

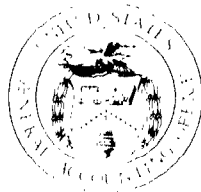
GAO

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee  
on Elections, Committee on House  
Administration, House of  
Representatives

November 1990

# VOTING

## Some Procedural Changes and Informational Activities Could Increase Turnout



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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

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Program Evaluation and  
Methodology Division

B-240953

November 2, 1990

The Honorable Al Swift  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Elections  
Committee on House Administration  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your letter of April 14, 1989, we are submitting this report entitled Voting: Some Procedural Changes and Informational Activities Could Increase Turnout. The study examines why voter turnout in the United States is low compared to other democracies, why U.S. voter turnout has been declining in virtually every election since 1960, and what election procedures and informational activities are associated with higher levels of voter participation. The report raises several matters for consideration by the Congress as it considers legislation in this area.

We are sending copies to interested congressional committees, and we will make copies available to others upon request.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please call me at (202) 275-1854 or Dr. Robert L. York, Acting Director for Program Evaluation in Human Services Areas, at (202) 275-5885. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,

Eleanor Chelimsky  
Assistant Comptroller General

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# Executive Summary

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## Purpose

Compared to an average turnout of 80 percent in other democracies, voter turnout in the United States is low and has been declining continuously since 1960. In the 1988 presidential election, only 50 percent of those old enough to vote participated, down from 63 percent in 1960. Turnout is even lower in congressional elections—only 36 percent voted in 1986, for example.

In view of this situation, the Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration asked GAO to provide information on how participation in federal elections could be increased. Specifically, the Subcommittee requested that GAO identify the practices of other democracies that encourage voter participation. Additionally, the Subcommittee requested that GAO provide information on state and local efforts to increase voter turnout and, if feasible, to identify particularly successful policies and practices that could be the basis for federal action. At the request of the Subcommittee, we did not fully evaluate registration systems.

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## Background

Some observers have attributed the low and declining turnout to increased levels of political alienation among U.S. citizens. Others have noted that electoral policies and practices make voting difficult in this country compared to other democracies. Still others believe that, rather than a consequence of political alienation or procedural barriers, low turnout is a reflection of the low level of organized political conflict in the United States compared to other countries.

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## Results in Brief

From a review of the relevant research, GAO concluded that the comparatively low American voter turnout is not the consequence of political alienation. Rather, the evidence points to international differences in the characteristics of political parties and election procedures. Political parties in the United States are less closely aligned with demographic groups than are parties in many other democracies, which may reduce the significance to voters of election outcomes. Moreover, election procedures in the United States make voting cumbersome.

Investigating the interstate differences in voter turnout, GAO found that three election procedures are associated with higher levels of voter turnout: (1) registration deadlines that fall on or close to election day, (2) toll-free phone numbers that allow a voter to request an absentee ballot, and (3) the practice of voting by mail rather than in polling places.

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Contrary to popular belief, voter information campaigns generally are not associated with higher turnout. One notable exception is that states that mail information about propositions and referendums to individual households have higher turnout than states that do not provide this service.

Finally, some evidence suggests that two actions could slow the continuing decline in voter turnout: (1) providing toll-free phone numbers that allow the voter to find out if he or she is about to be purged from the registration rolls, and (2) staging mock elections in high schools using actual voting equipment and materials.

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## GAO's Analysis

With respect to electoral procedures, the United States differs from other democracies in several ways. In some countries, voting is mandatory. This seems to increase turnout even though specific penalties are rarely administered. More importantly, almost two thirds of all democracies employ a system of automatic voter registration, whereas in the United States the individual voter must take the initiative to register prior to a deadline that could be as long as 50 days in advance of the election day.

GAO found that registration deadlines are strongly associated with voter turnout. Based on a statistical analysis, GAO estimated that adopting election-day registration could increase turnout in some states from 1 percent to more than 12 percent in the state with the earliest registration deadline. As many as 37 states might increase their turnout 5 or more percent by adopting election-day registration. Further, in states having registration deadlines well in advance of the election, information campaigns designed to educate voters about registration deadlines, registration drives, or places and hours of registration were not associated with higher turnout. More extensive information campaigns, therefore, are not a substitute for registration reform. GAO found that the availability of toll-free telephone numbers was associated with higher turnout, or with a smaller turnout decline since 1980. Specifically, the availability of toll-free telephone numbers that a voter could use to request an absentee ballot was positively associated with turnout, and the availability of toll-free phone numbers through which the voter could learn about the intent to purge him or her from the registration rolls was related to a smaller decline in turnout from 1980 to 1988.

However, the procedural change that could have the most dramatic effect on turnout is the all-mail election in which ballots are mailed to

voters and returned by them without the need to go to the polling place on election day. GAO analyzed voting data from selected local elections that used this procedure and found that all-mail voting was associated with a participation rate 20 to 40 percent higher than that for conventional voting. Moreover, GAO found that available evidence indicates high public support for the convenience of mail voting and that public officials reported encountering far fewer hardships in staging all-mail elections.

A major concern with such elections, however, is that they could lead to fraud or abuse. But since conventional elections have not always been free of such problems, the important question is whether they are more likely to be encountered in all-mail elections than in conventional elections. The one study to date that has examined this issue found little evidence of fraud or abuse in all-mail elections. However, that study was confined to local, uncontested elections, usually on bond issues or referendums. It is not clear what level of fraud or abuse would exist if contested state and national elections were conducted by all-mail balloting.

GAO's findings suggest that voter information activities, in general, do not increase voter turnout. States that provided more voter information did not have higher turnouts. Rather, low-turnout states were more likely to mount extensive campaigns to inform the voter about registration and voting procedures and, to a lesser extent, election issues. GAO did find some exceptions to this pattern, however. First, states that mailed information about propositions and referendums to individual households had higher turnouts than did states that did not provide this service. Second, states that staged mock elections in high schools using actual voting equipment had a substantially lower decline in voter turnout between 1980 and 1988 than did other states.

Finally, GAO examined the activities of local public and private outreach organizations that attempt to increase turnout by providing information on registration and voting procedures, and by making it more convenient to register and vote. The directors of the organizations GAO surveyed reported that two sets of activities were especially effective in increasing turnout: (1) sending deputy registrars into public places such as shopping malls and places of employment (rather than requiring the voter to travel to an official building to register), and (2) organizing voter information campaigns that stress the "how to" of registering and voting.

While GAO identified the opinions of responding public officials and outreach organization directors on what they believed to be effective local practices to increase voter turnout, a major finding is that little empirical support for these beliefs exists. The outreach organizations GAO surveyed did not conduct evaluations that would enable them to substantiate their views. Moreover, the beliefs reported by officials about the effects of voter information activities seem to be contradicted by GAO findings that voter information campaigns generally are not associated with higher levels of voter turnout.

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## Matters for Congressional Consideration

Based on the findings included in this report, the Congress may wish to consider making voter registration more convenient, such as by adopting a system of automatic registration. In addition, the Congress may wish to explore the feasibility of encouraging efforts to increase participation through the following:

- assessing the appropriateness of all-mail balloting for federal elections, paying particular attention to the differences between all-mail-ballot elections and conventional polling-place elections in turnout, cost, fraud, abuse, and public satisfaction;
- using toll free phone numbers in each state and the District of Columbia by which the voter could (1) request that an official absentee or mail ballot be sent to his or her legal residence, and (2) obtain registration information, including the intent to purge the voter from the registration rolls;
- mailing pamphlets explaining propositions and referendums to households of registered voters; and finally,
- placing polling booths and other materials in high school civics or other appropriate classes so that students could conduct mock elections using authentic equipment and materials.

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# Introduction

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Voting in public elections is the “lowest common denominator” of political participation in a modern democracy; it requires relatively little effort on the part of the voter. At the same time, the level of participation in elections is considered by some to be an indication of the fundamental well-being of a political system. Universal participation may not be an appropriate goal in the context of free elections, yet low or declining turnout weakens the definitiveness of election outcomes and may signify widespread disaffection with political institutions.

In comparison to an average turnout of 80 percent in other democracies, the voter turnout in the United States is low. In 1988, only 50 percent of Americans old enough to vote actually cast a ballot in the presidential election. In 1986, the last off-year federal election, turnout was only 36 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Not only is U.S. voter participation low in comparison to other countries, there has been a continuous decline in turnout since 1960. Turnout has been declining for whites as well as blacks and Hispanics, for the college-educated as well as those with less schooling, and for middle-aged voters as well as the young. While the decline in turnout is shared among all social categories, the historical differences in turnout among groups remain large. Whites are more likely to vote than are blacks or Hispanics, and older and more educated citizens are more likely to vote than are their younger and less educated counterparts. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989)

While some studies have observed weakening attitudinal support for voter participation in recent years, current research calls upon institutional and administrative factors to increase voter turnout. Improving access to the ballot, particularly by changing voter registration laws, is widely cited as the most important area of effective reform for enhancing turnout.

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<sup>1</sup>We use “turnout” to mean the percentage of the voting age public that votes, and not the percentage of registered voters who vote. States differ in registration laws, and the laws of many states have changed over the years. Moreover, the states vary considerably in the time of year registration rolls are tallied and when and how frequently the rolls are purged. Comparing the turnout of registered voters using aggregate data is less accurate than comparing turnout of the voting age public. Conversely, using the voting age population as the basis for computing turnout also introduces potential biases because the voting age population includes individuals ineligible to vote, such as non-citizens and institutionalized persons. To the extent states vary on the proportion of their populations ineligible to vote for such reasons, state-to-state comparisons are biased. Also, if the proportion of the population ineligible to vote increases over time, comparisons of turnout over time are misleading. For further discussion of this issue, see Smolka (1987).

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In this environment of concern for the continuing decline in turnout and limited knowledge of effective methods for improving voter participation, observers have noted the need for research addressing the opportunity to vote and the role played by voter information and motivation. In recent reviews of voter participation, for example, both the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate (an independent research and advocacy group) and the National Association of Secretaries of State have called for consideration of federal action to support voter outreach efforts and research on promising election practices at the state and local levels.

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## Legislative Context

Efforts to enact legislation to enhance access to voting have been common in the U.S. Congress in recent years. However, with the exception of H.R. 2190, the National Voter Registration Act of 1989, these proposals have not succeeded in advancing beyond the committee stage. Resistance to proposals for reform in this area appears to be broad and based to some extent on concerns for maintaining the security of elections from fraud or abuse, and possibly because there has been little public pressure for registration reform. Resistance has also been noted in the case of elected officials who may seek to perpetuate the administrative ground rules by which they were elected.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1989 was passed by the House of Representatives, but legislation was not passed by the Senate. Under the bill's provisions, states that require voter registration would be under federal obligation to include a voter registration section in the standard application form for a motor vehicle driver's license, as well as to provide opportunities for mail and in-person registration. No recent or currently proposed federal legislation addresses the need for improvement of voter information or outreach practices.

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## Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The House Subcommittee on Elections requested that we gather and integrate information on voter turnout that could assist in possible congressional actions to enhance participation in federal elections. Our approach involved first assessing international, state, and local (district, county, multicounty) differences in voter turnout and then, to the extent possible, determining the electoral procedures, voter information campaigns, and get-out-the-vote activities that are associated with these turnout differences.

Our study revolves around eight questions with focuses ranging from international, to national, to state, to local.

**International:**

1. Why do other democracies have considerably higher voter turnout than the United States?
2. What, if any, lessons can be learned from other democracies that could be applied to our own country to increase voter turnout?

**National:**

3. Why has there been a consistent decline in voter turnout in the United States since the 1960's?

**State:**

4. Do state differences in laws concerning residency requirements, registration deadlines, and the use of absentee balloting facilitate or impede voting?
5. Does the experience to date of those states that now permit mail-ballot elections suggest that, compared with conventional elections, all-mail-ballot elections increase turnout and decrease election costs?
6. Do states with extensive voter information campaigns have higher turnout?

**Local:**

7. What do local outreach organizations do to increase voter turnout?
8. Which, if any, of the activities conducted by local outreach organizations are especially effective in increasing voter turnout?

The existing research pertinent to these questions is uneven. There are a number of studies that address the reasons for the international differences in turnout. State variations in U.S. turnout, along with the causes of the decline in U.S. turnout since 1960, also have been the focus of research. However, there are virtually no studies that address the effects of voter information campaigns, or the efforts of local outreach organizations, on voter turnout.

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In order to answer the questions posed in this report, it was necessary to use multiple sources of information. We conducted two literature reviews, two surveys, and a secondary analysis of county-level voting records. In the literature reviews, we examined (1) all existing research on international comparisons in voter turnout and (2) the decline in U.S. voter participation. We report the findings of studies that addressed the same questions as those posed in our study.

In the first survey, we queried the secretary of state or chief election officer in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to assess the differences in electoral procedures, voter information campaigns, and get-out-the-vote activities for the 1988 presidential election. We achieved a 100-percent rate of response. These data were then merged with voter turnout data collected by the Congressional Research Service in order to determine the effectiveness of these policies and practices.

The second survey addressed the promising practices of local outreach organizations. We asked the respondents to our first survey to list local outreach organizations in their states that were engaged in potentially successful activities to increase voter turnout. We then surveyed 82 nominated organizations about their operations. We acquired completed questionnaires from 64 local outreach organizations, thus achieving a response rate of 78 percent.

Finally, we estimated the turnout and election cost differences of all-mail-ballot elections compared to conventional polling-place elections. We acquired records from a number of counties in Oregon that allow reasonable comparisons of these voting methods.

We performed our work between April 1989 and May 1990. We did not obtain formal agency comments on this report because we studied state and local rather than federal programs. Our review was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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## **Study Strengths and Limitations**

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### **Strengths**

First, because we obtained data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, our study had none of the sampling problems that can affect

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research of this type. Moreover, the number of cases was sufficiently large to allow multivariate statistical procedures that led to stronger conclusions.

Second, the state and local surveys we conducted answered important questions concerning election procedures, voter information campaigns, and get-out-the-vote activities, some of which had not been previously addressed. This included an assessment of both the main effects and possible interaction effects of these procedures and activities on voter turnout. For example, we addressed the possibility that voter information campaigns both increase voter turnout and ameliorate the turnout effects of other election procedures.

Finally, our study avoided certain significant methodological problems of the past in comparing the turnout and election costs of all-mail elections with those of polling-place elections. Earlier efforts had suffered from comparability problems as a result of comparing all-mail with polling-place elections in different jurisdictions or different elections.

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## Limitations

An important limitation of our study is one that applies to virtually all research that attempts to understand the causes of high and low voter turnout. While our design allowed us to identify whether policies and practices were associated with high voter turnout at the state level, we could not be absolutely sure that such policies or practices caused the higher turnout. There might have been other causal factors that were not identified or not included in the study.

A second limitation involved the problem of measuring the effects of local outreach activities. To determine whether the efforts of an outreach organization actually caused potential voters to vote would require a comparison of the voting behavior of potential voters contacted by the organization with the voting behavior of those not contacted by the organization. However, outreach organizations typically do not keep records of the potential voters they contact. In addition, it is difficult to measure the extent to which organizations actually engage in outreach activities.

In order to get some idea of the promising practices of these outreach organizations, we solicited the opinions of the directors or heads of the local outreach organizations about what they believe are effective activities, and why they think these activities are effective. The limitation of



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this method, of course, is that directors of outreach organizations may not make accurate estimates of effectiveness.

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## **Outline of This Report**

Questions 1, 2, and 3—the “international” and “national” questions—are addressed in chapter 2. Questions 4 and 5, which concern the effects of election procedures, are discussed in chapter 3. Question 6 regarding the effect of voter information campaigns is dealt with in chapter 4. Finally, questions 7 and 8, which examine the possible effects of local outreach organizations, are discussed in chapter 5.

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# American Voter Turnout: Low and Declining

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Americans are less likely to vote compared to citizens of other democracies. This finding is compelling in its own right, but it is even more so when we consider there also has been a continuous decline in American voter turnout since the 1960's.

In this chapter, we address three questions concerning the low and declining turnout: (1) Why do other democracies have considerably higher voter turnout than the United States? (2) What, if any, lessons can be learned from other countries that could be applied to our own country to increase voter turnout? (3) Why has there been a consistent decline in voter turnout in the United States since the 1960's?

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## International Comparisons

Of 21 industrialized democracies included in a recent study, the United States ranked 20th in voter turnout. Comparing national elections, table 2.1 shows that Italy had the highest turnout (94.0 percent of the voting age population), followed by Austria (89.3 percent) and Belgium (88.7 percent). Voter turnout in the United States in 1980 was 52.6 percent, about 40 percentage points lower than the highest voting nations and about 10 percentage points lower than Ireland, the nation with the third lowest turnout (62.3 percent). Only the Swiss had a lower turnout, with 39.4 percent of the voting age population actually voting.

**Table 2.1: Rank Order of 21 Democracies by Voter Turnout<sup>a</sup>**

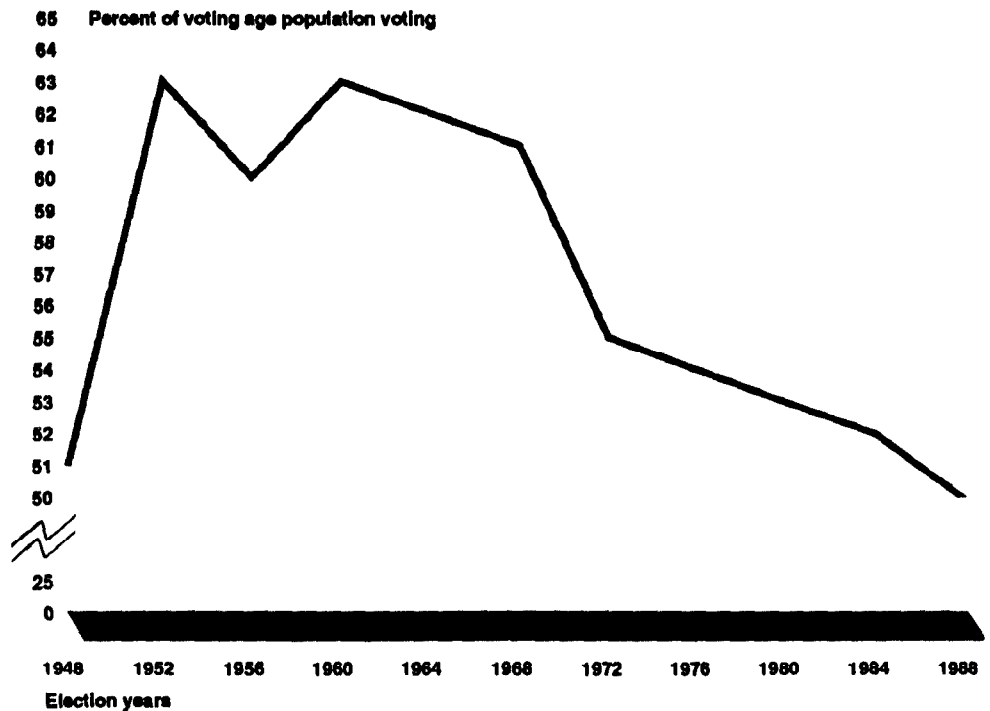
Country	Rank	Turnout
Italy	1	94.0%
Austria	2	89.3
Belgium	3	88.7
Sweden	4	86.8
Portugal	5	85.9
Greece	6	84.9
Netherlands	7	84.7
Australia	8	83.1
Denmark	9	82.1
Norway	10	81.8
West Germany	11	81.1
New Zealand	12	78.5
France	13	78.0
United Kingdom	14	76.0
Japan	15	74.4
Spain	16	73.0
Canada	17	67.4
Finland	18	63.0
Ireland	19	62.3
United States	20	52.6
Switzerland	21	39.4

<sup>a</sup>Based on the most recently published compilation, covering elections up to 1981.

Source: D. Glass, P. Squire, and R. Wolfinger, "Voter Turnout: An International Comparison," *Public Opinion*, 6 (Dec.-Jan. 1984), p. 50.

Not only is voter turnout in the United States lower than in many other democracies, it has been declining. Figure 2.1 shows that the turnout in presidential elections jumped from 51 percent in 1948 to 63 percent in 1952, before dipping to 60 percent in 1956. In 1960, the turnout returned to 63 percent, but in 1964 American voter turnout began a steady downward trend. The decline was only one or two percent per election until 1968, and then from 1968 to 1972 turnout declined from 61 to 55 percent.

Figure 2.1: U. S. Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections, 1948-88.



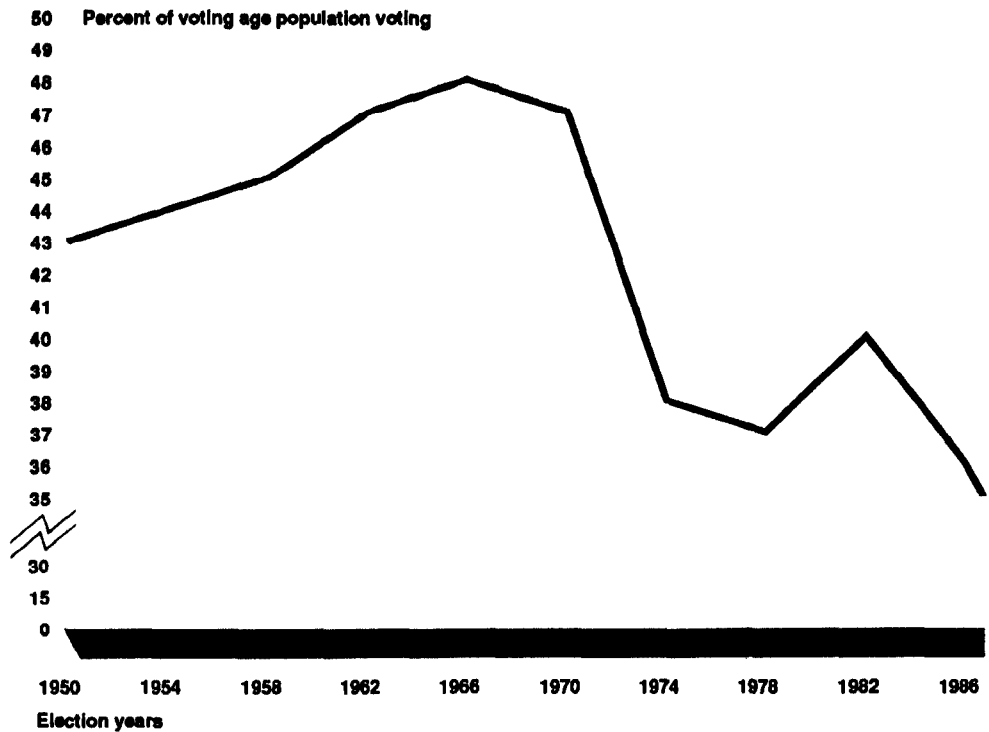
It is important to note that some of the decline from 1968 to 1972 reflects the enfranchisement of 18 to 20-year-olds. 1972 was the first presidential election in which this age group could vote. Research consistently indicates that young people are substantially less likely to vote than are older citizens. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989) It should be noted, however, that since virtually all industrialized democracies enfranchise 18 to 20-year-olds, allowing young people to vote cannot be cited as one of the reasons why the United States has comparatively lower voter turnout.

From 1972 to 1988, the decline continued, although at a much slower pace. In 1972, 55 percent of the voting age public voted; by 1988, the turnout had dropped to 50 percent.

While turnout for congressional elections in non-presidential (midterm) election years has always been lower than turnout in presidential years, it has followed the same downward trend. Figure 2.2 shows that in 1950 the turnout was 43 percent, that it rose to 48 percent in 1966, dropped

sharply to 37 percent in 1978, increased to 40 percent in 1982, and then declined gradually to 36 percent in 1986.

Figure 2.2: U. S. Voter Turnout in Non-Presidential Elections, 1950-86.



There are two issues that make these comparative trends noteworthy. First, with the exception of Switzerland, most industrialized countries have not experienced a decline in turnout comparable to that which has occurred in the United States. (Mackie and Rose, 1982)

Second, the decline in voter turnout since 1960 has occurred despite several trends that should logically have increased participation. There has been a general rise in education since 1960, which should have augmented turnout since citizens with higher levels of education are more likely to vote. Additionally, almost all states have enacted less restrictive registration procedures to increase the convenience of registering. These trends, however, are counterbalanced to some degree by the enfranchisement of 18 to 20-year-olds. Young people are substantially less likely to vote than are older citizens.

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## Why Is U.S. Turnout So Low?

Two kinds of explanation have been offered to account for the relatively low turnout in U.S. elections: one focuses on the attitudes of the electorate, while the other addresses the institutional differences between the United States and other democratic countries. In this section, we examine the evidence for each of these types of explanation.

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### Attitudes of the Electorate

A popular explanation of our low and still declining voter turnout is that, unlike citizens of other democracies, Americans have become alienated from the political process. This argument assumes that Americans increasingly believe that politicians cannot be trusted and that the government is unresponsive, ineffectual, or even corrupt. Sometimes the alienation is attributed to historical events that have occurred since the mid-1960's, such as the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

While this is a plausible explanation, it is not supported by cross-national research on voting-related attitudes. Interest in politics, attention to political affairs in the media, and individual political efficacy are consistently higher in the United States than in the European democracies. (Powell, 1986; Wolfinger et al., 1985) Moreover, U.S. citizens are more likely than citizens of European democracies to engage in political activity such as working with others in their communities to solve problems, attending political meetings or rallies, and working in behalf of a party or candidate. (Wolfinger et al., 1985)

While only 34 percent of Americans trust their government to do the right thing all or most of the time—compared to 76 percent of the Swiss and 55 percent of Austrians—higher levels of trust in government do not seem to be associated with higher voter turnout. For example, only 14 percent of the Italians trust their government, but they have the highest voter turnout among the industrialized democracies. (Wolfinger et al., 1985)

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### Political Institutions

A comparison of the voting-related attitudes of citizens of the United States with the attitudes of citizens from other countries reveals that the attitudes of Americans should facilitate voting. As an observer has noted, if Americans held the same political attitudes as those of other industrialized democracies, the turnout in the United States would be even lower than it currently is. (Powell, 1986)

Rather than attitudinal factors such as political alienation or trust in government, the evidence points instead to institutional factors as

explanation for the turnout differences between the United States and other democracies. (Crewe, 1981; Glass et al., 1984; Jackman, 1987; Powell, 1980, 1986) In what may be the most rigorous empirical study attempting to explain the differences in voter turnout between the United States and other industrialized democracies, G. Bingham Powell (1980) found that four variables explained nearly 75 percent of the variance.

### Alignment of Political Parties

National parties in some European countries are intimately linked with specific economic, religious, and other demographic categories in contrast to more diffuse, cross-cutting linkages in the United States. When there is a close linkage between political parties and demographic groupings, political parties can develop platforms that represent the specific interests of groups. As part of a voting bloc, the individual voter can have an effect on the election outcomes, and the outcomes of the election may make an identifiable difference in the life of the individual voter. In short, it is likely that the individual will vote when voting is perceived to make a difference.

### Party Competition

It has been demonstrated that when the election outcome is a foregone conclusion, turnout will be smaller than when the election is hotly contested. (Aldrich, 1976; Jackman, 1987) Party competition may be lessened when a single party dominates the electoral process, or when there is collusion among the parties to guarantee election outcomes.

Of course, competition between parties is likely to be greater when the parties themselves are linked with distinct economic, religious, or other groupings. However, party competition may vary even among nations with these characteristics. Lack of party competition has been offered as the reason why Switzerland has extremely low voter turnout even though its political parties are strongly linked to religious groupings.

### Penalties for Not Voting

The imposition of relatively small fines or other penalties can have a major impact on voter turnout. Austria, Belgium, and Venezuela impose fines or other penalties for failure to vote. The Netherlands had such penalties but abandoned them in 1971. (Powell, 1980)

It has been noted that the impact of these laws seems to be moral suasion rather than actual sanctions, since there are very few convictions for failure to vote. (Glass et al., 1984) In Italy, the nonvoter may have his name posted outside the town hall, and his identification papers may be stamped: "DID NOT VOTE FOR FIVE YEARS." (Seton-Watson, 1983) It is widely assumed that Italian nonvoters are subject to discrimination

in employment and other benefits. (Zariski, 1972) Not surprisingly, Italy has the highest voter turnout among the industrialized democracies, even though it ranks very low in political satisfaction and other attitudinal variables that facilitate voting.

The average voter turnout is about 10 percent higher in countries with penalties for not voting. The causal relationship between penalties and voting is fairly well established. For example, when two nations changed their laws on penalties for failure to vote, their turnout changed accordingly. In 1960, Costa Rica introduced penalties for failure to vote, and voter turnout subsequently increased by 15 percent. In 1971, the Netherlands eliminated all penalties for not voting, and participation then fell by 16 percent. (Powell, 1980)

### Automatic Registration

In about two thirds of the thirty democracies we studied, the government assumes responsibility for voter registration by continually updating lists of registered citizens from census and other official records, or by periodically canvassing the electorate. In Australia and New Zealand, the citizens must take the initiative; however, they are legally required to do so and are subject to fines or other penalties for failing to register to vote. Only the United States, France, and post-1962 Jamaica rely completely on the initiative and sense of civic duty of their citizens to take themselves through the steps to become legally registered voters. (Powell, 1980)

Requiring the individual to assume responsibility for registration is believed to be a major cause of the low rate of voter turnout in the United States. (Glass et al., 1984; Powell, 1980) One reason why the individual often shuns the responsibility is that the process of registering may be more demanding than voting itself. Registering to vote may require a longer journey, at a less convenient hour, to complete a more complicated procedure—all at a time when interest in the election has not reached its peak. (Rosenstone and Wolfinger, 1978) Consequently, nations with automatic registration generally have higher voter turnout than do nations in which the burden of responsibility is on the individual.



## What Do the Higher Voter Turnouts in Other Democracies Mean for the United States?

What lessons do we learn from comparing voter turnout in the United States with the turnouts in other democracies? The short answer is that the causes of the low voter turnout in the United States appear to be general institutional factors and specific election procedures that are unlikely to change. It is unlikely that American political parties that cross-cut multiple demographic groupings will give way to the European model in which political parties are strongly aligned with specific economic, religious, or other groupings. Nor is it likely that the platforms of the major political parties will become as differentiated as those in countries with high voter turnout. Moreover, mandatory voting would probably not garner the necessary support, or even a sufficient level of tolerance, to allow implementation of such a policy in the United States.

The lesson to be drawn from international comparisons that seems most relevant is that automatic voter registration, which is common in other democracies, might result in higher voter turnout in the United States (other factors being equal). Based on his research on international differences in voter turnout, Powell (1986) concludes that American turnout is “advantaged” about 5 percent by political attitudes, disadvantaged 13 percent by party system and other institutional factors, and disadvantaged 14 percent merely by the absence of automatic voter registration.

Some states have adopted “motor-voter” registration systems that allow citizens to register to vote at the time they acquire or renew a driver’s license. This type of system has some of the characteristics of an automatic voter registration system. Crocker (1990) reports that states with motor-voter systems generally had higher turnout in federal elections during 1976-88 than did states without such systems. Moreover, during 1972-88, states adopting motor-voter systems had increased turnout in non-presidential federal elections (in contrast to an overall national decline) and a turnout decline in presidential elections that was smaller than the overall national decline in the same years.

However, even if automatic voter registration could help increase voter turnout, this does not explain why voter turnout has declined in the United States over the last three decades, or why the turnout of some states remains as high as the 1960 average while the turnout in other states is only about half this level. To increase our understanding of voter turnout in the United States, we need to grasp why turnout has declined and why different states have different levels of turnout.

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## Electoral Participation in the United States

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### What Explains the Decline in American Voter Turnout?

A growing body of research seeks to explain why American voter turnout has declined over the last three decades. The findings are especially clear about the factors that cannot explain the decline. There is no evidence of a significant decline in civic duty, personal political efficacy, or interest in politics. (Miller, 1980) There has been a sharp decline in political trust; however, as noted earlier, feelings of political trust are not related to electoral participation. (Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1980; Wolfinger et al., 1985)

There are two attitudinal trends that do account for at least some of the decline in voter turnout: (1) the weakening of party identification and (2) a decreased sense of governmental responsiveness and efficacy.<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that between two thirds and seven tenths of the decline in presidential-election turnout between 1960 and 1980 resulted from the combined impact of these two trends. (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982)

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### Interstate Differences in Turnout

While there has been a general decline in voter turnout, it is important to note that some states have significantly higher levels of turnout than other states. For example, with 66.3 percent of its citizens of voting age actually voting, Minnesota led the nation in turnout for the 1988 election. Conversely, Georgia lagged behind all other states with a turnout of 38.8 percent. This suggests that, aside from the attitudinal trends that have led to a decline in voter turnout, state differences in election procedures, voter information campaigns, and get-out-the-vote activities may have had a substantial effect on voter turnout.

Table 2.2 indicates that the states with the highest turnout in 1988 (in addition to Minnesota) were likely to be those in the north and upper midwest, such as Montana (62.4 percent), Wisconsin (61.0 percent), North Dakota (61.5 percent), and South Dakota (61.5 percent). New England can claim two high turnout states: Maine (62.2 percent) and Vermont (59.7). The lowest turnout states were found in the southeast,

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<sup>1</sup> While a lowered sense of governmental responsiveness and efficacy is consistent with the political alienation hypothesis, the deep-seated feelings of dissatisfaction and despair that are central to the concept of political alienation have not been ascribed to, or identified among, Americans generally.

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which is probably a reflection of historic patterns of disenfranchisement in the region. In addition to Georgia, they were South Carolina (38.9 percent), the District of Columbia (39.4 percent), and North Carolina (43.4 percent).

**Chapter 2**  
**American Voter Turnout: Low and Declining**

**Table 2.2: Rank Order of 1988 Voter Turnout by the 50 States and the District of Columbia, Including the Change in Turnout Since 1968**

State	Rank	Turnout	Change since 1968
Minnesota	1	66.3%	-7.4%
Montana	2	62.4	-5.7
Maine	3	62.2	-4.2
Wisconsin	4	62.0	-4.5
North Dakota	5	61.5	-8.5
South Dakota	5	61.5	-11.8
Utah	7	60.0	-16.7
Vermont	8	59.7	-4.4
Iowa	9	59.3	-10.6
Oregon	10	58.6	-8.0
Idaho	11	58.3	-15.0
Massachusetts	12	58.1	-9.4
Connecticut	13	57.9	-10.9
Nebraska	14	56.7	-4.3
Colorado	15	55.1	-9.7
Ohio	15	55.1	-8.2
New Hampshire	17	54.8	-14.8
Missouri	17	54.8	-9.6
Washington	19	54.6	-11.4
Kansas	20	54.3	-10.6
Michigan	21	54.0	-11.7
Illinois	22	53.3	-16.0
Indiana	22	53.3	-16.5
Rhode Island	24	53.0	-14.2
New Jersey	25	52.2	-13.8
Alaska	26	51.7	1.7
Louisiana	27	51.3	-3.5
Delaware	28	50.8	-17.4
Wyoming	29	50.3	-16.6
Pennsylvania	30	50.1	-15.2
Mississippi	31	49.9	-3.4
Maryland	32	49.1	-5.3
Oklahoma	33	48.7	-12.5
Virginia	34	48.2	-1.9
Kentucky	34	48.2	-3.0
New York	36	48.1	-11.2
California	37	47.4	-14.2
New Mexico	37	47.4	-13.4
Arkansas	39	47.0	-7.2
West Virginia	40	46.7	-24.4

(continued)

<b>State</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Turnout</b>	<b>Change since 1968</b>
Alabama	41	45.8%	-6.9%
Arizona	42	45.0	-5.0
Nevada	43	44.9	-9.4
Florida	44	44.7	-8.3
Tennessee	45	44.7	-9.0
Texas	46	44.2	-4.4
North Carolina	47	43.4	-10.9
Hawaii	48	43.0	-10.8
District of Columbia	49	39.4	4.9
South Carolina	50	38.9	-7.8
Georgia	51	38.8	-5.1

Source: Royce Crocker, *Voter Registration and Turnout: 1948-1988* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Nov. 1988), pp. 20-21.

The changes in voter turnout since 1968 (when the precipitous decline began) are listed on the right side of table 2.2. They are as varied as are the differences in turnout between states. The states with the most dramatic decline in voter participation over the last two decades include West Virginia (-24.4 percent), Delaware (-17.4 percent), Utah (-16.7 percent), and Wyoming (-16.6 percent). Alaska (1.7 percent) and the District of Columbia (4.9 percent) have increased their voter turnout since 1968.

While the body of research attempting to explain the turnout differences between the states is less developed than are the efforts to explain the overall decline in turnout, the available literature suggests that the state variation in voter participation can be attributed to two main causes. (Kim, Petrocik, and Enokson, 1975; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980)

**Demographic Composition of the Electorate**

It is widely documented that those citizens who are less educated, lower income, racial minorities, under 35, or new residents are less likely to vote. (Kim, Petrocik, and Enokson, 1975; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989) While these are individual characteristics, states that have a higher concentration of citizens with these characteristics will, on average, have lower rates of voter turnout. It has been noted that the low proportion of voters among minorities and the poor may effectively dislodge these constituencies from the political process. (Pivin and Cloward, 1987)

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## Electoral Rules

There is now a substantial body of empirical research indicating that differences in electoral rules—such as residency requirements, registration deadlines, and the rules regarding absentee balloting—have a significant effect on voter turnout. (Kim, Petrocik, and Enokson, 1975; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980) In a widely cited study, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) found that four registration procedures influence turnout: (1) closing date of registration, (2) regularity of hours of registration offices, (3) the requirement that offices be open evenings or Saturdays, and (4) availability of registration for absentees. Of these factors, the closing date of registration was the most important influence on electoral turnout.

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## Summary of Research

This summary of research indicates that the comparatively low and declining American voter turnout is not the consequence of political alienation among citizens. Rather than identifying attitudinal causes, the evidence points to international differences in the characteristics of political parties and election procedures as the source of voter-turnout disparities among the western democracies.

Political parties in the United States are not intimately linked to the specific interests of groups and social categories, and consequently the outcomes of our elections are less likely than those in other countries to be perceived as making a difference in the lives of individual voters. With respect to election procedures, voting is mandatory in a few countries. This seems to increase turnout, even though specific penalties are rarely administered. Furthermore, Americans must take individual responsibility for registering to vote, while in most other democracies the government assumes responsibility for voter registration by continually updating lists of eligible citizens.

Not only is voter turnout low in the United States, it has been declining for the last three decades. However, there is no evidence that this downturn has been caused by a decline in civic duty, personal political efficacy, interest in politics, or political trust. Rather, the decline in voter turnout is associated with the weakening of party identification and a lowering of the voting public's sense of governmental responsiveness and efficacy.

Finally, research shows that turnout differences between the states result from two factors: (1) the demographic composition of the electorate (such as age and education), which is correlated with voting, and

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(2) electoral rules, with the closing date of registration being the most important electoral rule influencing turnout.

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**Matter for  
Congressional  
Consideration**

In the interest of increasing electoral participation, the Congress may want to consider making voter registration more convenient. One way to do this would be to adopt a system of more nearly automatic registration such as that advanced by H.R. 2190 or S. 874, the National Voter Registration Act of 1989.

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# Election Procedures and Voter Turnout

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Research on international and interstate differences in voter turnout indicates that election procedures have a significant effect on turnout. In this chapter, we address our fourth and fifth questions, which deal with specific election procedures that may affect turnout. The procedures we selected for our analysis are based on the findings of the studies discussed in chapter 2. Specifically, we examined whether state differences in election rules concerning residency requirements, registration deadlines, and absentee balloting are associated with differences in rates of turnout. Additionally, we investigated whether all-mail-ballot elections, used for local elections in some states, increase turnout and decrease election costs compared with those of conventional elections.

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## Election Procedures

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### Residency Requirements

One of the variables we considered was how long a voter had to reside in the state before being allowed to vote. Given the generally high rate of geographical mobility in this country, it could be that states that require longer times to establish residency are effectively restricting the number of people who are eligible to vote. States that so constrain eligibility could have significantly lower levels of voter turnout.

The fifty states and the District of Columbia employ different residency requirements to establish voter eligibility. Ten states have no residency requirement other than the requirement that the voter be a legal resident of the state on election day. Six states require that the voter reside in the state only one day, while 23 states require that the individual live in the state for at least 30 days to be eligible to vote. The state with the most stringent residency requirement is Arizona, where the individual must have resided for at least 50 days to be eligible to vote.

Statistically modeling the effect of residency requirements on voter turnout, we found that each day prior to election day that the citizen must reside in the state to be eligible to vote is associated with a reduction in turnout of only .03 percentage point. (See table II.1.) Thus, if the 23 states that required the potential voter to reside in the state for at least 30 days were to change this to 0 days, the model suggests that turnout in these states could increase a modest .9 percentage point. If Arizona were to drop its lengthy residency requirement from 50 to 0 days, turnout in this state could increase 1.5 percentage points.



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## Registration Deadlines

Research on voter turnout has consistently indicated that the number of days between the deadline for registration and the day of the election is strongly associated with interstate differences in voter turnout. (See chapter 2.) States with a registration deadline that is the same day as, or within a few days of, the election have substantially higher voter turnout than do those states with registration deadlines well in advance of the election.

The states range from 0 to 50 in the number of days prior to their elections that the last day to register falls on. North Dakota does not require registration and hence has no registration deadline. Three other states—Minnesota, Maine, and Wisconsin—allow the voter to register on election day. At the other end of the range, 21 states require that the voter register 30 or more days prior to the election. Once again, Arizona is the state with the most stringent registration rule, requiring citizens to register at least 50 days prior to the election.<sup>1</sup>

Our analysis replicates the findings of earlier studies concerning the effect of registration deadlines on voter turnout. States with registration deadlines well in advance of the election had substantially lower turnout rates in 1988. Using a multiple regression analysis to statistically model the effect of registration deadlines, we found that each additional day the registration deadline precedes the election is associated with a decrease in turnout of almost .3 percentage point. (See table I.1.)

Based on this analysis, it appears that, all other factors being equal, states with early registration deadlines could benefit more from registration reform than other states. Adopting election-day registration, Vermont could increase its turnout only about 1 percentage point, while Arizona could raise its turnout as much as 12.5 percentage points. As many as 37 states could increase their turnout by 5 or more percentage points. Table 3.1 lists the estimated effect of registration deadlines on 1988 voter turnout.

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<sup>1</sup> Arizona has changed its registration deadline from 50 to 29 days prior to the election, to be effective in 1991.

**Table 3.1: Estimated Effect of Registration Deadlines on 1988 Voter Turnout**

Number of days registration deadline precedes election day	Number of states with deadline	Estimated turnout effect
0	4	0%
4	1	-1.0
5	1	-1.2
10	6	-2.5
15	1	-3.8
17	1	-4.2
20	5	-5.0
21	2	-5.2
24	1	-6.0
28	2	-7.0
29	6	-7.2
30	18	-7.5
31	1	-7.8
32	1	-8.0
50	1	-12.5

## Absentee Balloting

All states allow the voter to vote by absentee ballot; however, the states differ in the circumstances under which they allow a voter to acquire and submit an absentee ballot. Our study explored the possibility that states with the most permissive criteria under which the voter can acquire and submit an absentee ballot have higher turnout than do those states with less permissive criteria. With the exception of absence from the state on election day, the states vary in the criteria that make a voter eligible to vote by absentee ballot. The following are our findings in brief concerning eligibility requirements:

- 96 percent of the states allow a voter to vote by absentee ballot if he or she is hospitalized, or if he or she is unable to travel to the polls because of illness or frailty;
- one third of the states allow a voter to use an absentee ballot if voting conflicts with his or her job, particularly when the job is related to the election;
- one fourth of the states allow the voter to use an absentee ballot if voting on election day conflicts with his or her religious tenets;
- about one fifth of the states allow the voter to use an absentee ballot if he or she will be absent from the precinct on election day;
- six states allow a citizen to vote by absentee ballot merely because of personal preference; and finally,
- three states allow any elderly person to cast a vote by absentee ballot.

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As shown in table 3.2, a correlation analysis of these practices indicates that none is associated with higher turnout. States that are more permissive in their eligibility criteria do not have higher turnout than do states with more restrictive criteria.

**Table 3.2: State Differences in Absentee Balloting Rules and Correlation With 1988 Turnout**

Absentee balloting rules	Number of states	Correlation with turnout <sup>a</sup>
<b>Circumstances under which a voter may vote by absentee ballot</b>		
1. Hospitalization	49	-.19
2. Inability to get to the polls because of illness or frailty	49	-.19
3. Absence from the state on election day	48	-.23
4. Institutionalization (other than hospitalization)	41	.08
5. Conflicts with election-related or other jobs	17	.00
6. Conflicts with religious tenets	13	.12
7. Absence from the precinct on election day	11	.06
8. Personal preference	6	-.15
9. In military	4	.07
10. Elderly	3	-.02
11. Long distance to polls	3	.03
<b>Methods of requesting an absentee ballot</b>		
1. Mail	50	-.03
2. In person	50	.15
3. Third-party	15	.28
4. Telephone	13	.20
<b>Method of casting absentee ballot</b>		
1. Mail	51 <sup>b</sup>	<sup>c</sup>
2. In person	50	.07
3. Other	16	.10
<b>Deadlines for requesting and returning absentee ballot</b>		
1. Deadline to request ballot <sup>d</sup>	51 <sup>b</sup>	-.21
2. Deadline to submit ballot <sup>e</sup>	51 <sup>b</sup>	-.11
<b>Absentee ballot must be notarized or witnessed</b>		
	27	-.04

<sup>a</sup>Pearson's zero-order correlation coefficient, a measure of the strength of association between two variables

<sup>b</sup>Number is 51 due to the inclusion of the District of Columbia.

<sup>c</sup>Correlation coefficient cannot be computed.

<sup>d</sup>Deadlines to receive an absentee ballot range from 0 to 90 days prior to the election, with a mean of 7.9 days.

<sup>e</sup>Deadlines to submit an absentee ballot range from 0 to 15 days prior to the election, with a mean of .7 days.

**Effects of Deadlines for Requesting and Submitting an Absentee Ballot**

We studied the effect on voter turnout of deadline dates for requesting and submitting an absentee ballot. The number of days prior to the election that a voter must request an absentee ballot ranges from 0 to 90

among the states, with an average of 7.9 days. There is a much shorter range prior to the election during which election officials need to receive an absentee ballot (0 to 15 days, averaging .7 days). However, the correlation coefficients listed in table 3.2 are modest. Entering the deadline dates for requesting and submitting an absentee ballot into the statistical model (table I.1) indicates that these variables are not associated with voter turnout.

### Methods of Requesting an Absentee Ballot

Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia allow their citizens to request absentee ballots by mail or in person. Slightly fewer than a third allow third-party requests, and about one quarter of the states allow citizens to request absentee ballots over the telephone. As indicated in table 3.2, both third-party and telephone methods of requesting an absentee ballot are modestly associated with higher turnout. In estimating their possible effects on turnout using the multiple regression equation (table II.1), we found that if states that did not allow third-party acquisition of absentee ballots were to do so, there might be a slight, 1-percentage point increase in turnout, and if states that currently do not allow absentee ballots to be requested over the telephone were to do so, their turnout could increase by about 2.5 percentage points.

### The Experience of All-Mail Balloting

In 1977, the Flood Control District in Monterey, California, conducted the first all-mail-ballot election. Usually, such special elections are characterized by an anemic turnout that seems hardly to justify the setting up of polling booths. However, in this election, the Monterey Flood Control District was itself flooded with approximately 16,500 mail-in ballots, an increase of more than 50 percent over any previous election held in that jurisdiction—at a savings of nearly \$10,000. (Sims and Kimberling, 1987)

Since the Monterey experience, jurisdictions in Oregon, New York, Kansas, Montana, Missouri, Washington, Nebraska, and elsewhere in California have experimented with all-mail balloting, mostly in uncontested local elections.<sup>2</sup> One researcher has estimated that more than 1,000 all-mail-ballot elections have been conducted. (Hamilton, 1988)

<sup>2</sup>Information provided by the Federal Election Commission National Clearinghouse on Election Administration.

In all-mail-ballot elections, an official ballot is mailed to each registered voter in the jurisdiction. Completed ballots may be returned to the election office either by mail or in person. The signature included with the return ballot is compared with the signature on the active voter registration rolls to determine the legitimacy of the ballot.

### Voter Turnout and Mail-In Ballots

Similar to the experience of Monterey, virtually all jurisdictions experimenting with mail-ballot elections have realized higher-than-expected turnout. Most reported substantial cost savings. Consider the following reported results:

- In 1986, Multnomah County, Oregon, conducted its school district elections by all-mail balloting. Compared to 1984, in which conventional election methods were used, there was at least an 80 percent increase in turnout, and in some districts the turnout was more than four to five times higher than that for conventionally conducted elections. In addition, the cost of the all-mail-ballot elections was 30 percent less than that for the conventionally conducted elections. (Hamilton, 1988)
- The elections in two small counties in Montana were held at the same time. The turnout in Lavina County, using conventional election procedures, was 39 percent. Sixteen miles away, Ryegate County held an all-mail-ballot election, and the voter turnout was nearly 70 percent. (Smolka, 1985)
- An experimental all-mail-ballot election in Rochester, New York, resulted in a turnout of 53 percent, which compared with the average turnout of 38 percent for conventionally conducted similar elections. In addition, the cost of the all-mail-ballot election was less than half that of the conventional election. (Spatola, 1985)
- In 1981, the City of San Diego completed the largest mail-ballot election ever held in the United States. In a special, one-issue referendum on a proposed convention center, 61 percent of the registered voters cast their ballots, exceeding the turnout for any previous special election and all but two municipal elections held within the previous twenty years. This was accomplished at a cost 40 percent less than that of a conventionally conducted election, even though the city paid for return postage and all (rather than a sample) of the signatures were verified against the affidavits of registration. (Abdelnour, 1981)
- Whether the voter is required to pay postage influences the governmental cost of the election but seems to have no effect on voter turnout. (Hamilton, 1988)

**Estimating Turnout and Computing the Costs of All-Mail-Ballot Elections**

While the evidence consistently suggests that all-mail-ballot elections increase voter turnout and decrease costs, it has been difficult to measure that increase in turnout and savings. Comparing jurisdictions using all-mail balloting with jurisdictions using conventional elections involves comparing not only the respective electoral processes but also jurisdictional differences that could influence turnout. Comparing all-mail-ballot elections in a single jurisdiction with previous or subsequent conventional elections does not control for the differences in election issues that could influence turnout. As the cost of the election is usually computed on a per-ballot-cast basis, the difficulty in finding comparable turnout data also may distort cost estimates.

We were able to identify cases that allow direct comparisons of all-mail and polling-place balloting for the same elections. In three school districts in Oregon that encompass two or more counties, one county used all-mail balloting to vote in a recent school district election, while the other counties used the conventional polling method. Table 3.3 shows the turnout and cost-per-ballot figures for these elections.

**Table 3.3: Comparison of All-Mail Balloting and Conventional Polling in Split-School-District Elections**

School district election	Turnout	Cost per ballot
<b>Greater Albany Public Schools<sup>a</sup></b>		
Linn County (all-mail balloting)	71%	\$ .58
Benton County (polls)	51	1.59
<b>Gresham Union High School District<sup>b</sup></b>		
Multnomah County (all-mail balloting)	62	.77
Clackamas County (polls)	22	1.38
<b>Portland Community College District<sup>c</sup></b>		
Yamhill County (all-mail balloting)	41	.72
Multnomah County (polls)	10	3.08
Clackamas County (polls)	8	1.06
Washington County (polls)	11	1.84

<sup>a</sup>November 5, 1985

<sup>b</sup>November 5, 1985

<sup>c</sup>August 13, 1985

Source: Barbara Roberts, Secretary of State, State of Oregon

In each case, the turnout among registered voters in the counties using mail ballots was 20 to 40 percentage points higher than in those counties using conventional polling procedures, and the cost of holding an all-mail-ballot election was at least 32 percent lower on a per ballot basis than the cost of holding a conventional election. While these examples

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do not allow us to generalize to elections at other times in other jurisdictions—particularly to presidential elections in which turnout is already high relative to other elections—they do suggest that both turnout gains and cost reductions could be realized through mail-ballot elections.

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## Public Satisfaction With Mail Balloting

One of the questions concerning mail balloting involves its acceptance by the voting public. Do Americans prefer mail balloting over conventional polling-place elections? The most convincing answer is a logical one: citizens are more, not less likely to vote in all-mail-ballot elections. (It seems unlikely that mail-ballot-election turnout would be higher if citizens overwhelmingly disapproved of mail balloting.)

Empirical evidence also indicates that citizens do approve of mail balloting. An all-mail-ballot election in twenty local jurisdictions in Montana conducted in 1985 included a survey to be included in the return envelope with the ballot. Of those who chose to complete the survey and send it with the ballot, 91 percent said they appreciated the convenience of mail balloting, 23 percent of the voters said they would not have voted if they had had to drive to the polls, 87 percent wanted to continue using mail balloting, and another 87 percent said that they were willing to provide their own stamp. (Smolka, 1985)

Similar responses were obtained from a 1988 mail-ballot election in two cities and one small county in Minnesota: 60 percent to 78 percent of those responding believed voting by mail was convenient, 21 percent to 29 percent said they would not have voted if they had had to go to the polls, and 48 percent to 81 percent said they wanted to continue all-mail balloting. It is important to note that the voters in Minnesota were required to have the ballot witnessed, yet this did not seem to pose a hardship: between 86 percent and 92 percent said they had no difficulty finding a witness. (Mansky, 1989)

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## Reaction of Election Officials to Mail Balloting

Although to date there has been no systematic study of what election officials feel about all-mail-ballot elections, in talking with a number of officials to obtain their records concerning turnout and costs, it became evident that those who have been involved in both conventional and all-mail-ballot elections strongly favor mail balloting. In addition to increasing voter turnout and reducing costs, all-mail-ballot elections eliminate many of the election-day management tasks normally associated with elections. The following is a list of tasks mentioned by election officials that are eliminated by all-mail-ballot elections:



- the securing of poll site leases,
- the setting up and tearing down of polling places,
- the coordination of delivery routes,
- the installation of directional signs for precinct routes,
- the transporting of polling equipment and registration rolls,
- the danger of losing polling equipment and registration rolls,
- the installation of handicap ramps,
- the recruitment of poll workers,
- the training of poll workers,
- the last minute replacement of poll workers, and
- the securing of W-2 forms for poll workers.

### Mail Balloting: Questions of Fraud and Abuse

One of the reasons why all-mail-ballot elections have been confined thus far mainly to local, uncontested elections is the fear that mail balloting exposes the electoral process to fraud and abuse. For our purposes, fraud will be defined as the casting of votes by ineligible voters. Abuse refers to the coercion or enticement of voters to vote in a particular way.

It should be made clear that the issue in regard to fraud and abuse is not whether they can or will exist. Rather, the issue is whether fraud and abuse are greater in mail balloting than in conventional elections. It is clear that conventional elections are not free from fraud and abuse. For example, in a graphic demonstration of the possibility of fraud in conventional polling, Barbara Nevins, a New York City WCBS-TV newscaster, described how she registered five different times under false addresses in 1988, and subsequently was admitted to all five polling places. (New York Times, April 23, 1988)

Still, there seem to be three areas where fraud and abuse in mail balloting are likely: (1) the forging of signatures, (2) the completing and mailing of ballots sent to the recently deceased, and (3) the paying or coercing of voters to fill out their ballots in a certain way.

The only study we could find that addresses these issues was conducted in 1984 by Robert Mason of the Survey Research Center at Oregon State University and involved a survey of 1,429 registered voters in seven counties in Oregon. (Mason, 1984) The findings indicate almost no fraud or abuse. Among the major conclusions of the study are the following:

- Almost half of the respondents said that someone else was present when they voted, and nearly one quarter of the sample indicated that they had discussed how they intended to vote.
- Of those who had voted in the presence of others, none said either that he or she had felt pressured to vote a certain way or that he or she would have voted differently if others had not been present.
- A mere 1.6 percent of the sample said someone else had marked their ballots. Usually the ballot was marked by the spouse because of the physical infirmity of the voter, and this was done only after a discussion about how the ballot was to be marked. In only one case had the individual opened the spouse's ballot envelope, marked the ballot, signed the spouse's name, and sealed the envelope, all without the knowledge of the spouse.
- Finally, there was no evidence of anyone marking and signing the ballot of someone who had died recently.

This evidence suggests that fraud and abuse were not a major factor in these all-mail-ballot elections. Still, it must be remembered that the study examined local, uncontested elections (usually bond issues or referendums) in a state where political fraud and corruption appear not to be widespread. If the potential for fraud and abuse is greater in all-mail than in conventionally conducted elections, it could be that, when the stakes are higher or in areas where political corruption is more prevalent, a test of all-mail-ballot elections might reveal a considerably lower level of integrity than that exhibited in conventional elections.

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## Constitutionality of Mail Balloting

On two occasions, mail-ballot elections have been challenged on the grounds that they violate the constitutional guarantees of a secret ballot, thereby increasing the risk of fraud. In *Peterson v. City of San Diego* (1983), the California superior court ruled the constitutional requirement that voting must be secret does not preclude voting by mail. (193 California Reporter, 1983) In *Sawyer v. Chapman* (1986), the Kansas Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the state's Mail Ballot Election Act. The court concluded that mail balloting may increase the risk of voter fraud and loss of secrecy but that the compelling state interest in increasing participation in the election process makes the risk worth taking. (Smolka, 1986)

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## Conclusion

The evidence shows that the length of the residency requirement for voter eligibility has little effect on turnout but that registration deadlines well in advance of the election are associated with lower turnout. A

statistical analysis suggests that adopting election-day registration could increase turnout from about 1 percentage point in some states to more than 12 percentage points in the state with the most stringent registration requirement. As many as 37 states could increase their turnouts by 5 or more percentage points by adopting election-day registration. The model suggests smaller increases are possible if the registration deadline is moved closer to election day, even if states are wary of moving to election-day registration because of the potential for fraud or error.

All states allow absentee balloting, but they differ in the circumstances under which they allow a voter to acquire and submit an absentee ballot. Both third-party and telephone methods of requesting an absentee ballot are associated with higher turnout. If states that did not allow third-party acquisition of absentee ballots were to do so, there might be a slight, 1-percentage point increase in turnout, and if states that currently do not allow absentee ballots to be requested over the telephone were to do so, turnout in those states could increase about 2.5 percentage points.

We found that all-mail-ballot elections in selected elections led to a 20 to 40-percentage point increase in turnout, with a cost that was at least 32 percent lower on a per ballot basis than the cost of conducting conventional polling-place elections. Moreover, the public generally appreciates the convenience of all-mail-ballot elections, as do election officials. In addition to the benefits of higher turnout and lower costs associated with mail balloting, election officials say that they encounter many more hardships associated with conventional elections than they do with all-mail-ballot elections.

While there is some concern about the potential for the corruption of the electoral system through the use of all-mail balloting, only one study has systematically examined this issue, and it found almost no evidence for fraud or abuse in uncontested local elections. It is not clear whether this finding would hold up for contested elections.

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## Matters for Congressional Consideration

In seeking to increase electoral participation, the Congress may want to explore the feasibility of using toll-free phone numbers by means of which the voter could (1) request that an official absentee or mail ballot be sent to his or her legal residence and (2) obtain registration information, including the intent to purge the voter from the registration rolls.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>All matters of consideration should include the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any possession or territory of the United States.

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Additionally, the Congress may want to consider the feasibility of a demonstration project to determine the appropriateness of all-mail balloting for federal elections. The project would determine differences in turnout and cost, the likelihood of fraud or abuse, and the comparative degree of public satisfaction with respect to mail-ballot elections versus conventional polling-place elections.

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# Voter Information and Turnout

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In this chapter, we answer our sixth question involving state efforts to improve turnout through voter information activities. Specifically, do states that mount more extensive voter information campaigns have higher turnout? Which, if any, specific voter information activities are associated with higher levels of turnout? Finally, do voter information campaigns eliminate the depressant effect of registration deadlines? (See chapter 3.)

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## Registration-Related Information

Except in North Dakota, one cannot vote in the United States if one is not registered. It seems logical, then, that information campaigns that attempt to increase the public's knowledge about when, where, and how to register to vote should increase the number of registered voters and, ultimately, the number of actual voters.

We therefore examined whether a wide range of registration-related informational activities carried out by the states was correlated with increased voter registration and turnout. Table 4.1 shows the zero-order correlation coefficients relating percent registered and percent voting to a number of voter information activities. (In this and all the other tables in chapter 4, the voter information activities have been dichotomized according to whether the state does or does not engage in the activity.)

Chapter 4  
Voter Information and Turnout

**Table 4.1: Registration-Related Voter Information Activities and Correlations With 1988 Percent Registered and 1988 Turnout**

Voter information activity	Number of states	Correlation with percent registered <sup>a</sup>	Correlation with turnout
<b>Newspaper</b>			
Publicize registration drives	32	-.40	-.30
Publicize registration deadlines	42	-.30	-.37
Publicize registration locations/hours	39	-.10	-.16
Notice of approval or denial	b	b	b
Notice of intent to purge	19	-.16	-.23
<b>Radio</b>			
Publicize registration drives	30	-.37	-.29
Publicize registration deadlines	33	-.32	-.27
Publicize registration locations/hours	23	-.24	-.30
Notice of approval or denial	b	b	b
Notice of intent to purge	4	-.14	-.38
<b>Television</b>			
Publicize registration drives	23	-.23	-.12
Publicize registration deadlines	31	-.30	-.30
Publicize registration locations/hours	19	-.17	-.20
Notice of approval or denial	b	b	b
Notice of intent to purge	b	b	b
<b>Direct mail</b>			
Publicize registration drives	8	-.10	-.05
Publicize registration deadlines	7	-.10	-.05
Publicize registration locations/hours	7	.00	-.02
Notice of approval or denial	33	-.43	-.29
Notice of intent to purge	29	-.18	-.22
<b>Toll-free phone number</b>			
Publicize registration drives	9	-.26	-.10
Publicize registration deadlines	12	-.33	-.10
Publicize registration locations/hours	8	-.30	-.24
Notice of approval or denial	10	.06	.10
Notice of intent to purge	3	-.16	-.14

<sup>a</sup>Percent registered is the percentage of the voting age population registered to vote in the 1988 presidential election.

<sup>b</sup>Voter information activity not performed

Table 4.1, however, also demonstrates that there is a negative correlation between nearly all the information activities we examined and the percentage of the voting age population actually registered. States with a higher proportion of registered voters were less likely to perform such

voter information activities as announcing registration drives and registration deadlines in the newspaper, or announcing registration drives and registration deadlines on radio and television. Additionally, states with a high proportion of registered voters were less likely to announce registration locations and hours on the radio or to provide toll-free phone numbers by which the voter could acquire information about the locations and hours of registration. Finally, high-turnout states were less likely to mail notices of approval or denial of registration.

These findings contradict the beliefs of many election officials, outreach organization directors, political-party activists, and concerned citizens who assume that strenuous information campaigns are necessary to increase the number of registered voters. However, we cannot conclude from these data that registration-related voter information campaigns conducted by the states have no effect on registration. Even though states with a low percentage of registered voters were more likely to conduct registration-related voter information activities, it is possible that the proportion of the voting age population who are registered would be even lower without these activities. This, however, is unlikely given the consistency of the findings.

There is a second reason why caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings. Because the states vary in the way they construct their registration rolls and in their methods and frequency of purging, state-reported registration figures may be widely divergent from the actual number of registered voters. (Smolka, 1987) If states that conduct voter information activities in order to increase electoral participation are also less likely to purge the registration rolls—in order not to restrict any eligible voter from voting—then the negative correlations between voter information activities and the proportion of the population registered may reflect the diligence with which the registration rolls are purged. If this is the case, then we would expect quite different findings when we examine the relationship between registration-related voter information activities and actual turnout.

However, in examining the association between registration-related voter information activities and the 1988 turnout of the voting age population listed on the right side of table 4.1, we see a similar pattern of negative coefficients. States with lower levels of turnout were more, not less, likely to conduct registration-related voter information activities. The similarity of these findings adds strength to our conclusion that registration-related voter information activities conducted by the states are

not associated with having a higher proportion of the voting age population who are registered or who vote.

Even though registration-related voter information activities are not associated with higher rates of registration and turnout, it could be that these activities mitigate the strongly depressant effect of registration deadlines. That is, states with early registration deadlines that perform fewer voter information activities could have an even lower proportion of registered voters than states that do not perform these activities.

One way to test this possibility is to compute partial correlation coefficients in which the association between registration rates and voter information activities is partialled out of the correlations between registration lead times and the percentage of the eligible population who are registered. If any voter information activity ameliorates the effect of registration deadlines on the registered population, then we would expect to see a significant reduction in the magnitude of the zero-order coefficients.

Table 4.2 shows that the partial correlation coefficients range from -.51 to -.59. These are not substantially different from the zero-order correlation coefficient of -.58 between registration deadlines and registration rates. Similarly, partialing the effects of voter information activities does not significantly reduce the zero-order correlation (-.64) between registration deadlines and voter turnout. These coefficients range from -.56 to -.69, strongly suggesting that voter information campaigns cannot ameliorate the depressant effect on turnout of long registration lead times.



**Table 4.2: Partial Correlation Analysis:  
 1988 Percent Registered and 1988  
 Turnout by Registration Deadline,  
 Controlling for Registration-Related  
 Voter Information Activities**

Voter information activity	Correlation with percent registered	Correlation with turnout
<b>Newspaper</b>		
Publicize registration drives	-.57	-.62
Publicize registration deadlines	-.51	-.56
Publicize registration locations/hours	-.57	-.63
Notice of approval or denial	a	a
Notice of intent to purge	-.57	-.64
<b>Radio</b>		
Publicize registration drives	-.59	-.63
Publicize registration deadlines	-.53	-.60
Publicize registration locations/hours	-.55	-.60
Notice of approval or denial	a	a
Notice of intent to purge	-.58	-.69
<b>Television</b>		
Publicize registration drives	-.59	-.64
Publicize registration deadlines	-.54	-.60
Publicize registration locations/hours	-.56	-.62
Notice of approval or denial	a	a
Notice of intent to purge	a	a
<b>Direct mail</b>		
Publicize registration drives	-.58	-.64
Publicize registration deadlines	-.57	-.64
Publicize registration locations/hours	-.57	-.64
Notice of approval or denial	-.55	-.61
Notice of intent to purge	-.55	-.62
<b>Toll-free phone number</b>		
Publicize registration drives	-.58	-.64
Publicize registration deadlines	-.58	-.64
Publicize registration locations/hours	-.58	-.64
Notice of approval or denial	-.57	-.63
Notice of intent to purge	-.58	-.64

<sup>a</sup>Voter information activity not performed

## Voting-Related Information

In addition to registration-related information, the states consistently conduct efforts to inform voters about voting procedures, such as publicizing polling places and hours, providing information on how to obtain and cast an absentee ballot, and providing voters with sample ballots. The question we addressed was: Do these efforts result in higher turnout?

The data listed in table 4.3 suggest that they may not. Similar to registration-related voter information activities, states with low turnout are more, not less, likely to mount campaigns that inform voters about how to vote. Again, it may be that turnout would be even lower in these states had they not conducted voting-related informational campaigns. Still, the evidence is clear that high-turnout states do not conduct more extensive voting-related informational activities to inform the voter about where, how, and when to vote.

**Table 4.3: Voting-Related Informational Activities and Correlations With 1988 Turnout**

Voting-related informational activity	Number of states	Correlation with turnout
<b>Newspaper</b>		
Publicize polling places and hours	43	-.20
Information on absentee/mail balloting	38	-.26
Provide voters with sample ballots	31	-.16
<b>Radio</b>		
Publicize polling places and hours	21	-.33
Information on absentee/mail balloting	20	-.35
Provide voters with sample ballots	2	.03
<b>Television</b>		
Publicize polling places and hours	18	-.31
Information on absentee/mail balloting	19	-.30
Provide voters with sample ballots	15	.03
<b>Direct mail</b>		
Publicize polling places and hours	11	.04
Information on absentee/mail balloting	11	-.04
Provide voters with sample ballots	12	-.09
<b>Toll-free phone number</b>		
Publicize polling places and hours	9	-.14
Information on absentee/mail balloting	16	-.17
Provide voters with sample ballots	5	-.04

## Issues-Related Information

While our findings clearly demonstrate that low-turnout states are more likely than high-turnout states to mount registration-related and voting-related information campaigns, this is not the case for issues-related informational activities. Regardless of the medium used, low-turnout states are no more likely than high-turnout states to engage in issues-related informational activities.

More importantly, there may be one activity that actually increases turnout. As indicated in table 4.4, states that mail information about propositions and referendums to individual households have consistently higher turnout than states that do not provide this service. Using the complete regression equation (shown in table I.1) to determine the possible effect of mailing information about propositions and referendums to individual households, we estimate that states that provided this service in 1988 had a rate of turnout about 2.4 percentage points higher than states that did not provide this service.

**Table 4.4: Issues-Related Informational Activities and Correlations With 1988 Turnout**

Issues-related informational activity	Number of states	Correlation with turnout
<b>Newspaper</b>		
Provide information about candidates	14	-.04
Provide information about propositions	34	-.16
<b>Radio</b>		
Provide information about candidates	11	-.06
Provide information about propositions	16	-.13
<b>Television</b>		
Provide information about candidates	9	-.04
Provide information about propositions	16	-.11
<b>Direct mail</b>		
Provide information about candidates	8	.09
Provide information about propositions	13	.24
<b>Toll-free phone number</b>		
Provide information about candidates	4	-.01
Provide information about propositions	7	-.03

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## Voter Information Campaigns Targeting Youths, Minorities, and Women

We examined state efforts to increase participation among populations typically low in voter turnout, including youths, racial and ethnic minorities, and women. While we found that state voter information campaigns consistently target these populations, these efforts are not associated with higher turnout levels.

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### Youths

More than four fifths of all states conduct registration drives in high schools. About three quarters of all states provide instructional materials on voting to school government or civics classes, and more than two thirds of all states conduct registration drives in colleges and universities. Nearly 35 percent of the states use youth-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns, and fewer than one third of all states work with private youth groups to assist in get-out-the-vote or voter information activities. Fewer than 1 in 10 states include registration forms and/or voter information with high school diplomas.

Table 4.5 shows that high-turnout states are no more likely than low-turnout states to engage in youth-related voter information activities. Rather, low-turnout states are more likely than high-turnout states to (1) conduct registration drives in high schools, (2) conduct registration drives in colleges, and (3) use youth-oriented media in their voter outreach and information campaigns.

**Table 4.5: State Voter Information Activities That Target Young Voters and Their Correlations With 1988 Turnout**

Voter information activity	Number of states	Correlation with turnout
1. Allowing youths to register before they are old enough to vote	39	-.07
2. Conducting registration drives in high schools	44	-.41
3. Providing instructional materials on voting to school government or civics classes	38	-.06
4. Conducting registration drives in colleges and universities	33	-.39
5. Working with private youth groups to assist their own voter registration activities	20	-.12
6. Using youth-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns	18	-.23
7. Working with private youth groups to assist their own get-out-the-vote activities	15	-.03
8. Working with private youth groups to assist their own candidate or issues information activities	9	.02
9. Including registration forms and/or voter information with high school diplomas	5	-.18
10. Conducting mock elections with actual voting equipment and materials	13	-.09

## Minorities

The most frequently performed voter information activity that targets minorities is providing information on registration to minority-group-oriented civic or political organizations (33 states), followed by working directly with these groups to assist in voter registration activities (26 states), assisting with get-out-the-vote activities (19 states), and sponsoring minority-group-oriented media (19 states).

Table 4.6 indicates that low-turnout states are about as likely as high-turnout states to engage in voter information activities that target minorities, with two exceptions. Low-turnout states are more likely than high-turnout states to use minority-group-oriented media in their voter information campaigns, and they are more likely to work with minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist in get-out-the-vote activities.

**Table 4.6: State Voter Information Activities That Target Minorities and Their Correlations With 1988 Turnout**

Voter information activity	Number of states	Correlation with turnout
1. Providing information on registration to minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups	33	-.16
2. Working directly with minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own voter registration activities	26	-.14
3. Using minority-group-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns	19	-.21
4. Working directly with minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own get-out-the-vote activities	19	-.24
5. Providing information on candidates or issues to minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups	12	.09
6. Working directly with minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own candidate or voter information activities	11	-.17
7. Providing funds to minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own voter registration activities	0	*
8. Providing funds to minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own candidate or issues information activities	0	*
9. Providing funds to minority-group-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own get-out-the-vote drives	0	*

\*Correlation coefficient cannot be computed.

## Women

Similar to the voter information activities designed to target minorities, voter information activities that target women include providing information about registration to women's civic associations or political groups (34 states), assisting these groups in registering voters (29 states), and working directly with women's groups in get-out-the-vote activities (17 states).

As demonstrated in table 4.7, low-turnout states are no more likely than high-turnout states to engage in these voter information activities, with one exception: Low-turnout states are more likely than high-turnout states to assist women's groups in get-out-the-vote activities.

**Table 4.7: State Voter Information Activities That Target Women and Their Correlations With 1988 Turnout**

Voter information activity	Number of states	Correlation with turnout
1. Providing information on registration to women's civic associations or political groups	34	-.09
2. Working directly with women's civic associations or political groups to assist their own voter registration activities	29	-.10
3. Working directly with women's civic associations or political groups to assist their own get-out-the-vote activities	17	-.28
4. Providing information on candidates or issues to women's civic associations or political groups	11	.05
5. Working directly with women's civic associations or political groups to assist their own candidate or voter information activities	10	-.07
6. Using female-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns	4	.13
7. Providing funds to female-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own voter registration activities	0	<sup>a</sup>
8. Providing funds to female-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own candidate or issues information activities	0	<sup>a</sup>
9. Providing funds to female-oriented civic associations or political groups to assist their own get-out-the-vote drives	0	<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Correlation coefficient cannot be computed.

## Voter Information and the Decline in Turnout Since 1980

Not only do the states have different levels of turnout, they also differ in the rates at which their turnouts have declined in recent elections. For example, while turnout declined 2.5 percentage points nationally from 1980 to 1988, Idaho experienced a 9.4-percentage point decline; Pennsylvania suffered a drop of 6.0 percentage points. Although most states have experienced some decline in turnout since 1980, a few have reported an actual increase in turnout over these eight years. For example, turnout increased 2.0 percentage points in Vermont, 3.7 percentage points in Nevada, and 4.0 percentage points in the District of Columbia during this period.

It is possible that specific policies and practices of the individual states have led to either a decrease or an increase in their voter turnouts since 1980. Unfortunately, we do not have complete data for enough election years to generate strong conclusions about the association of various policies and practices with the change in turnout since 1980. We do, however, have complete data for the 1988 election year. Comparing the

policies and practices of those states with greater turnout decline with the policies and practices of states with little or no decline may point to approaches that could diminish the general decline in voter turnout.

Computing a multiple regression equation, we found that the states with the lowest levels of turnout decline are more likely to conduct five voter information activities: (1) allowing youths to register prior to age 18, (2) using youth-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns, (3) offering toll-free numbers to be used to acquire sample ballots, (4) offering toll-free numbers that inform the voter about the intent to purge him or her from the registration rolls, and (5) employing high school "hands-on" programs that allow mock elections to be conducted on actual voting equipment. (The statistical analysis is shown in table I.2.)

We found that allowing youths to register prior to age 18 and using youth-oriented media in voter outreach and information campaigns were weakly associated with a change in turnout. States that performed both of these activities had an average decline in turnout of about 1 percentage point less than that for states that performed neither of these activities. Similarly, states that provided toll-free phone numbers by which a sample ballot could be acquired had an average decline in turnout of about .8 percentage point less than that for states that did not offer this service.

Toll-free numbers that inform the voter about the intent to purge them from the registration rolls, and high school "hands-on" programs that allow mock elections to be conducted on actual voting equipment were more strongly associated with the change in voter turnout since 1980. States that provided toll-free numbers that allowed the voter to acquire purging information had an average decline of 2.7 percentage points less than states that did not offer this service, and states that conducted mock elections in high schools using actual voting equipment also had an average turnout decline of 2.7 percentage points less than states that did not engage in this informational activity. Again, while we make no claim for a causal relationship in these cases, the evidence does suggest that such practices could prove useful in stemming the decline in voter turnout.



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## Are Voter Information Campaigns a Consequence of Low Turnout Rather Than a Cause of High Turnout?

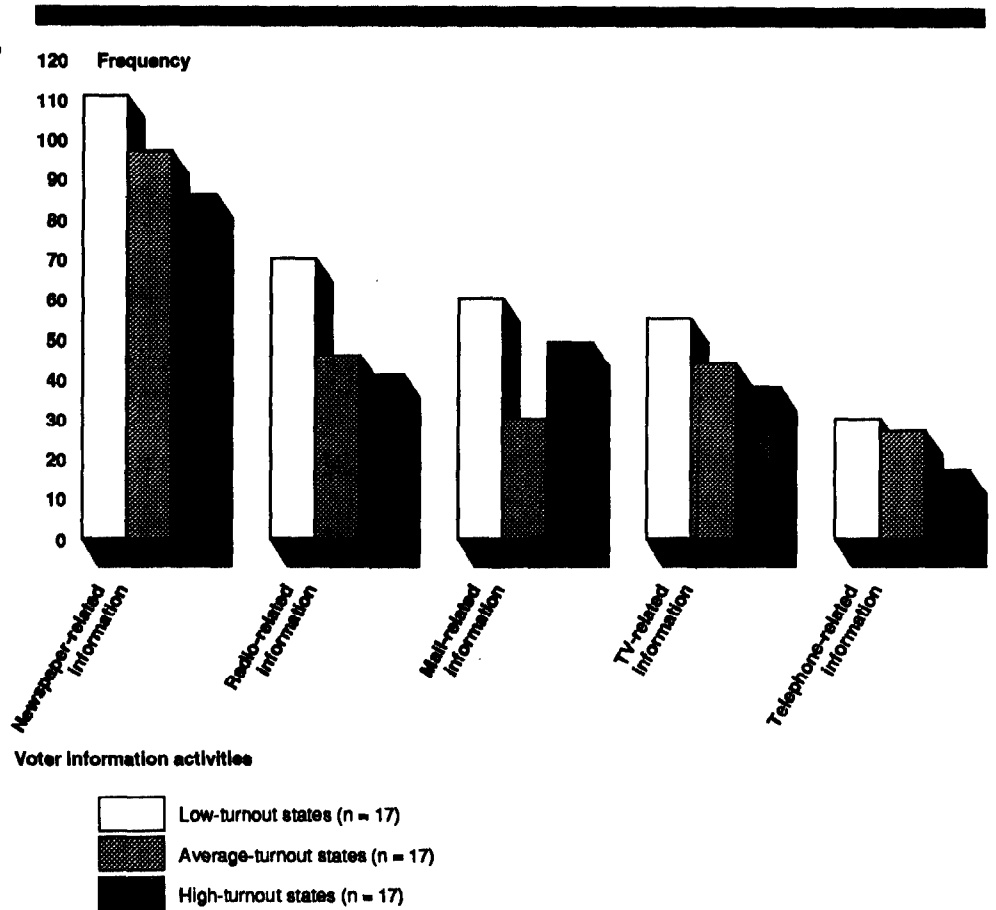
With few exceptions, our findings do not support the implicit theory of voter information campaigns. The assumption is that voter information activities increase both a citizen's knowledge of how to vote and the desire to actually cast a ballot in a way that represents his or her views and interests.

Our findings suggest a different explanation. States that have engaged in extensive voter activities generally have lower levels of turnout. It seems unreasonable to suggest that voter information campaigns actually decrease voter turnout, although we cannot rule out this possibility. Nor can we rule out the possibility that turnout in these low-turnout states would have been even lower without these voter information campaigns. Alternatively, it may be that the information provided is not relevant to the targeted voters.

What seems more plausible, however, is that states with low turnout come to view their inordinately low turnout levels as a problem, while states with high turnout do not perceive that they have a problem in the area of voter turnout. Furthermore, viewing their turnout as a problem, low-turnout states are more apt to look for a solution—a solution that frequently involves mounting more extensive voter information campaigns. While it is logical to think that voter information campaigns will increase turnout, our data suggest that, in fact, these campaigns do not have any such effect. Low-turnout states thus may be trying to solve a problem by employing a strategy that does not work.

We found that the 17 states with the lowest turnout engage in 41 percent more voter information activities than do the 17 states with the highest turnout. (See figure 4.1.)

**Figure 4.1: Frequency of Voter Information Activities for High-, Medium-, and Low-Turnout States.**



Given the finding that voter information activities do not generally increase turnout, the states may want to reconsider the amount of money they spend on voter information campaigns, or they may want to channel their resources into activities that are more likely to increase turnout, such as direct mailings of information about propositions and referendums to individual households.

In order to get some assessment of the amounts the various states are spending on voter information activities, we asked their secretaries of state to inform us of the amount of money their states spent on voter information activities during the 1988 general election. While the states employ different accounting procedures that sometimes make it difficult, or even impossible, to distinguish voter information activities from

other election-related activities, most were able to provide this information. The amounts provided by the secretaries of state range from 0 to almost \$1,000,000 per state.

There were vast differences in the amounts the states spent on voter information activities, but whatever the amount it seemed to have little bearing on turnout. For example, Minnesota, the state with the highest turnout in 1988, spent only \$5,000 on voter information activities, while Hawaii and the District of Columbia, a state and a district with very low turnouts, spent \$503,906 and \$121,200, respectively.

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## Conclusion

Our findings suggest that, contrary to widely held beliefs, voter information activities do not generally increase voter turnout. States with high turnout did not engage in more voter information activities. Rather, low-turnout states were more likely to mount extensive voter information campaigns that attempt to inform the voter about registration and voting procedures and, to a lesser extent, election issues. However, these campaigns generally did not increase turnout.

We found that information campaigns that educate voters about registration deadlines, registration drives, and places and hours of registration did not significantly increase the turnout of states having long intervals between the last day of registration and the day of election. These data indicate that more extensive informational campaigns cannot make up for the lack of registration reform. Moreover, we found that states consistently target low-voting populations—such as youths, minorities, and women—in their voter information campaigns but that, again, these campaigns seem to have little effect in increasing overall turnout.

Our data indicate some exceptions to the conclusion that voter information programs do not increase turnout. States that mailed information about propositions and referendums to individual households had a higher voter turnout than did states that did not provide this service. Additionally, states that provided toll-free numbers that allowed the voter to acquire purging information, and states that conducted mock elections in high schools using actual voting equipment, had a substantially lower decline in turnout between 1980 and 1988 than did states that did not provide these services.

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## Matters for Congressional Consideration

To increase electoral participation, the Congress may want to consider the feasibility of the following:

- encouraging the states to mail pamphlets explaining propositions and referendums to households of registered voters,
- placing polling booths and other election materials in high school civics or other appropriate classes to allow mock elections to be conducted, and
- setting up a toll-free phone number or numbers in each state and the District of Columbia from which the voter could obtain registration information, including information concerning the intent to purge individual voters from the registration rolls. (See chapter 3 for a related matter for consideration concerning absentee ballots.)

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# Local Outreach Programs to Increase Voter Turnout

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In this chapter, we answer our seventh and eighth questions by investigating the activities conducted by local outreach organizations engaged in initiatives to increase voter turnout. To date, there are no studies that systematically examine the effects of local outreach programs. Such an effort is hampered by the absence of data that would demonstrate the actual effects of these activities on voter turnout. (Local outreach organizations typically avoid the difficult task of determining the voting behavior of the potential voters they target.)

We therefore examined the opinions of local and outreach organization officials about what they believe these organizations are doing that may be effective in increasing voter turnout. Our effort here was to develop awareness of promising practices in the field. Of course, the limitation of this method is that local officials and outreach organization directors may not possess accurate information about the effectiveness of specific policies and practices. As we discussed earlier, our information is based on a survey of 82 local organizations that produced 64 usable responses (a response rate of 78 percent) from organizations in 47 states and the District of Columbia. The organizations surveyed included local governments, private partisan and nonpartisan groups, and local affiliates of national organizations concerned with voter participation.

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## General Strategies of Local Outreach Organizations

We found that local outreach organizations attempt to increase voter turnout by (1) increasing the availability of information concerning registration and voting procedures, and (2) decreasing the inconvenience typically associated with registering and voting. Considerably less attention is given to clarifying issues and positions or to actually engaging in get-out-the-vote activities, such as telephoning voters to remind them to vote or providing transportation to the polls.

While these two principles guide the activities of all outreach organizations we surveyed, the organizations themselves differ in two ways. First, their strategies to increase information and decrease the inconvenience of voting may be quite different. This is particularly the case for the methods used to contact potential voters. For example, most organizations publicize instructions about how to register and vote. Most use newspaper or radio announcements, but some employ such creative strategies as sending election-related information in utility bills and bank statements. (Detailed analyses will be provided in subsequent sections.)

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Second, all responding organizations emphasize the procedure of voting, but partisan organizations also tend to give some attention to the election issues, such as the candidates' positions or the implications of propositions and referendums. Whether partisan or nonpartisan, however, all local outreach organizations in our sample put most of their resources into voter registration activities. Voter information and get-out-the-vote activities are given less attention.

The important question, of course, is how effective these activities are in increasing voter turnout. While this question cannot be answered by an opinion survey, respondents' answers indicate that there are two sets of activities that outreach organization directors consider especially effective in increasing turnout. One involves making registration convenient by sending deputy registrars out into the field (for example, to malls and places of employment) rather than requiring the voter to travel to the town hall or other official building to register. The use of multiple registration sites and offices with extended hours is also believed to increase the convenience of registering.

Another sort of activity that outreach organization directors think is effective is the voter information campaign that stresses the "how to" of registering and voting. There is an almost universal belief among directors of outreach organizations that low turnout is the result of a lack of knowledge about procedures. A view commonly held by these directors is that when people know when, where, and how to vote, they are more likely to vote. In chapter 4, however, we presented evidence that indicates that voter information campaigns generally do not increase turnout. Some of the outreach organization directors seemed to acknowledge the limitations of information campaigns and offered a view similar to the one expressed by Annamae Arsenault, the town clerk in Stoneham, Massachusetts: "The only way to increase voter turnout is to have hot issues and good candidates."

While voter information campaigns that stress procedures are assumed to be effective, information campaigns that emphasize the importance of the election to the individual or that stress the civic duty of voting are assumed to have almost no effect in increasing voter turnout. Similarly, get-out-the-vote activities such as transporting voters to the polls, operating child-care centers, or telephoning potential voters to remind them to vote are not assumed to be effective in increasing turnout.

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## **Specific Practices of Local Outreach Organizations**

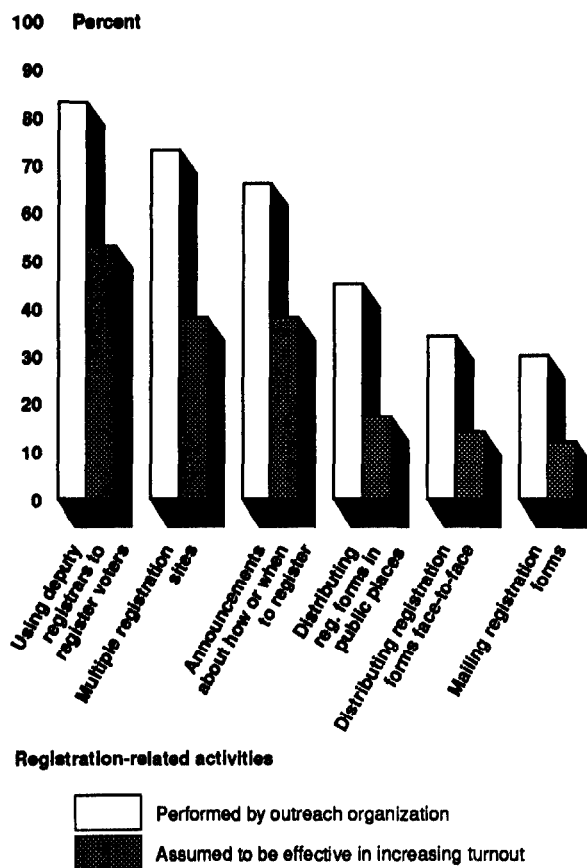
We turn now to a more detailed discussion of our survey findings concerning the practices of local outreach organizations. These findings consist of the responses to the questionnaire, including responses to open-ended questions. Our study examined three groups of practices: voter registration, voter information, and get-out-the-vote activities.

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## **Registration-Related Activities**

We found that outreach organizations performed registration-related activities more frequently than any other type of activity. Additionally, registration-related activities were viewed by a large number of organization directors as effective in increasing voter turnout. Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of responding programs that indicated that they conduct such activities and the percentage of organization directors that believe that these activities are effective in promoting higher levels of turnout.

**Figure 5.1: Registration-Related Activities Assumed by Local Outreach Organization Directors to Be Effective in Increasing Voter Turnout<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup>Announcements about how or when to register include television and radio spots, as well as newspaper articles and advertisements.

### Using Deputy Registrars to Register Voters

The activity believed by outreach organization directors to be the most effective in increasing voter turnout consists of sending deputy registrars into areas frequented by large numbers of people, including those who are unlikely to be unregistered. As many as 83 percent of the local organizations in our sample provided deputy registrars, and 53 percent of outreach organization directors believed that using deputy registrars was especially effective in increasing voter turnout.

The strategy typically employed by outreach organizations was to send deputy registrars into areas frequented by large numbers of people, such as shopping malls, county fairs, supermarkets, and places of employment. Several directors mentioned in the open-ended questions that shopping malls were particularly advantageous because not only



was it possible to contact a large number of people there but also these people were often willing to spend the time necessary to register. A few directors mentioned that they sent deputy registrars to rock concerts in the belief that they were effective locations in which to register young people.

One outreach organization operating in a large county employed a creative scheme to register people. It converted a recreational vehicle into a mobile registration office complete with walk-up window. Such vehicles could easily travel to all areas of the country to register voters.

### **Multiple Registration Sites**

As many as 74 percent of the outreach organization directors said that their counties employed multiple registration sites, and nearly 40 percent believed that these sites were effective in increasing turnout because they increased the convenience of registration.

In those counties in which all registration took place at the town hall or other appropriate facility, the outreach directors believed that having these offices remain open to allow after-work registration was effective in increasing turnout. After-hours registration was mentioned repeatedly by organization directors in answer to an open-ended question that asked them to list an electoral policy that they believed especially effective in increasing voter turnout.

### **Announcements About How and When to Register**

Nearly 70 percent of the outreach organizations provided announcements about how and when to register to vote. Almost 40 percent of the organization directors believed that this activity was effective in increasing turnout. When asked why these announcements were effective, the organization directors typically responded that, since no one who is unregistered can vote, people need to know how and when to register.

### **Distributing Registration Forms**

At Public Places. Only 17 percent of the directors in our sample believed that making registration forms available at public places was especially effective in increasing turnout. Some directors said that it was necessary to have actual deputy registrars officially register people because they believed the public generally would not send back the registration forms.

Two creative strategies for getting registration forms to the public that we encountered during the course of gathering data may be noteworthy. One consisted of printing official registration forms on the trayliners

used by the McDonald's fast food chain. Another involved sending registration forms and other voting information home with school children. The outreach organization directors did not claim, however, that these efforts increased voter turnout.

Face-to-Face. Only about 17 percent of organization directors believed that distributing registration forms face-to-face was effective in increasing turnout. The directors consistently believed that individuals would not take the initiative to fill out the forms and mail them to the appropriate office.

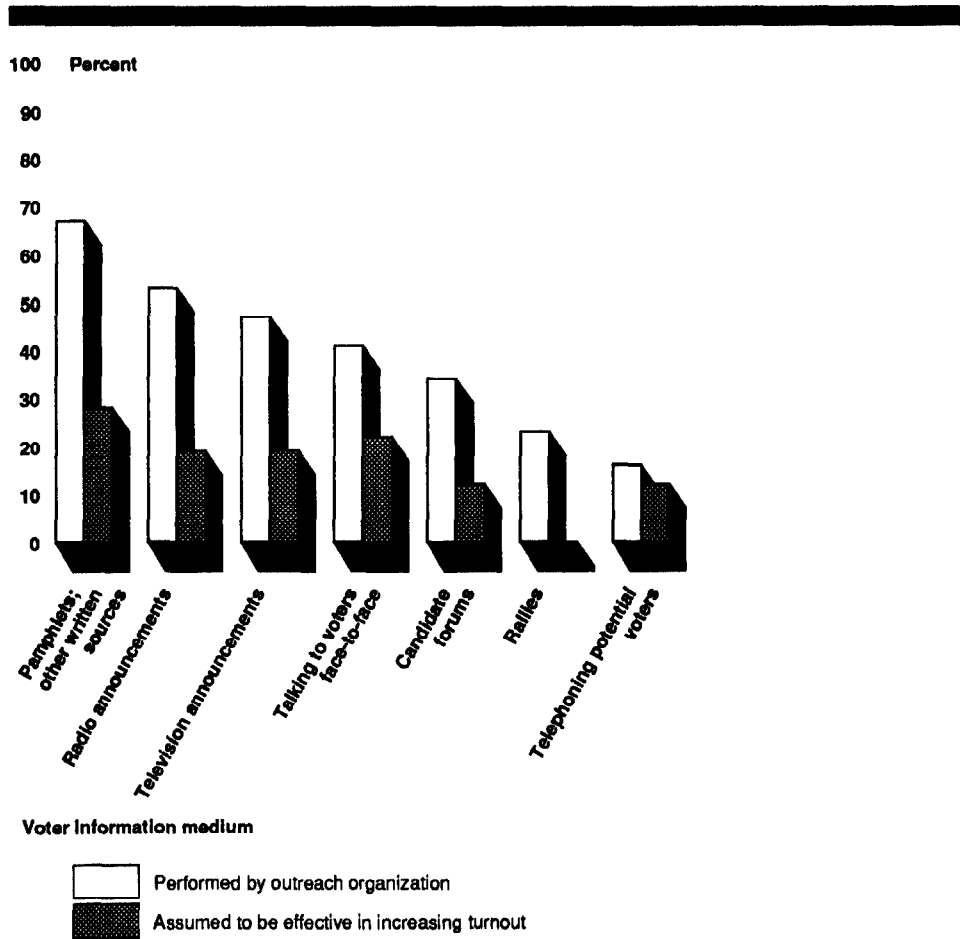
Mail. Fewer than 15 percent of the directors said that mailing registration forms to households was effective in increasing turnout. However, a small number of directors in our sample did believe that mailing registration forms and other voter information was an efficient way to register a large number of people. One director said that registration by mail made everyone a deputy registrar. Several organizations routinely mailed registration forms to all eighteen-year-olds, and some counties included registration forms with utility bills or bank statements.

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## **The Media Used in Voter Information Campaigns**

Even though outreach organizations employed multiple media in their information campaigns, no particular medium was assumed to be especially effective in increasing voter turnout. Pamphlets and other written sources, as well as talking face-to-face to potential voters, were viewed as effective mechanisms by the largest number of organization directors. (See figure 5.2.)

**Figure 5.2: Voter Information Media Assumed by Local Outreach Organization Directors to Be Effective in Increasing Voter Turnout**



**Pamphlets and Other Written Materials**

Written material such as pamphlets was the medium most likely to be used by outreach organizations. However, while 67 percent distributed written information, only 28 percent of the outreach organization directors assumed that this medium was effective. Still, this is the medium assumed by the largest number of organization directors to be effective in increasing voter turnout. It should be noted that in chapter 4 we present data indicating that mailing pamphlets explaining propositions and referendums to individual households is associated with higher levels of voter turnout.

**Radio and Television Announcements**

Fewer than one fifth of the outreach organization directors believed that radio and television announcements were effective in increasing voter turnout, even though about half of the outreach organizations routinely

used these media. Several directors noted that television announcements could be very expensive.

#### Talking to Voters Face-To-Face

Fewer than half (41 percent) of the organizations sent out people to talk to potential voters, and only 22 percent of the organization directors believed this strategy was effective in increasing turnout. Next to pamphlets, personal interaction with potential voters was the medium assumed by most organization directors to be effective in increasing voter turnout.

#### Telephoning Voters to Remind Them to Vote

Only 16 percent of outreach organizations telephoned potential voters to remind them to vote, and even fewer organization directors (12 percent) believed such an activity was effective in increasing turnout. Several directors mentioned the difficulty and expense of reaching more than a small percentage of eligible voters to remind them to vote. However, one outreach organization director suggested the importance of telephoning potential voters in western states to remind them to vote in the following way:

"We know that reminding people to vote increases turnout. In presidential years, people getting off work at 5 p.m. get discouraged when they think the election is over. They hear the national press project results and think: 'Why vote?' So reminding them of important state races and initiatives helps."<sup>1</sup>

Several directors believed that having a well-advertised telephone service to answer questions posed by potential voters was effective in increasing turnout. These directors pointed out that people liked the anonymity of such a telephone service because they were frequently embarrassed to admit their lack of information.

#### Candidate Forums and Rallies

Almost nine out of ten outreach organization directors indicated that candidate forums were not effective in increasing turnout. Political rallies were assumed to be even less effective. No director in our sample said that political rallies were effective in increasing turnout.

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#### The Message Delivered by Voter Information Campaigns

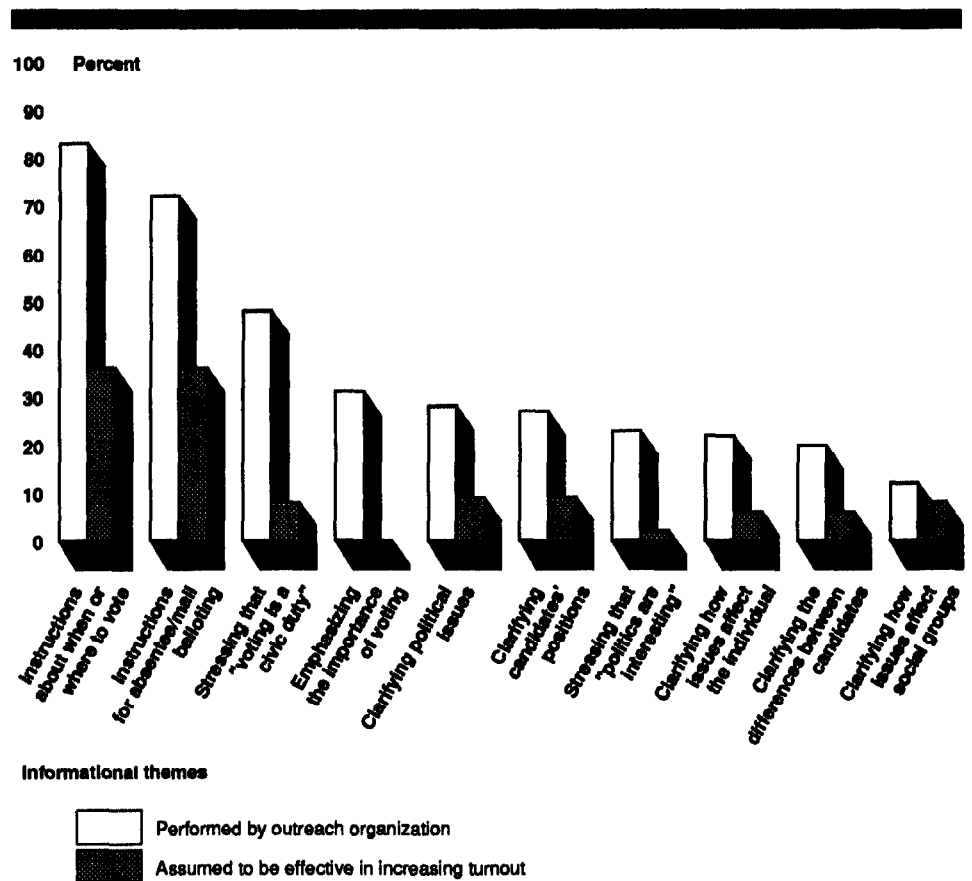
We examined the informational themes that were stressed by outreach organizations. We found that voting procedures were given the most attention by outreach organizations and that they were assumed to be the most effective means of increasing turnout. Civic responsibility and

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<sup>1</sup>Gail M. Stoltz, Executive Director, Montana Democratic Central Committee, Montana Democratic Party.

issues-related themes were not stressed and were generally assumed not to be effective in increasing voter turnout. Figure 5.3 presents these findings.

**Figure 5.3: Informational Themes Assumed by Local Outreach Organization Directors to Be Effective in Increasing Voter Turnout.**



**Instructions About When and Where to Vote**

The message most stressed by outreach organizations consisted of instructions about when or where to vote. At least 8 out of 10 outreach organizations stressed this theme in their information campaigns. Moreover, these instructions about voting procedures got the highest ratings for effectiveness. At least one third of the outreach organization directors believed that information about voting procedures was especially effective in increasing voter turnout.

**Instructions for Absentee and Mail Balloting**

Similar to instructions about when and where to vote, instructing citizens about how to acquire and cast absentee or mail ballots was an activity performed by more than 7 out of 10 outreach organizations. One

**Civic Duty and Other Non-  
Procedural Informational  
Themes**

third of the outreach organization directors believed that this activity was effective in increasing turnout.

Compared to those that stressed procedural themes, far fewer outreach organizations stressed civic duty, the importance of voting, and other non-procedural themes in their information campaigns. And, when organizations did stress these themes, their outreach directors consistently rated them as ineffective in increasing voter turnout.

For example, almost one third of the organizations emphasized the history-making importance of voting, but not a single director indicated that this emphasis was effective in increasing turnout. Similarly, almost half of the outreach organizations' information campaigns stressed the view that voting is a civic duty, but only 8 percent of the directors believed that stressing this view was effective in increasing turnout. Nevertheless, a number of outreach organizations printed and distributed "I voted" stickers to be worn by the voter on election day. This campaign, of course, emphasized the civic duty of voting, and several outreach organization directors believed that this would motivate voters to take the time to vote on election day.

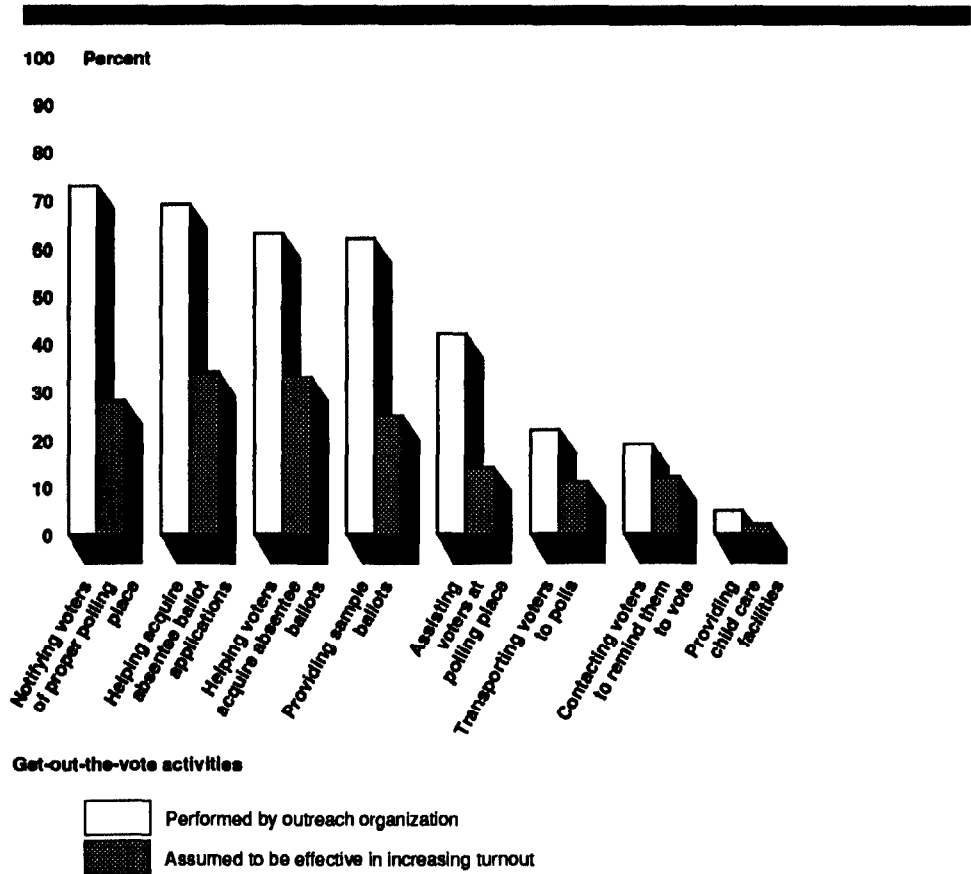
Other approaches—such as clarifying issues or the candidates' positions, or indicating how the issues or positions affect the interests of the individual—were not assumed to be effective in increasing turnout. Fewer than 10 percent of the outreach organization directors believed that such informational campaigns increased voter turnout.

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**Get-Out-The-Vote  
Activities**

In addition to registration-related and voter information activities, we examined the get-out-the-vote activities performed by outreach organizations. (See figure 5.4.)

**Figure 5.4: Get-Out-The-Vote Activities Assumed by Local Outreach Organization Directors to Be Effective in Increasing Voter Turnout**



**Notifying Voters of Their Proper Polling Places**

Notifying voters of their proper polling places was the get-out-the-vote activity performed most by outreach organizations. More than 70 percent of the organizations performed this service, yet fewer than three in 10 organization directors believed that it was effective in increasing turnout.

**Helping Voters Acquire and Cast Absentee Ballots**

The get-out-the vote activity assumed by outreach organization directors to be most effective in increasing turnout was helping voters acquire absentee ballot applications (34 percent), followed by helping voters acquire the absentee ballots themselves (33 percent). In the open-ended questions, many directors pointed to the convenience of absentee balloting for the elderly and handicapped. Others shared the following view of a director of an outreach organization in Orlando, Florida:

“It is noticeable that individuals are increasingly asking for instant service, whereas they once looked upon voting as a duty and a privilege. Whereas long lines

at polling places were once the expected norm, there are now numerous complaints if there is so much as a ten minute wait at a voting booth. We have seen a sharp increase in the number of individuals who reside [in the county] requesting absentee ballots.”<sup>2</sup>

### Providing Sample Ballots

One quarter of the outreach organization directors believed that providing sample ballots was effective in increasing turnout. The directors who believed this effort was effective said that sample ballots remind voters of the upcoming election and inform them about what will be on the ballot. One director believed that this use of sample ballots increased turnout because it reduced the mystery of the voting process. Others indicated that sample ballots motivated the voter to learn more about the candidates and issues so that they could formulate responses. According to this view, learning more about the candidates and issues increased the likelihood that the individual would actually go to the polls on election day.

### Assisting Voters at the Polls, Transporting Voters There, and Other Voter-Assistance Activities

While 42 percent of the outreach organizations assisted voters at the polling place, only 14 percent believed that such activities were effective in increasing turnout. Fewer than one quarter of the outreach organizations provided transportation to the polls, while only 11 percent of the outreach organization directors believed that this practice was effective in increasing turnout. About 5 percent of the outreach organizations provided child care facilities, but only 2 percent of the outreach organization directors believed that such efforts were effective in increasing turnout.

As to why voter assistance was not assumed to be effective in increasing turnout, some outreach organization directors said that transportation was not a major problem in their precinct or county because polling booths were usually located near the voter’s residence. Some directors also mentioned that absentee ballots existed for those who were frail or handicapped. Some directors added that the act of voting did not require extensive time away from small children and that polling places were not required to be “child-free.”

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### Use of Actual Voting Equipment in Schools

Several outreach organization directors mentioned in the open-ended questions that allowing high school and college students to hold their elections on actual voting equipment was effective in increasing turnout. They indicated that familiarizing young people with the actual practice

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<sup>2</sup>Betty Carter, Supervisor of Elections, Orange County, Orlando, Florida.



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of voting reduced the fear and intimidation that may accompany voting. It should be pointed out that the findings from our survey of states reported in chapter 4 indicate that the states that regularly placed voting equipment in high schools had a significantly lower turnout decline than those states that did not follow this practice.

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## **Conclusion**

Local outreach organizations attempted to increase voter turnout by increasing the availability of information concerning registration and voting procedures, and by decreasing the inconvenience typically associated with registering and voting. The activities engaged in by the outreach organizations included registration activities, voter information campaigns, and get-out-the-vote activities. Registration activities were engaged in most frequently by outreach organizations. Voter information and get-out-the-vote activities were engaged in by a considerably smaller proportion of outreach organizations.

Our analysis indicated that there were two sets of activities that were considered by outreach organization directors to be especially effective in increasing turnout. One involved making registration convenient by sending deputy registrars out in the field to locations such as shopping malls and places of employment rather than requiring the voter to travel to the town hall or other official building to register. Multiple registration sites and offices or registration booths with extended hours also were used to increase the convenience of registering.

Another set of activities that outreach organization directors assumed to be effective consisted of voter information campaigns that stressed the "how to" of registering and voting. There was an almost universal belief among directors of outreach organizations that low voter turnout was the result of a lack of knowledge about procedures. A view commonly held by these directors was that when people know when, where, and how to vote, they are more likely to vote.

Voter information campaigns that stress the civic duty of voting were assumed to have almost no effect in increasing voter turnout. Similarly, get-out-the-vote activities such as transporting voters to the polls, operating child-care centers, or telephoning potential voters to remind them to vote, were assumed not to be effective in increasing turnout.

While we have identified what the responding public officials and outreach organization directors believed to be effective local practices to increase voter turnout, our major finding is that there is no empirical

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support for these beliefs. Indeed, the activities of local outreach organizations could logically increase turnout, but these organizations simply do not conduct evaluations that would enable them to substantiate these claims. It is noteworthy that the beliefs held by officials about the effects of voter information activities seem to be contradicted by our state-level findings. We found that low-turnout states were more, not less, likely to mount voter information campaigns.

This is not to say that the efforts of local outreach organizations are invariably futile. Rather, our findings imply that the activities of local outreach organizations may not be as effective as is generally assumed by public officials and local outreach organization directors, and that systematic evaluations of these efforts are needed before they are applied more broadly.



# Multiple Regression Analyses

**Table I.1: Multiple Regression Analysis of Election Procedures and Voter Information Activities on Voter Turnout for 50 States and the District of Columbia During the 1988 Presidential Election**

Variables	Regression coefficient	Standard error
<b>Demographic controls<sup>a</sup></b>		
Age <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.02
Income <sup>c</sup>	.00	.00
Education <sup>d</sup>	.02	.02
Black <sup>e</sup>	.00	.01
Hispanic <sup>f</sup>	-.02	.01
Region <sup>g</sup>	-7.91	1.47
<b>Independent variables</b>		
Residency requirement (days prior to election)	-.03	.03
Registration deadline (days prior to election)	-.25	.06
Toll-free phone number available to request absentee ballots	2.55	1.24
Third-party requests for absentee ballots	.77	1.32
Direct mailing of information about propositions and referendums to households	2.39	1.21
<b>(Constant)</b>	<b>70.04</b>	<b>9.88</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.80</b>	

<sup>a</sup>To be sure that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not merely the effect of demographic and cultural differences between the states that have been demonstrated to influence turnout, these variables were entered into the equation as control variables.

<sup>b</sup>Age is computed as the percentage of the voting-age population in each state that is between 18 and 34. Age and the other control variables listed below are derived from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1990, 110th ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

<sup>c</sup>Income is computed as personal income per capita in 1988.

<sup>d</sup>Education is computed as the 1988 percentage of state population with 4 or more years of college.

<sup>e</sup>Black is computed as the percentage of 1985 state population identified as black. More recent data is unavailable. Source for black and Hispanic percentages is U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates by Race and Hispanic Origin for States, Metropolitan Areas, and Selected Counties: 1980-1985 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989).

<sup>f</sup>Hispanic is computed as the percentage of the 1985 state population identified as Hispanic.

<sup>g</sup>Region is a south/non-south dichotomy using U.S. Census Bureau definitions of regions.

Appendix I  
Multiple Regression Analyses

**Table I.2: Multiple Regression Analysis of Election Procedures and Voter Information Activities on 1980-88 Turnout Decline for 50 States and the District of Columbia**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Regression coefficient</b>	<b>Standard error</b>
Allowing youths to register prior to age 18	-.63	.67
Youth-oriented information media	-.39	.63
Toll-free phone number to acquire sample ballots	-.79	1.00
Toll-free phone number that will inform voters about intent to purge them from registration rolls	-2.73	1.29
"Hands-on" use of actual voting equipment and materials in high schools	-2.71	.77
(Constant)	3.85	.62
R <sup>2</sup>	.41	

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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives Committee on House Administration

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS  
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April 14, 1989

Honorable Charles A. Bowsher  
Comptroller General  
U.S General Accounting Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Bowsher:

The Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration is interested in information on how voter participation in federal elections can be increased. We understand that the staff of GAO's Program Evaluation and Methodology Division are looking into state and local efforts to encourage participation in elections, including mail balloting and outreach activities. We believe such information can be useful to the Subcommittee and would like to have your staff report to us on your findings.

Specifically, we would be most interested if in your work you could collect and summarize information on state and local efforts to raise the rate of election participation among registered voters, and, to the extent feasible, identify successes in state and local efforts and the factors that seem to explain such success. You also might consider the efforts made in other democratic nations to encourage participation. If justified, your staff should use this information to develop options for possible federal actions to enhance electoral participation. We do not see a need to evaluate registration systems or procedures, however.

The staff of the Subcommittee would like to meet with your staff to discuss details of this assignment. If you have any questions, please call Karl Sandstrom, Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Elections at 226-7616.

Sincerely,



Al Swift  
Chairman

AS/ds

# Major Contributors to This Report

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**Program Evaluation  
and Methodology  
Division**

Patrick G. Grasso, Assistant Director  
Robert Fiorentine, Project Manager  
Patrick C. Seeley, Reports Analyst

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