Report on the 1972-2008 Early and Absentee Voting Dataset

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1. Introduction

Recent decades have seen a large number of states adopt non-precinct voting procedures, and such reforms have now gained wide public support. In striking contrast, scholars have paid relatively little attention to the impact of alternative procedures, locations and timing in the conduct of elections. One of the reasons for this lack of attention is the absence of a detailed dataset on state laws governing the availability and procedures associated with non-precinct voting laws for federal, state and local elections. With the support of the Pew Foundation, we have collected data on state laws governing non-precinct voting in each state for each presidential year election from 1972 thru 2008. This report describes the procedures used to collect these data and describes our basic findings regarding the availability of, methods for and identification requirements associated with absentee and early voting in the states. The dataset of laws is available from the Pew Trust as both a spreadsheet and a Stata dataset. In addition to being used to study the evolution of the laws on non-precinct voting, when combined with other data this dataset can be used to measure the impact of non-precinct voting on elections and campaigns. Leighley and Nagler have used it to study the impact of non-precinct voting on turnout.[1] It could also be used to study the impact of non-precinct voting on campaign spending or campaign mobilization activity.

2. Non-Precinct Voting in the States: Absentee and In-Person Early Voting

Federal, state and local elections in the U.S. are governed primarily by state statutes and administrative codes, and our data collection for 1972-2008 is guided by this principle. Of course, several notable federal statutes also govern the implementation of elections in the states, including the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act, and the Help America Vote Act. While this study interpreted state laws in the context of these federal statutes, it primarily reports the content of state law as it is written, *even where state law appears to deviate from federal law and would therefore be void*.

Our documentation of state laws focuses on two types of non-precinct voting available in the states: absentee voting and in-person early voting. These terms are sometimes used interchangeably by policymakers as well as academics, and state legislative statutes governing their availability sometimes overlap as well. Consequently, it was necessary to first clearly define each term so that states could be accurately categorized on various dimensions of these policies. We define *absentee voting* as requesting, completing and returning a ballot prior to Election Day, and being able to do so without being present in person at an election office or precinct.

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[1] Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler, ``The Effects of Non-Precinct Voting Reforms on Turnout, 1972-2008'', December, 2009, report produced for the Pew Charitable Trusts' Make Voting Work.

We define *in-person early voting* as a one-stop transaction in which the voter requests a ballot, completes the ballot, and returns the completed ballot. If any portion of this three-part transaction does not occur simultaneously, or if it occurs at another location, it is not in-person early voting by our definition. Therefore, states were only classified as allowing early voting if the relevant statutory language explicitly permits the voter to complete the ballot *in the presence of election officials*. This definition may exclude some states in which early voting takes place, where those operations are not explicitly described in state statutes. For instance, many states allow voters to request absentee ballots in person and return them in person. There may be nothing to stop a local election official working under this regime from permitting voters who have requested ballots in person to complete them immediately on site and return them to the official. However, because a one-stop transaction is not explicitly mentioned in state statutes, we did not classify such a state as having "in-person early voting." We use the terms "in-person early voting" and "early voting" interchangeably below.

States may vary in numerous respects in how they allow (or require) citizens to complete each of the three required steps (requesting, completing and returning a ballot) and we have documented these variations, as described below. We also code state laws with respect to details regarding eligibility, timing and identification requirements associated with both absentee voting and in-person early voting.

One case that often causes confusion in the use of the terms *absentee voting* and *early voting* is Oregon, which conducts all statewide elections by mail (delivery and returns). Because voting-by-mail can be done before election day and does not take place in traditional precincts, the state might be considered as having a form of early or absentee voting. In our dataset, however, we code Oregon (like the other states) based on the above definitions of absentee and in-person early voting. Under these definitions, voting-by-mail is neither early nor absentee voting. Instead, in accordance with our definitions, we code Oregon's absentee and early voting rules based on state laws specific to those individuals who do not vote by the regular vote-by-mail system rules, e.g., those individuals who will be away from their residence during the voting period.

We emphasize that the data we have collected are based entirely on state statutes and administrative law. We have no data on how state or local officials implement these state laws. Where possible, we have coded some details as to whether state statutes or administrative law allow for county or municipal level variations. However, for those states that allow such variations, we have no relevant information as to the extent to which local officials take advantage of these options.

3. Coding Procedures and Dataset

The primary research method used to produce this dataset was review of relevant state statutes and administrative codes (hereinafter referred to simply as "laws") identified using standard search procedures in Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw. The goal was to identify the contours of the laws according to their plain meaning, even if other sources suggested that actual practice may sometimes deviate from that meaning. The review did not take into account any case law

that might have interpreted these laws in a way that deviated from their plain meaning. For additional details regarding the challenges of coding legal statutes over time, see Appendix A.

After identifying the relevant laws, researchers coded each state on various statutory details associated with state absentee and early voting laws. Coding procedures were developed based on discussions and planning sessions conducted by our research team, which consists of both experienced elections attorneys and senior political scientists. We first developed a list of attributes of each type of voting that we expected to be observable in the state laws, and then developed for each of these variables a discrete set of categories to which states could be assigned. Each substantive category was represented by a numerical value, and these coded data were entered into a spreadsheet format, where each row represents a different state, and each column in that spreadsheet represents a different variable.

Work was divided between two experienced elections attorneys and two law students. The attorneys trained, supervised, and reviewed for accuracy the work of the law students, who conducted most of the primary research. The law students relied on the coding procedures the research team had developed initially (and modified as necessary throughout the course of data collection) and reduced to writing in the codebook. When the law students were uncertain as to how to code specific laws, they consulted with the lead election attorneys, who reviewed the primary research, documented the issues involved and made the final coding decisions.

The data we have collected on absentee voting include variables that document:

1. whether individuals must provide an excuse to vote absentee.
2. whether individuals can permanently register as voting absentee.
3. how individuals may request absentee ballots.
4. how individuals may return absentee ballots.
5. identification requirements for requesting and returning absentee ballots.
6. deadlines for requesting and returning absentee ballots.
7. restrictions and rules imposed on first-time voters voting absentee.

The data we have collected on in-person early voting include variables that document:

1. whether individuals must provide an excuse to vote early.
2. identification requirements for early voting.
3. the time period available for early voting.
4. the number of sites and hours of operation for early voting sites.
5. restrictions and rules imposed on first-time voters voting early.

The dataset consists of 53 state-level variables for each presidential election year between 1972 and 2008; 1972 was chosen as the first year for data collection because it is the conventional starting date for empirical studies of contemporary voter turnout in the U.S. given the dramatic changes in federal voting and civil rights laws in the 1960s. The statutes of each state were coded according to what laws were in effect for each presidential election from 1972 to 2008. The unit of analysis is the state-presidential year (e.g., Alabama in 1972, Alaska in 1972 . . . Wyoming in 2008). Each cell entry in the dataset represents the nature of the legal statute governing non-precinct voting in that state for that year, and is tagged with the particular

state statute that our coding is based on. We include in Appendix B the codebook for the dataset, including the frequencies for each variable in 2008.

4. Overview of Findings: Non-Precinct Voting Laws in the States

Below are the main findings from the data, contrasting the major features of non-precinct voting laws in 2008 compared to 1972:

- While in 2008 all states made available some form of absentee voting, only 27 states allowed individuals to cast an absentee ballot without specifying an excuse. In 1972, only two states allowed no-excuse absentee voting.

- In 2008, thirty-four states required election officials to offer some form of early voting, while an additional four states permitted it. In 2008 31 states offered no excuse early voting, compared to only five states offering no-excuse early voting in 1972.

- In 2008, state statutes most commonly identified mail (37), fax (26) and in-person (39) means for requesting absentee ballots; only 15 states explicitly authorized third-party ballot requests, and three states explicitly prohibited this practice. In 1972, mail and in-person means were most common, while no state specifically authorized requests by fax.

- Most states allowed for mail (47) or in-person (40) return of absentee ballots in 2008. Twenty-five states permitted third parties to return these ballots on behalf of the voter in 2008, up from five in 1972. No state allowed the return of ballots by email or internet over the entire period (except for some states that allow those individuals who are covered under UOCAVA to do so).

- Identification requirements for requesting absentee ballots are minimal: 29 states do not require any form of identification. The other states have various requirements: ten states require the presentation of an identification number, and nine states require a signature match; only two states require absentee ballot requests to be notarized.

- The number of states requiring local officials offer early voting has increased from 21 to 34 between 1972 and 2008. However, whereas in 1972 only five of the 21 states with early voting allowed no-excuse early voting, in 2008 fully 31 of the 34 states with early voting allowed no-excuse early voting.

- Early voting periods—how early relative to Election Day, and for how long—varied substantially by state in 2008. Six states had an early voting period of less than or equal to ten days, while 13 states had periods between 11 and 20 days, five states had periods between 21 and 30 days, and four states had early voting periods longer than 30 days. Sixteen states require weekend early voting hours

- The minimum number of early voting sites also varied greatly in 2008, with three states limiting early voting sites to one, 20 states allowing local officials to offer more sites at their discretion, and three states requiring additional sites based on other criteria (population size, for example). Statutes in twelve states did not specify any details regarding the number of early voting sites.

5. Absentee Voting Laws, 1972-2008

Since 1972, all 50 states have offered absentee voting for those citizens who show that they cannot be present at the polls on election day (e.g., physical incapacity or travel on election day). By 2008, over half the states offered *no-excuse* absentee voting. This represents a huge and widely discussed change since 1972, when only two states (Idaho and Tennessee) offered no-excuse absentee voting. Figure 1 shows this increase over the 36 year period. In 2008, 11 of the 27 no-excuse states provided for permanent absentee registration. In the other 16 states with no-excuse absentee voting, citizens must request an absentee ballot in each election in which they seek to vote, rather than automatically having such a request registered with election officials. In four states with absentee voting only for those proving cause, voters are allowed to register for permanent absentee status (provided they meet the state standard for eligibility for absentee voting).

In 2008 the most common acceptable forms of requesting absentee ballots were in-person, by mail or by fax. Most states in 2008 allowed for mail or in-person return of absentee ballots. While 25 states permitted third parties to return these ballots on behalf of the voter, no state allowed the return of ballots by email or internet (except for some states that allow those individuals who are covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) to do so). Identification requirements for requesting absentee ballots were minimal in 2008, with 29 states not requiring any identification. Twelve states require no ID to return an absentee ballot. In 28 states, a signature match is sufficient. Requirements vary in other states. One state pairs a signature match with an ID number requirement. The other nine states require some form of identification to return an absentee ballot.

[Figure 1. Absentee Voting Laws, 1972-2008]

The most commonly authorized forms of requesting absentee ballots, in 2008 as in 1972, were by mail and in person (see Figure 2). Though authorized by fewer states than mail or in-person requests, requests for absentee ballots by a third party were authorized by a substantially larger number of states in 2008 than in 1972 (15 vs. five). The availability of absentee ballots by fax has risen even more sharply. As shown in Figure 3, the number of states authorizing absentee ballot requests by fax increased from 0 in 1972 to 26 in 2008. Another notable but more recent increase is in the number of states authorizing absentee ballot requests by the web. No states authorized such requests in 2000, compared to nine states in 2008. The number of states authorizing absentee ballot requests by phone increased as well, from one state in 1972 to five states in 2008.

[Figure 2. Traditional Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008]

[Figure 3. Electronic Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008]

Trends in the number of states authorizing absentee ballot *submission* by traditional means are similar to those for absentee ballot requests. As shown in Figure 4, most states' laws expressly authorize absentee ballot submissions by mail and in person (47 and 40, respectively). The largest change in absentee ballot submission methods since 1972 is for returns by a third-party, authorized by five states in 1972 and by 25 in 2008. In contrast, electronic methods for submitting absentee ballots are authorized by only three states (by fax) in 2008 (see Figure 5). Thus, the states are more restrictive in how citizens may submit, compared to how citizens may request, absentee ballots.

[Figure 4. Traditional Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008]

[Figure 5. Electronic Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008]

The average number of days prior to the election for absentee ballot requests and submissions has been quite stable. The average number of days before election day a ballot must be requested has decreased from four to three since 1972; and the average number of days before an election that a postal request must be received has remained at five. For absentee ballot submissions, returns made in person could be made on election day in all states, in 2008 as well as 1972. States vary with respect to whether eligibility of postal returns is based on postmark date or receipt date, but in either case states have maintained stable (and limited) requirements. On average throughout the years from 1972 to 2008, postal ballot returns must be postmarked one day prior to the election and postal ballot returns must be received by one day after the election.

6. Early Voting Laws, 1972-2008

As shown in Figure 6, the number of states that require that election officials offer early voting has increased from 21 to 34 states between 1972 and 2008, while the number of states that allow, but do not require, officials to offer early voting has increased from zero to four. The most dramatic change over the time period we consider is that between 1972 and 2008 the number of states that offer no-excuse early voting has increased from five to 31. Thus, many more citizens have the option of early voting today than in 1972. This significant increase in the availability of early voting is quite similar to that shown for no excuse absentee voting in Figure 1 above. And it is indicative of the tremendous variation in how elections are conducted across the states. Whereas for some citizens election day'' is really a two week or more period, for other citizens election day'' is still "just' the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

[Figure 6. Early Voting Laws, 1972-2008]

Among the 24 states with no-excuse early voting that clearly specified the early voting period, the mean length of the early voting period in 2008 was 18 days, with the shortest period being three days and the longest period being 44 days. On average early voting ended two to three days before election day in 2008.

7. Comparing Absentee and Early Voting Statutes in the States

In this section we address two questions regarding the availability of absentee and early voting in the states, with some attention to changes over time. First, to what extent do states that adopt one type of non-precinct voting also adopt the other? And, second, to what extent has the adoption of non-precinct voting varied by region?

Table 10 shows the distribution in 1972 of states offering combinations of absentee voting and early voting. Only two states offered no-excuse absentee voting (Tennessee and Idaho), and they both offered early voting, with Idaho allowing both no-excuse early voting and no-excuse absentee voting.

[Table 1. Absentee and Early Voting in the States (1972)]

In 2008, all of the 22 states that offered no-excuse absentee voting also offered no-excuse early voting. Another six states offered no-excuse early voting, and an additional three states offered no-excuse absentee voting. This means that in 31 states voters have the option of voting prior to election day. And we can see that eight of the nine states that neither offer no-excuse absentee voting, nor authorize early voting, are concentrated in the Northeast. Eight of the 13 states in the Western census region are located in the bottom right-corner of the table, among the states offering both no-excuse early voting and no-excuse absentee voting. Thus some regions in the U.S. are more aggressive in implementing non-precinct voting than are others.

[Table 2. Absentee and Early Voting in the States (2008)]

We show the variations over time among the regions in Table 3. As shown there, the availability of no-excuse absentee voting is highest in the West, fairly widespread in the Midwest and South, and least available in the Northeast. All the Western states offered no-excuse absentee voting in 2008, compared to only one in 1972. Early voting is widespread in both the South and West, fairly widespread in the Midwest, and least available in the Northeast. Interestingly, the mean early voting periods in the Western states have gotten shorter since 1972 (going from 35 to 16 days), while getting longer in the Midwest states (from 22 to 29 days).

[Table 3. Absentee and Early Voting by Region (1972 and 2008)]

8. Summary of State Electoral Laws Governing Non-Precinct Voting, 1972-2008

The legal availability of no-excuse absentee voting and no-excuse early voting has increased dramatically since 1972. As we document above, the means of requesting and returning absentee ballots, and the length of the early voting period, varies substantially across states. Changes in the methods of requesting and submitting absentee ballots, as well as early voting, have been modest, though electronic forms of balloting seem to be increasing rapidly in recent election years.

9. Appendix A: Coding Challenges

The main challenge in coding these statutes over time was in finding the statutes from earlier periods. Electronic sources (Lexis and Westlaw) currently only go back to 1982 for approximately 75% of states. As a result, traditional legal sources were used for those state statutes not available through Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw. For the more recent years, law students were able to use hard copies of state statutes and administrative codes to document statutory changes over time. Unfortunately, the same type of searches could not be conducted for earlier years because most law libraries either dispose of outdated statute and administrative code books or put them into a warehousing facility where they cannot be retrieved without special permission. The libraries did, however, have books of what are referred to as "session laws." Books of session laws are issued every year by each state and are essentially compendiums of the text of each bill that was passed into law. The session law books come with an index that one can use to find whether any particular law has changed in any particular year. Project staff relied on these indices, eliminated changes to election law statutes that were determined to be irrelevant (e.g., grammatical changes), and coded those laws that were relevant.

A related problem regarding original sources was that in a few cases the law that was on the books in 1972 had not been altered for fifty or even one hundred years, but the indexing systems were not adequate to determine the last year they were amended. This might happen, for instance, if the legislature had decided at some point in history to "recodify" state statutes by organizing them in a different order and indexing them according to a different numbering system. The indices of the session laws often did not acknowledge the recodification, but were written as if the year of the recodification was the first year that the statute in question had been on the books. Additional research on the timing of these recodification changes allowed project staff to determine the appropriate code section of the statute that existed before the recodification.

In one case, where existing resources in various law libraries in Ohio did not provide the detail we needed, Nathan Cemenska, our leading staff legal researcher, travelled to Annapolis, Maryland, the only place in America where old copies of the Maryland administrative code could be found.

A second challenge the research team faced was to maintain the validity and reliability of the data being coded as the work progressed and the researchers became more experienced with the statutory codes being translated into data. Many small changes in the wording of the codebook were made in order to increase understanding and iron out ambiguities in how the codebook should be interpreted; these reflect more on the language of the codebook than on what coding procedures were followed. Another more substantive example of modifications to the coding process is how we adjusted our coding on permanent absentee voting statutes (V3). We initially trained our staff to ignore special rules or regulations that would apply only in a small percentage of cases and instead focus on the "main rule" that would apply to most people for permanent absentee voting statutes. However, we found that only a few states allowed any individual to sign up to receive absentee ballots on a permanent basis, but that many of them

allowed this procedure for individuals who were permanently disabled. For that reason, we thought that coding nearly every state as not having permanent absentee voting was invalid. We thus modified our coding procedures and codebook to document that states that permitted the disabled to sign up permanently for absentee ballots; we instructed our researchers to make sure they conformed with the updated language in the codebook. Coding of states that had been completed prior to this change was reviewed and corrected, as needed. This example is offered to illustrate the way we managed the coding team to maintain the integrity of the data as we made adjustments that we thought necessary.

More broadly, to produce the highest quality dataset to distribute to other scholars, we used a team approach that involved a high level of daily interaction of our supervising legal researcher, Nathan Cemenska, with research staff. Two features of these communications include 1) all-day teleconferences with our researchers that encouraged constant communication and promoted identifying and addressing problems as they occurred, and 2) using online collaboration tools (the Google Docs office suite) that made it possible to physically see what each individual researcher was doing to the codebook and spreadsheet at any particular time. This created a high level of integration and coordination and Cemenska was able to analyze and check the researcher's work as it was being produced, rather than at a later time when the researcher might no longer be able to explain what he or she was thinking at the time he or she entered the data and possibly continued working in a manner that did not meet the project's standards.

We also performed more detailed checks of particular variables that were identified as difficult to code. These included variable V12, which indicated whether a state offered voters the ability to request, receive, cast and return a ballot before election day in a one-stop transaction. It was important to double-check this variable because although it is meant to go to the very heart of the concept of "early voting," state statutes use different terminology for this type of transaction, or may even have outlined the procedure for conducting it but failed to give any name to the procedure at all. We also double-checked variables V10 and V14, which concerned whether special identification requirements applied to first-time voters in a particular state. We checked these variables because there were a number of states that appeared to have no such rules on the books despite the fact that the special ID requirements are part of federal law. For each of these variables, Cemenska returned to the original statutes that the staff based their codes on; we compared these statutory codes to how states describe their own laws on their election-related websites; and we compared them to data that Leighley and Nagler had collected earlier based on secondary sources such as the Book of the States. Most of the differences that existed as we compared these sources reflected differences in how the states and this project defined early and absentee voting. Because our goal was to create a data set of statutory law, we gave preference to the statutes as a confirming source rather than to secondary sources; a few minor inconsistencies or vagaries in these coding decisions are noted in the data set codebook.

10. Appendix B: Codebook for 1972 - 2008 Early and Absentee Voting Dataset (with Frequencies for 2008)

This appendix provides documentation for using the data set we have constructed. Each entry begins with a variable number, a brief label describing the variable, and the variable name, followed by a longer description of the variable. The numerical value associated with each possible coding category is followed by a colon and value label describing the category. In parentheses, to the left of each value, in bold-face font, is the number of cases in the category for 2008. Some entries also have additional notes regarding other coding details.

V1: Absentee Voting (abs_vote)

Whether the state allows voters to request absentee ballots and return them either in person, by mail, or otherwise.

- **(0)** *0: no, absentee voting is not allowed in the state*
- **(50)** *1: yes, absentee voting is allowed in the state*

V2: No-Excuse Absentee Voting (abs_nofault)

Whether the state allows voters to request absentee ballots without an excuse.

- **(23)** *0: no, an excuse is required for voting absentee or there is no absentee voting in the state*
- **(27)** *1: yes, anyone can request an absentee ballot in the state without providing an excuse*

V3: Permanent Absentee (abs_perm)

Whether the state allows some or all voters to put their name on a list that gives them permanent absentee status.

- **(35)** *0: no, state law does not authorize permanent absentee status for any voter*
- **(15)** *1: yes, state law authorizes at least some voters to have permanent absentee status*

Note: Voters with permanent absentee status receive absentee ballots automatically before each

election without having to submit a request for an absentee ballot. In general, we have coded the variables to reflect rules for the typical voter and not the special circumstances voter. However, this variable is coded "1" in states where permanent status is only available to special circumstances voters.

V4.0: Absentee request by mail (abs_request_mail)

Whether the state allows voters to send in by mail a request for an absentee ballot.

- **(0)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(37)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(13)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V4.1-V4.5) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.1: Absentee request by phone (abs_request_phone)

Whether the state allows voters to phone in requests for an absentee ballot.

- **(2)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(5)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(43)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code this variable as 0 (expressly prohibited). The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.2: Absentee request by fax (abs_request_fax)

Whether the state allows voters to fax requests for an absentee ballot.

- **(1)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(26)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(23)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code this variable as 0 (expressly prohibited). The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.3: Absentee request by web/email (abs_request_web)

Whether the state allows voters to use the internet to submit requests for an absentee ballot.
- **(2)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(9)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(39)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code this variable as 0 (expressly prohibited). The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.4: Absentee request in person (abs_request_inperson)

Whether the state allows voters to go to election officials in person to request an absentee ballot.

- **(0)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(29)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(11)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code this variable as 0 (expressly prohibited). The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.5: Third-party pickup (abs_request_thirdparty)

Whether the state allows voters to send *another person on their behalf* to go to election officials in person and request an absentee ballot.

- **(2)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(15)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(33)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may **only** be requested by mail, we code this variable as 0 (expressly prohibited). This variable refers to whether voters under ordinary circumstances may send a third party. It is not meant to capture special procedures that apply only in unusual circumstances (e.g., sickness or immobility). The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 4.1-4.5 to be coded as "0."

V4.6 Overseas and/or military voter request (abs_request_UOCAVA)

Whether the state specifies particular methods for overseas and/or military voters to request absentee ballots

    (2)   *0: No, law makes no mention of request process for overseas and/or*
           military voters.
    (48) *1: Yes, law mentions distinct request process for overseas and/or*
           military voters.

V5.0: Absentee Return (abs_return_mail)

Whether the state allows voters to return their absentee ballots by mail.

    (0)   *0: expressly prohibited*
    (47) *1: expressly authorized*
    (3)   *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may only be returned by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V5.1-V5.4) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 5.0-5.5 to be coded as "0."

V5.1: Absentee return by fax (abs_return_fax)

Whether the state allows voters to return their absentee ballots by fax

    (5)   *0: expressly prohibited*
    (3)   *1: expressly authorized*
    (42) *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may only be returned by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V5.1-V5.4) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 5.0-5.5 to be coded as "0."

V5.2: Absentee return by web/email (abs_return_web)

Whether the state allows voters to return their absentees by email or over the internet.

- **(6)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(0)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(44)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may only be returned by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V5.1-V5.4) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 5.0-5.5 to be coded as "0."

V5.3: Absentee return in person (abs_return_inperson)

Whether the state allows voters to return their absentee ballots in person.

- **(1)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(40)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(9)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may only be returned by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V5.1-V5.4) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 5.0-5.5 to be coded as "0."

V5.4: Third-party return (abs_return_thirdparty)

Whether the state allows voters to have another person return their absentee ballots in person on their behalf.

- **(2)** *0: expressly prohibited*
- **(25)** *1: expressly authorized*
- **(23)** *2: not specified*

Note: If the law says that absentee ballots may only be returned by mail, we code the other variables that have to do with absentee ballot requests (V5.1-V5.4) as 0 (expressly prohibited) . This variable refers to whether voters under ordinary circumstances may send a third party. It is not meant to capture special procedures that apply only in unusual circumstances (e.g., illness, immobility) . The word "only"-- or some other indicator of an exclusive list-- typically has to appear in the statute for 5.0-5.5 to be coded as "0."

V5.5: Overseas and/or military voter return (abs_return_UOCAVA)

Whether the state specifies particular methods for overseas and/or military voters to return absentee ballots

(11) *0: No, law does not mention a distinct return process for overseas and/or military voters*
(29) *1: Yes, law mentions distinct return process for overseas and/or military voters.*

V6.0: Government-issued photo ID required to request absentee ballot (abs_request_gov_photoID)

Whether a government-issued photo ID is required to request an absentee ballot.

(2) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(0) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(19) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29) *3: signature only (no match required) , or no ID required)*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V6.1: Photo ID required to request absentee ballot (abs_request_nongov_photoID)

Whether photo ID not issued by the government is required to request an absentee ballot.

(2) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(0) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(19) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29) *3:signature only (no match required) , or no ID required)*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V6.2: Documentary (nonphoto)   ID required to request absentee ballot

(abs_request_nonphoto_ID*)*

Whether nonphoto ID such as a utility bill, paycheck, government check, bank statement, etc., is required to request an absentee ballot.

(1) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(0) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(20) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29) *3:signature only (no match required)   , or no ID required)*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V6.3 ID number required to request absentee ballot (abs_request_ID_number)

Whether an ID number (typically driver's license number, state ID number, or last four digits of social security number) is required to request an absentee ballot.

(1) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(10) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(10) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29) *3: signature only (no match required)   , or no ID required)*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V6.4 Signature match required to request absentee ballot (abs_request_sigmatchID)

Whether election officials must compare the signature submitted on an absentee ballot request form with a signature on file before issuing an absentee ballot.

(9)   *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others*
        they can submit instead
(0)   *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(12)   *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29)   *3: signature only (no match required) , or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V6.5 Notarization or witness required to request absentee ballot (abs_request_notary_ID)

Whether voters must have their signatures on the absentee ballot request paperwork notarized in order to request a ballot.

(1)   *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they*
        can submit instead
(2)   *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(18)   *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(29)   *3: signature only (no match required), or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.0: Government-issued photo ID required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_govt_photoID)

Whether government-issued photo ID is required to submit an absentee ballot.

- **(1)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(0)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(37)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(12)** *3: signature only (no match required),, or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.1: Photo ID required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_nongov_photoID)

Whether photo ID not issued by the government is required to submit an absentee ballot.

- **(1)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(0)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(37)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(12)** *3: signature only (no match required),, or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.2: Documentary (nonphoto)   ID required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_nonphoto_ID)

Whether nonphoto ID such as a utility bill, paycheck, government check, bank statement, etc., is required to submit an absentee ballot.

(1) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they
     can submit instead*
(0) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(37) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(12) *3: signature only (no match required), or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.3 ID number required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_ID_number)

Whether an ID number (typically driver's license number, state ID number, or last four digits of social security number) is required to submit an absentee ballot.

(1)   *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others
     they can submit instead*
(2)   *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(35) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(12) *3: signature only (no match required) , or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.4 Signature match required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_sigmatchID)

Whether election officials must compare the signature submitted on an absentee ballot return paperwork with a signature on file before accepting a completed absentee ballot.

- **(0)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(29)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(9)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(12)** *3: signature only (no match required) , or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V7.5 Notarization or witness required to submit absentee ballot (abs_submit_notary_ID)

Whether voters must have their signatures on the absentee ballot request paperwork notarized in order to submit a ballot.

- **(0)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(11)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(27)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(12)** *3: signature only (no match required) , or no ID required*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V8.0 Number of days before election by which ballot must be requested in person (abs_request_deadline_inperson)

The last day that voters may go in and request an absentee ballot by personally appearing at the office of an election official.

(4)   *0 days*
(20) *1 day*
(4)   *3 days*
(3)   *4 days*
(1)   *5 days*
(4)   *6 days*
(7)   *7 days*
(1)   *18 days*
(1)   *98: Depends*
(5)   *99: N/A*

Note: Oftentimes the statute will say, e.g., the deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. In this case, the proper code is 4, because Friday is 4 days before every federal election (we are concerned only with federal election on this question).

V8.1: Number of days before election by which postal request must be postmarked (abs_request_deadline_postmark)

The last day that postal requests for absentee ballots must be postmarked in order to be honored.

(50)   *99: N/A*

Note: The law of some states specifies a postmark date, while the law in other states gives a receipt date. Oftentimes the statute will say, e.g., the deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. In this case, the proper code is 4, because Friday is 4 days before every federal election (we are concerned only with federal election on this question). Unless the word "postmark" or some similar word is used, a deadline for submission is interpreted to be a receipt deadline.

V8.2: Number of days before election by which postal request must be received (abs_request_deadline_receipt)

The last day that postal requests for absentee ballots must be received in order to be honored.

(3) *0 days*
(9) *1 days*
(2) *3 days*
(6) *4 days*
(2) *5 days*
(6) *6 days*
(13) *7 days*
(1) *8 days*
(1) *10 days*
(1) *11 days*
(1) *98 N/A*
(5) *99: N/A*

Note: The law of some states specifies a postmark date, while the law in other states gives a receipt date. Note: Oftentimes the statute will say, e.g., the deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. In this case, the proper code is 4, because Friday is 4 days before every federal election (we are concerned only with federal election on this question).

V8.3: Law mentions both postmark date and receive date (abs_request_deadline_hybrid)

Whether the state specifies both a postmark and a receipt date for returning absentee ballots.

(46) *0: no, the law either mentioned a postmark or a receipt-date deadline, but not both*
(0) *1: yes, the law mentions both postmark and receipt-date deadlines*
(4) *99: other*

Note: Unless the word "postmark" or some similar word is used, a deadline for submission is interpreted to be a receipt deadline.

V9.0: Number of days before election by which absentee ballot must be submitted in person (abs_submit_deadline_inperson)

The number of days before election by which an absentee ballot must be submitted in person in order for the ballot to count.

- **(38)** *0 days*
- **(7)** *1 days*
- **(1)** *3 days*
- **(1)** *4 days*
- **(3)** *99: N/A*

V9.1: Number of days before election by which absentee postal submission must be postmarked in presidential election (abs_submit_deadline_postmark)

The number of days before the election that submitted absentee ballots must be postmarked in order to be counted in a presidential election.

- **(4)** *0 days*
- **(7)** *1 day*
- **(39)** *99: N/A*

Note: Because Federal law governs submission of absentee ballots in presidential elections, deadlines attached to other types of elections are ignored. The law of some states specifies a postmark date, while the law in other states gives a receipt date. Unless the word "postmark" or some similar word is used, a deadline for submission is interpreted to be a receipt deadline.

V9.2: Number of days before election by which postal submission must be received in presidential election (abs_submit_deadline_receipt)

The number of days before (or after) the election that submitted absentee ballots must be received in order to be counted in a presidential election.   Post-election deadlines are indicated by a negative value (e.g., one day post-election is entered as a negative one).

(1)   *11 days after*
(2)   *10 days after*
(1)   *2 days after*
(1)   *1 day after*
(40) *0 days*
(3)   *1 day before*
(1)   *4 days before*
(1)   *99: N/A*

Note: Because Federal law governs submission of absentee ballots in presidential elections, deadlines attached to other types of elections are ignored. The law of some states specifies a postmark date, while the law in other states specifies a receipt date. If the deadline is actually after the election, then the value is negative.

V9.3: Law mentions both postmark date and receive date for submitting absentee ballots (abs_submit_deadline_hybrid)

Whether the law mentions both a postmark and a receipt date for submitting absentee ballots.

(40) *0: no, the law either mentioned a postmark or a receipt-date deadline,*
          but not both
(10) *1: yes, the law mentions both postmark and receipt-date deadlines*
(0)   *99: Other*

Note: Unless the word "postmark" or some similar word is used, a deadline for submission is interpreted to be a receipt deadline.

V10: First-time voter voting absentee restrictions and rules (abs_firsttime_restrictions)

Whether the law contains special ID or other provisions for first-time absentee voters beyond the provisions that apply to all voters casting absentee ballots.

(15) *0: no, the law contains no special rules for first-time voters.*
(35) *1: yes, the law contains additional requirements for first-time voters*
      when they vote absentee

Note: In 2004, federal law imposed general ID requirements that all first-time mail-in registrants must satisfy if the information contained on their voter registration applications was not "matched" against information in outside databases. While most states have updated their laws accordingly, this variable shows that the statutes of 15 states do not acknowledge the change with respect to absentee voting. However, this does not necessarily mean that these states are not complying with federal law in actual practice.

V11: All-mail elections (all_mail_authorized)

Whether the law authorizes jurisdictions to to conduct statewide elections entirely by mail.

(38) *0: there is no provision requiring or allowing statewide elections to be*
      conducted by mail
(11) *1: statewide elections may be conducted by mail at the discretion of*
      local election officials
(1) *2: statewide election must be conducted by mail*

Note: Oregon conducts all elections by mail. For states coded 0, our presumption is that local officials may not conduct elections by mail. This variable is coded as 0 if the law authorizes all mail elections for smaller local or countywide elections, but not for statewide elections.

V12.0: Early voting availability (early_voting_authorized)

Whether the state authorizes in-person early voting.

(0) *0: in-person early voting is prohibited by state law*
(12) *1: in-person early voting is not mentioned in state law*
(4) *2: state law explicitly authorizes, but does not require, local officials to*
      implement an early voting program at their discretion
(34) *3: local officials are required to provide in-person early voting*

Note: Different states use different terms to refer to in-person early voting. For instance, some states call it absentee voting, while others call it advance voting. The important thing is not the

terminology, but the underlying concept of a one-stop transaction.

V12.1: No Excuse Early Voting (early_voting_no_excuse)

Whether the state authorizes any person to engage in in-person early voting, or only voters who have an "excuse" (typically something that prevents them from voting at the polls on election day).

(7) *0: no, early voting requires an excuse*
(31) *1: yes, the state allows early voting without an excuse*
(12) *99: N/A, this state does not have early voting*

V12.2: Whether beginning and end dates for early voting are inferences (early_voting_period_statute)

Whether the early voting period is explicitly mentioned in state law, or whether it had to be inferred.

(7) *0: The beginning and/or ending time for early voting listed in 12.3 and 12.4 are not derived from explicit language in state law, but from inference*
(29) *1. The beginning AND ending times listed in 12.3 and 12.4 are derived from explicit language in state law, not from inference*
(14) *99: The beginning and end times for the early voting program could not be determined, even by inference (or this state has no early voting)*

Note: The laws of many states blend the concepts of early and absentee voting and do not discuss them separately. Particularly, many states introduce early voting by stating in the absentee voting statute that voters can vote an absentee ballot in person. In these states, because they do not treat absentee and early voting as separate processes, there is no language in the statutes to indicate when early voting would begin and end.

However, the most reasonable inference is that early voting would *begin* at the earliest time absentee ballots may be issued. Inferring the *end* period for early voting can be more difficult: Does early voting end on the last day absentee ballots can be issued, or on the last day that already issued absentee ballots may be received?

We assume here that the last day of early voting is the last day that absentee ballots may be *issued*. However, note that this assumption only applies to a state only where that state:

1) has no early voting program with laws authorizing early voting that are distinct from the laws that authorize absentee voting;

2) has no laws that pertain specifically to the beginning and end periods of in-person absentee

voting (as opposed to absentee voting including in-person absentee voting -- generally);

3) but nevertheless explicitly authorize in-person absentee voting under state law.

In this narrow circumstance that applied to 12 states, we infer beginning and end periods for early voting using the scheme described above.

V12.3: Early voting begins for federal elections (early_voting_begins)

Coded in number of days before **federal general election** day that early voting begins.

(1) *4 days*
(1) *6 days*
(1) *7 days*
(1) *10 days*
(1) *12 days*
(2) *14 days*
(5) *15 days*
(3) *17 days*
(1) *19 days*
(2) *20 days*
(1) *22 days*
(1) *28 days*
(2) *29 days*
(2) *30 days*
(1) *35 days*
(1) *40 days*
(1) *43 days*
(1) *45 days*
(22) *99: N/A, this state does not have early voting, or time is not specified by law*

Note: This variable is coded according to the minimum or stipulated number of days before an election that early voting must start.

V12.4: Early Voting Ends (early_voting_ends)

Coded in number of days before (federal general) election day that early voting ends.

(5)   *0 days*
(17) *1 days*
(1)   *2 days*
(5)   *3 days*
(5)   *4 days*
(2)   *5 days*
(2)   *7 days*
(13)   *99: N/A, this state does not have early voting, or time is not specified by law*

Note: While some states end early voting a few days before the election, most states allow early voting up until the day before or of the election. If the state specifically says that early voting ends the day before an election, this variable is coded 1. If the state does not specify an end to early voting, this variable is coded 0.

V12.5: Early voting hours (early_voting_hours)

Coded in minimum number of hours per day that in-person early voting locations must be open (Monday through Friday only).

(1)   *0 hours*
(1)   *3 hours*
(1)   *4 hours*
(3)   *8 hours*
(1)   *9.5 hours*
(3)   *10 hours*
(40)   *99: N/A, this state does not have early voting, or time is not specified by law*

V12.6: In-person early voting on weekends (early_voting_weekends)

Whether the state requires, prohibits or makes optional that early voting sites are available on weekends.

(0)   *0: expressly prohibited,*
(14) *1: no provision made,*
(2)   *2: expressly allowed at the discretion of local officials,*
(16) *3: local officials are required to provide weekend hours*
(18)   *99: no early voting*

V12.7: Number of in-person early voting sites (early_voting_sites)

The minimum number of early voting sites that must be established in each jurisdiction by law.

(12) *0: not specified*
(3) *1: one*
(20) *2: jurisdictions may have more than one site*
(3) *3: some or all jurisdictions must have multiple sites*
(12) *99: N/A; no early voting*

V13.0: Government-issued Photo ID required for early voting (early_voting_govt_photoID)

Whether government-issued photo ID is required to request an early ballot.

(7) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(1) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(19) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(9) *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
(2) *98: Unclear*
(12) *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V13.1: Photo ID required for early voting (early_voting_nongov_photoID)

Whether photo ID not issued by the government is required to cast an early ballot.

(6) *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
(0) *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
(21) *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
(9) *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
(2) *98: Unclear*
(12) *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified

as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V13.2: Documentary (nonphoto) ID required for early voting (early_voting_nonphotoID)

Whether nonphoto ID such as a utility bill, paycheck, government check, bank statement, etc., is required to cast an early ballot.

   (5)   *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others*
               they can submit instead
   (1)   *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
   (21)   *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
   (9)   *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
   (2)   *98: Unclear*
   (12)   *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V13.3: ID number required for early voting (early_voting_IDnumber)

Whether an ID number (typically driver's license number, state ID number, or last four digits of social security number) is required to cast an early ballot.

   (2)   *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others*
               they can submit instead
   (3)   *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
   (22)   *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
   (9)   *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
   (2)   *98: Unclear*
   (12)   *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V13.4: Signature with match required to cast an early ballot (early_voting_sigmatchID)

Whether polls workers must compare the voter's signature to one on file before allowing the voter to cast an early ballot.

- **(1)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(15)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(11)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(9)** *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
- **(2)** *98: Unclear*
- **(12)** *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

V13.5: Witness required to cast an early ballot (early_voting_witnessID)

Whether voters may use the sworn statement of a witness to prove their identity to meet ID requirements for casting an early ballot.

- **(0)** *0: This is one type of ID that voters may submit, but there are others they can submit instead*
- **(6)** *1: yes, voters must submit this type of ID*
- **(21)** *2: no, this type of ID is not accepted*
- **(9)** *3: signature only sufficient (no signature match requirement)*
- **(2)** *98: Unclear*
- **(12)** *99: NA*

Note: Typically there are several forms of acceptable ID, any one of which is sufficient to request a ballot. In these cases, all forms of acceptable ID that are identified are coded as 0. If multiple forms of ID must be submitted together to request a ballot, each form that is identified as acceptable (but in combination) is coded as 1.

**V14: First-time voter restrictions and rules for early voting
(early_voting_firsttime_restrictions)**

Whether the law contains special ID or other provisions for first-time early voters beyond the provisions that apply to all voters casting early ballots.

(21) *0: no, the law contains no special rules for first-time voters*
(16) *1: yes, the law contains additional requirements for first-time voters
          when they vote early*
(13) *99: This state has no early voting*

Note: In 2004, federal law imposed general ID requirements that all first-time mail-in registrants must satisfy if the information contained on their voter registration applications was not "matched" against information in outside databases. While most states have updated their laws accordingly, this variable shows that the statutes of 13 states do not acknowledge the change with respect to early voting. However, this does not necessarily mean that these states are not complying with federal law in actual practice.

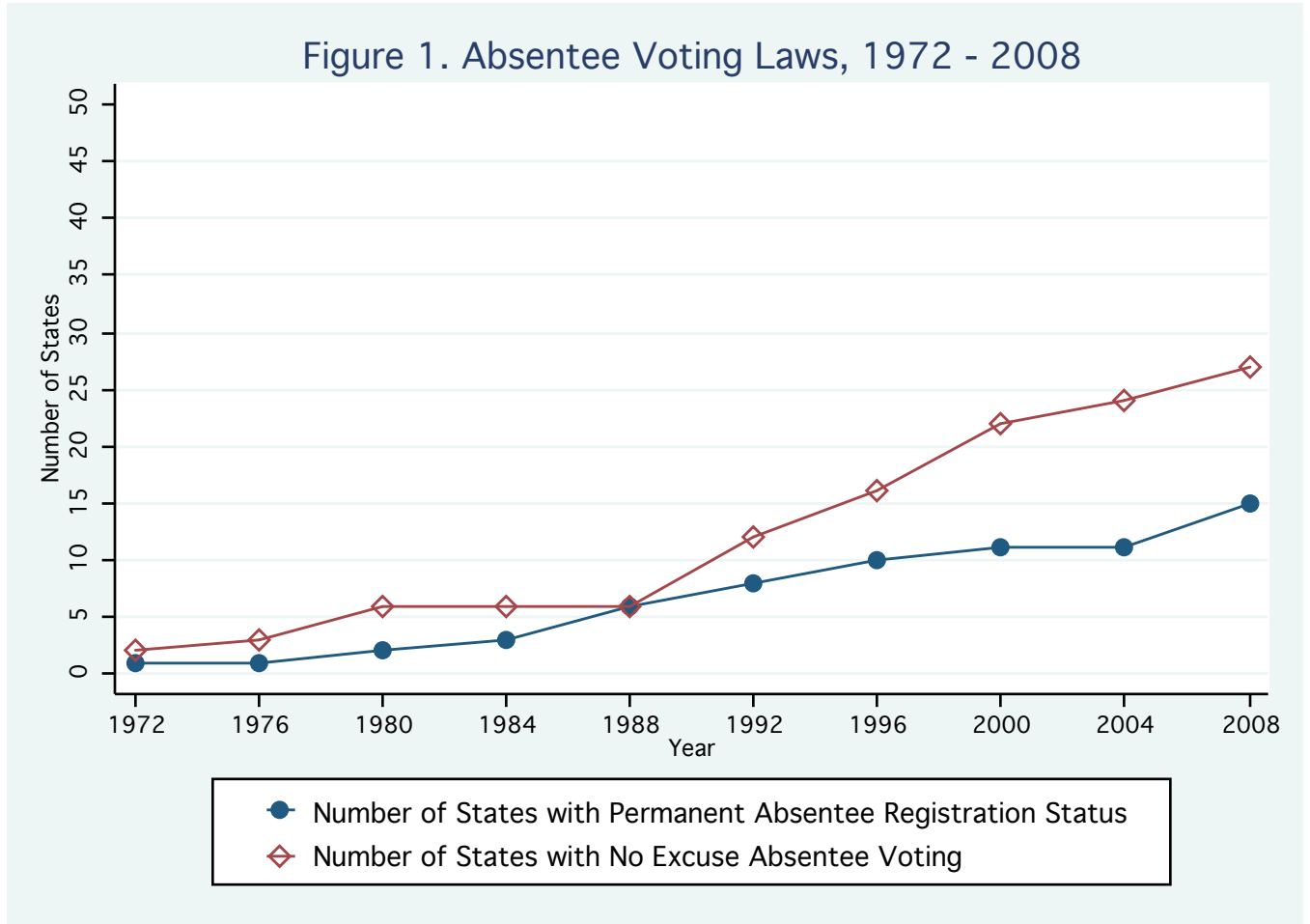Figure 1: Absentee Voting Laws, 1972-2008

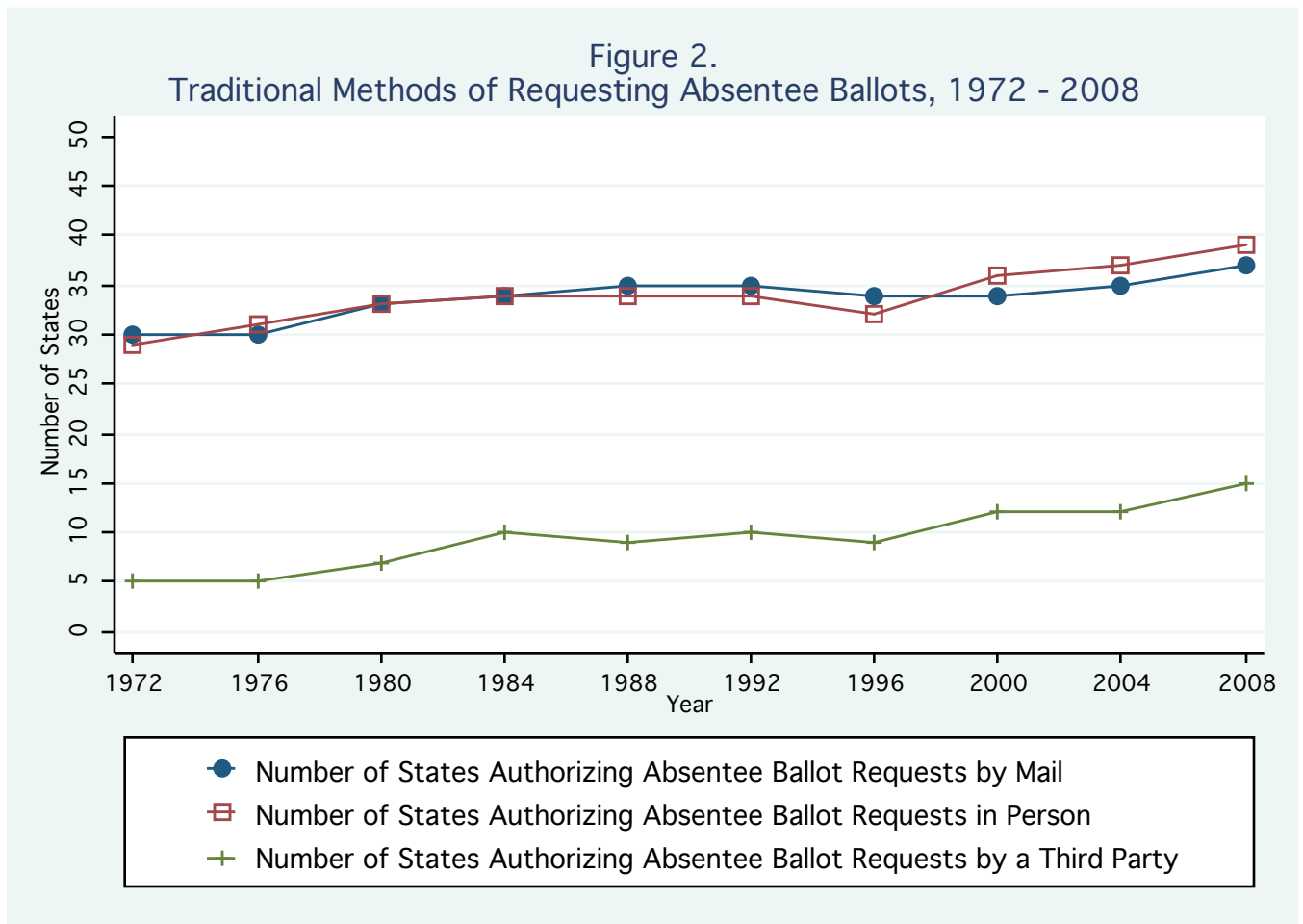Figure 2: Traditional Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008

Figure 2.
Traditional Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972 - 2008

● Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Requests by Mail
⊟ Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Requests in Person
+ Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Requests by a Third Party

Figure 3: Electronic Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008

Figure 3.
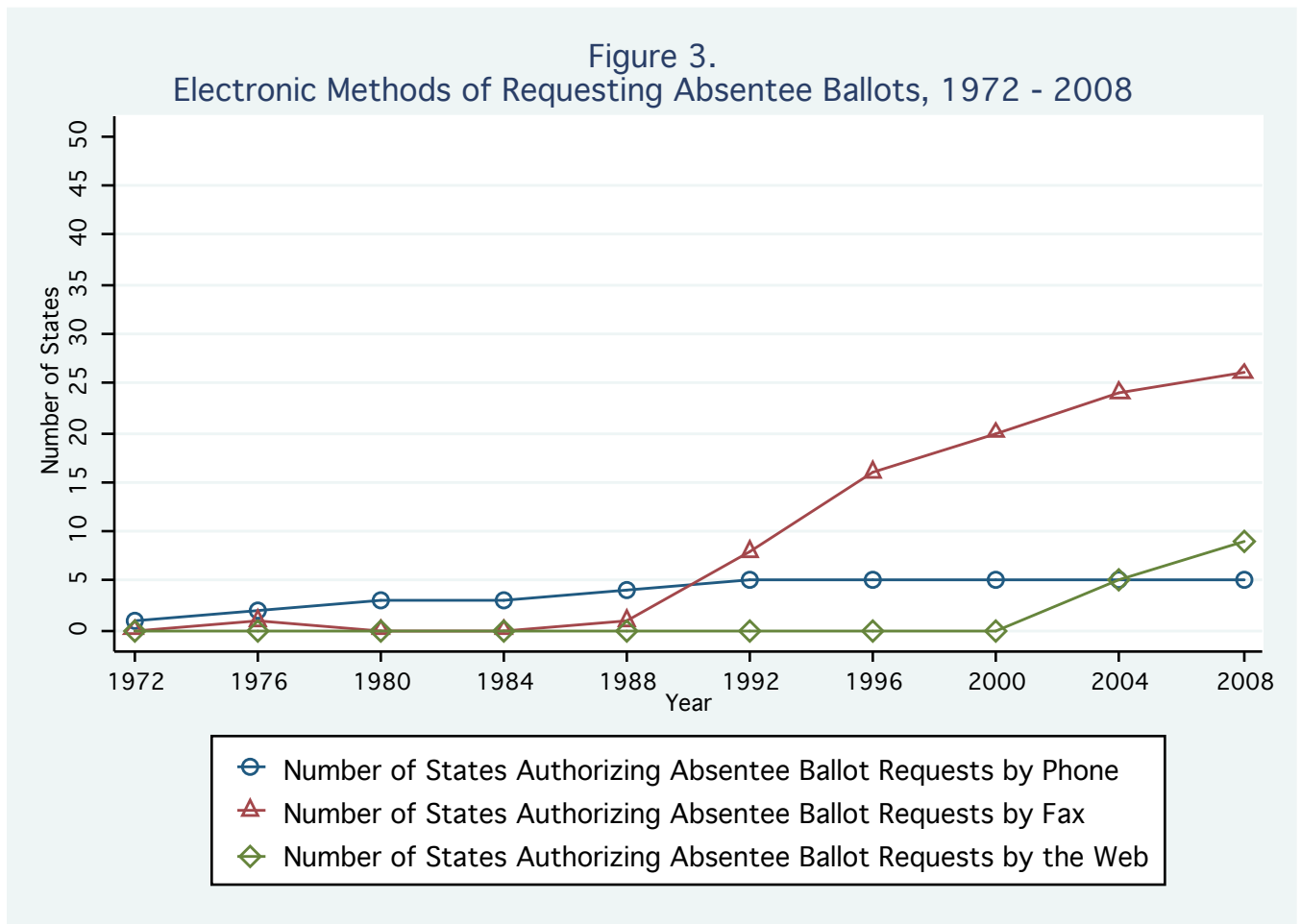Electronic Methods of Requesting Absentee Ballots, 1972 - 2008

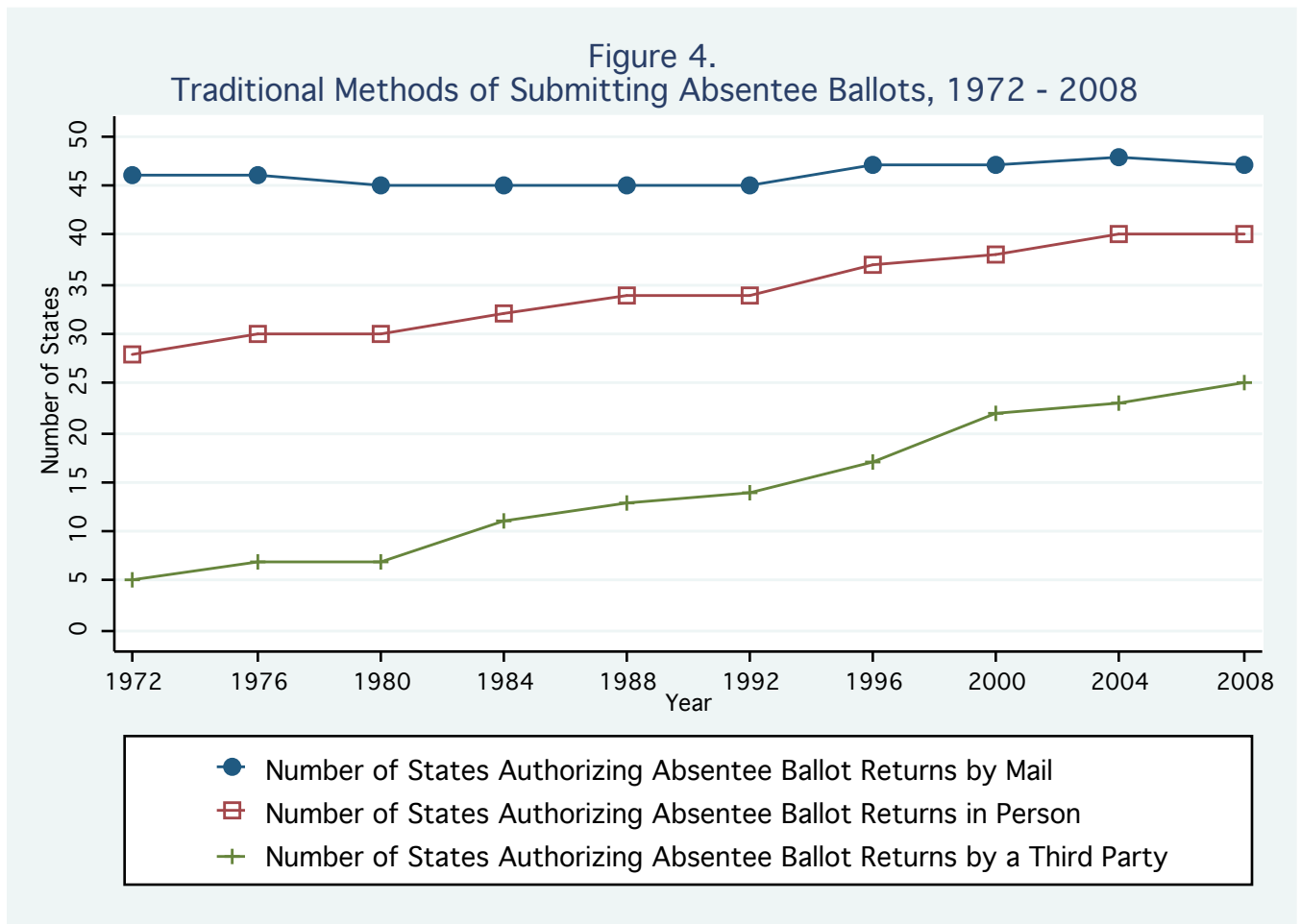Figure 4: Traditional Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008

Figure 4.
Traditional Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972 - 2008

Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Returns by Mail
Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Returns in Person
Number of States Authorizing Absentee Ballot Returns by a Third Party

Figure 5: Electronic Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972-2008

Figure 5.
Electronic Methods of Submitting Absentee Ballots, 1972 - 2008
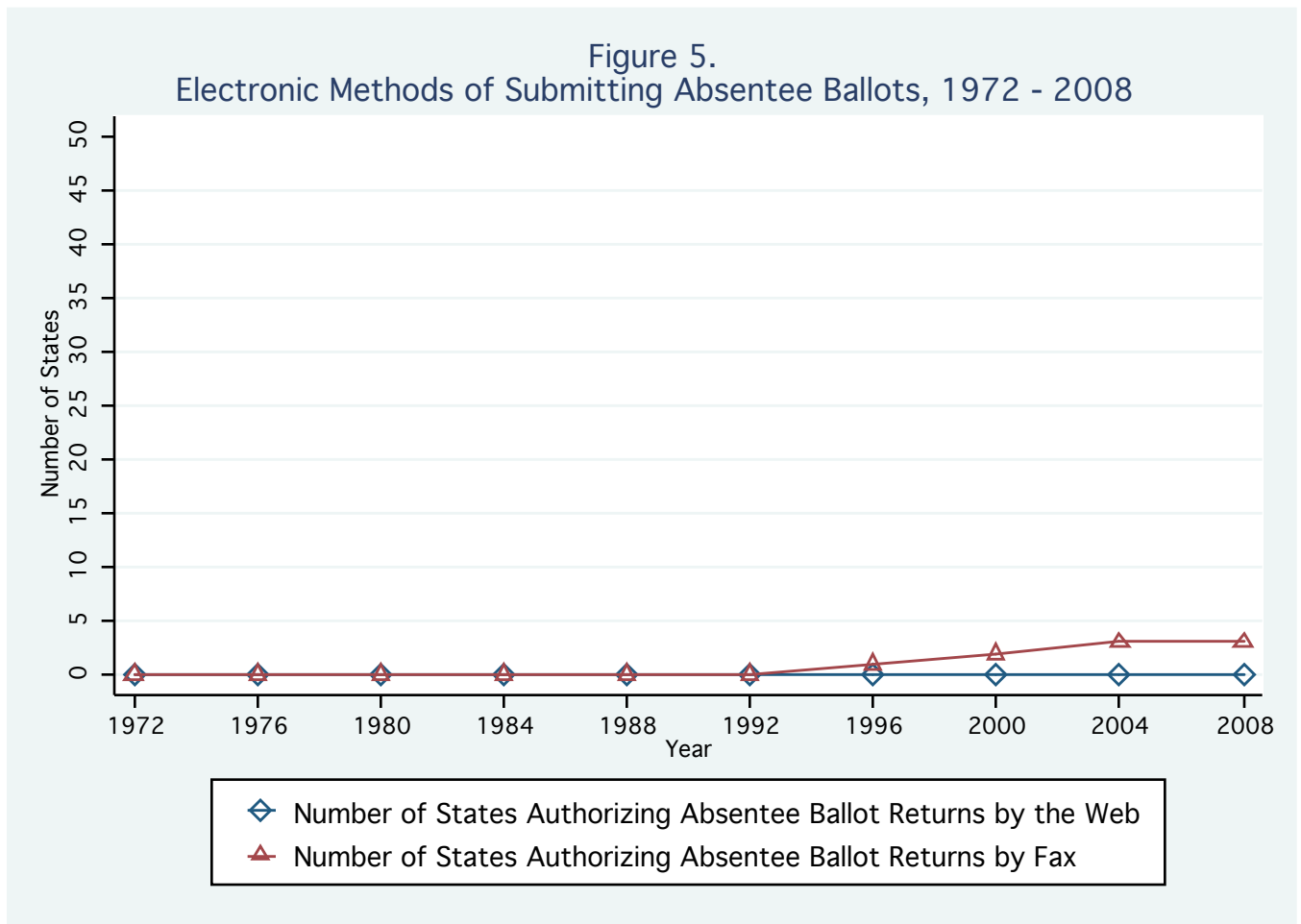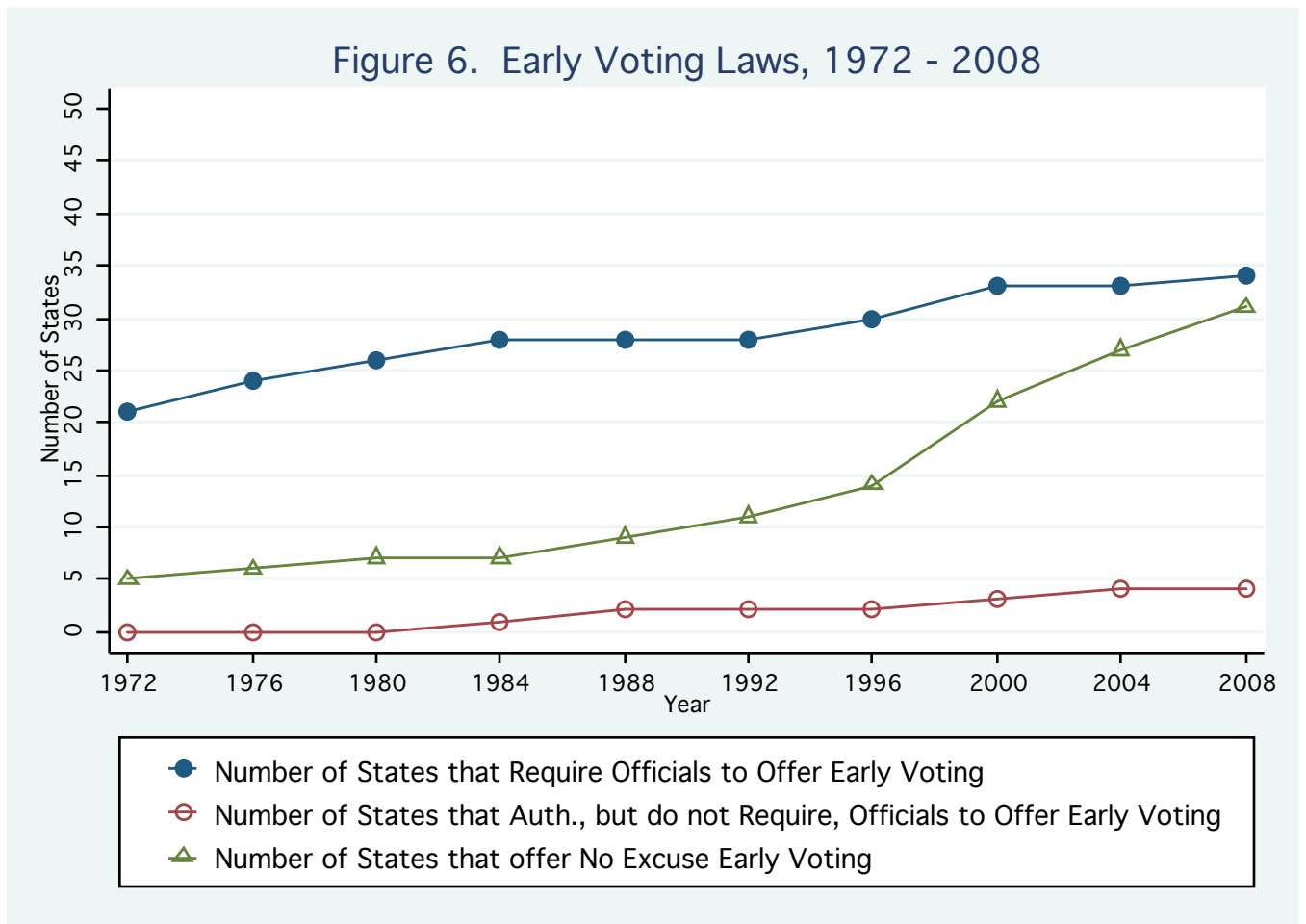
Figure 6: Early Voting Laws, 1972-2008

Figure 6. Early Voting Laws, 1972 - 2008

Table 1: Absentee and Early Voting in the States (1972)

	No Early Voting (V12.0 = 0)	No Mention of Early Voting in Law (V12.0 = 1)	Authorize Early Voting with Excuse Required (V12.0 = 2)	Require Early Voting be Offered with Excuse Required (V12.0 = 3)	Offer No-Excuse Early Voting (V12.1 = 1)
Offer Absentee Voting with Excuse Required (V1 = 1) and (V2 = 0)	Wisconsin	Alabama Arizona Connecticut Delaware Florida Georgia Hawaii Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maine Maryland Massachusetts Minnesota Missouri New Hampshire New Jersey New York North Carolina North Dakota Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania Rhode Island South Carolina Utah Washington Wyoming		California Iowa Louisiana Michigan Mississippi Montana Nebraska Nevada New Mexico Ohio South Dakota Texas Vermont Virginia West Virginia	Alaska Arkansas Colorado Indiana
Offer No-Excuse Absentee Voting (V2 = 1)				Tennessee	Idaho

Table 2: Absentee and Early Voting in the States (2008)

	No Early Voting (V12.0 = 0)	No Mention of Early Voting in Law (V12.0 = 1)	Authorize Early Voting with Excuse Required (V12.0 = 2)	Require Early Voting be Offered with Excuse Required (V12.0 = 3)	Offer No-Excuse Early Voting (V12.1 = 1)
Offer Absentee Voting with Excuse Required (V1 = 1) and (V2 = 0)		Alabama Connecticut Delaware Massachusetts Missouri New Hampshire New York Pennsylvania South Carolina		Iowa Kentucky Michigan Minnesota Mississippi Rhode Island Texas Virginia	Arkansas Illinois Indiana Louisiana Tennessee West Virginia
Offer No-Excuse Absentee Voting (V2 = 1)		Maryland New Jersey Washington			Alaska Arizona California Colorado Florida Georgia Hawaii Idaho Kansas Maine Montana Nebraska Nevada New Mexico North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Oregon South Dakota Utah Vermont Wisconsin Wyoming

Table 3: Absentee and Early Voting by Region (1972 and 2008)

	1972				2008			
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Number of States with Early Voting Requirement (V12.0 = 3)	1	6	7	7	3	8	12	11
Number of States with No-Excuse Early Voting (V12.1 = 1)	0	1	1	3	2	8	9	12
Number of States with No-Excuse Absentee Voting (V2 = 1)	0	0	1	1	3	6	5	13

Northeast: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey.

Midwest: Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri.

South: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana.

West: Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii.