

**KANSAS VOTER ID LAWS:
ADVERTISING AND ITS EFFECTS ON TURNOUT**

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Abstract

Previous studies have sought to assess the aggregate impact new voter identification laws have on voter turnout. In this study, we extend on this research by considering how the advertising of voter identification laws can affect voters' perception of these laws and how these perceptions may impact individuals' decisions to turnout. In Kansas, county clerks were given discretion in how to advertise new voter ID laws. Employing a quasi-experimental design and matching techniques, we examine these differences in the county-level advertising. We find that different advertising strategies can influence the impact voter ID laws have on turnout.

Introduction

On April 18, 2011, Kansas Governor Sam Brownback signed the Secure and Fair Elections (S.A.F.E) Act into law. The new legislation required all Kansas voters to show photo-identification in order to vote. The Kansas law is just one example in a recent upsurge of state legislation focused on voter identification requirements. Currently thirty-four state legislatures have passed legislation that requires voters to show some form of identification to vote and thirty-three of these laws will be in effect for the 2016 presidential election (National Conference of State Legislatures 2016). Out of these thirty-four states, eight have enacted strict photo ID laws requiring voters to show a government issued photo ID prior to casting a ballot. Some states, such as Tennessee, will only accept photo IDs from the state or federal government.

Proponents of these laws argue that they are necessary to prevent voter fraud. They claim these laws will prevent ineligible voters, such as felons, noncitizens, nonresidents, and individuals who have already voted, from voting illegally (Overton 2007). Despite these claims, there is little evidence—academic or otherwise—that voter fraud is common in the US.¹ Opponents of voter ID laws argue that any efforts to curb voter fraud are not worth the risks of reduced voter turnout and disenfranchisement that new laws pose. They argue that certain segments of the population, especially the elderly, the poor, and racial minorities, are less likely to have appropriate or current government IDs and risk being discriminated against by new identification requirements.²

Previous studies have sought to assess the aggregate impact new identification laws have on voter turnout (Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz 2011; Mycoff, Wagner, and Wilson 2009; Milyo 2007; and Vercellotti and Anderson 2006). In this study, we extend on this research by considering how the advertising of voter identification laws can affect voters' perception of these

laws and how these perceptions may impact individuals' decisions to turnout. Spencer Overton (2007) argues that policymakers must apply cost-benefits analysis to decide whether voter identification laws are worthwhile. By more closely examining how advertising can frame voters' perceptions, we hope to provide a clear picture of how the public measures the costs of voter identification laws on their decision to turnout.

Variation in how county clerks implement and advertise the Kansas requirements provide an excellent opportunity to empirically examine how the advertising of voter ID laws affects turnout.³ In the run-up to the 2012 election, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach's office developed an advertising campaign to advertise the new voter identification law. Kobach, a nationally recognized proponent of strong voter identification laws, developed an ad campaign featuring the slogan "Got Vote ID?" This campaign stressed the fact the voters must have an identification to be allowed to vote.

County clerks also had the opportunity to inform voters of the new law. While most county clerks advertised the new laws at the county-level using materials provided by the Secretary of State's office, Douglas County Clerk Jamie Shew produced his own advertising materials. His materials assured voters that their votes would be counted, via the provisional balloting process, even if they did not have an approved photo-identification. This difference in the county-level advertising that citizens were exposed to provides variance that we exploit. Employing a quasi-experimental design and matching techniques, we compare precinct-level turnout data in counties with both kinds of advertising. This allows us to assess the impact of advertising of the new law on turnout.

The Cost of Voting

Political scientists have been studying political and electoral participation for decades. While some scholars have lamented the low levels of participation in American politics, others have argued that given the high costs and low expected utility in voting, the phenomenon of interest is not why so few participate, but why anyone does (Downs 1957; Aldrich 1993). Despite the high costs of voting, roughly fifty percent of the electorate continues to turn out to vote in presidential elections – scholars have pointed to social and personal benefits that voters can receive for this higher-than-expected level of voting. Political parties, interests groups, and social movements also play a very important role in mobilizing voters and helping to offset the relatively high costs of voting (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Mobilization increases political participation, which is generally viewed by scholars as a good thing for the state of democracy. What happens, however, when political elites are able to manipulate the incentive structure for mobilizing specific blocs of the electorate?

Participation in electoral politics is costly. When it comes to voting, for instance, individuals must register to vote well in advance of the election, gather information about the candidates and issues, and get to the polls on Election Day. It stands to reason that individuals with ample resources are better equipped to participate than those less fortunate. In their analyses of the cost of voting, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) contend that income, education, experience, and feelings of efficacy are four key recourses that either aid or abet participation. Ideally, the costs of voting would be equally distributed among all citizens. Research indicates, however, that this is not the case. Within the American political system there are large disparities in the costs of electoral participation among individuals. Individuals with larger incomes, for example, are more likely to participate in electoral politics because their opportunity costs are lower (Rosenstone

and Hansen 1993). Likewise, increased education is directly related to increases in political participation (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1980). While a substantial amount of literature has been devoted to the individual costs of voting, less attention has been given to the evaluating the costs associated with changes in the institutional structure of voting.

Local, state, and federal voting laws can impose additional costs on voting, particularly for those individuals who lack the required resources. These laws and regulations can also place strains on efforts by campaigns and political parties to mobilize certain groups. Elected officials at the local, state and national level responsible for maintaining electoral institutions have sometimes used these institutions to marginalize various groups. In the US, there is a strong history of marginalizing certain groups, such as women and blacks, through election laws that either exclude or significantly increase the cost of electoral participation. Even after woman and blacks were legally eligible to vote, political elites were successful in preventing participation through election laws that made it difficult, if not impossible, for these groups to vote.⁴

Voter registration laws are another example of electoral rules being used increase the costs of voting for certain groups of voters. In the 1800s, voter registration laws were passed in response to large waves of immigration in an effort to “put an end to stolen elections by making it more difficult for immigrants, blacks, Indians, Chinese and Mexicans to vote, either legally or illegally.” (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 205).⁵ Although many of such restrictive laws have been amended and reformed, legislative bodies continue to use their power to change electoral institutions; changes which have the potential to change the perceived costs and benefits of voting. The recently implemented voter ID laws are the latest electoral institutions to be scrutinized for disproportionately increasing the cost of voting.

Voter ID Laws

The controversial presidential election of 2000 renewed legislative interest in electoral rules. Discussions of butterfly ballots, hanging chads, and manual recount procedures dominated the news for over as election officials worked determine who won the election. Following Bush's eventual victory in the 2000 election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which sought to replace punchcard voting systems and provide more uniform election standards across the states. The Act also required states to standardize voter registration processes, poll worker training, and election administration, but implementation of these has been left to the states and different states have interpreted the Act in different ways.

One of the provisions of HAVA required states to ensure that voter registration records are accurate and up-to-date. To achieve more accurate voter registration lists, the Act stipulated minimum requirements for verifying the identification of voters when they register to vote.⁶ States have reacted to these minimum standards in a number of ways. Republican lawmakers in many states have pushed to extend these standards, requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification not only when they register, but also when they vote. Proponents of more stringent standards argue that requiring voters to present a photo identification reduces the risk of fraudulent voting, ensuring fair elections.⁷ Other states have maintained the minimum standard that requires voters to show proof of identification when registering to vote, but not requiring identification for voting.⁸ These primarily Democratic opponents of strict voter identification laws argue that burdensome identification requirements increases the costs of voting for many, potentially preventing otherwise eligible citizens from voting. They point to the fact that many eligible voters do not have a government-issued ID, with minority groups,

seniors, the disabled, and students less likely to have IDs than the rest of the populations (Weiser and Kasdan 2012).

The state of Indiana was the first state to implement a strict voter identification law, requiring all registered voters in Indiana to present a government-issued photo ID in order to vote (Hershey 2009).⁹ Citizens opposing the law challenged it in federal court. Democrats and civil rights groups supported this lawsuit, claiming that as many as 11% of eligible voters in Indiana did not possess a valid photo ID (Stohr 2008). The case eventually made its way to the Supreme Court. In *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, the Court ruled in a 6 to 3 decision that, "the application of the statute to the vast majority of Indiana voters is amply justified by the valid interest in protecting the integrity and reliability of the electoral process."

Since the Supreme Court's validation of the Indiana law, thirty-four states have introduced legislation to require photo ID for voting. At the time of the 2012 election, seventeen states passed some version of voter ID legislation. Alabama, Kansas, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin passed laws requiring voters to present a photo ID to vote.¹⁰ Several other states passed laws requiring photo IDs, but allow voters without an ID to cast a regular ballot if they sign an affidavit affirming their identity or if a poll worker can confirm their identification. An additional eighteen states require a non-photo ID to be presented by voters.

Because of legal challenges, only four of the eleven states that initially passed strict voter ID laws -- Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, and Tennessee -- had these laws in effect during the 2012 election (National Conference of State Legislatures 2016).¹¹ Successful legal challenges argued that minority groups were less likely to possess valid IDs, increasing the costs of voting. In a large-scale survey of the American states, Charles Stewart (2013) found that while possession of

some form of government identification is nearly universal among American voters, there are significant disparities in ID possession by race.

Voter ID Laws and Turnout

Initial studies examining voter ID laws have examined whether or not voter ID laws impact voter turnout. These studies report little to no aggregate reduction in turnout after states adopt photo-ID laws (Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz 2007; Mycoff, Wagner, and Wilson 2009; and Milyo 2007). Vercellotti and Anderson (2006) find that increasingly strict voter ID requirements are correlated with reduced turnout in aggregate data, but that the overall effect was “fairly small” (2006, 13).

While research has shown that minorities, the elderly, and the poor are less likely to possess IDs¹², political scientists find mixed evidence that this leads to a reduction in turnout for various subgroups of the electorate. Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz (2008) find no statistical significant difference in turnout between white and nonwhite voters, while Vercellotti and Anderson (2006) report that Hispanic voters in voter-ID states are 10% less likely to vote and African-American are 6% less likely to vote than Hispanics and African-Americans in states without ID requirements. Both studies report reduced turnout among low-education and low-income voters.

Erikson and Minnite’s (2009) study is indicative of the current state of the empirical literature on voter ID laws. They report that while changes from lax to severe voter ID requirements are associated with a few percentage points reduction in turnout, on average, and that this reduction is the strongest among the least educated, nothing reaches a level of statistical significance. They argue that at present, “the data is not up to the task of making a compelling

statistical argument” and that, “we should be wary of claims--from all sides of the controversy--regarding turnout effects from voter ID laws...” The current research is insufficient to make claims regarding the precise effects of voter ID laws.

Local Officials and Turnout

While scholars have long recognized the important effect that state electoral institutions have on voter turnout, scholars have only recently begun to explore how the local administration of state laws affect turnout.¹³ Ansolabehere and Konisky (2006) are possibly the first scholars to make use of local-level variance in the administration of state electoral laws to assess the impact of electoral institutions on voter turnout, however they do not directly assess the influence of local-level administration. Burden and Neiheisel (2012) consider the variance in municipal-level administration of voter registration laws in Wisconsin and are able to show that the influence of voter registration requirements on turnout is “sharply moderated by local institutions designed to implement the policy (2012, 86).” They find that reductions in turnout associated with new registration requirements are mitigated when election officials are better trained and have better resources.

Research Design

In the run-up to the 2012 election, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach’s office generated an advertising campaign to inform citizens of the new voter ID law. These materials, which can be viewed at www.gotvoteid.com, use the advertising slogan “Got Voter ID?” The focus of these materials is on the fact that voters need a photo-identification to vote. The materials informed voters that, “starting January 1, 2012: (1) Kansas voters must show

photographic identification when casting a vote in person; and (2) Kansas voters must have their signature verified and include a copy of an acceptable form of photographic identification or provide a full Kansas driver's license or nondriver ID (<http://www.gotvoterid.com/main.html>).” No information is given on how a provisional ballot could be cast, even without a photo ID. An example of this advertising is shown in Figure 1. Kobach disseminated these materials through this website and through various forms of print and television media.

[Figure 1 Here]

Our project seeks to take advantage of the fact that county clerks had the option of generating their own advertising campaigns to inform citizens about the new law. Douglas County Clerk Jamie Shew chose to aggressively act to reduce the risk that new voter ID laws reduced turnout. Shew reached out to voters with the message, “If you don’t have [a photo ID], you can still cast a provisional ballot. You’re not going to be turned away from the polls (Fagan 2011).” His office created its own advertising campaign highlighting this message, disseminating it via a countywide mailer. Shew was also active in using local newspapers and other media to let people understand no voter would be turned away. His office even took the extraordinary step of issuing county photo IDs free of charge. A current utility bill, bank statement, government check or other government documents that show a name or address was all that was required to receive an ID, in contrast to the state’s requirement that a birth certificate be produced for an ID to be issued (Lawhorn 2011).¹⁴ Finally, Shew developed materials for election workers outlining provisional ballot procedures, even if the voters do not have a photo-identification.

Alternatively, most county clerks used materials that strongly echoed the “got voter ID?” message promoted by the Secretary of States’ office.¹⁵ Many county clerks sent out pamphlets to registered voters, hung signs around town, put information in the local paper, and had information booths at the county fair informing voters that they would be required to take their photo ID to the polls in order to vote. Other county clerks did little to inform voters about the policy.¹⁶ We contacted each of the 105 Kansas county clerks and conducted brief phone interview with each clerk. We were able to confirm that only Douglas County has a clerk that generated advertising materials that differed in substance from the Secretary of State’s advertising campaign.¹⁷

To assess the impact of Douglas County’s “all votes will be counted” message, we can compare turnout in precincts from the 104 counties in Kansas that only received the “Got ID?” advertising (control group) to turnout in Douglas County precincts, which received both the “all votes count” and “Got ID?” advertising (treatment group).¹⁸ We hypothesize that voters receiving only the “got voter ID?” are less likely to vote. Alternatively, we hypothesize that residents receiving the additional “all votes will be counted” advertising will minimize turnout reductions associated with the new voter ID law.

Methods

Unfortunately, simply comparing turnout in Douglas County to the rest of the state would be an insufficient way to test for advertising effects. Douglas County is fairly unique among Kansas counties. Douglas County is one of only two Kansas counties where Obama won a majority of the votes in 2012.¹⁹ While 17.2% of Kansans hold a 4-year college degree, 28.0% of residents in Douglas County, the home of the University of Kansas, hold a 4-year degree.

Summary statistics for all Kansas precincts and Douglas County precincts are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

[Table 1 and 2 About Here]

Rather than compare Douglas County to other counties, we use matching techniques to compare Douglas County precincts to statistically similar precincts in other parts of the state. We consider other factors that could influence turnout, such as turnout in previous elections, demographic characteristics, and ideological data. Matching identifies a non-Douglas County precinct that is virtually identical among these factors for each Douglas County precinct. The only real difference will be that the Douglas County precincts would have received the additional “all votes will be counted” advertising while the otherwise similar non-Douglas County precincts did not. This methodology allows us to mirror an experimental design where some precincts are given a treatment and others are left in a control group, without needing to manipulate these treatments directly.

We employ this quasi-experimental design to assess the effects of voter identification law advertising on turnout in the 2012 election. We use cluster-randomized experiment matching to find pairs of precincts that are virtually identical in a statistical sense to the 64 unique precincts in Douglas County. To match precincts, we collected demographic, turnout, and ideological data for all 3907 voting precincts in Kansas.²⁰

Precincts were matched on race, age, gender, political party, 2008 turnout, and income.²¹

²² While the precincts in the treatment group are from the same geographic unit, there is significant variation across precincts as displayed in Table 2 above. The only statistical

difference between matched precincts is whether or not the precinct received advertising (Imai et al. 2009).²³ We are then able to assess turnout difference between treatment groups, while carefully accounting for all other non-identification law factors that may be influencing turnout.²⁴ To ensure that smaller precincts don't overly influence the analysis and to account for the variation in precincts size, we standardized our variables by reporting the rates, as opposed to raw numbers.

Results

The results show that Douglas County precincts did have higher turnout in the 2012 presidential election than precincts in other counties. This effect is significant with $p < 0.001$. This finding provides support for our hypothesis that positive advertising and efforts to make photo IDs more accessible are correlated with higher levels of turnout. Douglas County's efforts saw a 2.3% average higher turnout in its precinct compared to similar precincts in the rest of the state. This indicates that different types of advertising can influence how voter ID laws impact turnout levels at the precinct level.²⁵

[Table 3 Here]

While matching techniques account for the control variables primarily at the matching level, these controls are included in the matched regressions. When the model is run with matching, all control variables perform as expected. Higher turnout in 2008 is correlated with increased turnout in 2012. Increased levels of non-white and males are correlated with decreased

turnout and increased percentage of Republicans in a precinct and increased median income levels are correlated with increased levels of turnout.

Discussion

It is well documented that underrepresented populations, such as minorities and the poor, are less likely than their white counterparts to possess photo IDs (Barreto, Nuno, and Sanchez 2009; Hood and Bullock 2008; Stewart 2013). The literature has had a harder time establishing a causal link between the decreased likelihood of possessing an ID and reduction in turnout as a result of photo ID laws. It is currently unclear the extent that photo ID laws may prevent or discourage vulnerable populations from voting (Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz 2008; Mycoff, Wagner, and Wilson 2009; and Milyo 2007). While some studies do find a negative impact on turnout, the effect is small (Alvarez, Bailey, and Katz 2008; Vercellotti and Anderson 2006). In certain elections, especially those at the local level, however; even a small effect could have a large impact the election outcomes.

Our findings show promising results for policy makers and government officials who wish to counter potential negative repercussions of ID laws on turnout. While the differences between advertising focusing on “Got ID” and “every vote will be counted” do indicate that voter ID decreases turnout, it appears that targeted advertising explaining the provisional ballot process to voters and increased efforts to make photo IDs easy and inexpensive to obtain, can mitigate the potential negative effects voter ID laws may have on turnout.

But the news is not all good – while advertising that reduces voters perceived costs has the potential to improve turnout, advertising that emphasizes increased costs of voter-ID laws – like the Kansas “Got ID” campaign – are likely to decrease turnout. This study highlights the

important role that local administration of elections can have on turnout. What message local officials send to their voters can alter their calculations of costs and benefits and can impact voter turnout. While we do not suggest that advertising campaigns can prevent all the potential negative effects that voter ID laws could have on turnout – voter ID laws may still prevent many, otherwise eligible voters, without ID from voting regardless of how good the outreach is – government officials or independent groups have a potential role to play in influencing the public’s perception of these laws and thus affecting turnout. As long as legislative bodies continue to use their power to change electoral institutions; these changes will have the potential to change both the perceived and real costs and benefits of voting.

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Figure 1. “Got Voter ID” Advertising Campaign



Screenshots from Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach’s advertising campaign on new voter ID laws. See <http://www.gotvoterid.com/main.html>.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for All Kansas Precincts

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Turnout 2012	0.579	0.169	0.009	1.000
Turnout 2008	0.617	0.168	0.000	1.000
Race (% Non-White)	0.105	0.129	0.000	1.000
Age (% over 65)	0.164	0.081	0.000	1.000
Gender (% Female)	0.498	0.042	0.191	0.709
Education (% 4-year Degree)	0.172	0.105	0.005	0.643
Party (% Republican)	0.503	0.169	0.000	1.000
Income (Median in \$10,000s)	5.343	2.149	1.278	25.000
Douglas County	0.022	0.147	0	1

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Douglas Precincts

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Turnout 2012	0.580	0.179	0.112	0.928
Turnout 2008	0.627	0.170	0.000	0.941
Race (% Non-White)	0.137	0.087	0.034	0.503
Age (% over 65)	0.103	0.063	0.001	0.424
Gender (% Female)	0.506	0.039	0.407	0.625
Education (% 4-year Degree)	0.280	0.103	0.083	0.532
Party (% Republican)	0.299	0.114	0.095	0.503
Income (Median in \$10,000s)	5.313	2.083	1.278	11.917

Table 3: Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> Voter Turnout
Douglas	0.023*** (0.005)
Turnout2008	0.625*** (0.073)
Race	-0.131* (0.071)
Gender	0.267 (0.214)
Age	0.210** (0.100)
Education	0.117*** (0.041)
Party	0.130* (0.073)
Income	0.015*** (0.004)
Constant	-0.124 (0.100)
Observations	128
R ²	0.858

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix

Matched Precincts

	Matched
Atchison	2
Bourbon	1
Crawford	10
Douglas	64
Geary	1
Greenwood	1
Johnson	30
Leavenworth	2
Lyon	1
Riley	4
Sedgwick	2
Shawnee	8
Wyandotte	2

Endnotes

¹ Supporters of voter ID laws do point to documented instances of voter fraud and argue that, because voter fraud is difficult to detect, these limited number of documented cases are indicative of fairly high levels of voter fraud in the United States (Kobach 2011).

² A 2006 Brennan Center study claims that as many as 11% of Americans do not have a government issued photo ID. This claim is based on the results of a phone survey of 987 voting-age citizens (Brennan Center 2006).

³ This paper only considers the recent photo ID requirement in Kansas and does not consider the proof of citizenship requirement that became law on January 1, 2013. The citizenship requirement was *not* in effect for 2012 election, which is the focus of this study.

⁴ For example, in the South it was common to have poll taxes, white primaries, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses, all of which were designed to increase the costs of voting for blacks without affecting the cost of white voters.

⁵ These laws were so successful that voter turnout dropped 17 percent between 1896 and 1916 as a result of the new requirements (Burnham 1987).

⁶ For example, voters that register by mail are required to present a valid photo-identification when voting in person. Voters registering by mail are required to provide a document verifying their current address, such as a recent utility bill or bank statement.

⁷ There have only been a small number of voting fraud cases in the US. Over a five-year period, from 2002 to 2007, about 120 people were charged with voter fraud and only 86 of those were convicted (Lipton and Urbina 2007). Indeed, Ahlquist, Mayer and Jackman find that the

“proportion of the population reporting voter impersonation is indistinguishable from that reporting abduction by extraterrestrials (2014).”

⁸ Voters are only required to state or sign their name.

⁹ Individuals without a valid government ID are given a provisional ballot. For a provisional ballot to be counted, the voter must present an acceptable ID to election officials within ten days. If a valid ID is not presented to officials, the provisional ballot is not counted.

¹⁰ The National Conference of State Legislatures maintains a complete list of state voter ID laws (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>).

¹¹ Legal challenges have successfully overturned voter ID laws at both the state court and federal court level. The Obama administration used power granted to the Department of Justice (DOJ) under the Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to invalidate voter ID laws in Texas and South Carolina. Under the 1965 Voting Rights Act, new election laws in all or parts of 16 states with a history of discriminatory election practices must be either pre-approved by DOJ or approved by a federal court. In *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013), the Supreme Court ruled to overturn key sections of the Voting Rights Act, effectively putting a halt on the DOJ’s efforts to further challenge state voter ID.

¹² Hood and Bullock (2008) find that African-American, Hispanics and the elderly in Georgia are less likely to possess a photo ID than other voters. Similarly, Barreto, Nuno, and Sanchez (2009) find that in Indiana minority, low-income, and less educated residents are less likely to possess a valid photo ID.

¹³ See Springer (2014) for an expansive discussion of how state electoral laws affect voter turnout.

¹⁴ Shew offered county IDs after receiving concerns from local nursing home operators about residents that did not have valid photo IDs. Shew issued IDs at nursing homes and other sites that requested IDs, so residents would not have to travel (Lawhorn 2011).

¹⁵ All of counties which have precincts matched to Douglas County precincts used in the ensuing analysis used the materials provided by the Secretary of States' office.

¹⁶ This effect was somewhat mitigated by the statewide television and radio advertising campaign sponsored by the Kansas Secretary of State's office.

¹⁷ It is not surprising that no other clerks generated their own ad campaigns, given the many other jobs that county clerks perform. The website of Shawnee County Clerk Cyndi Beck lists some of her varied duties as including Freedom of Information Officer, HIPAA privacy officer, payroll administrator, county health plan administrator, responsible for maintaining real estate ownership files, sets and certifies all mill levies, responsible for all accounts payable, and "many other statutory duties not listed."

¹⁸ Given that the amount of "Got ID?" advertising varied given the different activities pursued by different county clerks, there may be spatial autocorrelation within counties. To account for this, we include clustered standard errors at the county level in our analysis.

¹⁹ Obama carried 67.61% of Wyandotte County, an urban county containing Kansas City, Kansas.

²⁰ Many precincts have no registered voters in them. All precincts that had no registered voters or no voters in the 2012 election were removed from the analysis, leaving 2906 precincts.

²¹ Because of redistricting there were some discrepancies matching all 2012 precincts with relevant demographic and turnout data from previous elections. Clear mismatches were excluded from the analysis.

²² Education and income were taken from the American Community Survey. As such, the data was only available at the census block group level. Census block groups and precincts (VTD level data) have overlapping borders. To account for this mismatch within the data, the authors computed the measurement for education and income by calculating the census block group composition of each precinct and then weighting the data according to the percent of the precinct that overlapped with a block group.

²³ The 64 matched precincts in the analysis come from only 12 counties. Because Douglas County is more urban and more highly educated than the average Kansas county, matched precincts tend to come from urban counties (counties in metro Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka) and counties containing universities (all but one state universities in contained in the 12 matched counties. Appendix 1 reports the number of matched precincts per county.

²⁴ Our measure of voter turnout is the percentage of voting age population (VAP) that turned out to vote, not the percentage of registered voters.

²⁵ To ensure that the positive effect for Douglas County observed in Table 3 is due to the mobilization outreach in 2012 and not inherent to Douglas County, we run the same model to predict turnout for the 2008 election. In these elections, there was no “extra outreach” by Douglas County, and we do not see the 2.3% turnout bump. This confirms that the results we observe are not just a Douglas County effect.