

# PLSC 476: Empirical Legal Studies

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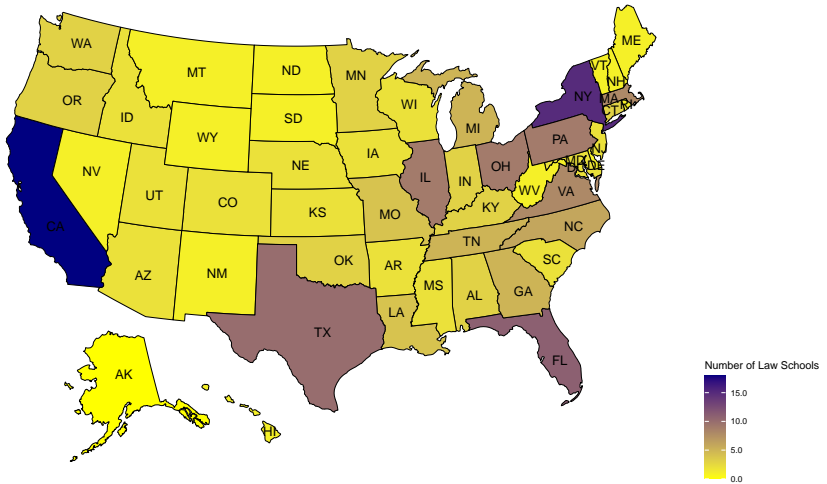
April 1, 2021

# Legal Education and Bar Passage

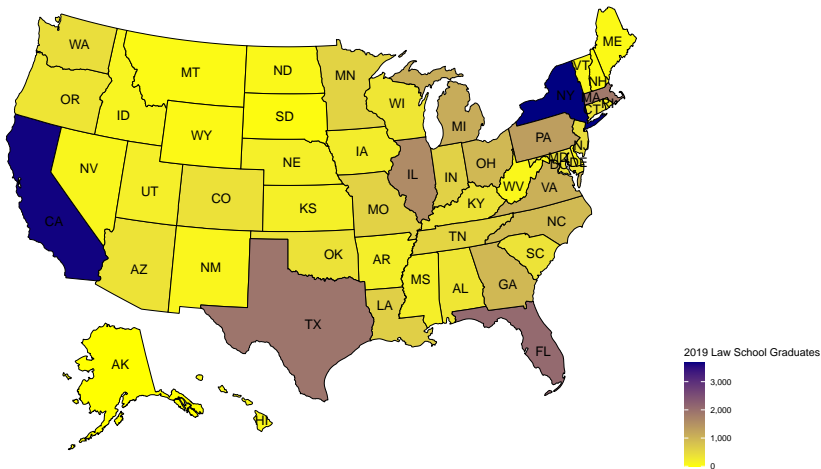
- Bar passage is required to receive a license to practice law in the U.S.
- Each state (and D.C.) is responsible for creating, administering, and evaluating its own bar exam
- 36 states / jurisdictions have adopted the Uniform Bar Exam, administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners
- Following graduation, J.D. holders typically take the bar exam in July; if they do not pass, there is typically a second examination in February
- In most states, potential attorneys can take the bar exam as many times as they wish

- <https://analytix.accesslex.org/DataSet>
- Data on  $N = 198$  ABA-accredited law schools in the U.S. (from 2019)
- Things we're going to focus on today:
  - Law school characteristics +
  - Class / student characteristics =
  - Bar passage results
- Contains many, many other variables:
  - Institutional resources (libraries, etc.)
  - Students: full-time vs. part-time status
  - Scholarships, grants, etc.
  - Employment status (in very great detail; part- vs. full-time, temporary vs. permanent, etc.)
  - Most common state of employment

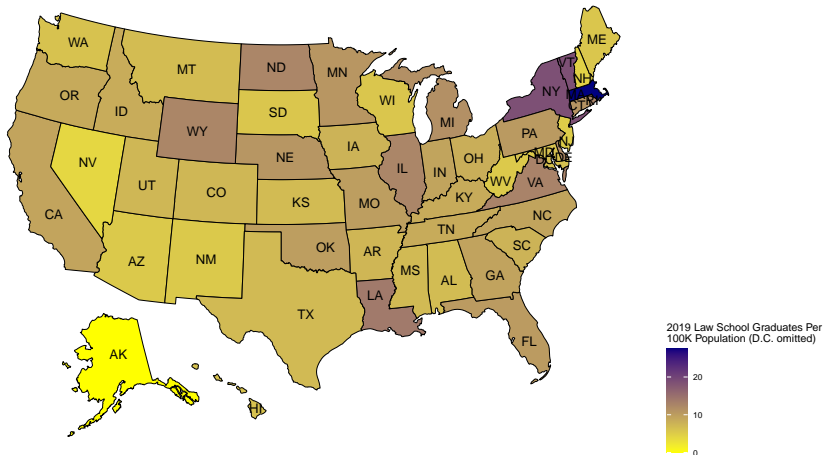
# Law Schools Per State (2019)



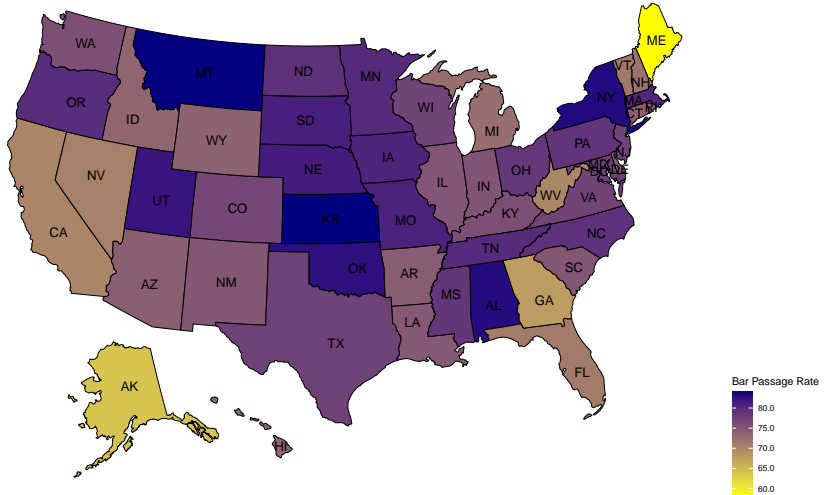
# Law Graduates, by State (2019)



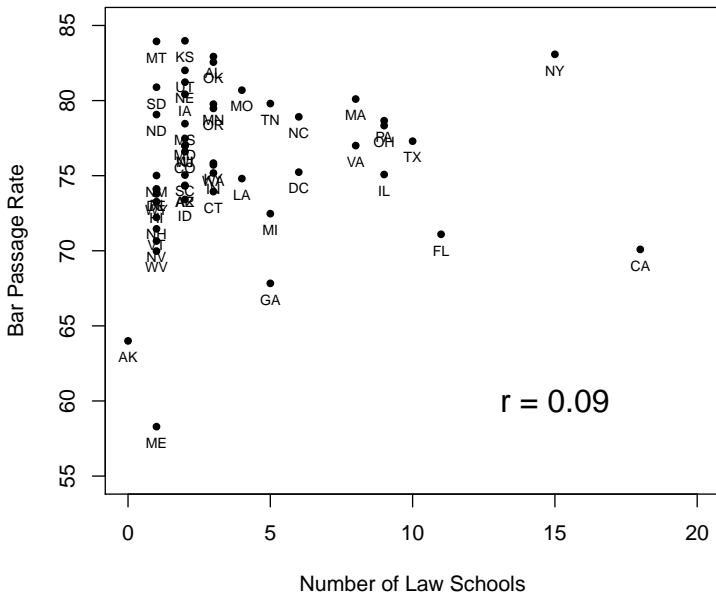
## Law Graduates Per 100,000 Population (2019)



## Bar Passage Rates, 2019

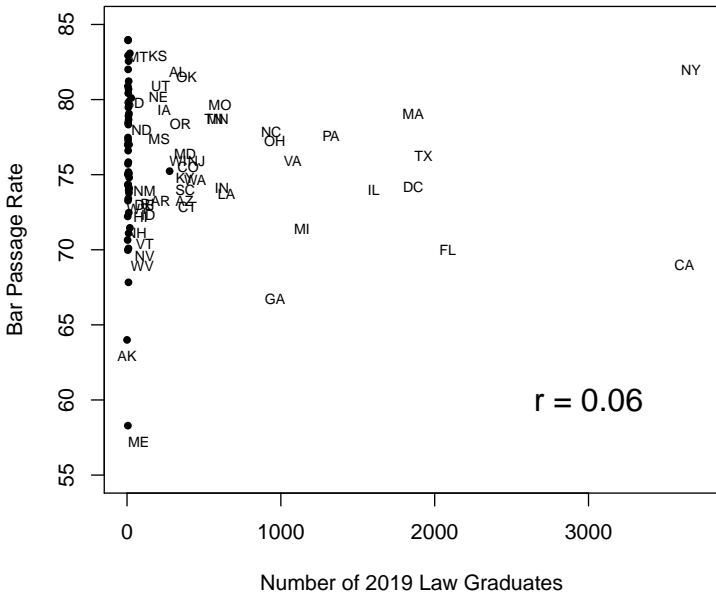


# Bar Passage Rates and $N_{\text{Law Schools}}$ (2019)

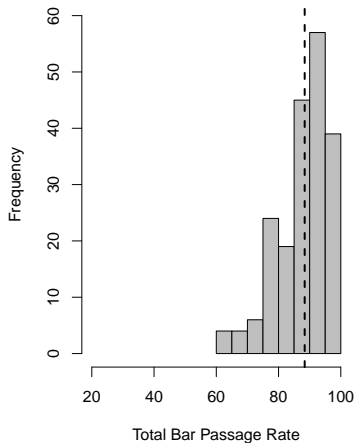
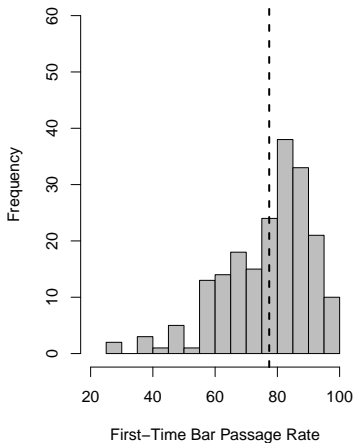




## Bar Passage Rates and $N_{\text{Law}}$ Graduates (2019)



# First-Time and Total Bar Passage Rates (2019)



# Best and Worst: First-Time Bar Passage

Top 10:

| School                     | Pass Rate |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| University of Wisconsin    | 100       |
| Harvard University         | 99        |
| Marquette University       | 99        |
| Duke University            | 98        |
| University of Pennsylvania | 97        |
| Yale University            | 96        |
| University of Chicago      | 96        |
| University of Virginia     | 96        |
| New York University        | 96        |
| Belmont University         | 96        |

Bottom 10:

| School                                   | Pass Rate |
|--|-----------|
| California Western School of Law         | 49        |
| University of Puerto Rico                | 49        |
| Appalachian School of Law                | 48        |
| Vermont Law School                       | 46        |
| Golden Gate University                   | 44        |
| University of San Francisco              | 39        |
| District of Columbia                     | 38        |
| Western Michigan University              | 36        |
| Pontifical Catholic University of P.R.   | 27        |
| Inter American University of Puerto Rico | 26        |

# Best and Worst: Total Bar Passage

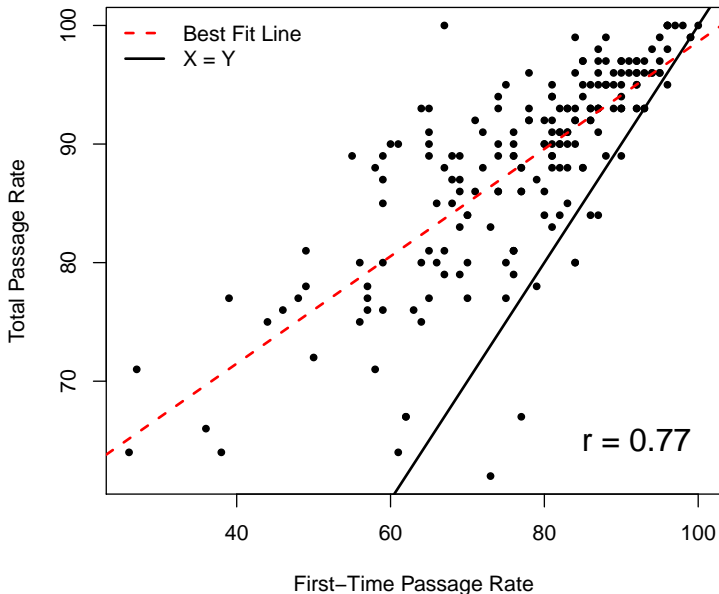
Top 10:

| School                     | Pass Rate |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| University of Wisconsin    | 100       |
| Duke University            | 100       |
| University of Pennsylvania | 100       |
| Yale University            | 100       |
| University of Chicago      | 100       |
| University of Virginia     | 100       |
| Concordia Law School       | 100       |
| Harvard University         | 99        |
| Marquette University       | 99        |
| Stanford University        | 99        |

Bottom 10:

| School                                   | Pass Rate |
|--|-----------|
| Florida A&M University                   | 71        |
| Pontifical Catholic University of P.R.   | 71        |
| University of South Dakota               | 67        |
| Atlanta's John Marshall Law School       | 67        |
| Florida Coastal School of Law            | 67        |
| Western Michigan University              | 66        |
| Mississippi College                      | 64        |
| District of Columbia                     | 64        |
| Inter American University of Puerto Rico | 64        |
| Faulkner University                      | 62        |

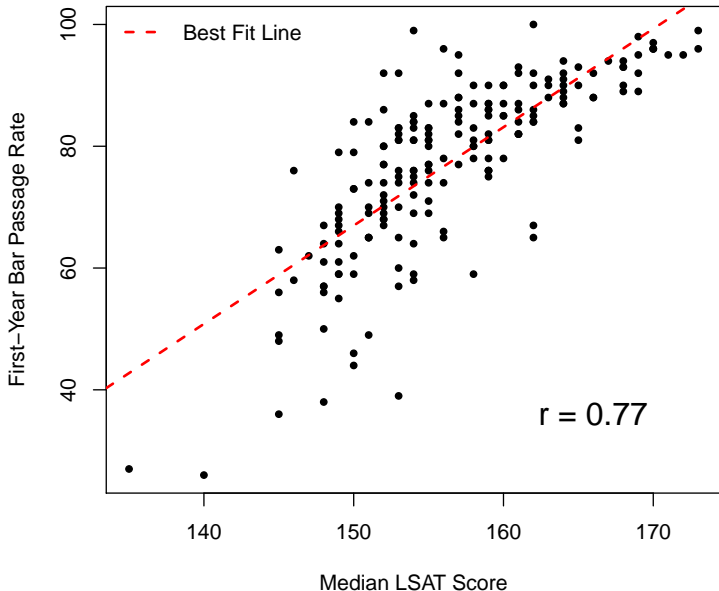
# First-Time and Total Bar Passage Rates (2019)



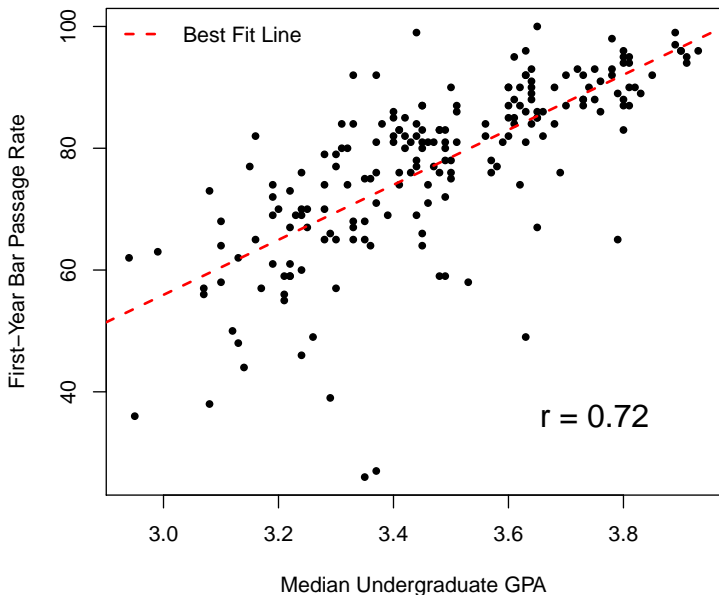
# Bar Passage Determinants

- “Inputs”: Student quality
  - LSAT
  - Undergraduate GPA
  - Selectivity
- School characteristics
  - Public vs. Private
  - Size
  - Cost
- Context / location

# First-Time Bar Passage by Median LSAT (2019)

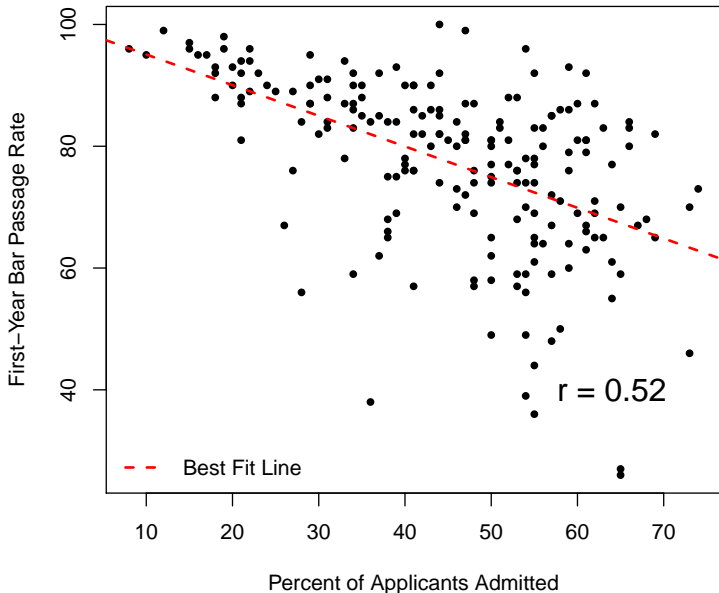


# First-Time Bar Passage by Median UGPA (2019)

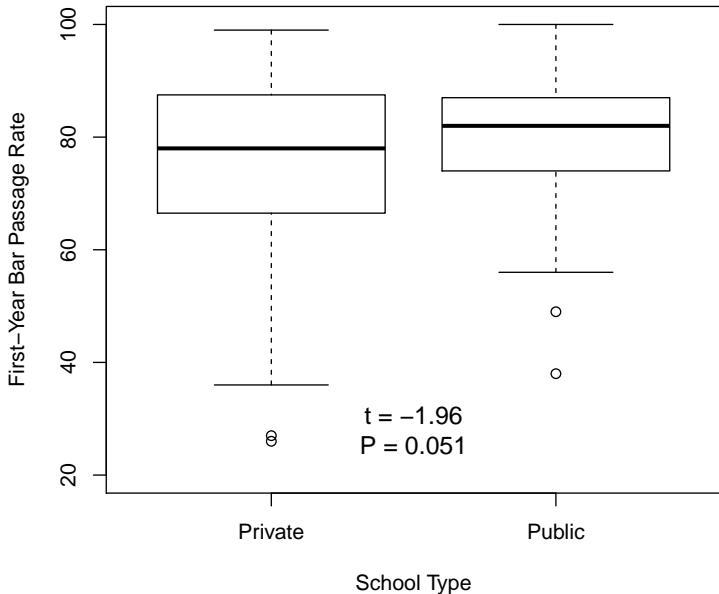




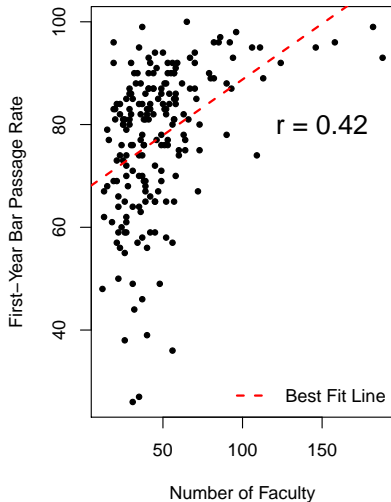
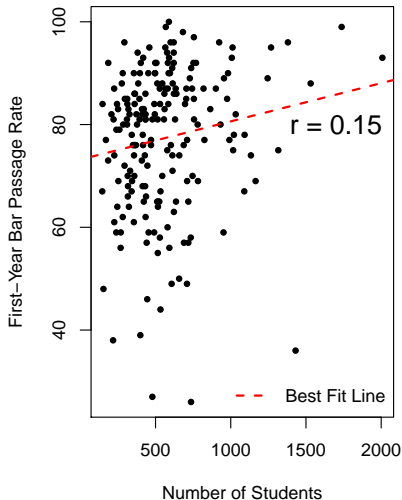
# First-Time Bar Passage by Admission Rates (2019)



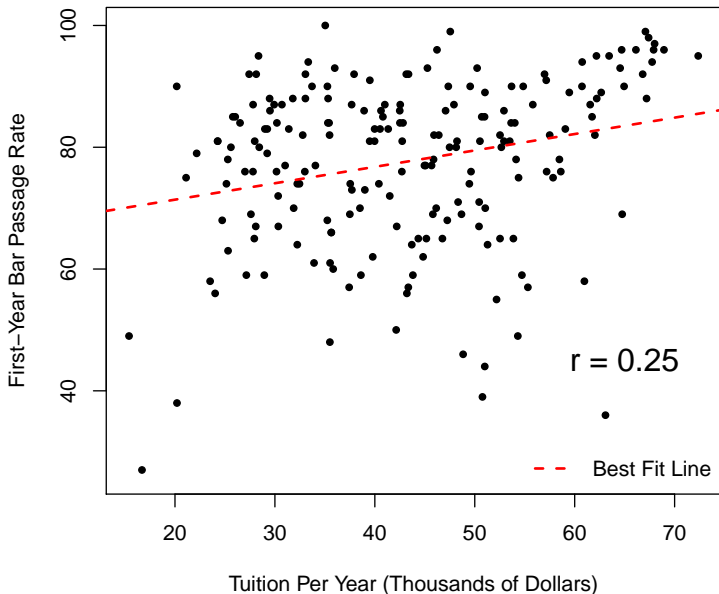
# First-Time Bar Passage by School Type (2019)



# First-Time Bar Passage and School Size (2019)



# First-Time Bar Passage and School Cost (2019)



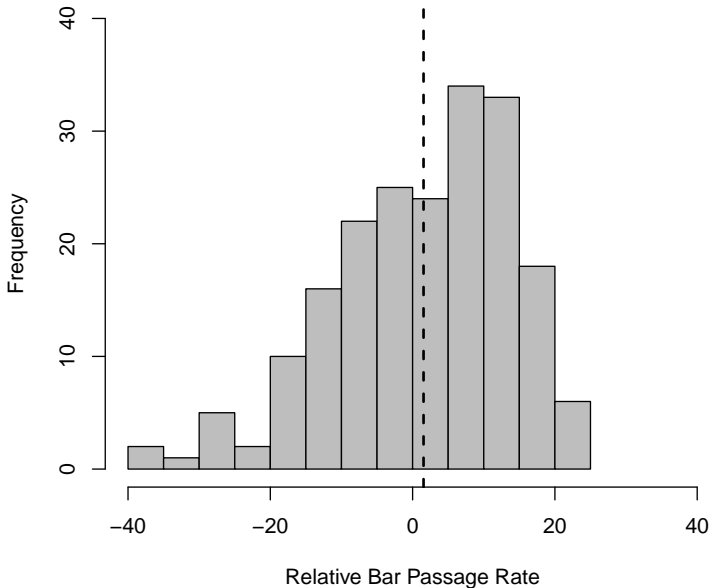
# First-Time Bar Passage: Multivariate Analysis

|                         | Dependent Variable          |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                         | First-Time Bar Passage Rate |
| Median LSAT             | 2.166***<br>(0.283)         |
| Median UGPA             | 5.572<br>(6.254)            |
| Admitted Percentage     | 0.174***<br>(0.067)         |
| Public School           | -2.619<br>(1.704)           |
| Number of Students      | -0.002<br>(0.004)           |
| Number of Faculty       | -0.045<br>(0.051)           |
| Annual Cost (\$1000s)   | -0.277***<br>(0.086)        |
| Constant                | -272.260***<br>(30.349)     |
| Observations            | 197                         |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.652                       |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.639                       |

Note:

\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

# “Relative” Bar Passage Rates (2019)



# First-Time and Relative Bar Passage

|                         | Dependent Variable          |                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|                         | First-Time Bar Passage Rate | Relative Bar Passage Rate |
| Median LSAT             | 2.166***<br>(0.283)         | 0.922***<br>(0.257)       |
| Median UGPA             | 5.572<br>(6.254)            | 24.833***<br>(5.689)      |
| Admitted Percentage     | 0.174***<br>(0.067)         | 0.011<br>(0.061)          |
| Public School           | -2.619<br>(1.704)           | -2.218<br>(1.550)         |
| Number of Students      | -0.002<br>(0.004)           | -0.001<br>(0.004)         |
| Number of Faculty       | -0.045<br>(0.051)           | -0.006<br>(0.047)         |
| Annual Cost (\$1000s)   | -0.277***<br>(0.086)        | -0.238***<br>(0.078)      |
| Constant                | -272.260***<br>(30.349)     | -217.640***<br>(27.608)   |
| Observations            | 197                         | 197                       |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.652                       | 0.642                     |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.639                       | 0.629                     |

Note:

\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

# Predictions and Relative Performance

Our model *predicts*:

$$\hat{Y}_i = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 X_{1i} + \hat{\beta}_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \hat{\beta}_k X_{ki}$$

The *residual* is:

$$\hat{u}_i = Y_i - \hat{Y}_i$$

Residuals indicate *relative performance*:

- $\hat{u}_i > 0 \leftrightarrow$  the school's bar passage rate is higher than the model predicts
- $\hat{u}_i < 0 \leftrightarrow$  the school's bar passage rate is lower than the model predicts



# Overperformers and Underperformers

Top 10:

| School                            | Relative Performance |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Marquette University              | 26.27                |
| North Carolina Central University | 20.05                |
| Liberty University                | 18.40                |
| Campbell University               | 18.01                |
| University of Dayton              | 17.06                |
| Duquesne University               | 15.17                |
| Florida International University  | 14.97                |
| Belmont University                | 14.96                |
| Syracuse University               | 14.37                |
| Ohio Northern University          | 13.74                |

Bottom 10:

| School                                 | Relative Performance |
|--|----------------------|
| University of San Francisco            | -31.23               |
| District of Columbia                   | -23.92               |
| University of Arizona                  | -23.32               |
| Indiana University - Bloomington       | -22.23               |
| Vermont Law School                     | -21.34               |
| Golden Gate University                 | -19.12               |
| University of Maine                    | -19.00               |
| Chapman University                     | -18.35               |
| Pontifical Catholic University of P.R. | -16.11               |
| California Western School of Law       | -15.58               |