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Voter Registration, Turnout, and Participation Among Movers and Transients

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Voter Registration, Participation, and Turnout among Movers and Transient Communities

BACKGROUND

How does voter registration affect the participation and turnout of movers and transient populations?

- The transient population can be defined as groups of people living in a geographic place that tend to only live there for a short time. These people are also called movers.
- Transients and movers are less likely to be registered to vote at the address where they currently reside; and are therefore more likely to not be able to vote in elections due to registration deadlines
- There are many different registration policies and methods of registration systems with differing deadlines that impact voting accessibility
- There are solutions to voter registration deadline issues such as automatic, portable, and same-day voter registration, which are proven methods of helping to increase voter turnout and registration rates amongst movers and transients.

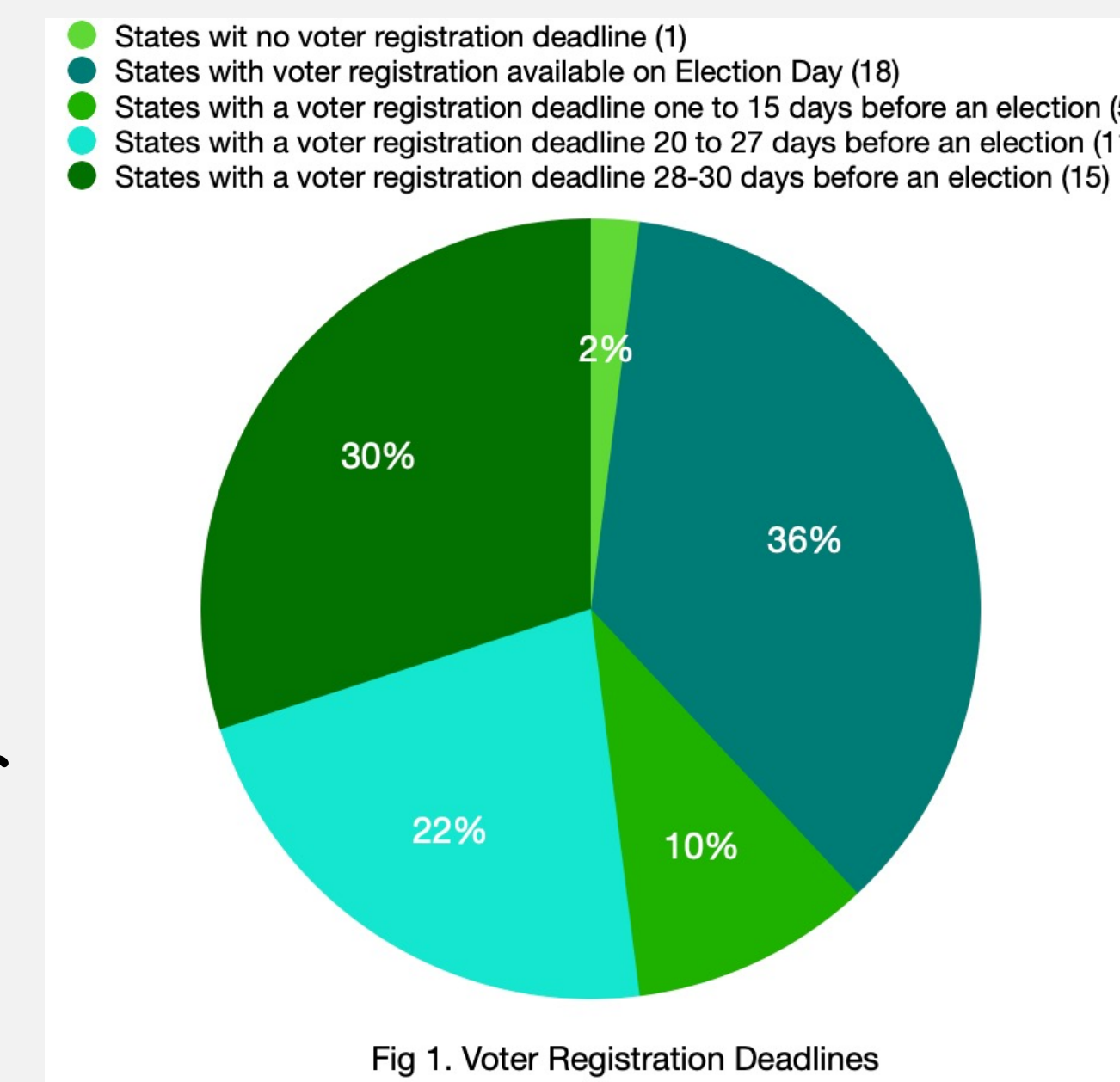
METHODS

- Conducting an analysis of Broome County Voter Registration trends by district
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the transient and mover population of the City of Binghamton by looking at changes in the Census Records
- Considering these trends in relation to polling places across the City of Binghamton
- Visiting locations registered as polling places in the City according to the Broome County Board of Elections and analyzing any anticipated issues with parking or accessibility to the polling place

RESULTS

TRANSIENT VOTING REGISTRATION TRENDS

We can observe after looking at the sets of Voter Registration Data that with transient communities, voter participation is not very high. Levels of registration are not always reflective of the electorate because of the high rates of transients and movers. Given the constant mobility of households or individuals, this results in issues where voters are not unregistered from their previous address through the Board of Elections but no longer reside at the residence. They then become unable to vote due to Voter Registration deadlines.



POLLING LOCATIONS AND TRANSIT ROUTES

Within the City of Binghamton, a majority of the polling locations are within walking distance of transit lines. However, not all of the polling places appear to have ample parking locations for voters when lines build up. This creates a burden for voters that would decrease voter turnout.



Fig. 2 Polling Locations and Fixed Transit Map

NYS VOTER REGISTRATION

- Must be a United States citizen
- Must be 18 years old (can pre-register at 16 / 17 but cannot vote until 18)
- Must be a resident of NY state and the county, city or village for at least 30 days before the election (creates an issue for transients and movers)
- not be in prison for a felony conviction;
- not be adjudged mentally incompetent by a court
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere
- Registration deadline 25 days before election day

CONCLUSION

Levels of voter registration within the City of Binghamton are not below average when looking at U.S. Census records for the total eligible voting population, but the registration rates are impacted due to registration deadlines. The lack of same-day or portable voter registration creates a barrier for transient individuals or movers to vote in elections when deadlines are set far away from Election Day. The best possible solution to address this issue would be to change the registration deadline requirement. Additionally, polling place accessibility must be increased when a region is known to have a transient population as it helps to increase voter turnout.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is still needed into the number of movers across the City of Binghamton and Broome County that are registered to vote. The large college student demographic impacts many of the records based on housing. A study of registered voters discovering who has relocated within the City since the last election would be needed to identify this data.

REFERENCES

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- Fig. 2 Data from the National Conference of State Legislatures
- Voter registration deadlines*. Voter Registration Deadlines | New York State Board of Elections. (n.d.).
- Fig. 2 Data from Broome County GIS and Mapping Services