

ANES QUESTION Proposal for the 2016 ANES Pilot Study: Reasons for Electoral Non-Participation

1) Reasons for Electoral Non-Participation:

a. **Proposal Overview:** Today the ability of all Americans to effectively exercise the right to vote is far from guaranteed. However, the existing public opinion datasets rarely delve into the respondent's reasons for not participating in electoral politics, especially reasons for not registering to vote or voting.

Researchers cannot assume that non-participants are always lacking the interest to participate; rather they may provide a valid reason for their non-participation.

The reasons can also be assessed for the combined impact of diverse respondents' identities, by examining whether particular identity groups are more impacted by potential hurdles to their electoral participation. The Census CPS 2014 Voting and Registration Supplement provides a rare opportunity to assess the multiple reasons for respondent's lack of electoral participation. This type of survey data is critical to examining the influence of possible suppression efforts on respondent's ability and/or likelihood to register and vote. The ANES provides a great avenue for further examining respondent's reasons for not participating in electoral politics.

b. **Proposal Keywords:** voter registration, vote, political participation, voter suppression, voting rights.

c. Other related survey questions

1. 2012 ANES Time Series Questions:

a. (Voter Registration) Are you registered to vote at this address, registered at a different address, or not currently registered? How

many years have you been registered to vote at (this/that) address?

Under what name are you registered to vote? What political party

are you registered with, if any? Do you intent to register to vote

before the November 6 elections, or do you not intend to register?

- b. (Vote) Did you vote in a Presidential primary election or caucus this year? Who did you vote for? Have you already voted in the election, or have you not voted? In what manner did you vote? Who did you vote for? Do you intend to vote for a candidate for President (U.S. Senate, U.S. House, Governor)?

2. Current Population Survey (CPS) 2014 Voting and Registration

Supplement

- a. Which of the following was the MAIN reason (you/name) (were/was) not registered to vote?
- Did not meet registration deadlines
 - Did not know where or how to register
 - Did not meet residency requirements/did not live here long enough
 - Permanent illness or disability
 - Difficulty with English
 - Not interested in the election or not involved in politics
 - My vote would not make a difference
 - Not eligible to vote
 - Other reason
 - Don't know
- b. What was the main reason (you/name) did not vote?
- Illness or disability (own or family's)
 - Out of town or away from home
 - Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)
 - Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference
 - Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule
 - Transportation problems
 - Didn't like candidates or campaign issues
 - Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered)
 - Bad weather conditions

- j. Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long
- k. Other
- l. Don't know

d. Proposed New Questions for the 2016 ANES Time Series Study:

1. What is the main reason you did not register to vote?

- a. Did not meet registration deadlines
- b. Did not know where or how to register
- c. Did not have the required identification
- d. Did not meet residency requirements/did not live here long enough
- e. Permanent illness or disability
- f. Difficulty with English
- g. Not interested in the election or not involved in politics
- h. My vote would not make a difference
- i. Not eligible to vote
- j. Other reason

2. What is the main reason you did not vote?

- a. Illness or disability (own or family's)
- b. Out of town or away from home
- c. Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)
- d. Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference
- e. Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule
- f. Difficulty with English
- g. Childcare issues
- h. Transportation problems
- i. Didn't like the candidates or campaign issues
- j. Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location).
- k. Vote was previously invalidated (due to issues with your signature, identification, or address).
- l. Did not know where or how to vote
- m. Bad weather conditions
- n. Inconvenient hours, polling place or lines too long
- o. Other

e. Statistical Information: The two proposed questions will allow for a broader

analysis of the reasons that respondents do not participate in electoral politics.

Statistically, we could use basic differences of means tests or more sophisticated multivariate models (because of the n and the breadth of other questions on the

survey). The ANES sample size and diversity allows us the statistical power to

examine the demographic identity of the respondent on their reasons for not

participating in electoral politics. The questions can be asked pre-election to assess the respondent's participation in voter registration and voting in a prior election. The questions can also be asked post-election to assess the respondent's participation in the most recent 2016 election.