



voter suppression
myth

WWW.PRAGERU.COM

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Mr. Riley asks, “Do Republicans win elections by preventing minorities- blacks, Latinos, and others from voting? For those on the left and their allies in the major media the answer is yes- even more than that, it’s an article of faith.” How would you answer Mr. Riley’s question? Explain. What do you think Mr. Riley means by ‘an article of faith?’ Explain.
- Mr. Riley goes on to point out that, “According to the Left, voter ID depresses minority turnout and is therefore a blatant form of racial discrimination. But there’s a problem with this accusation- there’s no evidence to support it. Minorities are voting in greater numbers and at higher percentages than ever before. The facts and figures are there for anyone to see. Still, Progressives and most of the political press don’t seem to have noticed. Or maybe they just don’t want to look.” Why do you think that Progressives and the political press claim that voter ID laws suppress minority voters, even though the evidence shows the opposite to be true? Explain. Why do you think that the Left so often blames anything that they disagree with on racism, even when there is zero evidence to support such a serious allegation?
- Later in the video, Mr. Riley shares with us that, “Ms. Abrams claims that Republicans have been hard at work trying to disenfranchise black voters, but the reality is that black voter registration is outpacing white registration in the Peach State. These gains are not limited to blacks. Voting has been up substantially in all minority groups. An analysis of the census data published by Pew Research Center found that ‘all major racial and ethnic groups saw historic jumps in voter turnout’ in 2018.” Why do you think that Ms. Abrams blankets herself in victim mentality rather than accepting that other factors likely contributed to her defeat and rather than accepting responsibility for her losing campaign? What factors do you think are contributing to the significant increase in black voter registration and turnout? Explain. Do you think that Ms. Abrams could legitimately reconcile her claim that ‘Republicans are working hard to disenfranchise black voters’ with the fact that more blacks than ever before are voting? Why or why not?
- After providing evidence that the voting rate for women of color has substantially increased, Mr. Riley notes that, “As to the issue of ensuring the accuracy and integrity of U.S. elections, minority voters appear to be as concerned as everyone else. Ms. [Kamala] Harris and Ms. [Stacey] Abrams may feel that requiring an ID for banking, flying, or buying cold medicine should not apply to voting, but most people don’t seem to have that problem.” Why do you think that minority voters support voter ID laws? Explain. Do you think that identification should be required to vote? Why or why not?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Riley asks, “So, if there is no serious opposition to Voter ID laws and no evidence of Voter Suppression- if, in fact, more people of different races and ethnicities are voting at higher rates than ever before, why won’t this Voter Suppression myth die? The answer is at once surprising and obvious, one party simply can’t accept that they will lose a close election. If a Republican wins one of those, there has to be a nefarious reason. Voter suppression is as good as any- even if it has no basis in fact.” How would you answer Mr. Riley’s question about why the voter suppression myth won’t die? Why do you think that so many on the Left refuse to accept legitimate defeat in elections? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Voter ID laws

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “New Study Confirms Voter ID Laws Don’t Hurt Election Turnout,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What impact do voter ID laws have on voting behavior? Whose vote do voter ID laws suppress? Which voters were just as likely to vote in states requiring photo identification as in those that don’t? What did researchers for the National Bureau of Economic Research find? What did the new study also conclude, in terms of mobilization against the laws? According to the study, to what extent did voter registration and turnout rates change? Did an ID requirement discourage eligible voters from registering to vote? What happened to Hispanic turnout in states with an ID requirement? Which activities appear to occur at nearly identical rates in states with and without voter ID laws? How have liberal groups reacted to the findings? What is critical to measuring the deterrent effect of ID laws? How often is election fraud detected, and how often does law enforcement take action? How much reliable data is there on the true scope or frequency of voter fraud, and why? What was the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals’ reasoning on why voter fraud prosecutions cannot be used to measure the overall scope of fraud? How many of the predicted problems have come to fruition concerning Indiana’s voter ID laws? What does the latest research confirm, in terms of states enacting voter ID laws to protect their electoral integrity? What did the Commission on Federal Election Reform, headed by former Democratic President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker, say in 2005 about the electoral system?
- Do you think that other methods could be enacted to counter voter fraud? If not, why not? If so, what might some of those methods be? One of the criticisms of voter ID laws is that many poor people and many minorities do not have the ability to obtain a valid ID. Do you think that this may be true? If no, why not? If so, then what do you think could be done to help those people to obtain and to not lose their identification?
- Do you think that it is unreasonable to require an ID to vote? If no, why not? If yes, why, and what about requiring ID for banking, flying on a plane, etc...? Rather than trying to suppress the votes of minorities, don’t you think that Republicans would be working to earn the votes of minorities? Why or why not?



QUIZ

THE MYTH OF VOTER SUPPRESSION

1. A recent Census Bureau report found that voter turnout in 2018 climbed 11 percentage points from the last midterm election... surpassing ____ for the first time since 1982.
 - a. 20%
 - b. 30%
 - c. 40%
 - d. 50%

2. How much did the Hispanic turnout increase by?
 - a. 30%
 - b. 40%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 60%

3. In 2012 blacks voted at higher rates than whites nationwide, including in Georgia, which was one of the first states in the country to implement a photo-ID requirement for voting.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. According to an analysis of the census data published by Pew Research Center, which major racial and ethnic group saw historic jumps in voter turnout in 2018?
 - a. Blacks
 - b. Hispanics
 - c. Asians
 - d. All of the above.

5. In a 2016 Gallup poll, voter-ID laws were supported by 4 in 5 respondents, including 95% of Republicans, 63% of Democrats, 81% of whites and _____ of nonwhites.
 - a. 67%
 - b. 77%
 - c. 87%
 - d. 97%



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

THE MYTH OF VOTER SUPPRESSION

1. A recent Census Bureau report found that voter turnout in 2018 climbed 11 percentage points from the last midterm election... surpassing ____ for the first time since 1982.
 - a. 20%
 - b. 30%
 - c. 40%
 - d. 50%

2. How much did the Hispanic turnout increase by?
 - a. 30%
 - b. 40%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 60%

3. In 2012 blacks voted at higher rates than whites nationwide, including in Georgia, which was one of the first states in the country to implement a photo-ID requirement for voting.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. According to an analysis of the census data published by Pew Research Center, which major racial and ethnic group saw historic jumps in voter turnout in 2018?
 - a. Blacks
 - b. Hispanics
 - c. Asians
 - d. All of above.

5. In a 2016 Gallup poll, voter-ID laws were supported by 4 in 5 respondents, including 95% of Republicans, 63% of Democrats, 81% of whites and _____ of nonwhites.
 - a. 67%
 - b. 77%
 - c. 87%
 - d. 97%

<https://www.heritage.org/election-integrity/commentary/new-study-confirms-voter-id-laws-dont-hurt-election-turnout>

New Study Confirms Voter ID Laws Don't Hurt Election Turnout

Feb 27th, 2019 4 min read

Commentary By:

Hans A. von Spakovsky , Election Law Reform Initiative and Senior Legal Fellow
Caleb Morrison, Spring 2019 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation



This latest research confirms that states are justified in enacting voter ID laws to protect their electoral integrity. Hero Images/Getty Images

Key Takeaways

- Voter ID laws don't "suppress" anyone's vote.
- Among a variety of minority groups and political affiliations, no significant change in turnout occurred after voter ID laws went into effect.
- The reality is, election fraud often goes undetected; even when it is discovered, investigators and prosecutors often opt to take no action.

Less than one week after Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams made inflammatory claims in her State of the Union response about an epidemic of "voter suppression" jeopardizing the character of our nation, the National Bureau of Economic Research released a study that demonstrates once again that voter ID laws have no measurable impact on voting behavior.

In other words, voter ID laws don't "suppress" anyone's vote.

This latest study echoes the conclusion of others, including a landmark report by The Heritage Foundation in 2007 finding that voter ID laws don't reduce voter turnout, including among African-Americans and Hispanics. These voters were just as likely to vote in states requiring photo identification as in those that don't.

Researchers for the National Bureau of Economic Research found that between 2008 and 2016, voter ID laws had "no negative effect on registration or turnout, overall or for any specific group defined by race, gender, age or party affiliation."

The new study also concluded that these results "cannot be attributed to mobilization against the laws," contradicting critics who say election turnout has been sustained only by such campaigns.

According to the study, voter registration and turnout rates did not change to any significant extent after voter ID laws took effect. Out of the millions of registered voters the researchers studied over eight years, no statistically observable change in voting behavior could be attributed to voter ID laws.

The study didn't find a statistically significant drop in registration rates in states that liberals falsely claim are improperly "purging" eligible voters from their rolls. Neither did an ID requirement discourage eligible voters from registering to vote.

Among a variety of minority groups and political affiliations, no significant change in turnout occurred after voter ID laws went into effect. It should be noted, though, that Hispanic voter turnout actually increased in states with ID requirements, when compared to states without them. Clearly, the decrease erroneously claimed by critics has not happened.

Contrary to the commonly heralded assumption that voter ID laws mobilize political backlash, this research shows the laws have no significant impact on four different measurements of political mobilization: campaign contact, frequency of campaign signs, volunteering for campaigns, and levels of campaign contributions. These activities appear to occur at nearly identical rates in states with and without voter ID laws.

Still, many liberal groups have ignored the findings and focused instead on the study's second contention: that voter ID laws have "no significant effect" on deterring fraud. To reach this conclusion, researchers reviewed the voter fraud datasets of both The Heritage Foundation and a liberal organization, News21, and used them to measure the frequency of fraud over time.

However, as Heritage has explained, its database of almost 1,200 cases is a representative sampling of election fraud cases from across the country and "not an exhaustive and comprehensive list." This database is intended to demonstrate the many ways in which fraud is committed; it does not capture the full extent of electoral fraud in the United States.

Most importantly, the research fails to take into account or measure whether citizens believe voter ID laws increase the chance of being caught in the act of fraud. A measure of these attitudes before and after a state passes voter ID is critical to measuring the deterrent effect of ID laws.

Research strongly underscores the fact that the certainty of being caught is one of the biggest factors in deterring crime. Without an understanding of their deterrent value, it is impossible to measure the effectiveness of ID laws.

The reality is, election fraud often goes undetected; even when it is discovered, investigators and prosecutors often opt to take no action. In other words, no reliable data exist on the true scope or frequency

of fraud, and Heritage's database can't be treated as a proxy. Statistical claims based on the database should be treated with great skepticism.

Nor can voter fraud prosecutions be used to measure the overall scope of fraud. That reasoning was roundly rejected by the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, a decision that the Supreme Court affirmed when it upheld Indiana's voter ID law. The 7th Circuit opinion noted:

But the absence of prosecutions is explained by the endemic under-enforcement of minor criminal laws (minor as they appear to the public and prosecutors, at all events) and by the extreme difficulty of apprehending a voter impersonator. He enters the polling places, gives a name that is not his own, votes, and leaves. If later it is discovered that the name he gave is that of a dead person, no one at the polling place will remember the face of the person who gave that name, and if someone did remember it, what would he do with the information?

As the 7th Circuit said, such fraud "has a parallel to littering, another crime the perpetrators of which are almost impossible to catch."

When a lawbreaker is "almost impossible to catch," states are faced with two options, according to the court: States may "impose a very severe criminal penalty" or "take preventative action, as Indiana had done by requiring a photo ID." And that law has been in place for more than a decade, with none of the problems critics predicted.

The researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research also failed to realize that a voter ID requirement can stop other types of fraud in addition to impersonation of another voter. It potentially may prevent individuals from voting using false and fictitious registrations; prevent noncitizens from casting ballots; catch out-of-state residents who are registered in multiple states; and make absentee ballot fraud harder to commit in states such as Kansas that have extended the ID requirement to absentee ballots.

This latest research confirms that states are justified in enacting voter ID laws to protect their electoral integrity. Such laws don't deter eligible voters from registering and voting, and they do not disenfranchise minority voters.

As the Commission on Federal Election Reform, headed by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker, said in 2005:

The electoral system cannot inspire public confidence if no safeguards exist to deter or detect fraud or to confirm the identity of voters. Photo IDs currently are needed to board a plane, enter federal buildings, and cash a check. Voting is equally important.

Is voter ID the only reform that states need to implement to ensure the integrity and security of the election process? Certainly not. But it is one of the many steps states should take to safeguard both voting in person and by absentee ballot.

This piece originally appeared in *The Daily Signal*