichotomous, but co-mingled category of “early voting.” We divide states with “early voting” into the procedurally and operationally distinct methods of “early voting”: absentee and EIP. Given that absentee voting (no-excuse as well as permanent status) is both procedurally and operationally different from EIP voting, we opt not to collapse the two methods into a single category of “early voting,” as BCMM do. As discussed above, we think BCMM’s melded category may underestimate state differences as well as the nuanced effects that each of these electoral laws might have on turnout, given the considerably different administrative processes and GOTV operations each method of “early voting” entails. Figure 3 offers our alternative Venn diagram.

**Figure 3: MSS Venn Diagram of No-Excuse Absentee, SDR &/or EDR, and Early In-Person States, 2008**



Our coding for EIP voting is as follows. The covariate for EIP voting is a dummy variable coded as 1 for states that allow EIP voting and 0 for those that do not. It should be noted that, even among the states that allow EIP voting, there are differences in the ways they have adopted this law. For example, in 2008 Arizona allowed EIP voting but does not allow for weekend voting. On the other hand, Florida and North Carolina allowed EIP voting in 2008, including on weekends, and Ohio and Texas permitted early voting to commence more than a month prior to Election Day. To account for at least some of the variability in the allowance of EIP voting across the states, we use a dummy variable that controls for states that permitted local election officials to offer EIP voting on a least one weekend in 2008 and 2012.

We operationalize the flexibility of absentee voting, which has similar heterogeneity across the states, two different ways. First, with respect to absentee voting, we code states in 2008 and 2012 that allowed “no excuse” absentee ballots as a 1, and 0 otherwise. Alternatively, we create a dummy variable coded as 1 for states that allow “permanent” absentee status to registered voters, and 0 if they do not.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, we offer a dummy variable coded 1 for states that allow either or both SDR or EDR, and 0 otherwise. We consciously co-mingle EDR and SDR states together in our category of immediate voter registration with regard to its proximity to the act of casting a ballot, as much of the scholarly literature (as well as information sources, such as the NCSL and the EAC) do not clearly differentiate between the two registration procedures. We also include North Dakota, with no voter registration, in this category.

<sup>21</sup> Drawing on the PEW data, we code a state requiring a potential voter as having to have a valid excuse to receive an absentee ballot as a 1 in our dataset, and a 0 if the state is a “no-fault absentee” state, or what Leighley and Nagler code as a “abs\_nofault” state. We code DC as having to have an “excuse” in both 2008 and 2012.

We create a dummy variable for whether a state has in place a strict photo ID law, which is constructed from information drawn from the NCSL. The strict photo ID covariate is coded as a 1 for the four states (Arizona, Indiana, Kansas, South Carolina) that enforced strict photo ID laws in the 2012 General Election. Several recent studies have argued that strict voter ID laws may affect turnout (Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz 2008)

Because they used all-mail ballots in the 2008 and 2012 elections, our models (like BCMM's) include dummy variables for Oregon and Washington, although we also classify them as no-fault absentee states. Finally, to account for the continued expansiveness of the voter registration window that differs considerably across the states, we construct a dummy variable for states that require voters to register at least 28 days prior to Election Day.

Following BCMM, we also include a control variable for the campaign competitiveness of the presidential election in each state. Campaign competitiveness is calculated as the difference between the final pre-election poll results of the two major party nominees (based on information provided by Pollster.com). To ease the interpretation of the competitiveness variable, we follow BCMM, computing this variable as  $100 - |\text{Democratic}\% - \text{Republican}\%|$  where the higher values indicate a more competitive campaign environment.

Our individual-level analysis of the likelihood of turnout, like BCMM, draws on the Voting and Registration Supplement Files of the 2008 and 2012 CPS. Following BCMM, we include several socio-demographic control variables in our models for each year, including a respondent's age, education, income, race, marital status, gender, length of residence in the state, whether the respondent is a natural-born citizen or naturalized, and whether the respondent's voting status is self-reported.

Given our skepticism that "early voting"—especially EIP voting—dampens turnout (Herron and Smith 2012, 2014, 2015), all else equal our expectation is that states offering EIP voting will not have appreciably lower turnout than states not offering voters this "convenience." Furthermore, we argue that allowing EIP voting on weekend day(s) might even have a positive impact on a voter's propensity to turn out. With respect to our other state-level covariates, we expect turnout to be lower in those several states still requiring voters to provide an excuse to cast an absentee ballots, but we are more skeptical that states that proactively send out absentee ballots who have permanent absentee status will have a positive impact on turnout. With respect to states allowing EDR/SDR, we certainly follow the conventional wisdom that these convenient forms of voter registration will increase the likelihood of an eligible citizen voting, as they greatly lower the barriers to voter registration and allow newly registered voters to immediately cast a ballot. We expect quite the opposite effect with respect to turnout in those states that enforce strict photo ID laws for voters casting ballots at the polls, early or otherwise. Finally, regarding the individual-level socio-demographic covariates, we follow the well-established voter turnout model (Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1980), that older, white, more educated, and wealthier voters have a higher propensity to turn out.



## Findings

To gauge the possible independent impact of no-excuse absentee voting and EIP voting have on turnout, along with other state-level reforms already discussed, we estimate four separate models using weighted CPS 2008 and 2012 data. As mentioned previously, we introduce two dummy variables for EIP voting: one if a state requires local election administrators to offer EIP voting, and another if a state permits local election administrators to offer EIP voting on the weekend. In addition, we measure absentee voting with two dummy variables: one if a state allows “no-excuse” absentee ballots and another if a state permits permanent absentee voting.

Table 2 shows our 2008 results for four separate turnout models, and Table 3 offers four identical models for the 2012 General Election. For both years, Model 1 estimates the effect of a state allowing “no excuse” absentee ballots on turnout, requiring local elections officials to offer EIP voting, allowing SDR and/or EDR, with controls for the other state-level and individual-level controls described above. Model 2 again estimates the separate effect on turning out to vote of allowing “no excuse” absentee ballots, EIP voting, SDR and /or EDR as well as the assortment of covariates, but it also includes the covariate of whether a voter may cast a ballot on at least one weekend of early voting. In Model 3, we drop the “no-excuse” absentee variable, substituting in its place whether a state allows permanent absentee ballots, along with the covariates previously mentioned. Finally, Model 4 estimates the effects of permanent absentee, EIP voting, SDR and/or EDR, and if a state offers EIP on at least one weekend on the likelihood of a CPS respondent saying he or she turned out to vote in the 2008 General Election.

### [Table 2 about here]

As Table 2 displays, in 2008 states that allowed no-excuse absentee voting (Model 1) or offered permanent absentee ballots (Model 3) had no higher or lower turnout than those states still requiring an excuse to vote absentee or that did not offer permanent absentee voting. As expected, and in keeping with BCCM, in all four models the states that permitted SDR and/or EDR were more likely to have higher turnout than other states. Also in support of BCCM’s findings, we find that in all four 2008 models the EIP dummy variable has a negative (and significant) effect on turnout, all else equal. What is interesting, though, is that turnout is higher in EIP states if they permit weekend voting (Model 2 and Model 4), all else equal. If a state offers early voting, it appears that any dampening turnout effects may be offset if they offer an option for weekend voting prior to Election Day. Finally, in all four models we find that turnout in a state was unaffected by the length of the registration period, though we find that states that required a strict photo ID had lower turnout, *ceteris paribus*.

With regard to the many demographic control variables in our models, our results closely parallel those of BCMM and other studies examining voter turnout. Our findings are quite robust. Across all four model specifications drawing on weighted 2008 CPS data, African-Americans

reported having a higher likelihood of turning out as compared to whites. Also as expected we find that more educated, wealthier, older, female, and married voters all have a significant, and positive, likelihood of turning out to vote. In addition, we find that respondents residing in a state for at least a year were more likely to turn out, all else equal, but that those living in the South were less likely to vote, as were naturalized citizens compared to natural-born citizens. Not surprisingly, the self-reported vote is positive, which likely indicates that survey respondents have a tendency to over-report their vote than when responding for other household members. Furthermore, we find that campaign competitiveness has a positive impact on turnout across all four models. We find that turnout in the all-mail voting state of Oregon was higher in 2008 compared to other states in the models with no-excuse absentee ballots, but not in neighboring Washington in any of the four models.

Turning to the effects of convenience voting reforms on turnout in the 2012 General Election, we again find that states having either EDR and/or SDR have higher turnout, all else held constant. As Table 3 reports, compared to the 2008 CPS weighted data, we do find that “no excuse” absentee voting has a positive impact on turnout in 2012, but only in Model 1, when we don’t also control for whether a state permits EIP on the weekend. We again find that states that offer voters permanent absentee ballot status have no substantively higher turnout than states that don’t offer voters this convenience, all else equal. Most importantly, we find that whether or not a state offered EIP in 2012, it had no impact on turnout, holding constant the other covariates. We do find, however, that states in 2012 that allowed local officials to offer EIP on at least one weekend day did have higher turnout, all else equal. Finally, in all the models, we find that states that had in place a strict photo ID requirement in 2012 had lower turnout, but that states with registration periods 28 day or more prior to an election only had lower turnout in the final model.

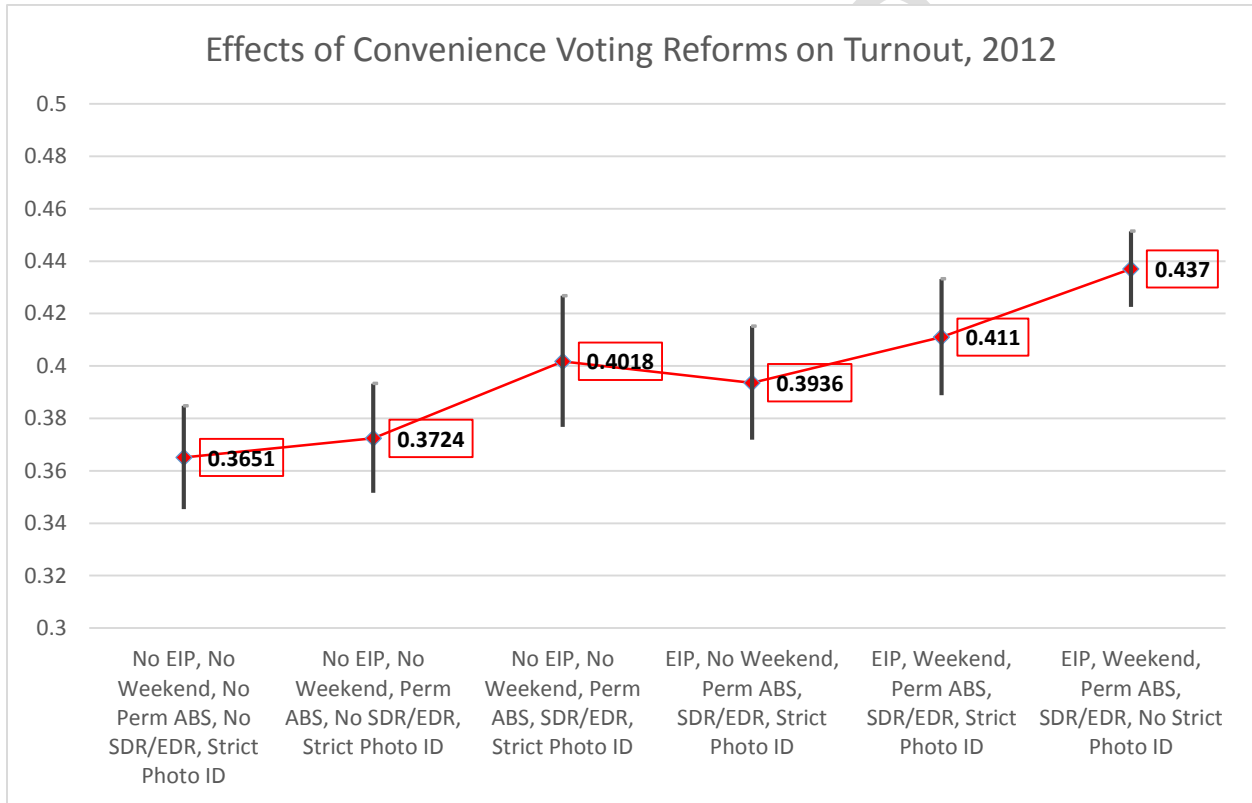
### **[Table 3 about here]**

The demographic control variables in the four 2012 models are nearly identical to those in the 2008 models, giving us confidence that we have specified them correctly. African-Americans reported turning out at higher rates than whites in 2012, and more educated, wealthier, older, female, and married voters all have significant and positive coefficients. All of the other controls are quite similar to those in the 2008 model discussed above, with the exception that we find turnout to be higher in Washington (but not Oregon) in 2012, as compared to other states.

Figure 3, below, transforms the key election reform coefficients derived from Table 3, Model 4 into predicted probabilities of turning out to vote in the 2012 General Election. Holding all other variables at their mean values, the categories (from left to right) gradually add convenience voting reforms. All else equal, voters living in a state with no EIP, no weekend EIP, no permanent absentee ballot status, no SDR and/or EDR, but that have a strict photo ID law have a 36.5% likelihood of turning out to vote. On average, voters residing in a state offering permanent absentee balloting have a slightly higher probability of voting, but that likelihood jumps by 3.5 percentage

points if the state also allows SDR and/or EDR.<sup>22</sup> Should the state offer EIP voting, the odds of voters turning out drops a fraction, which is similar to what BCMM find. However, if the state allows local election administrators to offer EIP on the weekend (at least one Saturday or Sunday), the likelihood of turning out improves to more than 41 percent. Stripping away a state’s strict photo ID law, however, increases the likelihood of turnout to nearly 44 percent, more than 7 percentage points higher than if that state offered no convenience voting reforms.

**Figure 3: Predicted Probabilities of Turnout, 2012 CPS**



## Discussion

Does early voting lead to lower turnout rates? We replicate and extend BCMM’s influential *AJPS* article, which won the 2014 best paper award at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference. Drawing on CPS data, BCMM find a negative correlation between early voting and turnout in the 2004 and 2008 General Elections. In the process of replicating and extending their analysis to the 2012 General Election, we discovered that their analysis lacks internal validity: missing data is inconsistently treated among dependent and independent variables and state election laws are misclassified. Regrettably, these data errors are only one concern that we have with their analysis.

<sup>22</sup> By construction, in this hypothetical this state does not offer SDR as it does not offer EIP.

Whether or not early voting (or any election reform) affects turnout is a question that deserves attention, given the United States' complex patchwork of state election laws. Our effort here has been to unpack BCMM's crude classification scheme, correcting coding errors along the way. In doing so, we arrive at a different conclusion about the efficacy of convenience voting on voter participation. While we generally find no positive effect of absentee or EIP voting on turnout, we do observe that states offering weekend in-person early voting do have statistically higher turnout rates. In addition, we find that states that offered some form of EIP in the 2012 General Election had no negative effect on turnout. Convenience may thus truly be an important factor for those who cannot vote in-person during the workweek or on Election Day, and perhaps the use of EIP has changed from 2008 to 2012 as more states adopt the reform.

Further, it is important to underscore that the data analyzed are the Current Population Survey data for the 2004, 2008, and 2012 presidential elections. As Hur and Achen (2013) and McDonald (2014) document, these data have systematic voting over-reporting bias across states. Correcting these presidential data by reweighting is an important step to resolve potential confounds. These findings may thus not be present in presidential elections using other data sources—survey or administrative data—or for other types of elections, such as midterm, state, local, or primaries.

Finally, we want to stress that our results are preliminary, in that we have so far only analyzed the 2008 and 2012 General Elections. Due to its temporal proximity, we have the highest confidence in the correct coding of the array of election laws for the 2012 election, which, in fairness to BCMM, are exceedingly difficult to classify. Our next steps are to review previous state elections laws and extend our analysis to the 2004 CPS, as well as the 2006, 2010, and 2014 midterms, so as to better understand the connections between voting laws and turnout in different electoral contexts and over time. Finally, we plan to analyze if there are any differential effects of convenience voting reforms along the dimensions of race, class, and education levels.

**TABLE 1: Replication of BCCM (2014) Logistic Regression Estimates of Election Laws on Individual Turnout, with 2012 Extension**

	Model '04	Model '08	Model '12
<i>Early Voting Laws</i>			
Election Day Registration	.157 (.166)	.191* (.092)	.173 (.165)
Early Voting	-.134** (.062)	-.180*** (.058)	-.227*** (.078)
Early Voting & EDR	.057 (.116)	-.069 (.128)	.029 (.156)
Early Voting & Same Day Registration	-.048 (.089)	.008 (.048)	.029 (.101)
Early Voting & EDR & SDR	.317*** (.081)	.134 (.082)	.249** (.103)
<i>Additional Electoral Laws</i>			
30-Day Registration Close	-.110* (.063)	-.124** (.049)	-.085 (.069)
ID Requirement	.021 (.077)	.009 (.062)	.082 (.061)
<i>Demographic Factors</i>			
Education	.625*** (.022)	.600*** (.021)	.503*** (.017)
African American	.400*** (.066)	.719*** (.061)	.669*** (.060)
Hispanic	-.113*** (.039)	-.049 (.102)	-.069 (.077)
Self-Reported Vote	.643*** (.025)	.823*** (.029)	.957*** (.030)
Naturalized Citizen	-1.158*** (.144)	-1.028*** (.175)	-.700*** (.085)
Naturalized 10 Plus Years	.500*** (.138)	.456*** (.165)	.238*** (.082)
Married	.490*** (.031)	.426*** (.024)	.456*** (.022)
Residence 1 Year	.370*** (.033)	.269*** (.035)	.223*** (.034)
Income	.082*** (.004)	.083*** (.003)	.072*** (.003)
Female	.109*** (.013)	.149*** (.018)	.104*** (.014)
Age	.029*** (.001)	.025*** (.001)	.025*** (.001)
Age 18-24	.465***	.425***	.332***

	(.039)	(.038)	(.036)
Age over 75	-.138***	-.108**	-.113***
	(.050)	(.053)	(.036)
<b><i>State Electoral Factors</i></b>			
Campaign Competitiveness	.004	.011***	.001
	(.003)	(.003)	(.002)
South	-.066	-.075	.115
	(.084)	(.058)	(.076)
North Dakota	-.066	-.343***	-.010
	(.094)	(.081)	(.112)
Oregon	.444***	.192***	.314***
	(.057)	(.045)	(.077)
Washington	.021	-.021	.042
	(.055)	(.064)	(.081)
Constant	-4.311***	-4.774***	-3.993***
	(.234)	(.261)	(.167)
Pseudo-R2	.150	.146	.141
N	78,244	73,333	92,926

*Note:* Cell entries are logit coefficients with robust standard errors clustered by state in parentheses.

\*p < .10, \*\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .01, two-tailed test.

**TABLE 2: Logistic Regression Estimates of Election Laws on Individual Turnout, 2008 CPS**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Early Voting Laws</i>				
No-excuse Absentee	-.002 (.026)	-.031 (.027)		
Permanent Absentee			.024 (.027)	.040 (.027)
EDR &/or SDR	.208*** (.029)	.178*** (.030)	.210*** (.029)	.181*** (.029)
Early in-Person Voting	-.165*** (.028)	-.273*** (.041)	-.170*** (.027)	-.288*** (.042)
EIP Weekend		.161*** (.043)		.157*** (.041)
<i>Other Election Laws</i>				
28+ Day Registration Close	-.034 (.028)	-.022 (.028)	-.026 (.027)	.001 (.028)
Strict Photo ID	-.129* (.058)	-.177** (.059)	-.126* (.058)	-.169** (.059)
<i>Demographics</i>				
African-American	.955*** (.043)	.954*** (.043)	.954*** (.043)	.952*** (.043)
Hispanic	-.055 (.041)	-.028 (.041)	-.057 (.041)	-.035 (.041)
Education	.901*** (.017)	.903*** (.017)	.900*** (.017)	.901*** (.017)
Income	.090*** (.003)	.091*** (.003)	.090*** (.003)	.090*** (.003)
Age	.024*** (.001)	.024*** (.001)	.024*** (.001)	.024*** (.001)
Female	.254*** (.023)	.253*** (.023)	.254*** (.023)	.254*** (.023)
Married	.361*** (.025)	.359*** (.025)	.362*** (.025)	.361*** (.025)
Self-Reported Vote	.244*** (.024)	.244*** (.024)	.244*** (.024)	.244*** (.024)
Residence 1 Year	.491*** (.032)	.490*** (.032)	.492*** (.032)	.491*** (.032)
Naturalized Citizen	-.676*** (.046)	-.678*** (.046)	-.679*** (.046)	-.685*** (.046)

*State Electoral Factors*

Campaign Competitiveness	.015*** (.001)	.015*** (.001)	.015*** (.001)	.014*** (.001)
South	-.124*** (.031)	-.112*** (.031)	-.115*** (.031)	-.091** (.032)
Oregon	.227* (.088)	.100 (.094)	.215* (.088)	.069 (.096)
Washington	.118 (.081)	.140 (.081)	.098 (.081)	.081 (.081)
Constant	-5.147*** (.133)	-5.149*** (.133)	-5.156*** (.134)	-5.133*** (.134)
<i>N</i>	138831	138831	138831	138831

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**TABLE 3: Logistic Regression Estimates of Election Laws on Individual Turnout, 2012 CPS**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model3	Model 4
<i>Early Voting Laws</i>				
No-excuse Absentee	.054* (.028)	.045 (.028)		
Permanent Absentee			.012 (.024)	.031 (.025)
EDR &/or SDR	.133*** (.026)	.131*** (.027)	.132*** (.027)	.124*** (.027)
Early in-Person Voting	-.037 (.027)	-.051 (.028)	-.010 (.023)	-.034 (.024)
EIP Weekend		.059* (.024)		.073** (.024)
<i>Other Election Laws</i>				
28+ Day Registration Close	-.021 (.023)	-.036 (.024)	-.039 (.022)	-.052* (.023)
Strict Photo ID	-.096* (.038)	-.098** (.038)	-.106** (.038)	-.106** (.038)
<i>Demographics</i>				
African- American	.939*** (.037)	.939*** (.037)	.941*** (.037)	.940*** (.037)
Hispanic	-.041 (.036)	-.030 (.036)	-.042 (.036)	-.031 (.036)
Education	.673*** (.012)	.674*** (.012)	.674*** (.012)	.674*** (.012)
Income	.065*** (.003)	.065*** (.003)	.065*** (.003)	.065*** (.003)
Age	.027*** (.001)	.027*** (.001)	.027*** (.001)	.027*** (.001)
Female	.196*** (.020)	.196*** (.020)	.196*** (.020)	.196*** (.020)
Married	.404*** (.022)	.404*** (.022)	.403*** (.022)	.403*** (.022)
Self-Reported Vote	.159*** (.021)	.159*** (.021)	.159*** (.021)	.159*** (.021)
Residence 1 Year	.580*** (.029)	.578*** (.029)	.580*** (.029)	.578*** (.029)
Naturalized Citizen	-.752*** (.040)	-.752*** (.040)	-.748*** (.040)	-.749*** (.040)

*State Electoral Factors*

Campaign Competitiveness	.021*** (.001)	.021*** (.001)	.022*** (.001)	.021*** (.001)
South	-.093*** (.028)	-.104*** (.028)	-.110*** (.026)	-.113*** (.026)
Oregon	.087 (.080)	.095 (.080)	.101 (.081)	.091 (.081)
Washington	.215** (.074)	.232** (.075)	.248*** (.073)	.246*** (.073)
Constant	-6.311*** (.124)	-6.268*** (.125)	-6.366*** (.124)	-6.307*** (.124)
<i>N</i>	150342	150342	150342	150342

*Note:* Cell entries are logit coefficients with robust standard errors clustered by state in parentheses.

\*p < .10, \*\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .01, two-tailed test.

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