

A Principle or a Strategy? Voter Identification Laws and Partisan Competition in the American States

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Abstract

We undertake a comprehensive examination of restrictive voter ID legislation in the American states from 2001 through 2012. With a dataset containing approximately one thousand introduced and nearly one hundred adopted voter ID laws, we evaluate the likelihood that a state legislature introduces a restrictive voter ID bill, as well as the likelihood that a state government adopts such a law. Voter ID laws have evolved from a valence issue into a partisan battle, where Republicans defend them as a safeguard against fraud while Democrats indict them as a mechanism of voter suppression. However, voter ID legislation is not uniform across the states; not all Republican-controlled legislatures have pushed for more restrictive voter ID laws. Instead, our findings show it is a combination of partisan control and the electoral context that drives enactment of such measures. While the prevalence of Republican lawmakers strongly and positively influences the adoption of voter ID laws in electorally competitive states, its effect is significantly weaker in electorally uncompetitive states. Republicans preside over an electoral coalition that is declining in size; where elections are competitive, the furtherance of restrictive voter ID laws is a means of maintaining Republican support while curtailing Democratic electoral gains.

Keywords

voter ID laws, polarization, political parties, legislative studies, electoral competition

Voting is one of the most common, and important, political acts. It is the primary means by which politicians are held accountable. At minimum, voting enables furtherance of the governing status quo or overturning it by “throwing the rascals out” (Riker 1988). From the vantage of politicians, and by extension the parties they affiliate with, the shifting composition of the electorate—specifically, “coalition maneuvering” and the division between Democrats and Republicans (Sundquist 1983)—provides a palpable incentive for structuring the electoral game so that it favors one’s political party. In this study, we examine the legislative introduction and adoption across the states of restrictive voter ID laws—an electoral reform that epitomizes the partisan battle for attaining an electoral advantage in contemporary American politics.

With voter ID laws in mind, there are three features that we contend shape the current state of American politics. First and most important, close elections reveal the ugliness of how the political game is played. Anything that is within the rules is exploited by partisans to gain electoral advantage, including expanding or contracting the rate of political participation (Wang 2012). The political party in control of state government might try to change a state’s electoral rules as a way to reduce participation among

supporters of the opposing party in the short term—even if such rules might include long-term electoral costs for their own party. “At the top of the list” of these contested electoral laws, according to a prominent scholar of voting rights, “is the highly partisan issue of voter identification (voter ID) at the polls” (Minnite 2013, 88).

Second, narrow partisan victories spur political mobilization (Aldrich 1993). For at least the better part of three decades preceding the 2000 elections, the American electorate underwent a palpable partisan transformation (Black and Black 2007). Perhaps the most evident manifestation of these changes is that white southerners are now decidedly Republican in their identification and voting behavior (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2012). With a partisan re-sorting of the electorate (Levendusky 2009) along distinguishable demographic lines (Green, Palmquist, and

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Schickler 2002), the major parties and their supporters know which groups to mobilize to have a shot at winning a close race. The return of large-scale political mobilization has been a logical response to the advent of a more partisan electorate, whose votes are more reliably cast for one or the other party (Bartels 2000).

Third, because of the renewed emphasis on mobilization as a means to win contemporary American elections, Democrats and Republicans have placed turnout under a massive microscope—examining all facets of the electorate to determine which voters favor or oppose their candidates (Green and Gerber 2008). The rekindled interest in turnout gives the parties a better sense of partisan attachments and what strategies enable mobilization efforts and, if necessary, demobilization tactics. After all, one can win an election by getting more supporters to the polls or, conversely, having fewer of the opposition's backers show up (Schattschneider 1960). In general, Democrats want to enhance voter turnout to ensure that their supporters—especially African Americans—take their “souls to the polls” (Herron and Smith 2012). In contrast, Republicans have embraced—if often surreptitiously—the mantra of Paul Weyrich, co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, who infamously stated in 1980, “They want everybody to vote. I *don't want everybody to vote* . . . As a matter of fact, our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down” (Palast 2012, 114). Hence, demobilization is just as relevant a component of electoral strategy as is mobilization and has been a feature of the electoral playbook as old as the Republic (Cloward and Piven 1989; Schier 2000).

The steady stream of restrictive voting reforms introduced by state legislatures throughout the 2000s speaks loudly to the contrary political motives and expectations these institutional changes will have on election outcomes. In this study, we undertake a detailed examination of one of the most widespread and polarizing election reform issues: voter ID laws. Voter ID laws had been on the books in a handful of states prior to the new millennium (see Biggers and Hanmer 2013 for a complete list), but the number of introduced and adopted laws exploded in the new millennium, especially after Republicans made impressive statehouse and gubernatorial gains in the 2010 midterms. Since 2000, the high rate of restrictive voter ID legislation (introduced and/or adopted) reveals an overwhelming Republican bias, as Democrats rarely introduce these bills (Weiser and Norden 2012). Furthermore, the support for voter ID bills is remarkably polarized, with supermajorities of Republicans typically favoring such reforms and supermajorities of Democrats opposing them.

Rather than trying to quantify the electoral *effects* of voter ID laws, which is an endeavor fraught with difficulty (see Erikson and Minnite 2009), we are interested in

the *sources* of restrictive voter ID measures at two distinct stages of the policy-making process. First, we ask why legislatures in some states are more likely to *introduce* restrictive voter ID bills relative to legislatures in other states. Second, we ask why some state governments are more likely to *adopt* restrictive voter ID policies relative to other states. We suspect that answers to these equally interesting empirical questions differ in fundamentally important ways. And we make a key assumption about voter ID policies, namely, that restrictive voter ID policies advantage Republican candidates at the polls and disadvantage Democratic candidates—either by mobilizing the Republican base through the creation of a valence issue or, more likely, demobilizing the Democratic base by marginally increasing the costs of voting primarily at this group's expense. Based on this principal assumption, we derive and test different theories about how political competition, partisan conditions, and changing demographics across the states might influence bill introductions and policy adoptions by state legislatures.

Party Coalitions and Voter ID Laws

Perhaps the foremost objective of a political party is to win elective office (Aldrich 1995). Principles become secondary as ideological platforms serve the purpose of assembling coalitions designed to capture the most votes (Downs 1957). Although the construction of short-term party coalitions makes it more difficult for candidates to maneuver at will in the political spaces most fruitful for securing an electoral victory, the long arc of American political history demonstrates that the paramount goal of political parties is to collectively win elective office. As such, the objective of winning office animates the ever-evolving relationship between party coalitions and electoral strategies.

A brief look to the past illustrates how the current wave of voter ID legislation and the extreme partisan polarization over these proposals is merely history repeated—an attempt to alter electoral outcomes by reshaping the composition of the voting electorate. Reversals in party ideology and issue positioning for the sake of winning elections is a hallmark of American political development (Gerring 2001; Miller and Schofield 2008). For instance, in response to the justifiable accusation of a prearranged “corrupt bargain” to select John Quincy Adams as president, Martin Van Buren recognized that the political mobilization of a democratizing populace was the key to placing Andrew Jackson in the White House (Aldrich 1995). Following passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 and the demise of the Radical Republican Congress, the Democratic Party in the South successfully barred newly enfranchised blacks from the electorate, thereby keeping

the political system “honest” (Woodward 2001). The resulting Jim Crow system—with its numerous restrictive voting laws (literacy tests, understanding clauses, the white primary, poll taxes)—shrank the electorate and thereby established the one-party Democratic South (Kousser 1974). A generation later, immigrant voters in urban areas were successfully mobilized through an elaborate construction of party machines that provided tangible benefits to the have-nots. Progressive Era reforms, under the cover of rooting out political corruption, weakened both parties, though efforts by urban Democratic machines to mobilize poor and immigrant voters were particularly targeted (Hofstadter 1955). As a result, the historically high turnout of the late 1800s plummeted, remaining low until 1932 (Burnham 1965; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Nearly a century later, following a period of party decline and a dealigning electorate (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Wattenberg 1998), there was a resurgence of mass partisanship (Hetherington 2001) and an increase in partisan voting (Bartels 2000). With reinvigorated partisanship, the incentive for parties to mobilize the electorate in the face of fragile partisan majorities in congressional and presidential elections once again became the vogue political strategy.

Today, polarization on salient issues reflects an unprecedented differentiation of party coalitions along demographic lines, leading to different coalition maintenance strategies of the two parties (Bawn et al. 2012; Karol 2009). A decidedly white, male, older, evangelical Protestant, conservative, and southern-based Grand Old Party (GOP) now faces off against a racially and ethnically diverse, younger, secular, liberal, and northern-based Democratic Party. Despite enduring disparities in regional strength (Black and Black 2007), the parties have become nationalized to such a degree that their demographic profiles look very similar throughout the United States. And, although the Republican coalition managed to deliver razor-thin U.S. House majorities from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s and presidential victories in 2000 and 2004, it has had to weather demographic changes favoring Democrats, especially the mobilization of minorities (Latinos, African Americans, and Asians), women, and younger voters—the core supporters of Barack Obama.

From a historical perspective, then, the recent wave of electoral reforms—including voter ID—appears quite tame; indeed, the turnout and electoral impact of strict voter ID laws is not a given (de Alth 2008; Erikson and Minnite 2009; Hood and Bullock 2012; Mycoff, Wagner, and Wilson 2009; Vercellotti and Andersen 2009). Restrictive voter ID laws may have a marginal impact on turnout, and if so, only in highly competitive elections. But in an age of elite polarization and precarious state legislative, congressional, and presidential majorities, a

minimal impact may be just enough incentive for partisans to try to game the system. If the past is any indicator, shifting party coalitions may certainly condition electoral strategies. Today, Democrats, because their coalition is comprised of adherents with higher participation costs vis-à-vis most Republicans, tend to rely heavily on a mobilization strategy. By contrast, given that the GOP has failed to broaden its appeal to a burgeoning minority electorate, it has leaned on a two-prong strategy: mobilize the base and champion electoral reforms that incidentally may demobilize Democratic supporters. Failing to expand its coalition, the Republican backing of restrictive voter ID legislation appears to be an example of coalition maintenance (Karol 2009). Rather than altering issue positions as a means to attract new supporters, the GOP has turned to restrictive voter ID laws to disproportionately deter the participation of current Democratic Party supporters.¹

In this study, we argue that state-level contextual factors are critical to understanding the introducing and passage of restrictive voter ID laws, as party leaders are driven by the objective of winning elections. Efforts by state legislatures to require more restrictive forms of voter ID are indicative of the larger struggle for electoral advantage between two highly polarized and demographically differentiated parties trying to maintain their coalitions with an eye on electoral success. We argue that partisan competition drives Republican efforts to enact restrictive voter ID laws and Democratic opposition to them; and this battle is conditioned by both national and state-based electoral environments. Given what we know about the electoral coalitions that send Democrats and Republicans to public office (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Karol 2009), each party has adopted a clear electoral reform strategy. Although both major parties see it in their interest to increase turnout among their core supporters, we argue that the Republican Party has systematically pursued a demobilization strategy as a means to win elections—but that it is conditioned by electoral competition, partisan conditions, and changing state-level demographics. In short, we argue that in competitive electoral environments (*ceteris paribus*), the Republican Party’s effort to boost its electoral chances relies in part on restrictive voter ID laws designed to deter a larger, albeit often latent, pool of Democratic Party supporters from turning out to vote.

The Evolution of Voter ID Laws

In 2001, the year before Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the following four states passed new voter ID laws: Arkansas, Georgia, Michigan, and North Dakota. When these laws were passed, Democrats held legislative majorities in Arkansas and Georgia, and Republicans were in control in Michigan and North

Dakota. Divided government prevailed in Arkansas (Republican Governor), and there was unified control in the other three states.² In addition, none of these states took a bold step toward requiring photo ID as a condition for voting. The laws simply clarified or modified existing voter requirements. In its infancy, the initial set of states addressing voter ID after the 2000 election did not fit the typical profile of what we find later. It is clear that in the decades leading up to the controversial 2000 presidential election, and even immediately in its wake, voter ID reform had not crystallized into a bitterly disputed and politically polarizing issue.³ This would soon change, as the push for stricter voter ID requirements quickly evolved into a leading issue that would divide Democrats and Republicans.

There is little question that the passage of HAVA in 2002 helped to harmonize state election laws. The federal legislation was framed and supported as a valence issue—indeed, given the patriotic title, why would any member of the Congress oppose helping Americans vote? Not long after the bipartisan congressional undertaking, however, the scene in statehouses became markedly more divisive. In 2006, a completely party-line vote made Indiana the first state to pass a law requiring voters to show a government-issued photo ID to vote at the polls (Davidson 2009). Soon thereafter, numerous states attempted to follow the Hoosier State's lead (Weiser and Norden 2012). As Erikson and Minnite (2009, 86) note, “[f]ew other issues are as politically polarizing” as voter ID bills, as “95.3 percent of 1,222 Republican legislators but just 2.1 percent of 796 Democrats voting on ten voter ID bills introduced by Republican state legislators between 2005 and 2007 supported them.” In short, polarized partisan voting on restrictive voter ID bills is now the norm in state legislatures, as Republicans consider them to be a discrete electoral advantage.⁴

Table 1 presents the total number of restrictive voter ID bills introduced and adopted each year in all the state legislatures from 2001 through 2012. The spike in the number of bills in 2003 is a direct response to state compliance with HAVA. What is notable about these data is the steady progression in favor of adopting more stringent voter ID legislation over the time period—nineteen states added some kind of identification requirements to vote and fifteen states added photo identification. We find that since 2004, states continue to adopt more restrictive voter ID laws reaching a high in 2011 with six states adding photo-based requirements to vote. Over time, the number of states that require identification continues to grow. While in 2001 only fourteen states required identification (four required photo identification and ten allowed non-photo), by 2014 a total of thirty-four states have statutes on the books (seventeen photo laws, fifteen non-photo, and two struck down by state courts) that require voters to present some form of identification.

Table 1. Restrictive Voter ID Bills Introduced and Enacted by Year.

Year	Bill introductions	Adopted (any)	Adopted (photo-based)
2001	51	0	0
2002	50	0	0
2003	93	6	3
2004	59	0	0
2005	98	2	2
2006	80	3	0
2007	90	0	0
2008	101	0	0
2009	122	2	1
2010	93	1	1
2011	47	3	6
2012	26	2	2
Total	910	19	15

Data and Expectations

Unfortunately, the conventional wisdom—that Republican lawmakers generally favor restrictive voter ID laws and Democrats generally oppose them—is of little help in an effort to explain why considerable variation exists across the states with regard to legislation introduced by lawmakers and policies adopted by state governments. Over the past decade, several Republican-controlled legislatures introduced relatively few restrictive voter ID bills and adopted less severe laws, including Alaska, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. So as to avoid the reductive fallacy of simply attributing the driving force behind the patchwork of voter ID laws solely to partisan control of state legislatures, we draw on a comprehensive dataset compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) of all the voter ID bills introduced and adopted from 2001 to 2012 across all the states. Through content analysis, we pared the more than twenty-six thousand bills dealing with elections down to approximately one thousand introduced bills and nearly one hundred bills enacted by state legislatures dealing with voter ID. To assess which factors affect the likelihood of legislatures introducing or states adopting restrictive voter ID bills, we employ a series of pooled time-series cross-sectional models with the state in a given year as the unit of analysis.

We offer two separate dependent variables in our analysis of legislative efforts to tighten voter ID requirements over the past decade. Our first is a count measure of the number of restrictive voter ID bills *introduced* in legislature *i* at time *t*. These restrictive bills include any and all regulations that tighten voter ID requirements that could potentially limit the number of voters appearing on Election Day. Examples of these more restrictive bills

include provisions that range from requiring government-issued photo identification to removing certain forms of identification accepted as valid ID. Using this approach, we are able to take into account various efforts to restrict voter ID, even if a bill fails to pass into law. Our second dependent variable is a binary measure, coded 1 if the state i adopts a restrictive voter ID policy in time t , otherwise 0. As such, we measure and evaluate this outcome according to two criteria: (a) state i is coded 1 if it has adopted *any* restrictive form of voter ID and (b) state i is coded 1 if it has adopted a strict *photo-based* voter ID law.

Regarding the two dependent variables—the number of restrictive voter ID bills introduced by legislatures and whether a state adopts a restrictive voter ID policy if it had not already done so—our models attempt to account for a multitude of factors that we suspect influence the introduction and passage of restrictive voter ID laws. Our foremost concern, nonetheless, is with the influence of electoral competition and partisan control on the likelihood that state legislators introduce and state governments adopt restrictive voter ID laws. We explore this relationship with reference to an interaction effect between % *GOP lawmakers* and the *partisan election margin*.⁵

The partisan election margin describes the absolute percentage difference in votes earned by all of a state's Republican and Democratic legislative candidates. Higher values suggest little competition in state legislative elections, as one party earned a greater share of the two-party vote, and lower values suggest extensive competition, as the collective votes earned by the parties' candidates are roughly equivalent (Carroll and Eichorst 2013). Our explanation for the introduction and adoption of restrictive voter ID bills suggests that not all Republican governments are the same. Indeed, we argue that a greater presence of GOP lawmakers in a given legislature more strongly influences the introduction of voter ID bills and the adoption of voter ID laws as the competitiveness of state legislative elections increases or as the partisan election margin shrinks. In other words, while we expect the main effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers on voter ID bill introductions and voter ID policy adoptions to be positive and significant, we argue that this effect should reduce in size and significance as the partisan election margin increases. We offer the following hypothesis toward this end:

Hypothesis 1: The marginal effect of the percent of GOP legislators on voter ID bill introductions and voter ID law adoptions decreases as the partisan election margin increases, other things being equal.

Our theory also suggests that the introduction and adoption of voter ID laws is influenced by conditions surrounding presidential elections. In effect, we suggest that

voter ID laws might reflect the efforts of a national party organization to control, perhaps only marginally, a state's electorate. We argue that states with higher levels of *turnout* in presidential elections are more likely to solicit these efforts by a national party organization than states with lower levels of turnout, but only if such a state is a *battleground state*, for only under such conditions will national party organizations expend extensive resources to influence state policy changes.⁶ Therefore, we expect that presidential turnout positively influences voter ID bill introductions and voter ID policy adoptions in battleground states, but has little influence otherwise. We explore this expectation with reference to another interaction effect between turnout in a state's most recent, prior presidential election and the battleground status of a state. We expect the interaction term to be positive and significant, suggesting that the marginal effect of turnout is greater in battleground states relative to non-battleground states. We offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The marginal effect of a state's presidential turnout on voter ID bill introductions and voter ID law adoptions is significantly greater in battleground states relative to non-battleground states, other things being equal.

Given the electoral demands placed on parties to maintain their coalitions (Karol 2009), we also expect that a state's demographic characteristics should positively impact both the introduction and adoption of restrictive voter ID bills. Empirical evidence shows that voter ID laws negatively affect minorities, among other demographic groups. Our analysis takes into consideration the prevalence of minorities in a given state's electorate with a variable for the percentage of *non-white voter registrants* and another for the absolute percentage *growth of non-white voter registrants*.⁷ Because there is evidence suggesting that the raised costs associated with restrictive voter ID laws, however marginal, falls overwhelmingly on minorities (e.g., Barreto, Nuno, and Sanchez 2009), we expect a positive relationship for each of these variables. We use the two variables to evaluate whether, and if at all, the introduction and adoption of voter ID laws is influenced by the prevalence of minorities or their growth from year to year. Of course, simply because voter ID laws affect minorities does not mean, *ipso facto*, that legislators' and governments' willingness to propose and enact voter ID laws is related to the prevalence of minorities. If the coefficients for these variables and their associated confidence intervals include zero, we would have insufficient evidence that the prevalence of minorities influences voter ID laws. We therefore offer the following hypotheses with respect to demographic sources of voter ID laws:

Hypothesis 3a: The percentage of a state's non-white voter registrants positively influences the expected number of voter ID bill introductions in a given legislature and the likelihood that a given state will adopt a voter ID law.

Hypothesis 3b: The absolute percentage growth of a state's non-white voter registrants positively influences the expected number of voter ID bill introductions in a given legislature and the likelihood that a given state will adopt a voter ID law.

In evaluating our primary hypotheses, we control for several other factors that may influence voter ID bill introductions and adoptions. We include a dummy variable for whether or not a state has a *GOP governor*.⁸ Assuming Democratic governors are more likely to veto voter ID laws, we expect this variable to be positive and significant in our models on policy adoptions. We also include the variable in our models on voter ID bill introductions to account for the notion that GOP governors may encourage their legislative co-partisans to introduce such bills. The *South* is the most culturally conservative region of the United States. Its history of voter suppression (Key 1949; Kousser 1974), more traditionalistic norms (Elazar 1966), and racial conservatism should make it more conducive to supporting restrictive voter ID laws than other parts of the country. But the history of voter suppression extends beyond the South. As such, we construct a dummy variable coded 1 for the eleven former Confederate states and 0 otherwise. In the same vein, we control for the political *ideology* of state governments. In particular, each state is placed on a scale from conservative (0) to liberal (100). We derive these data from Berry et al. (Berry, Fording, et al. 2010; Berry, Ringquist, et al. 1998).⁹ Next, drawing on a comprehensive dataset compiled by News21,¹⁰ a Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, we control for a state's experience with voting fraud, as it might motivate some legislatures to try to deter electoral wrongdoing by requiring stricter ID at the polls (Fund and von Spakovsky 2012). Others, however, caution that the claim of impersonation fraud at the polls is highly unlikely (Hasen 2012; Minnite 2013; Scher 2011; Wang 2012). In this case, we suspect that voter fraud may influence bill introductions and law adoptions differently.

Because the overwhelming weight of the evidence for in-person voter fraud in the form of impersonating another voter is exceedingly rare (for a particularly rigorous analysis revealing the remarkable rarity of this type of election fraud, see Hood and Gillespie 2012), we hypothesize that higher incidents of alleged fraud should positively affect the *introduction* of restrictive voter ID bills, whereas it should have a null effect on the *adoption* of voter ID laws. In the first case, higher incidents of

reported voter fraud provide a compelling and credible motive for proposing restrictive voter ID measures. In the second scenario, the case of enacting voter ID legislation, since we contend that these laws are really about partisan competition, reports of fraud can be strategically useful regardless of the strength of the evidence behind them. Thus, the number of reported election fraud cases should have no bearing on the enactment of this reform, which is intended to advantage Republicans. We include a lagged measure of the count of voting fraud cases in each state in each year in the models.

There is of course the possibility that state lawmakers might introduce and state governments might adopt restrictive voter ID laws because neighboring states have done so. Diffusion of public policies across time and space often occurs in numerous policy domains. We expect that lawmakers introducing restrictive voter ID bills may be influenced by what legislatures in adjacent states are doing—that these “policy outbreaks” are akin to the spread of pathogens in an epidemiological sense. By contrast, however, we also hypothesize that the actual adoption of laws may not be as directly affected by geographic proximity (Boushey 2010; Karch 2007), because partisanship, as opposed to geographic proximity, drives the passage of these laws. Our diffusion-based variable is *the proportion of a given state's neighbors that have adopted a voter ID law*.¹¹

Our model for the introduction of voter ID laws also controls for the *existing restrictiveness of a state's current voter ID laws*. We expect that the probability of a state legislature introducing legislation will be more likely in states with less restrictive voter ID statutes in place. We construct an ordinal variable coded 0 for states where no voter ID is needed, 1 for states that require voters to produce non-photo ID at the polls, and 2 for states that require voters to produce a photo ID at the polls. In these models, we also include a control variable for states with *biennial legislative sessions*, since not all legislative bodies are able to introduce such legislation every year.

Method

Using time-series cross-sectional data, with the state/year as the unit of analysis, we evaluate the following general outcomes:

1. The expected number of restrictive voter ID bills introduced in legislature *i* at time *t*.
2. The probability that state *i* adopts a restrictive voter ID policy in time *t*, given that it has not already done so.

This second outcome is explored in two ways. First, we investigate the probability that a state adopts any form

of voter ID in time t , provided that it has not adopted any form of voter ID up to that point. Second, we investigate the probability that a state adopts a strictly photo-based voter ID law in time t , provided that it has not adopted a photo-based voter ID requirement up to that point.

Although these data are organized similarly, the different outcomes require alternative econometric approaches. To estimate the expected number of restrictive voter ID bills introduced in state i at time t , conditional on covariates, we rely on count models. We fit in particular a multilevel, over-dispersed Poisson model where state-level heterogeneity is modeled with a level-2 variance component, and remaining observational-level heterogeneity is modeled with a level-1 variance component (see Cameron and Trivedi 2005; Gelman and Hill 2007; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008).¹² This model takes the following functional form:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Bills}_{it} = & \exp(\alpha_i + \beta_1 \cdot \% \text{GOP}_{it} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{Margins}_{it} \\ & + \beta_3 \cdot \% \text{GOP} \cdot \text{Margins}_{it} \\ & + \beta_4 \cdot \text{Battle}_{it} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{Turnout}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \cdot \text{Battle} \cdot \text{Turnout}_{it} \\ & + \beta_7 \cdot \% \text{Non-white}_{it} \\ & + \beta_8 \cdot \% \text{Non-white growth}_{it} \\ & + \beta_9 \cdot \text{South}_i + Z_{it}\omega + \gamma_1 T_t \\ & + \gamma_2 T_t^2 + \zeta_{it}^{(1)} + \zeta_i^{(2)}). \end{aligned}$$

In this model, i indexes the state, t indexes the year, Z_{it} is a matrix of time-varying control variables, T is a time counter variable, and $\zeta_{it}^{(1)}$ and $\zeta_i^{(2)}$ are observational-level and state-level variance components, respectively.¹³ Over-dispersion in these data is most likely a consequence of state-level heterogeneity, meaning that it should be significantly reduced after we include a variance component for the state. However, should any over-dispersion remain, the observation-level variance component models it directly: if it equals 0, the model reduces to a standard multilevel Poisson. We also include a variable for time and time-squared, to control for temporal dependence within states.¹⁴

We use this equation to highlight several variables that are central to our expectations regarding the sources of voter ID laws. For example, while we expect that Republican legislatures are more likely to adopt voter ID laws, we argue that it also depends on the competitiveness of lawmakers' elections. Other things being equal, we expect that a Republican legislature selected in competitive elections is more likely to adopt a voter ID law than a Republican legislature selected in uncompetitive elections. We evaluate this expectation with the interaction effect of *% GOP lawmakers* and the *partisan election margin*. Partisan election margin reflects the absolute percentage point difference between the votes earned by

all of a legislature's Republican candidates and Democratic candidates. We expect this interaction effect, β_3 , to be negative and the main effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers, β_1 , to be positive and significant. That is, as the partisan election margin increases (i.e., suggesting elections are less competitive), the marginal effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers should reduce.

Alternatively, we expect β_6 —the interaction effect between *battleground status* and *turnout*—to be positive. If, as we argue above, the marginal effect of presidential turnout on voter ID introductions and adoptions is significantly greater in battleground states relative to non-battleground states, this interaction term should be positive and significant. Finally, we expect that the percentage of *non-white voter registrants* and the *percentage growth in non-white voter registrants* positively influence voter ID bill introductions and adoptions.

We rely on an event history/duration approach with discrete time (yearly) to model the probability that state i adopts a restrictive voter ID policy in time t , given that it has not already done so. Voter ID policy adoptions during this time frame are largely forward moving, meaning states that adopt a voter ID policy are very unlikely to repeal it (at least quickly) and therefore require a model that properly accounts for temporal dependence. Fitting a discrete-time duration model to these data requires a slight adjustment to their organization: while organized as “binary time-series cross-sectional,” once a state adopts a policy (coded 1), it is dropped from the dataset in subsequent years, as it no longer remains in the “risk-set.”¹⁵ With this re-organization in hand, we fit a standard logit with cluster-robust standard errors to these data and tested various specifications for time (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). This is a fairly standard approach to modeling policy adoptions in the state politics literature.¹⁶ This model takes the following functional form:

$$\begin{aligned} \log[\lambda_{it} / (1 - \lambda_{it})] = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \% \text{GOP}_{it} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{Margins}_{it} \\ & + \beta_3 \cdot \% \text{GOP} \cdot \text{Margins}_{it} \\ & + \beta_4 \cdot \text{Battle}_{it} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{Turnout}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \cdot \text{Battle} \cdot \text{Turnout}_{it} \\ & + \beta_7 \cdot \% \text{Non-white}_{it} \\ & + \beta_8 \cdot \% \text{Non-white growth}_{it} \\ & + \beta_9 \cdot \text{South}_i + Z_{it}\omega + \gamma_1 g(T_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it}. \end{aligned}$$

In this equation, λ_{it} denotes the probability that state i adopts a voter ID policy in year t , provided it has not already done so. One noticeable difference between our approach to bill introductions and policy adoptions is how we estimate the effect of time. We estimated a number of models, treating policy adoption as linear, quadratic, and cubic with respect to time. We also used

Table 2. Restrictive Voter ID Bill Introductions.

	Coefficient	SE
Partisan election margin	-0.0087	-0.0067
% GOP lawmakers	-0.0108	-0.0087
% GOP × Partisan margin	-0.0010*	-0.0003
Battleground state	0.0649	-0.169
Turnout	-0.0097	-0.0181
Battleground × Turnout	0.0121	-0.0198
Republican governor	-0.1174	-0.1702
% Non-white voter registrants	0.0263*	-0.0112
% Growth non-white voter registrants	-0.005	-0.0039
Government ideology	-0.0021	-0.0052
South	0.0393	-0.3351
Prop. neighbors with voter ID	0.7132†	-0.3731
Voter fraud cases	0.0418*	-0.0134
HAVA	0.9709*	-0.1881
Biennial sessions	-1.2324*	-0.3775
Existing voter ID law	-0.2214†	-0.1275
Time	0.2993*	-0.0733
Time squared	-0.0266*	-0.0057
Constant	-0.2571	-0.3048
N	552	
$\sigma_{\zeta}^{(2)}$	0.6530	
$\sigma_{\zeta}^{(1)}$	0.5453	

Dependent variable is the number of restrictive voter ID measures proposed in a given state legislature in a given year (2001–2012).

Coefficients are based on an over-dispersed multilevel Poisson equation. All quantitative predictors are grand-mean centered.

HAVA = Help America Vote Act.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

smoothing functions to characterize time, such as a cubic spline and lowess. Model-fit statistics suggest a lowess smoother is a better characterization for the temporal dependence present in these data, which we denote as $g(T_{it})$.¹⁷

Findings

Restrictive Voter ID Bill Introductions

The model presented in Table 2 uses as a dependent variable, in a given state legislature/year, a count of the number of restrictive voter ID bills introduced. The column of coefficients presents estimates based on an over-dispersed, multilevel Poisson equation. Our first two hypotheses are evaluated with reference to the two interaction terms and their respective main effects. We contend, with regard to these interaction effects, that (a) the marginal effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers increases as the partisan election margin reduces and (b) the marginal effect of turnout is significantly higher in battleground states relative to non-battleground states. To facilitate the

interpretation of interaction terms in the models that follow, we *grand-mean centered* all quantitative predictors, particularly those used in the interaction terms. This means that each observed value of the partisan election margin in a given state legislature/year, for example, is subtracted from the overall sample mean across all state legislatures/years. The overall mean is 15.4, meaning that in the typical legislature the winning party earns roughly 15 percentage points more of the two-party vote share than the losing party. Grand-mean centering does not change any of the coefficients or their associated standard errors; it only makes the intercept more meaningful and facilitates interpretation.

While the significant interaction effect between GOP lawmakers and the partisan election margin seems to provide some evidence in support of our first hypothesis, the interaction effect between battleground state and turnout does not reach conventional levels of significance. Because the partisan election margin is grand-mean centered, the coefficient for % *GOP lawmakers* represents the effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers on the number of voter ID bill introductions, in a given state and year, when the partisan election margin is held to its mean value. Indeed, these estimates suggest that with the typical amount of electoral competition for state legislative seats, the expected number of voter ID bills is smaller by a factor of 0.92 per 10-percentage-point increase in the number of Republican lawmakers in a given legislature, all else equal. As the partisan election margin increases, this effect reduces more and more.

In Figure 1, we present a plot of the marginal effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers on the expected number of voter ID bills, conditional on the partisan election margin. This plot shows that as the partisan election margin increases from its sample minimum to its sample maximum (meaning elections move from more to less competitive), the marginal effect of GOP lawmakers changes from positive, though statistically insignificant, to negative and statistically significant. This finding ultimately suggests that legislators are more likely to introduce voter ID bills in legislatures with less electoral competition and fewer Republicans. Although the directional change in this effect is consistent with our hypothesis, the substantive manner of this effect is not consistent with expectations.

Although we fail to reject the null on our second hypothesis in evaluating the number of voter ID bills introduced in a given legislature/year, we find some support for our third hypothesis regarding the demographic composition of the electorate. We find that the percent of non-white registrants positively influences the expected number of voter ID bills in a given legislature/year. Indeed, per 10-percentage-point increase in the percent of non-white voter registrants, the expected number of voter ID bills increases by a factor 1.3, other things being equal.

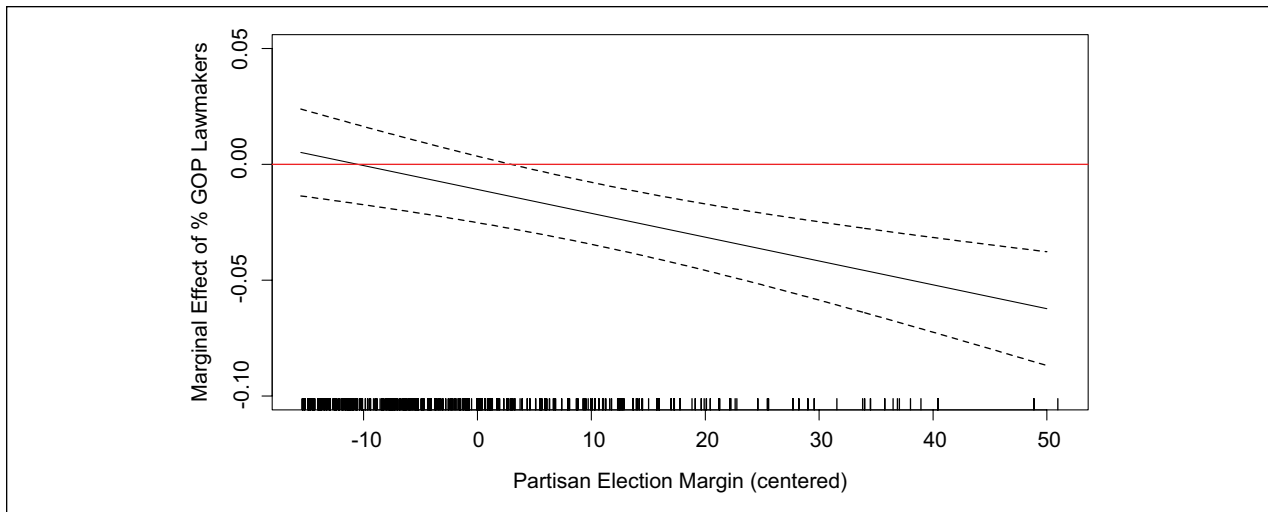


Figure 1. Party control, electoral competition, and voter ID bill introductions.

Marginal effect (ME) of % GOP, x_1 , given partisan election margins, x_2 , is computed generically as $ME(x_1 | x_2) = \beta_{x_1} + \beta_{x_1 \times x_2} x_2$. Estimates based on the column of coefficients in Table 2. Dashed lines reflect the 90% CI. Density of the partisan election margin is plotted on the x-axis.

However, we find no evidence that the growth rate of non-white voter registrants from year to year influences the expected number of voter ID bills.

A number of our control variables exhibit significant and interesting findings. For example, as the proportion of a given state's neighbors with a restrictive voter ID law on the books increases, legislators within that state are more likely to introduce restrictive voter ID bills, other things being equal. The expected rate of restrictive voter ID bill introductions increases by a factor of 1.07 per 10-percentage-point increase in the proportion of a state's neighbors with an adopted restrictive voter ID law. At least with regard to bill introductions, these findings suggest that legislators learn from their neighbors. We also find that the number of alleged voting fraud cases positively influences the rate of restrictive voter ID bill introductions. Our findings show that for each additional case of alleged voter fraud, the rate of introduced restrictive voter ID bills increases by a factor of 1.04. This positive finding lends some credence to the argument that lawmakers are using allegations of voting fraud to introduce restrictive voter ID legislation, even though there is thin evidence for election-related maladies across the states.

Table 2 also reveals that the rate of restrictive voter ID bill introductions is lower in legislatures that meet biennially rather than annually, since the former have fewer opportunities to introduce legislation. Furthermore, the current restrictiveness of a state's voter ID law inhibits the introduction of even stricter bills. Congress' passage of HAVA in 2002 positively influenced the rate of restrictive voter ID bills. The long-term effect of HAVA, addressed with covariates for time and

time-squared, suggests it is curvilinear with respect to the rate of restrictive voter ID bill introductions (i.e., the rate of proposed bills increased toward 2009 and thereafter decreases). Finally, there is no evidence that the number of voter ID bill introductions differs systematically between southern and non-southern states.

Restrictive Voter ID Bill Adoptions

The two models presented in Table 3 estimate the likelihood that state i adopts a restrictive voter ID policy in time t , given that it has not done so previously. The first model is based on *any* restrictive voter ID policy, and the second is based on strictly *photo-based* voter ID policies. Although in Table 2 we found evidence that the percent of GOP lawmakers, conditional on the partisan election margin, influences the expected number of voter ID bills in a given legislature and year, the precise manner of the effect was not, altogether, consistent with our expectations. The marginal effect of the percent of GOP lawmakers is positive and insignificant when the partisan election margin is low (i.e., in electorally competitive states), but negative and significant when the partisan election margin is high (i.e., in electorally uncompetitive states). We found even more limited evidence of our second hypothesis that turnout positively and significantly influences voter ID bill introductions in battleground states. Nevertheless, we find much stronger evidence in support of these hypotheses when we turn to evaluating the state-wide adoption of voter ID laws.

Our findings regarding voter ID policy adoptions are presented in Table 3. Because we grand-mean center all

Table 3. The Adoption of Restrictive Voter ID Policies.

	Any ID	Photo ID
Partisan election margin	-0.0296 [†] (0.0174)	0.0162 (0.0213)
% GOP lawmakers	0.0771 [†] (0.0413)	0.1717* (0.0514)
% GOP × Partisan margin	-0.0033* (0.0012)	-0.0041* (0.0012)
Battleground state	-1.6991* (0.6918)	-4.9165* (1.8367)
Turnout	-0.1106 [†] (0.0569)	-0.0951 (0.0703)
Battleground × Turnout	0.1510* (0.0759)	0.4815* (0.1802)
GOP Governor	1.4246 (0.9771)	3.1088* (1.2351)
% Non-white voter registrants	-0.0567 (0.0400)	-0.0274 (0.0539)
% Growth non-white voter registrants	-0.0418 (0.0271)	-0.0481 [†] (0.0252)
Government ideology	-0.0285 (0.0245)	0.0326 (0.0246)
South	-0.226 (2.0964)	1.419 (1.3877)
Prop. of neighbors with any voter ID	0.5877 (1.5132)	
Prop. of neighbors with photo voter ID		0.2589 (1.4755)
Voter fraud cases	0.0287 (0.0466)	0.0717 (0.0492)
HAVA	1.5903* (0.7954)	1.0273 (1.1903)
Time (lowess smoother)	54.4401* (11.4082)	36.7129* (14.2169)
Constant	-7.6007* (1.3666)	-8.4720* (2.1445)
N	332	476
Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	123.995	110.635
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	184.877	177.282

Dependent variable is measured with a binary variable coded 1 if, in a given state, a restrictive voter ID policy has been adopted in year t , 0 otherwise (2001–2012)—any restrictive voter ID policy in the first column of coefficients and strictly photo ID policies in the second column of coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. All quantitative predictors are grand-mean centered. HAVA = Help America Vote Act.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

quantitative variables, the main effect of the percentage of GOP lawmakers is the marginal effect of GOP lawmakers on the adoption of a voter ID law when the partisan election margin is held to its sample mean. According to the first column of coefficients in Table 3, for example, per 10-percentage-point increase in the percentage of GOP lawmakers, the odds that a state adopts any restrictive form of a voter ID law increases by a factor of 2.19, when the partisan election margin is held to its sample mean. According to column 2 in Table 3, the odds that a state adopts a strictly photo-based voter ID law increases by a factor of 5.6 per 10-percentage-point increase in the percentage of GOP lawmakers when the partisan election margin is held at its sample mean.

However, we are interested in determining if, and by how much, this effect changes as the partisan election margin varies across its observed values. Is GOP legislative control more likely to influence the adoption of voter ID laws in politically competitive states? In this instance, we investigate this question with reference to Figure 2. This plot presents the marginal effect of the percentage of GOP lawmakers across the range of the partisan election margin on the adoption of strictly photo-based voter ID laws.¹⁸ This plot provides strong evidence that the percentage of GOP lawmakers positively and significantly influences the adoption of photo-based voter ID laws when the partisan election

margin is small (i.e., in electorally competitive states). As the partisan election margin increases, however, the effect of the percentage of GOP lawmakers reduces in size and significance. Provided that a state has not adopted a photo-based voter ID law, partisan control is much more likely to influence the probability of adopting such a law in competitive states relative to less competitive states.

Figure 3 presents a similar conclusion. This plot demonstrates the probability that a state will adopt a photo-based voter ID law, provided that it has not already done so, as the percentage of GOP lawmakers increases. The lines on the plot divide states into hypothetical states with “competitive elections,” “average elections,” and “uncompetitive elections.” For competitive elections, we hold the partisan election margin to a standard deviation below its mean value, and for uncompetitive elections we hold the partisan election margin to a standard deviation above its mean value. The solid line, competitive election states, shows that the likelihood a state adopts a restrictive voter ID law increases dramatically as the percentage of GOP lawmakers increases. In average election states (shown with the long-dashed line), the influence of GOP lawmakers on state adoption of strictly photo-based voter ID laws is noticeably smaller, and the influence is seemingly non-existent in uncompetitive states (shown with the short-dashed line).

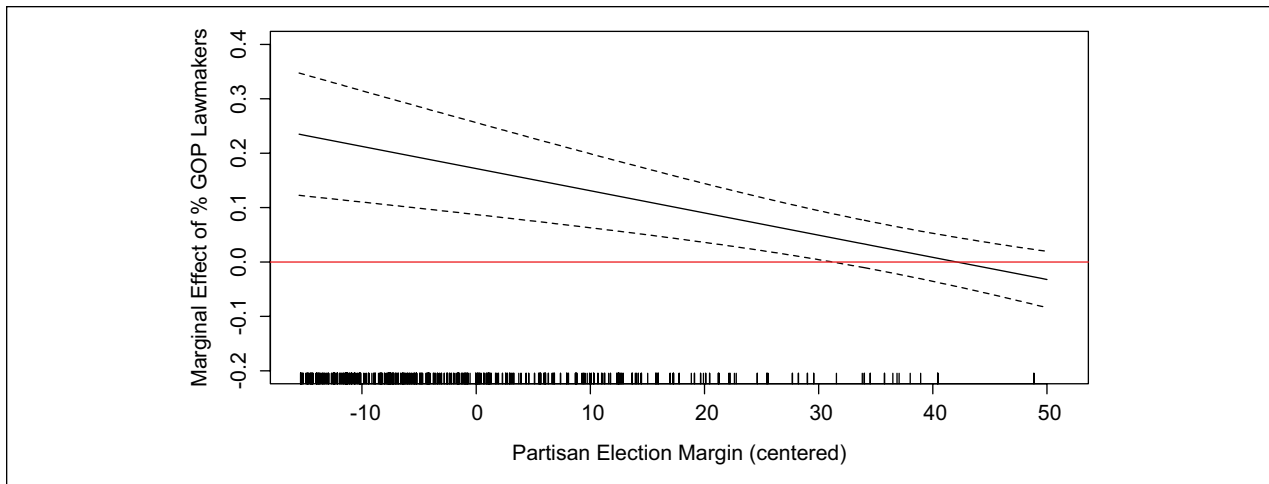


Figure 2. Party control, electoral competition, and voter ID policy adoptions. Marginal effect (ME) of % GOP, x_1 , given partisan election margins, x_2 , is computed generically as $ME(x_1 | x_2) = \beta_{x_1} + \beta_{x_1 * x_2} x_2$. Estimates based on the second column of coefficients in Table 3. Dashed lines reflect the 90% CI. Density of the partisan election margin is plotted on the x-axis.

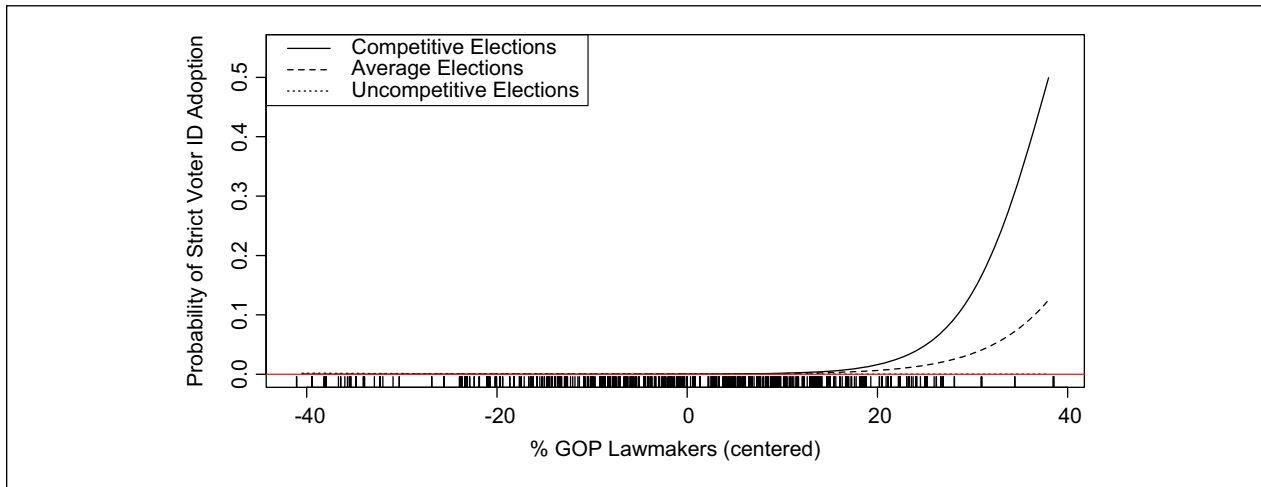


Figure 3. Party control and the probability of voter ID policy adoption. Estimates are based on the second column of coefficients in Table 3. Density of the percentage of GOP lawmakers is plotted on the x-axis.

We also find some support for our hypothesis regarding the conditional influence of turnout. The marginal effect of turnout on the likelihood that a state adopts a photo-based voter ID law, column 2 of Table 3, is significant and positive in battleground states and slightly negative and insignificant in non-battleground states. A 1-percentage-point increase in the percentage of presidential turnout increases the odds that a state adopts any voter ID law by a factor of 1.47 in battleground states with a 95% CI of [1.06, 2.05]. The influence of turnout in non-battleground states (i.e., the main effect of turnout) is not discernible from 0, however. While we find strong support for this hypothesis in the analysis of strictly photo-based voter ID laws, our findings with regard to

any voter ID laws are more mixed. Although turnout positively influences the adoption of voter ID laws in battleground states, this effect is not significant. On the other hand, we do find that turnout negatively influences the adoption of any restrictive voter ID law in non-battleground states.

It is worth noting that we find a strongly negative main effect for battleground status. This suggests that non-battleground states are significantly more likely to adopt voter ID laws when turnout is average or lower than average. That voter ID laws appear to receive strong support in lower turnout, non-battleground states perhaps suggests that these states exhibit a culturally conservative environment prone to support such measures.

We find very limited evidence in support of our third hypothesis regarding the demographic composition of state electorates. Indeed, the percentage of non-white voter registrants does not reach conventional levels of significance in either model. The absolute percentage growth in non-white registrants is not significant in the model for any voter ID law and negative in the model for the adoption of photo-based voter ID law. Per 10-percentage-point increase in the number of non-white voter registrants from one year to the next, the odds that a state adopts a photo-based voter ID law reduce by a factor of 0.618.

Other than time, the only other control variable that reaches significance in our models is the dummy variable for whether or not a state has a Republican governor. States with GOP governors are substantially more likely to adopt photo-based voter ID laws than states with Democratic or Independent governors, other things being equal. Given that all states that adopted photo-based voter ID laws had a Republican controlled legislature, this finding supports the argument that unified government provides the GOP a unique opportunity to adopt such policies.

Although we find less convincing and supportive evidence for our main hypotheses as applied to the case of voter ID introductions,¹⁹ in the case of voter ID adoptions (any restrictive measures and in the strictest instance of photo-based measures), the combination of a greater number of Republican lawmakers and closer state legislative election margins has a strong and highly significant effect on their passage. This finding highlights and reinforces the thesis of our study—competition coupled with the ability to bring about this kind of electoral reform is a primary factor accounting for the enactment of this restrictive voting measure. Within the context of closely fought elections, when Republican lawmakers are prominent enough to control the legislative agenda, they are much more likely to enact restrictive voter ID laws.

Conclusion

The right to vote has been treated with the esteem worthy of the most sacred democratic principle in American politics. Yet in the new millennium, the protection of voting rights palpably changed. Among a host of election administration and voting rights controversies, the battle over voter ID has become an issue where the two major political parties have sharply divided. We suspect that the most plausible reason for a shift toward contracting the right to vote, at least with regard to increasing some of the costs involved with exercising the franchise, stems from party competition and its grounding in coalitional politics.

As we have argued, because the participatory rates of the social groups comprising the main supporters of the

two major parties are highly unequal, it provides an incentive for some party elites to pursue a demobilization strategy. Specifically, the Republican Party has proved incapable of expanding its appeal among the much faster growing minority electorate—which just so happens to exhibit notably lower turnout rates vis-à-vis the stagnant non-Hispanic white electorate that is more supportive of Republican candidates. Faced with this reality, the GOP appears to have opted for coalition maintenance instead of coalition expansion (Karol 2009), by embracing several restrictive voting reforms whose true purpose is to marginally curtail the participation of voters typically aligned with the Democratic Party.

However, unlike recent efforts by Republican lawmakers to cut back on early voting days, Election Day registration, or reducing the amount of time for completing voter registration drives, which provide little credible political cover and are easily viewed as blatant partisan power plays, restrictive voter ID legislation at least holds the appearance of ensuring the integrity of the voting process. Not only can these laws be framed as a valence issue—indeed, the GOP and their allies often try to frame the requirement to have voters show state-issued photo identification at the polls as necessary to deter voter fraud—it also receives sizable success in the court of public opinion (Fund and von Spakovsky 2012; Wilson and Brewer 2013). In fact, as long as the majority of voters favor restrictive voter ID laws as a means to prevent fraud and hence protect the right to vote from potential political corruption, Republicans have every incentive to continue pushing for such measures. Of course, perception and reality are two very different things in the partisan battle over restrictive voter ID laws. Despite the strong public support to the contrary, there simply is no widespread, concerted, and systematic evidence that some voters go to the polls impersonating someone else to cast a vote to benefit one of the political parties (Davidson 2009; Hasen 2012; Hood and Gillespie 2012; Wang 2012).

Our analysis of the introduction and adoption of voter ID legislation in the American states over the past decade moves beyond the truism that Republicans are generally supportive and Democrats generally opposed to placing restrictions on the identification needed to vote in person. Without question, underlying coalition-based party politics goes a long way in helping us understand the evolution of voter ID laws from a valence issue to a divisive partisan gambit exercised by Republicans across the country. The trumpeting of restrictive voter ID legislation by the GOP, we argue, is an effort by the party to maintain its extant coalition and bolster its electoral competitiveness—at both the national and state levels. But “politics by other means” (Ginsberg and Sheffer 2002) is not played in a vacuum. Republicans have not pursued this scorched-earth policy in all states, nor have

they done so consistently over time. Rather, we show that a variety of factors at the state-level condition their effort to curtail the electorate by requiring more severe voter ID requirements. Notwithstanding the considerable litigation challenging their constitutionality, few other scholars (Bentele and O'Brien 2013 and Biggers and Hanmer 2013 being exceptions) have tried to systematically assess the enactment of voter ID laws at the macro-level, evaluating the evolution of this issue across states and over time.

As we have demonstrated in this study, restrictive voter ID laws have undergone a pronounced evolution. Early adopters of these laws barely registered on the political radar, and when they did, rarely was voter ID viewed through the prism of partisan politics. But in the new century, because of the different electoral imperatives facing the Democratic and Republican parties, efforts to increase the costs associated with obtaining the proper identification for voting drew a crisp contrast in terms of how such a reform would affect the major parties' political fortunes. Thus, we find that Democratic and Republican elites across the states have almost completely polarized on an issue which seems very clear-cut with respect to its possible impact on voter participation—disproportionately raising costs on social groups aligned with the Democratic Party—even if such costs are marginal at best.

This is the current arena in the contestation over restrictive voter ID laws, a forum where partisan elites are sharply divided over the matter. In contrast, besides those voters who have been directly affected by the implementation of the most restrictive voter ID laws in a handful of states, much of the American public has been slow to understand the dynamics undergirding the fight. But the current equilibrium is changing, as the vocal and high-profile partisan disagreement over the guiding purpose of voter ID laws penetrates the awareness of rank-and-file party identifiers.²⁰ Similar to other instances where public opinion has polarized because of partisan division over a salient issue (Zaller 1992), the scope of conflict will inevitably expand (Schattschneider 1960), and we suspect that the party-in-the-electorate will begin to receive the message.

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Notes

1. In addition to having a racial and ethnic minority problem, the GOP also underperforms with respect to the larger coalition of Democratic voters, including the poor, the young, the lesser educated, women, and urban residents. With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that the increased costs of voting, directly tied to restrictive voter ID laws, fall disproportionately on those segments of the electorate more inclined to support the Democratic Party, especially minorities, the poor, the young, and lesser educated (Barreto, Nuno, and Sanchez 2009; Gaskins and Iyer 2012; Hood and Bullock 2008). The only clear exception to this pattern is the elderly, who are considerably more likely than younger voters to lack the proper identification required in strict photo ID jurisdictions (Hershey 2009; Sobel and Smith 2009), but are also less inclined to vote Democratic (Biggers and Hanmer 2013). This type of partisan electoral warfare is characterized by the aptly phrased "politics by other means" (Ginsberg and Shefter 2002), where the institutional structure of American elections is often manipulated and altered to gain partisan advantage.
2. Unified Democratic control in Georgia might explain the reason for no longer allowing hunting and fishing licenses to suffice for voter ID, because this disproportionately white and male population of outdoor enthusiasts has been realigning to the GOP since at least the 1964 presidential election.
3. In the next iteration of our research, we plan to examine the partisan breakdown on the floor votes in these four, and subsequent, states.
4. The one clear aberration to this pattern actually reinforces the general point that Democrats oppose and Republicans favor restrictive voter ID laws. In 2011, Rhode Island was the lone state where Democrats controlled the legislature, introduced a restrictive voter ID bill, and passed it into law. But even though a Democratic majority favored a more restrictive voter ID law, even more Republicans supported the legislation (McKee 2012).
5. We measure GOP control as the *percentage* of GOP lawmakers in a given legislature and year. We opt for this approach because the GOP had a majority in both chambers of all of the states that adopted a strictly photo-based voter ID law (during our period of analysis). A dummy variable for GOP control is not statistically tractable, put simply, because it perfectly predicts non-adoptions. Using a dummy variable for GOP control in our models on voter

- ID bill introductions produces the same substantive findings. These data are derived from Klarner (2003) for the partisan composition of state governments. Our measure for the partisan election margin is derived from Klarner et al. (2013). In a given election year and state, we first sum all of the votes earned by Republican and Democratic candidates and then we take the absolute percentage difference between the two. If no election was held in a given year, we use the most recent prior partisan election margin.
6. In a given election year, we derive the percent of eligible voters who actually vote from Michael P. McDonald's turnout database publicly available at <http://www.electproject.org/home>. In non-presidential election years, we use the most recent, prior turnout. Battleground and leaner states for 2000 are drawn from The Cook Political Report (Feldmann 2000), the 2004 classification is drawn from The Cook Political Report (2004), and the 2008 and 2012 categories are drawn from The Rothenberg Political Reports (2008, 2012). The resulting battleground and leaner coding is quite similar to the ordinal scale developed by Shaw (2006), but the dichotomous measure we use is easier to interpret in the models. Another compelling reason why the GOP is more likely to target battleground states with higher turnout is because minority participation is consistently higher in these states (see Bentele and O'Brien 2013). In all four presidential elections (2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012), minority turnout was higher in the set of battleground states compared with the set of non-battleground states. We calculated white and non-white battleground and non-battleground turnout data for the four elections using the 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey available at <http://www.nber.org/data/cps.html>.
 7. We derive the number and percentage of non-white voter registrants from U.S. Census reports on Voting and Registration accessible at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/>. Because these data are only provided on a biennial basis, we interpolate values for odd (i.e., non-election) years. We calculate the absolute percentage growth rate of non-white registrants as follows:

$$G = \left(\frac{N_{it} - N_{it-1}}{N_{it-1}} \right) \times 100$$
 , where G is the absolute percentage growth rate and N is the number of non-white voter registrants, indexed by state i and year t .
 8. These data are derived from Klarner (2003).
 9. Updated data on the ideology of state governments is available at <http://rcfording.wordpress.com/state-ideology-data/>. Berry et al. (2010) derive their estimates by weighing the partisan composition of state governments against the ideological positions (measured via NOMINATE scores) of their congressional delegations.
 10. News21 data on voter fraud are available at <http://votingrights.news21.com/interactive/election-fraud-data-base/>. We sincerely thank Jennie Drage Bowser, formerly with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and Ethan Magoc, formerly with News21, for their assistance with data acquisition.
 11. In our model on introduced legislation, we use the proportion of a state's neighbors that have adopted any form of voter ID, and the same for our models on the adoption of any form of voter ID. However, we include a variable that is the proportion of a state's neighbors that have adopted strictly photo-based voter ID laws when such law adoptions are used as our dependent variable.
 12. A negative binomial equation yields very similar coefficients, with much more generous standard errors.
 13. This model assumes these variance components are normally distributed, with a mean of 0 and a constant variance. Their standard deviations are depicted in Table 2 as σ_{α} for the state-level variance component and σ_{ϵ} for the data-level variance component.
 14. We evaluated different specifications for time, including smoothing functions, linear, quadratic, and cubed, but found the squared term was the best fit for time with respect to modeling this outcome.
 15. Models based on the adoption of any voter ID law evaluate the probability that a state adopts any voter ID law provided that it has not already adopted *any* voter ID law. Therefore, this outcome does not account for states that adopt photo-based voter ID laws after adopting non-photo ID laws. However, our models on the adoption of photo-based voter ID laws evaluate the probability that a state adopts a photo-based voter ID law provided that it has not already adopted a *photo* ID law. Therefore, this analysis does account for states that adopt photo-based voter ID laws after adopting non-photo ID laws.
 16. See, for example, Berry and Berry (1990); Mooney and Lee (1995); although see also Jones and Branton (2005).
 17. Using different specifications for time does not change our substantive findings.
 18. Findings are very similar if we look at the adoption of any form of voter ID laws.
 19. It is virtually costless to introduce voter ID bills and hence we are not surprised that effects at this stage are less supportive of our expectations. In addition, bill introductions are not a consequential or notably important stage of the legislative process. Indeed, one of our anonymous reviewers suggested scrapping this part of the analysis and we presume for these aforementioned reasons. Nonetheless, we present this component of the policy-making process to at least demonstrate how much our covariates react differently from the adoption stage, where partisan motives and electoral imperatives loom much larger.
 20. Wilson and Brewer (2013) show that most Americans support voter ID laws but there are marked differences among subgroups, with Republicans and conservatives significantly more in favor of voter ID laws vis-à-vis Democrats and liberals. In addition, they find evidence that opinions on the issue are being shaped in part by elite transmission as greater awareness leads to an alignment of opinions with one's ideology and party affiliation.

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