Does State Outreach to People Who Are Eligible but Unregistered to Vote Increase Registration?

*Field Experiments*

February 2022

A report from

The Center for Election Innovation & Research
The Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR) is a nonpartisan non-profit with a proven track record of working with election officials from around the country and from both sides of the aisle. We seek to restore trust in the American election system and promote election procedures that encourage participation while ensuring election integrity and security.

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Executive Summary

Registering to vote is one of the most critical components of the U.S. voting process, serving as a prerequisite for casting a ballot in almost every state. Accordingly, reforms that aim to increase registration among citizens who are eligible to vote, while also decreasing barriers to registration, play an important role in expanding voter access.

Toward this end, states make use of various policies, procedures, and practices, including online voter registration, automatic voter registration, and Election Day registration. Another such procedure, available to members of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), involves sending mailers to citizens who are likely eligible but unregistered to vote (known as EBUs).

ERIC, a nonprofit organization working to improve U.S. voter roll accuracy and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens, identifies EBUs through a process that involves matching voter registration rolls with lists of driver licenses and state identification cards. ERIC then provides lists of EBUs to its member states, which contact EBUs through mailers to educate them on how to register and encourage them to do so.

A recent study by researchers Christopher Mann and Lisa Bryant found that simple government outreach to EBUs using such mailers increased voter registration rates in Delaware and Oregon. Given these encouraging results, CEIR decided to conduct similar large-scale field experiments across multiple states.

During the fall of 2020, we worked with election officials in eight states to examine the extent to which government outreach to EBUs impacts registration rates. Officials sent mailers to EBUs in at least two batches: first to EBUs randomly assigned to the treatment group and later to EBUs randomly assigned to the control group. The time between these mailings served as our study period, during which we observed the difference in registration rates between the two groups. We hypothesized that registration rates would be significantly higher among EBUs in the treatment group than those in the control group. Using data collected from our eight partner states' EBU lists and voter files, we found statistically significant evidence in support of our hypothesis.

Our findings carry strong practical implications for state election officials and advance the research on government outreach to EBUs. Election officials can significantly increase voter registration among EBUs by contacting them via simple, relatively inexpensive mailers. This study bolsters previous findings with evidence from a wider selection of states, adding to a growing literature on the benefits of ERIC membership and the efficacy of government outreach in successful elections administration.
Introduction

In all but one state, U.S. citizens must register to vote before they may cast a ballot.\(^1\) Therefore, public policies, procedures, and practices that aim to increase registration among eligible citizens, while decreasing barriers to the process, can play an important role in expanding voter access to elections.

For states that partner with the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), sending simple, informative mailers to citizens who are likely eligible but unregistered to vote (known as EBUs) represents one such procedure. Generally, EBUs are people who have recently attained voting age, never registered, moved into the state from another state, or are eligible to have their name restored to the voter roll after it was previously removed (e.g., due to inactivity for two federal elections).\(^2\)

ERIC is a nonprofit organization comprised of member states whose mission is to improve the accuracy of U.S. voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens.\(^3\) For each of its member states, ERIC seeks to produce the most comprehensive list of EBUs possible. To accomplish this, ERIC identifies EBUs through a process that involves matching state voter registration rolls against lists of driver licenses and state identification card lists.\(^4\) ERIC cleans these data using the U.S. Postal Service National Change of Address database, U.S. Social Security Administration's Death Master File, and other governmental data sources.

Using the lists ERIC provides, member states contact EBUs through mailers to educate them about how to register to vote. At a minimum, this outreach must take place once every two years, before each federal election.\(^5\)

Previous field experiments on increasing voter registration have tested a range of communication strategies, including face-to-face canvassing and email messaging, producing somewhat mixed results. Few have studied whether the sort of simple government mail outreach described above can increase voter registration rates. However, in a 2019 article, researchers Chris Mann and Lisa Bryant published the results of a set of experiments conducted in Delaware and Oregon in 2012 and 2014 testing the efficacy of such mailers. The results were encouraging: simple government outreach to EBUs increased voter registration rates.

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\(^1\) North Dakota is the only state without some form of voter registration. Secretary of State of North Dakota, [https://vote.nd.gov/PortalListDetails.aspx?pthPKID=79&ptlPKID=5](https://vote.nd.gov/PortalListDetails.aspx?pthPKID=79&ptlPKID=5).

\(^2\) Eligible voters who need to update their registration after moving within a state are also identified by ERIC and contacted by election officials, but they are not counted among EBUs as they are still registered in the state and need only update their information.

\(^3\) Currently, 30 states and Washington D.C. belong to ERIC.

\(^4\) Mann, Christopher B., Bryant, Leslie A., 2019. If you ask, they will come (to register and vote): Field experiments with state election agencies on encouraging voter registration. Electoral Studies 63 (2020) 102021.

\(^5\) Under ERIC Bylaws, member states must at least contact EBUs by the earlier of October 1 or 15 days before the registration deadline. See Membership Agreement, Sec. 5(a), [https://ericstates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ERIC_Bylaws_01-2020.pdf](https://ericstates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ERIC_Bylaws_01-2020.pdf).
Following the positive outcome of these experiments, CEIR decided to conduct similar large-scale field experiments to update and expand the body of evidence across a broader range of states. We conducted large-scale field experiments in eight states—Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Utah—to test whether government outreach to EBUs impacts voter registration rates. Specifically, our research asks if EBUs who receive mailers from state election officials register at a higher rate during a study period than those who do not receive the mailers. We hypothesize that registration rates will be significantly higher among those who were sent a mailer by election officials during the study period.

Our findings are consistent with Mann and Bryant’s results, indicating that election official outreach to ERIC-identified EBUs can increase voter registration by statistically significant margins. We discuss these findings in detail below.

**Methodology**

Collaborating with our eight partner states and ERIC, we conducted our research in several steps, broadly described in the paragraph below. Additional details on factors considered during each step are described in the subsections that follow.

First, our partner states sent us their EBU list for the 2020 general election, produced for them by ERIC as part of its standard procedure for member states. For each partner state, we randomly assigned EBUs to a treatment or control group before returning the list. Next, election officials in our partner states designed outreach mailers encouraging and educating EBUs on the voter registration process. Officials first sent these mailers to EBUs in the treatment group, then sent them to EBUs in the control group after a set period of time. The gap between the mailings served as the experiment’s study period. Following the 2020 election, we matched each state’s original EBU list with its voter file to find any individuals who had since registered to vote. Finally, we conducted hypothesis testing to determine if the treatment group registered at a significantly higher rate than the control group during the study period.

**Mailer Design**

Each partner state designed its own mailer with information educating EBUs about how to register to vote. Previous research by Mann & Bryant (2019) suggested that differences in message framing across mailers yield statistically indistinguishable results. Accordingly, while we worked with election officials to ensure that some common elements were shared across all mailers, the exact content varied from state to state. Generally, all mailers included key information on how to register, any applicable registration deadlines, and voter eligibility requirements. Beyond this information, some states chose message framing that focused on deadlines while others emphasized the ease and convenience of

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6 Randomizing the assignment of individuals to experimental groups helps to reduce bias between the groups.
the registration process; several states combined these elements. A copy of each state's mailer can be found in the appendix.

Most states opted to send one mailer to each individual on their EBU list, but a few chose to send one mailer to each household, even if more than one EBU lived at the address. This is a fairly common practice that we refer to as “householding.”

**Control Group Design**

We considered several approaches to control group selection during our initial research design. While a large control group that did not receive mailers might have yielded the most definitive results, ethical concerns and practical considerations precluded this approach. In the end, control group design was necessarily influenced by a variety of factors, including election administration standards of treating constituents equally and contractual requirements of ERIC membership.

We therefore opted to use a delayed treatment control group design: states would send mailers to the treatment group, then wait about two weeks before sending mailers to the control group. This timeframe was intended to provide enough time to detect differences in registration rates between the groups while still giving control group members ample time to register for the election. Our statistical analysis focused on the period during which only the treatment group had been sent mailers.

While we recommended a delay of at least 14 days between treatment and control group mailings, the actual length of time varied due to state-specific circumstances. Naturally, the shorter the study period, the shorter the window in which to capture a significant difference in registration rates. Additionally, some states sent mailers in multiple batches over multiple days, rather than sending just one treatment group mailing and one control group mailing.

Control group size varied from state to state, depending on factors like EBU list size, ERIC outreach requirements, and state-specific considerations. Based on Mann & Bryant’s results, we calculated statistical power across a range of potential control group sizes and recommended a minimum of roughly 5,000 EBUs. Each state’s final control group size is listed in its analysis below.

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7 This primarily occurred when a state had difficulties coordinating with its mail vendor. Mail vendors often divide a large mailing list into multiple batches and mail it over several days. We are not able to confirm the method by which the mail vendors divided mailing lists for the three states in our study that batched EBUs. Frequently, however, when vendors divide a mailing list into batches, they do so by ZIP code. If this occurred, it may have reduced the effectiveness of randomization by introducing geographical bias into the sample.
Despite the complications noted above, our partner states produced a wealth of data suitable for our analysis. Any additional limitations resulting from state-specific circumstances are described in the states analyses below.

**Data Analysis**

Following the 2020 election, CEIR collected voter data from our partner states and received record-matching files from ERIC. CEIR and ERIC entered into a non-disclosure agreement to ensure the security and confidentiality of all data and personally identifiable information used in the course of this research, including individual voter files and details of state data security protocols. ERIC transmitted all data to CEIR securely through CEIR's sFTP site. CEIR then stored the data on a protected computer purchased exclusively for the project and not used for any other purpose. All data and confidential information was used only for research purposes and only by CEIR and ERIC employees in the course of this project, and CEIR explicitly agreed to not publicly reveal any confidential information during or after the project. At the conclusion of our research, all copies of the data were either destroyed or returned to ERIC in accordance with set terms of the agreement.

Using this data, we were able to link records from the randomized EBU lists to the corresponding voter file record for individuals who registered to vote. In most cases, each file contained a unique identifier for each individual so that we could directly link the records across multiple files. However, in some instances at least one file was missing the unique identifier. For these states, it was necessary to conduct probabilistic matching using name and address data to link the files correctly.\(^8\)

Once we matched the voter data, we conducted hypothesis testing to determine if the registration rate of the treatment group was higher than that of the control group by a statistically significantly degree during the study period. Three states—Florida, Michigan, and Utah—sent mailers in multiple batches. For these states, we used the first batch as the treatment group and the last batch as the control group to best approximate the study period.

**Findings**

For each state, we conducted hypothesis testing to determine whether the treatment group registration rate was significantly higher than that of the control group during the study period.\(^9\) The results reinforce Mann and Bryant's (2019) findings: mailers from state election officials to EBUs can have measurably positive impacts on voter registration. The

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\(^{8}\) Probabilistic matching is “the technique typically used for merging two datasets with no common record identifier,” in which weights are assigned to variables present in both data sets and the best record matches calculated from these weights. In our specific use, our probabilistic matching relied on name and address variables. See: N. Wasi and A. Flaaen, “Record Linkage Using Stata: Preprocessing, Linking, and Reviewing Utilities,” Stata Journal 15, no. 3 (2015): pp. 672-697.

\(^{9}\) In each state, we conducted an upper-tail Z test to determine if the treatment group registration rate was significantly higher than that of the control group during the study period.
evidence broadly supports our hypothesis, though confidence levels varied, and we were unable to detect statistically significant results in one state.

For each partner state, Table 1 lists the treatment and control group registration rates during the study period. Similarly, Figure 1 compares registration rates between the two groups in each state. It should be noted that these rates do not reflect overall rates of registration among EBU; rather, they reflect the percent who registered during the period between when mailers were sent to those in the treatment group and when mailers were sent to those in the control group.\(^\text{10}\)

Table 1 also indicates whether the treatment group registration rate was significantly higher than that of the control group, and to what level of confidence.

**Table 1: Study Period Registration Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>9.81%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Asterisk indicates statistical significance of upper-tail hypothesis test where \(H_a = \text{treatment group registration} > \text{control group registration} \); * = 90% confidence level, ** = 95%, *** = 99%

\(^{10}\) Colorado did not send mailers to the control group due to a complication with the first mailing list that could not be reconciled for a second mailing. Because of this, the study period for Colorado was considerably longer than that of the other states—spanning nearly two months, from when the initial batch of mailers were sent to the treatment group until the close of registration on Election Day—resulting in the much higher registration rates reported in this table relative to the other states. Further discussion may be found in the State Analyses section.
## Figure 1: Study Period Registration Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>9.81%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State Analyses

Michigan

During the study period, Michigan's treatment group registered at a higher rate (6.88%) than the control group (5.97%). This result is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level—a result that strongly supports the hypothesis.

Michigan sent its mailer in four batches, with the first going out on September 16, 2020, and the last going out on September 29, 2020. To preserve the longest possible study period, we used the first and last batches as the treatment and control groups, respectively.

### Study Period Results: Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>279,798</td>
<td>5,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>19,264</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mailer Details**

**Messaging focus:** Civic duty  
**Language(s):** English  
**Individual or household treatment:** Individual  
**Number of EBUs sent mailers:** 568,524 (includes EBUs in all batches)  
**Length of study period:** 13 days

Utah

During the study period, Utah's treatment group registered at a higher rate (6.67%) than the control group (3.53%). This result is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level—a result that strongly supports the hypothesis.

Utah election officials sent mailers in multiple batches. To preserve the longest possible study period, we used the first two batches as the treatment group and the last batch as the control group. Mailers to the treatment group went out on September 4 and September 9, 2020; control group mailers went out September 23 and 24, 2020, The study period for Utah was between September 9, 2020, and September 23, 2020.

### Study Period Results: Utah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>25,498</td>
<td>16,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mailer Details**

**Messaging focus:** Urgency (registration deadline), convenience (ease of registering online), civic duty  
**Language(s):** English  
**Individual or household treatment:** Individual  
**Number of EBUs sent mailers:** 74,137  
**Length of study period:** 14 days
Kentucky
During the study period, Kentucky’s treatment group registered at a higher rate (2.57%) than the control group (2.04%). This result is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level—a result that strongly supports the hypothesis.

Kentucky election officials sent mailers to the treatment group on September 10, 2020, and to the control group on September 24, 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Period Results: Kentucky</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>507,579</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>13,058</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mailer Details
- Messaging focus: Urgency (registration deadline) and convenience (ease of registering online)
- Language(s): English
- Individual or household treatment: Individual
- Number of EBUs sent mailers: 512,579
- Length of study period: 14 days

Nevada
During the study period, Nevada’s treatment group registered at a higher rate (4.67%) than the control group (3.97%). This result is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This result supports the hypothesis.

Nevada election officials sent mailers to the treatment group on September 11 and 14, 2020, and to the control group on September 28, 2020. The study period was from September 14, 2020 through September 28, 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Period Results: Nevada</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>87,656</td>
<td>4,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>4,090</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mailer Details
- Messaging focus: Registration deadline
- Language(s): English
- Individual or household treatment: Household
- Number of EBUs sent mailers: 92,272
- Length of study period: 14 days
Rhode Island

During the study period, Rhode Island’s treatment group registered at a higher rate (2.32%) than the control group (1.91%). This result is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This result supports the hypothesis.

Rhode Island presented a unique methodological challenge. After we randomized and returned the EBU list to the state, election officials found that it contained the names of individuals who had indicated in previous interactions with the state that they were not U.S. citizens at that time. For these specific individuals, officials shifted the mailer message slightly to encourage registration only if their citizenship status had changed. We excluded these individuals from our analysis. Rhode Island sent mailers to the treatment group on September 11, 2020, and to the control group on September 22, 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Period Results: Rhode Island</th>
<th>Mailer Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample</strong></td>
<td><strong>Messaging focus:</strong> Urgency (registration deadline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number Registered</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language(s):</strong> English; bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent Registered</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual or household treatment:</strong> Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Number of EBUs sent mailers: 114,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Length of study period: 11 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Sample | 108,701 | 5,695 |
| Number Registered | 2,517 | 109 |
| Percent Registered | 2.32% | 1.91% |

Colorado

Colorado’s treatment group registered at a higher rate (9.81%) than the control group (9.60%). This finding is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Colorado election officials sent mailers to the treatment group on September 8, 2020. Due to unforeseen circumstances, officials did not send mailers to the control group. Colorado has no in-person registration deadline and allows for Election Day registration. Thus, we had the opportunity to observe the treatment and control groups through Election Day for a total of 57 days. Interestingly, in the 14-day period immediately following the mailing date, the registration rate of the treatment group was statistically significantly higher than that of the control group at the 99% confidence level. We address this in the discussion section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Results: Colorado</th>
<th>Mailer Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample</strong></td>
<td><strong>Messaging focus:</strong> Civic duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number Registered</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language(s):</strong> English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent Registered</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual or household treatment:</strong> Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample</strong></td>
<td>Number of EBUs sent mailers: 677,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>677,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>66,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>9.81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Florida

During the study period, Florida's treatment group registered at a higher rate (1.05%) than the control group (0.82%). This finding is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Florida's mail vendor sent its mailers in four batches, with the first going out on September 16, 2020, and the last on September 21, 2020. To preserve the longest possible study period, we use the first and last batches as the treatment and control groups, respectively. Still, with a study period of only five days, the window to detect a significant difference in registration rates was very narrow. (See the Discussion section for more information on these results.)

### Study Period Results: Florida

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>635,424</td>
<td>4,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>6,679</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mailer Details

- **Messaging focus:** Urgency (registration deadline)
- **Language:** All mailers bilingual (English and Spanish)
- **Individual or household treatment:** Individual
- **Number of EBUs sent mailers:** 2,230,760
- **Length of study period:** 5 days

Georgia

In Georgia, we found no statistically significant difference between the registration rates of the treatment and control groups during the study period. The treatment group registered at a rate of 1.84% and the control did so at a rate of 1.86%.

Like Florida, Georgia's study period was short. The state sent mailers to its treatment group on September 18, 2020, and to its control group on September 25, 2020.

### Study Period Results: Georgia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>915,659</td>
<td>48,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Registered</td>
<td>16,805</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Registered</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mailer Details

- **Messaging focus:** Convenience (ease of registering online)
- **Language(s):** English
- **Individual or household treatment:** Household
- **Number of EBUs sent mailers:** 963,868
- **Length of study period:** 7 days
Discussion

Taken broadly, these results support our hypothesis, suggesting that state outreach to EBUs can increase voter registration by a significant margin. Indeed, three states—Michigan, Utah, and Kentucky—produced significant results at the 99% confidence level, while Nevada and Rhode Island produced results at the 95% confidence level. Of the remaining three states, Colorado and Florida produced results significant at the 90% confidence level, and we were unable to detect any significant findings in the state of Georgia. We turn now to a discussion of the factors impacting research design in each of these three states.

In Georgia and Florida, the study periods were particularly short, and these shortened timeframes made the task of detecting statistically significant results more challenging. Georgia sent mailers to its treatment and control groups only seven days apart, shortening our recommended study period by seven days and halving the window to detect any differences in registration rates between the treatment and control groups. In Florida, this window was narrowed even more substantially, as the state sent its mailers in four batches over five days. To mitigate this, our analysis used the first and final batches as our treatment and control groups, but this shortened study period severely limited our ability to detect a statistically significant effect. Additionally, the large population of EBUs in Florida increased the risk of type I statistical error, introducing further reason to question the reliability of these findings.

In Colorado, complications prevented the state from sending mailers to EBUs in the control group, resulting in a true experimental control in place of our initially-planned delayed treatment model. Moreover, this true control group was relatively large, with 51,967 EBUs out of a total sample of 729,821. Colorado’s results should therefore be seen as highly reliable. While our findings in Colorado were significant at the 90% confidence level, it is worth considering possible reasons why this is lower than the 95% to 99% confidence levels found in other states with highly reliable results.

Notably, when the scope of our analysis in Colorado is limited to the 14 days immediately after the state sent mailers, we find that the treatment group registered at a statistically significant higher rate than the control group, beyond the 99% confidence level. This suggests that the impact of mailers may be concentrated in the weeks immediately after they are sent to EBUs, though we cannot say with certainty this would be the case across all states. The higher confidence level in the 14-day period in Colorado, however, both hints at an immediate impact from mailers and suggests an interesting avenue for further research. For example, Colorado allows voters to register and vote same-day up to and on Election Day. Future studies could examine the effects of these and other voter registration policies on EBU outreach across states.
This discussion of state variation at the policy level raises the question of whether it is appropriate to compare results between states, and furthermore whether the findings of this study can be generalized to other states considering membership in ERIC. State-to-state variations in research design—impacted by varying requirements of state law and different procedural protocols in election administration—limit direct comparisons between states. However, the percent change of registration rates from control to treatment group in each state does provide a way to consider the results in aggregate. We demonstrate this in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Percent Change from Control Group Registration Rate to Treatment Group Registration Rate**

Across all states, the average percent change was 24.80%; in the four states that had at least a 14-day study period, the average percent change was 33.69%. Again, state-specific factors meant that each experiment was unique, and direct comparisons between states warrant caution. Nonetheless, the average percent change suggests that the practical impact of mailers was substantial throughout a range of states.

**Conclusion**

Overall, the results of this study support the hypothesis that simple mailers from election officials can significantly increase the registration rate of EBUs. These findings have important practical implications for election officials and expand a growing literature on effective government outreach.
As part of their membership in ERIC, states receive lists that identify their eligible-but-unregistered citizens. Our findings show that contacting these individuals via simple and relatively inexpensive mailers can increase their registration rates by a statistically significant margin. ERIC membership thus offers states a unique opportunity to increase voter participation.

This study reinforces the Mann and Bryant (2019) findings with evidence from a broader selection of states, adding to a growing literature on the effectiveness of government outreach in successful elections administration. Future research should seek to address factors limiting the present research design, including length of study period, consistent batching of treatment and control groups, and total sample size. It should also seek to further explore other nuances impacting mailer efficacy, including differences in state policy and varying mailer messages. Additionally, questions remain about the impacts of these mailers on the registration rates of EBUs among different demographic groups.

Voter registration is a crucial step of the voting process in the United States, yet many otherwise eligible citizens remain unregistered. This study points to effective steps that state governments can take to help EBUs register to vote, opening a path toward greater participation in elections.
Appendix: State Mailers

Michigan

All voters can now vote safely and securely from home

Apply from home for a ballot

Get an application to vote absentee at Michigan.gov/Vote or from your local clerk

Recommended: Set your voter information on the site to automatically receive an application by mail to vote absentee in every election

Vote by mail from home with an absentee ballot

Ballots must be received by the clerk by 8 p.m. Election Day

Recommended: Return ballot by mail no later than one week before Election Day

Or return ballot or vote in person at your local clerk’s office (call first for locations and hours)

More on Voter Registration in Michigan

Eligibility to register To be eligible to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old when you vote and a 30-day resident of your city or township in Michigan.

Updated Address If you register to vote at an address that is different than your current Michigan driver’s license or voter ID, we’ll update both addresses at the same time. You will receive a sticker with the new address for the back of your ID card. If you have an Enhanced License, you will receive a new card in the mail.

Note: If you register to vote within 14 days of an election, you must go to your local clerk’s office and provide proof of residency to be able to vote in that election. Acceptable documents include the following (electronic copies are ok): Michigan driver’s license or state ID card, current utility bill (paper or electronic), bank statement, paycheck or government check, or other government document.

Registration Confirmation Your local clerk will send you a voter information card when you register that will include your polling place.

Already registered? Visit Michigan.gov/Vote to check your status. Some voter registration information is public, but we won’t share your driver’s license or social security number, day or month of birth, email or phone number on your decision not to register.

As a registered voter, you have the right to vote by mail. Visit Michigan.gov/Vote to learn more.
Be a voter.

Our records indicate you may be eligible to vote in Michigan but might not be registered at your current address. You can vote if you are a U.S. citizen and have lived in your city or township for 30 days. You must be 18 years old to vote, but can register when you’re 17 years, six months.

Here are your options:

Go online
Visit Michigan.gov/Vote
You’ll need your Michigan driver’s license or state ID. The site will indicate if you are already registered.

Mail it in
Detach, complete and mail the form provided below to register at the address currently listed on your Michigan driver’s license or state ID.

Jane Doe
12345 This is My House
My City, My State 12345

Your chance to be a voter has arrived.
Make your voice heard!

Voter Registration Form
Register by mail up to two weeks before Election Day

Are you a U.S. citizen?
Please circle an answer:

- Yes
- No

I certify that I am:
- A United States citizen
- A Michigan resident and will vote only after I have lived in my city or township for at least 30 days
- At least 17½ years old and will vote only after I turn 18

The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be subject to a fine or imprisonment or both under federal or state laws.

Sign Here

By signing, I certify the above information and agree to the terms on this form.
3 Minutes. Click. Done!

Want a voice?

Become a Utah voter before 5:00 pm on October 23 and automatically receive a mail ballot for the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Questions? Contact us at elections@utah.gov or (801) 538-1041

Our records indicate you may not be registered to vote.

To vote in the next election, you must register online, by mail, or in-person by 5:00 pm on October 23, 2020.

Already registered? You may have received this postcard in error. Please go to vote.utah.gov or call 801-538-1041 to confirm your voter registration.

Eligibility
You are eligible to vote in Utah if you are:
- at least 18 years old on or before the next General Election;
- a U.S. citizen;
- a Utah resident for at least 30 days immediately before the next election;
- not under Department of Corrections supervision for a Utah felony conviction.

Online
Register online. It's quick and easy. Go to vote.utah.gov.

By mail
You can call 801-538-1041, to request a paper registration form.

In person
Visit vote.utah.gov to locate your County’s Elections Department.
Kentucky

Kentucky

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?
GOVOTEKY.COM

THREE MINUTES, CLICK AND DONE!
REGISTER BY 4PM OCTOBER 5TH.

It appears you may not be registered to vote.

If you are a US citizen you may register at:
GOVOTEKY.COM

3 minutes. Click. Done.
If you have questions or would like to request
a paper registration form call your local county clerk.

Deadline to register to vote in November is October 5th.
NEVADA STATE VOTER REGISTRATION NOTIFICATION

Deadline Approaching - October 29, 2020

Register to vote or update your registration online:

RegisterToVoteNV.gov

Our records indicate that you may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered.
If you are 18 years old or older, a resident of Nevada and a U.S. citizen, you are qualified to vote.

To register to vote online, please visit RegisterToVoteNV.gov

To vote in the November 3rd, 2020 General Election, you must be registered to vote by:

October 6, 2020 (postmarked) if you submit your application by mail or in person
October 29, 2020 if you submit your registration online

Any registrations after October 16th, 2020 will require the voter to show their Nevada driver’s license or ID card and, if needed, proof of residency at a polling location in order to receive and mark their ballot.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the Nevada Secretary of State Elections Division by email at NVElect@sos.nv.gov or by phone at (775) 684-5705.

Sincerely,

Barbara K. Cegavske
Secretary of State
Rhode Island

Register to vote online.
Inscríbase para votar por internet.
vote.ri.gov

RI Department of State
Nellie M. Gorbea, Secretary of State
Elections Division
148 W. River St., Providence, RI 02904

Our records show that you may not be registered to vote or you may be registered from a different address.

Deadline to register to vote
Primary election: August 14
General election: October 9

Eligibility
You may register to vote in Rhode Island if you are:
- A citizen of the United States;
- A resident of Rhode Island; and
- At least 16 years of age.
(You must be at least 18 years of age to vote on Election Day)

Register online
vote.ri.gov

Register by mail
Contact your local board of canvassers to request a paper registration form.

Already registered? You may have received this postcard in error. Please go to vote.ri.gov or call 401-222-2340 to confirm your voter registration.

Nuestros registros indican la posibilidad de que usted no esté inscrito para votar o pueda estar inscrito con una dirección diferente.

Fecha límite para inscribirse
Elección primaria: 14 de agosto
Elección general: 9 de octubre

Elegibilidad
Usted puede inscribirse para votar en Rhode Island si (es):
- Ciudadano de los Estados Unidos;
- Residente de Rhode Island; y
- Tiene 16 años de edad. (Necesita tener 18 años el día de la elección)

Inscríbase por internet
vote.ri.gov

Inscríbase por correo
Comuníquese con su junta local de elecciones para solicitar un formulario de inscripción de votante.

¿Ya está inscrito? Es posible que haya recibido esta tarjeta por error. Por favor, visite vote.ri.gov o llame al 401-222-2340 para verificar su inscripción de votante.
Register to vote online.

Inscríbase para votar por internet.

vote.ri.gov
Colorado

Make sure your voice is heard this November.

Register to VOTE today at www.GoVoteColorado.gov
En Español: www.VayaVotarColorado.gov

A message from Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold

General Election November 3, 2020
Reelecciones Generales 3 de noviembre de 2020

Our records indicate that you or a member of your household may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered at your current address.

Colorado Voter Eligibility Requirements
- 18 years old by Election Day
- U.S. citizen
- Colorado resident for at least 22 days before the next election.

If you believe you are already registered to vote, this may mean your record is out of date.

Register to vote or update your registration at
www.GoVoteColorado.gov

You can also register in person or by mail. Contact your county clerk for more information. County clerk contact info can be found at the above website.

Jena Griswold
Colorado Secretary of State
Florida

Florida Department of State
Division of Elections
P.O. Box XXXX
Tallahassee, Florida 323XX

Our records indicate that you may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered. If you are 18 years old or older, a resident of Florida and a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to register to vote.

Already registered? Go to www.RegistertoVoteFlorida.gov to check voter registration status.
For other registration questions, call 1-866-308-6739, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).

Our records indicate that you may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered. If you are 18 years old or older, a resident of Florida and a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to register to vote.

Already registered? Go to www.RegistertoVoteFlorida.gov to check voter registration status.
For other registration questions, call 1-866-308-6739, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).
Florida Department of State
Division of Elections
P.O. Box XXXX
Tallahassee, Florida 323XX

Our records indicate that you may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered. If you are 18 years old or older, a resident of Florida and a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to register to vote.

Already registered? Go to www.RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov to check voter registration status.
For other registration questions, call 1-866-308-6739, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).

Our records indicate that you may be eligible to vote, but do not appear to be registered. If you are 18 years old or older, a resident of Florida and a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to register to vote.

Already registered? Go to www.RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov to check voter registration status.
For other registration questions, call 1-866-308-6739, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice).
Georgia

YOU CAN SECURELY REGISTER TO VOTE QUICKLY AND EASILY

Register Online at RegisterToVote.sos.ga.gov

In 2019, the Georgia General Assembly passed HB316 which authorized the state to enter the Electronic Registration Information Center. It is part of keeping clean, fair, and accurate voter lists. Records indicate you may not be registered to vote. If you want to register, follow the easy steps on this card by registration deadline of October 5, 2020.

To register to vote you must:
★ Be a citizen of the United States
★ Be a legal resident of the county
★ Be at least 17 1/2 years of age to register
★ Not be serving a sentence for conviction of a felony
★ Have not been found mentally incompetent by a judge

Register Online at RegisterToVote.sos.ga.gov
You can **securely** register to vote quickly and easily

Register Online at RegisterToVote.sos.ga.gov

In 2019, the Georgia General Assembly passed HB316 which authorized the state to enter the Electronic Registration Information Center. It is part of keeping clean, fair, and accurate voter lists. Records indicate you may not be registered to vote. If you want to register, follow the easy steps on this card by registration deadline of October 5, 2020.

**To register to vote you must:**
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be a legal resident of the county
- Be at least 17 1/2 years of age to register
- Be 18 years of age to vote
- Not be serving a sentence for conviction of a felony
- Have not been found mentally incompetent by a judge