



Registration Innovation: The Impact of State Laws on Voter Registration and Turnout

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How can administrators improve registration?

Length of Time to Register

- Closing dates closer to the election day
- Election Day Registration

Opportunities to Register

- 'Motor voter' laws (DMV registrations)
- Online Registration
- Pre-registration of youth
- Registration campaigns and public outreach

List Management

- List centralization or decentralization
- List sharing with other government departments and agencies
- Automatic Voter Registration
- Frequency of purging, 'motor voter' laws (purging)
- Online Registration

Four Innovations Studied



Election Day
Registration (EDR)



Online
Registration (OR)

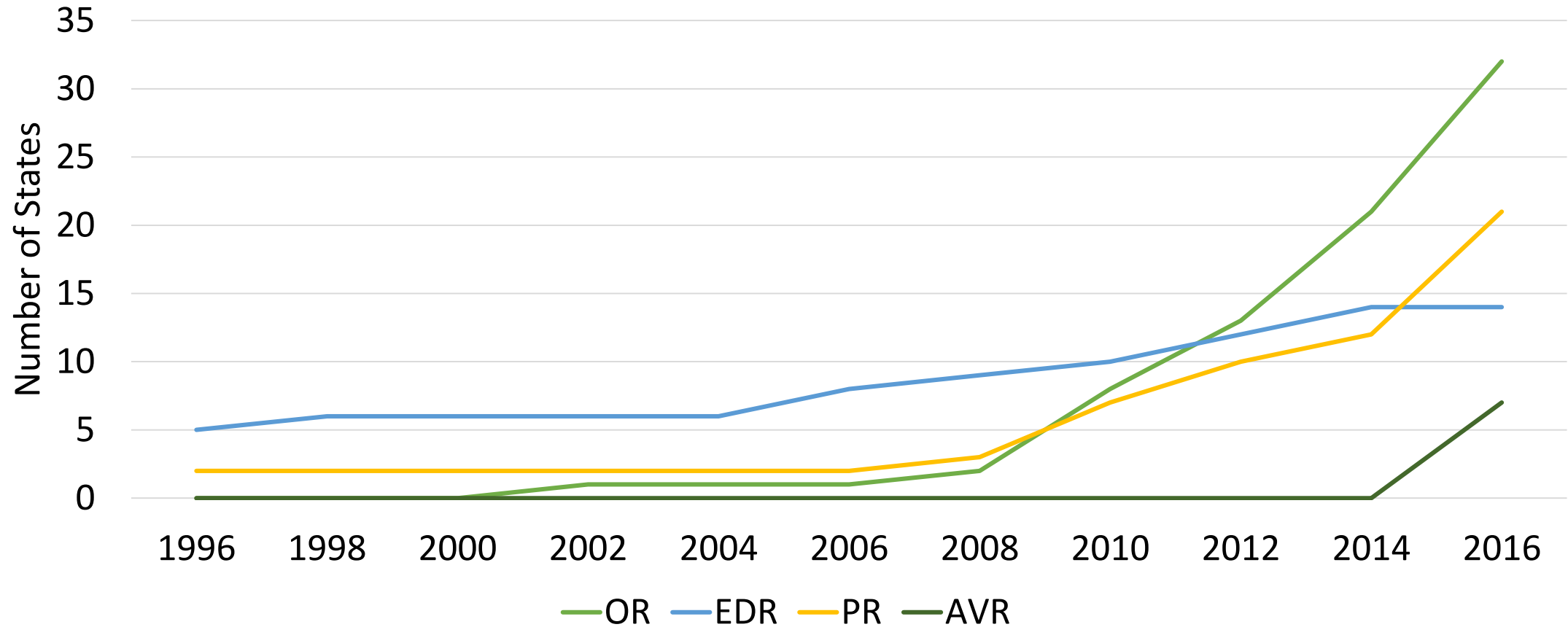


Pre-Registration of
Youth (PR)

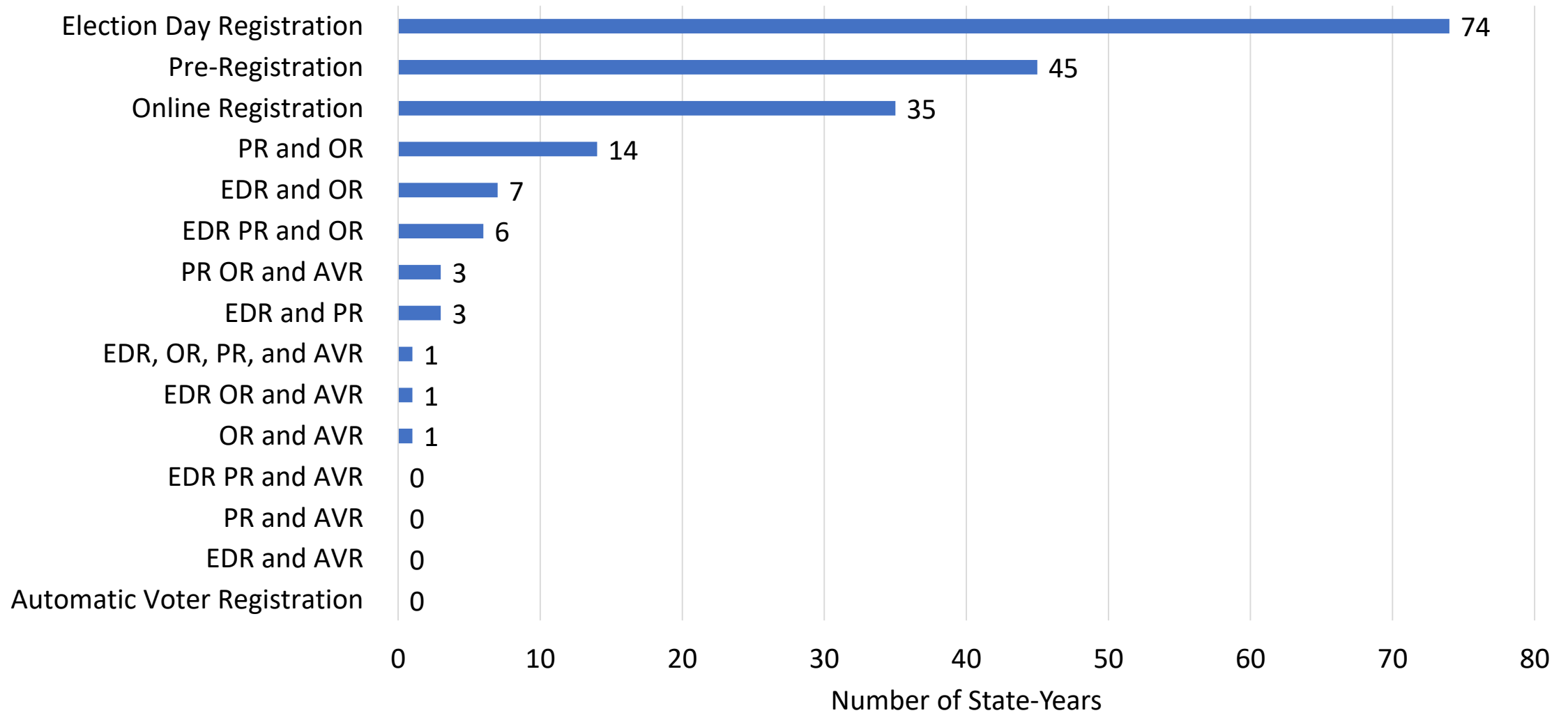


Automatic Voter
Registration (AVR)

Why (still) Study Voter Registration?



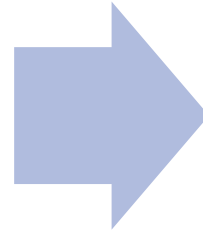
Method: Studying Registration Regimes



Method: Models

Independent Variables

- Registration Regime
- Controls:
 - Socio-Demographic Variables (gender, age, education, minority status and mobility)
 - State (South, North Dakota)
- State & Year Fixed Effects



Dependent Variables

- Registered (0/1)
- Voted (0/1)

Results

Election Day Registration Alone

- Registration: decrease
- Turnout: ~ 2%-point increase in turnout

Online Registration Alone

- Registration: ~ 2%-point increase
- Turnout ~ 2%-point increase

Pre-Registration Alone

- Registration ~ 5%-point increase (young voters)
- Turnout ~ 6%-point increase (young voters)

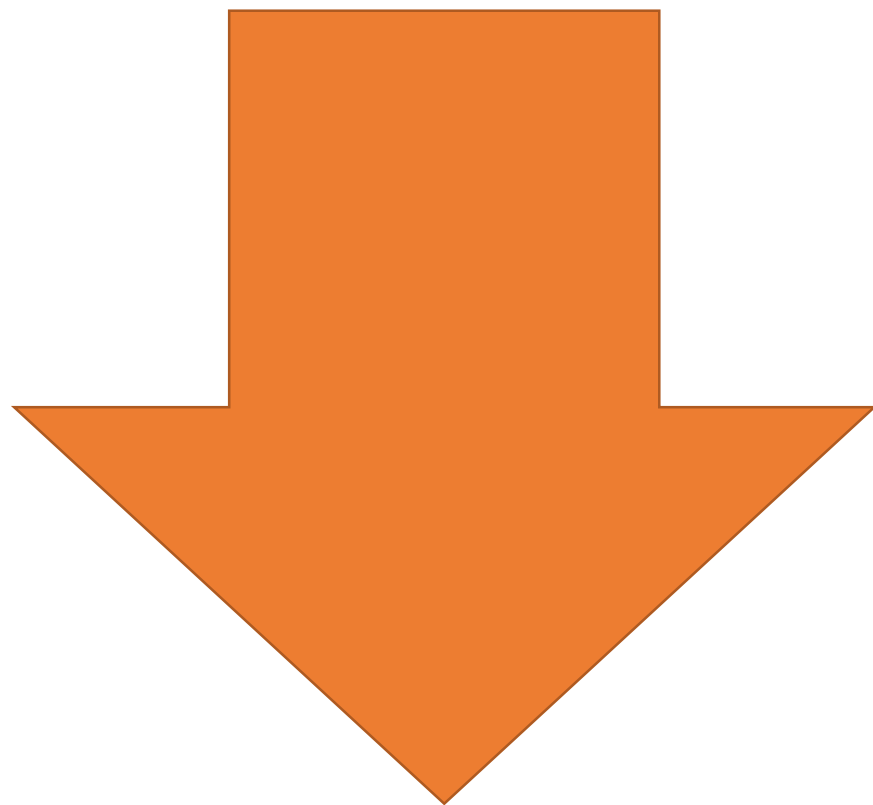
Automatic Voter Registration

- Cannot be studied alone, only with other innovations

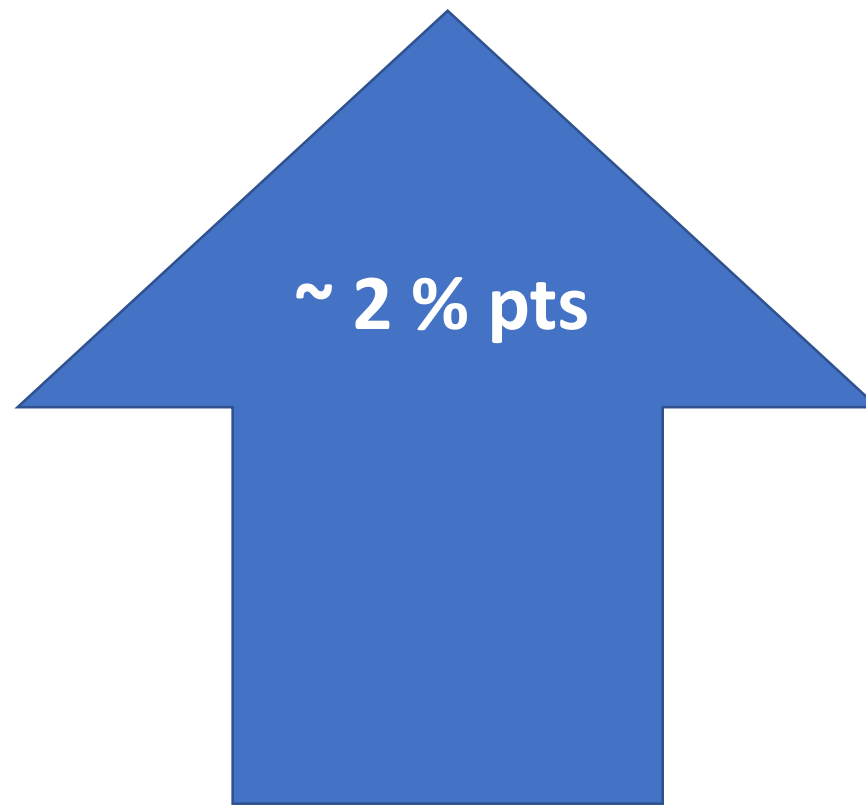
Registration Regimes

- PR + OR ~ 10% point increase (young voters, registration & turnout)
- EDR + OR + PR small increase (registration & turnout)

Election Day Registration (Alone)

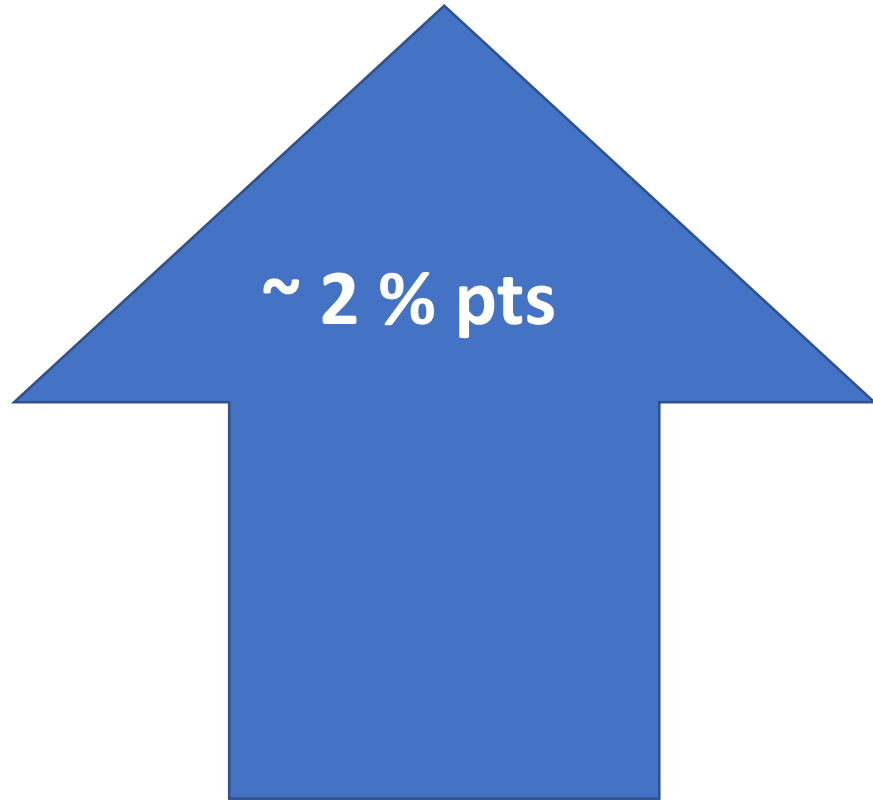


Registration

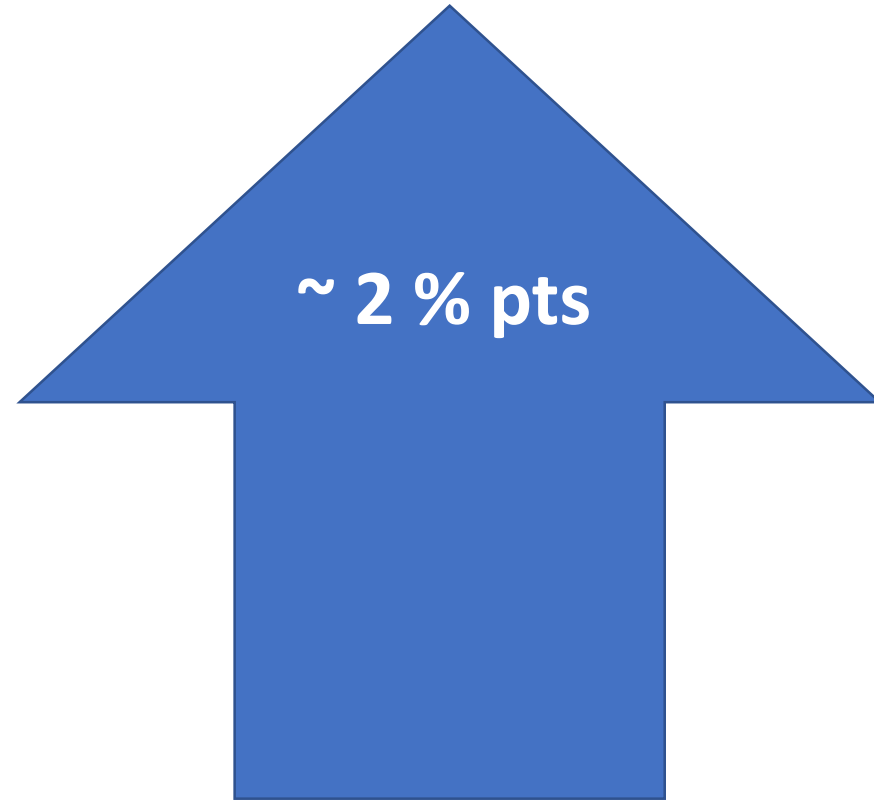


Voting

Online Registration (Alone)

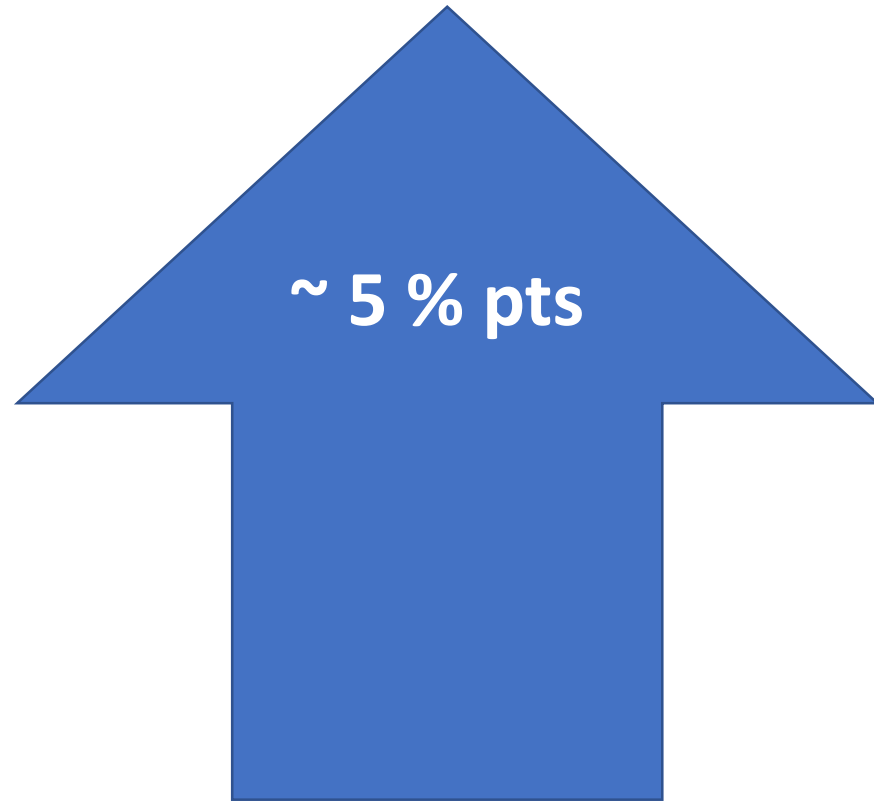


Registration

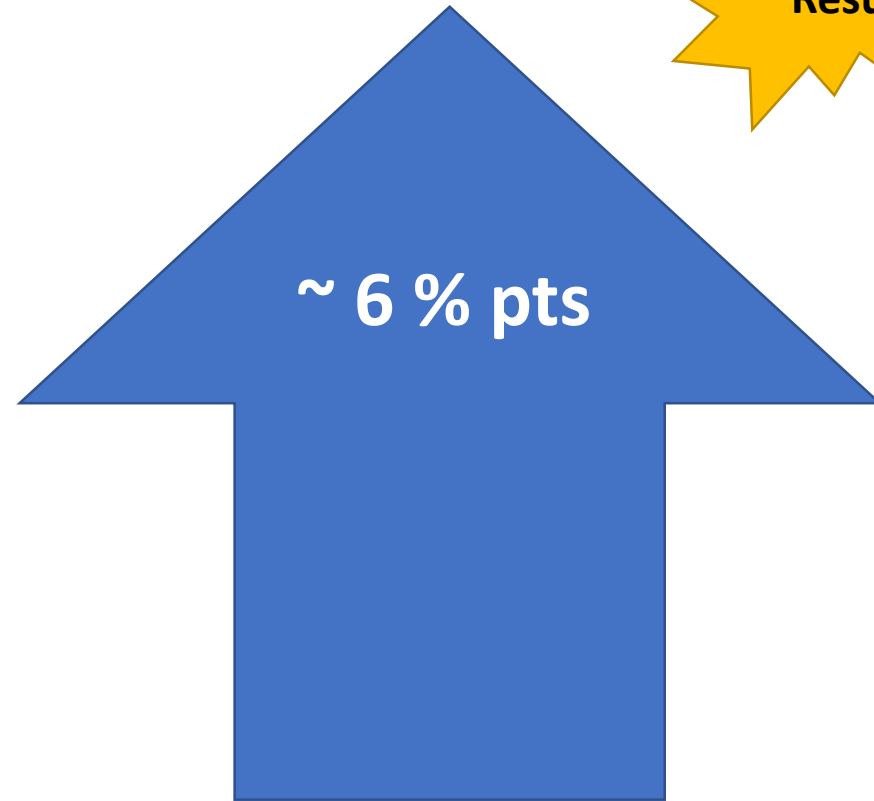


Voting

Pre-Registration (Alone)



Registration



Voting



Automatic Voter Registration



Registration



Voting

Pre-Registration + Online Registration



Registration



Voting



Conclusions

1. Registration innovations *can* increase registration and turnout rates
2. Election day registration may decrease registration rates, but can nonetheless increase turnout
3. The combination of online registration and pre-registration of youth can have sizable impacts on youth registration and turnout
4. Administrators and scholars must be careful in evaluating the impact testing one innovation alone, or one election year