

## Background

In the past few years, many states have passed laws requiring that voters produce certain forms of identification before being allowed to vote - driver's licenses, passports, student identification, voter ID cards, etc. Often hunting/ fishing licenses and concealed weapon carry permits are acceptable



For those who travel regularly, have credit cards, etc. the idea that many people lack any ID may be surprising. It can also be more difficult than you might think to get an acceptable form of ID – many older people, for example, have problems producing a required birth certificate; for others the locations for obtaining IDs may be difficult to get to or open infrequently.

Some people believe that voter ID laws are part of a broader scheme to suppress voting; there have been a number of court decisions finding such restrictions to be unconstitutional because of their likely disparate impact on certain segments of the population. Others claim that the laws are needed to prevent voter fraud, although courts have generally found that there is insufficient evidence of such fraud to justify such impositions as voter ID requirements..

## The role of AU

In the 2014 election, AU students engaged in an exit poll project that showed that 1.8% of those who showed up at the polls were denied the ability to vote because they lacked adequate IDs. That might not seem to be many, but in the 2013 statewide election for Virginia Attorney General the margin of victory was less than 700 of the more than 2 million votes cast.

### Sampled precincts

Unlike those of some states, the Virginia voter ID laws are still in effect, so we want to repeat the exit poll project November 8.

Students in Stat 405-605, a survey sampling class, will design a sample of precincts in the jurisdictions closest to AU (Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudon County) by public transportation. The selection will be based on the racial and income distribution of the precinct area so that differences can be measured.



will be studied by the

The procedure is for a pair of AU students, primarily from statistics classes, to go to an assigned precinct on election day, November 8, preferably but not necessarily, early in the morning or in late afternoon. A systematic sample (1 in 5 or 1 in 10) of those exiting the polls will be asked the following:

Were you here to vote? Were you able to vote? If not, why not? (inadequate ID or other)

The answers, together with the gender, age and ethnicity of the interviewees will be recorded on forms provided (hard copy or for tablets) and collected centrally. The composite results will be distributed to participants so that various sorts of analysis, as required by particular instructors.

This is an opportunity to participate in gathering evidence on an important policy issue.