

Turnout and Amendment 4

Mobilizing Eligible Voters Close to Formerly Incarcerated Floridians

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Introduction

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- Electoral behavior of neighborhoods home to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Turnout among household members of the formerly incarcerated.
- Post-passage legislation and litigation.

Literature and Theory

- Work from Amy Lerman and Wesla Weaver (2010; 2014) explores the effects of the carceral state, arguing that criminal justice contact teaches individuals that government is something that is “done to” them, not something they are invited to participate in.

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- Work from Amy Lerman and Wesla Weaver (2010; 2014) explores the effects of the carceral state, arguing that criminal justice contact teaches individuals that government is something that is “done to” them, not something they are invited to participate in.
- Importantly, this socialization extends also to non-convicted family members (Comfort 2008; Lee, Porter, and Comfort 2014; Kirk 2016).

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- Proximal contact with the criminal justice system probably reduces turnout even for eligible voters (e.g. Burch 2013; Morris 2020; but see White 2019).
- **Research Question:** Can a contest of particular salience to these eligible voters — such as Amendment 4 — recoup their turnout?

Key Elements of Amendment 4 Campaign

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- Used a framework of injustice, which Walker (2020) and others indicate can be mobilizing.
- Gillum spoke openly about the disenfranchisement of his brother; this potential descriptive representation could also have been mobilizing (e.g. Merolla, Sellers, and Fowler 2013).

Data and Methods

- Primarily using the Florida registered voter file and the Offender Based Information System (OBIS)

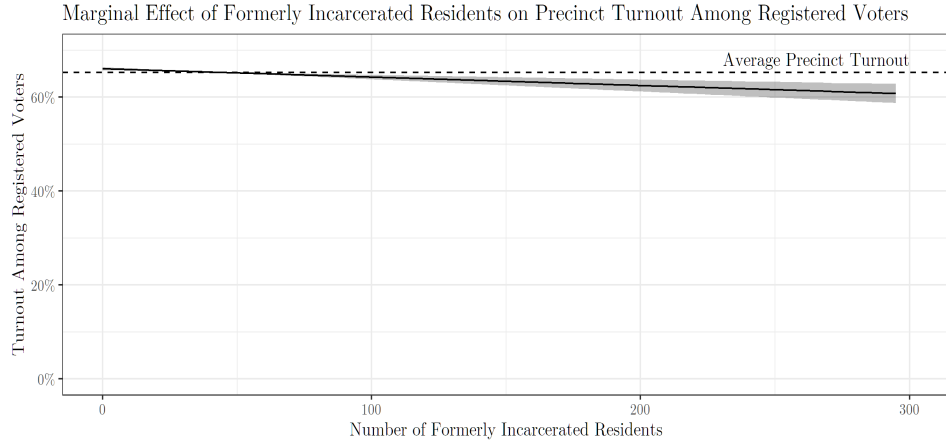
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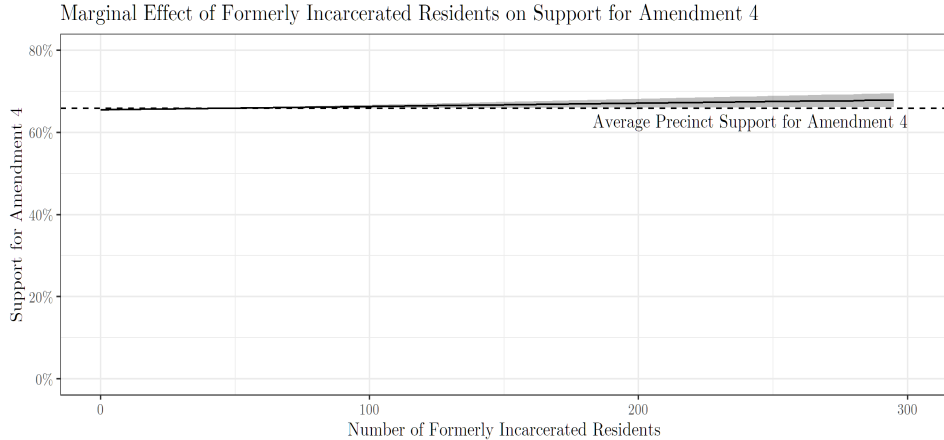
- Primarily using the Florida registered voter file and the Offender Based Information System (OBIS)
- Geocoded OBIS records show the neighborhoods home to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- By matching (cleaned) addresses in the voter file and OBIS I identify registered voters who live with formerly incarcerated individuals. These individuals are genetically matched to untreated voters, and I run a difference-in-differences model.

Nighborhood Turnout



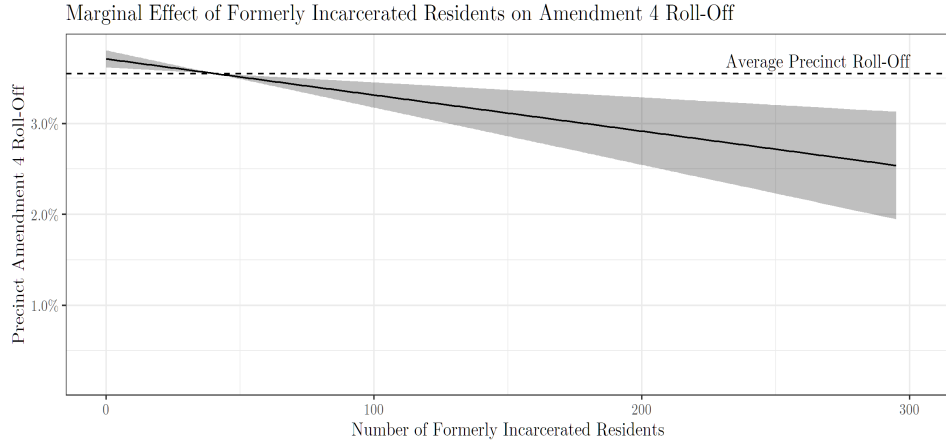
Controls: Race, gender, partisan makeup, age, income, collegiate education, unemployment rate, historical turnout, congressional district.

Support for Amendment 4



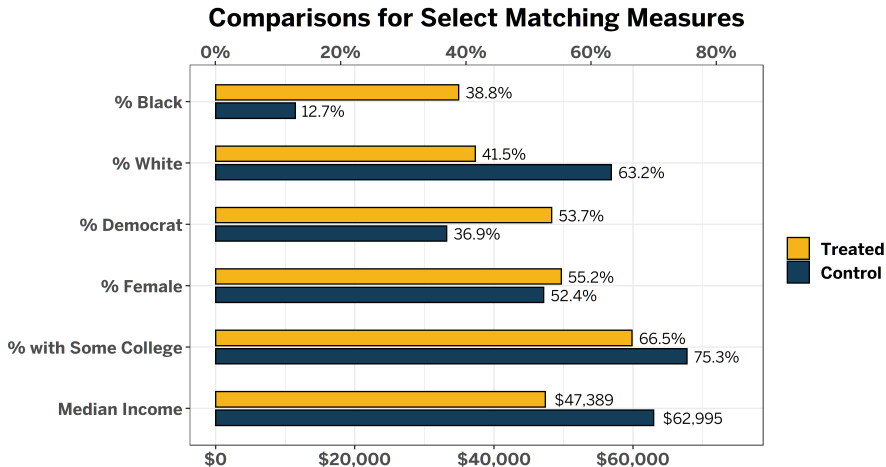
Controls: Race, gender, partisan makeup, age, income, collegiate education, unemployment rate, historical turnout, congressional district.

Roll-Off

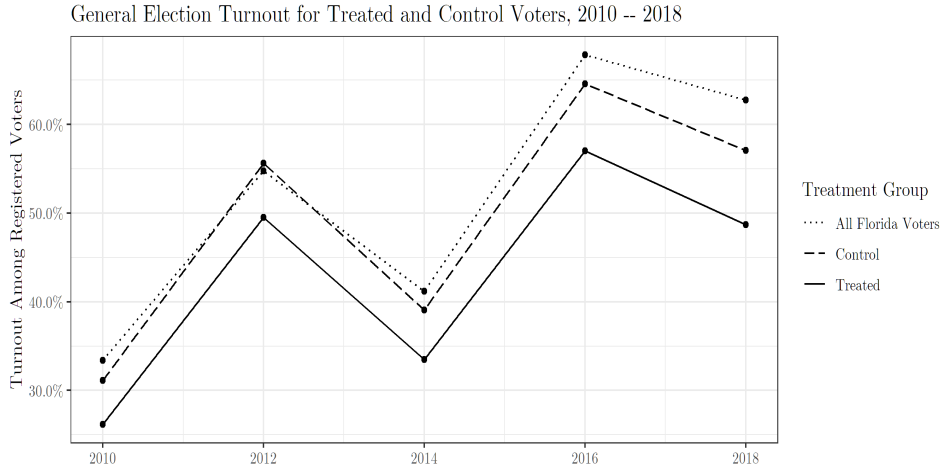


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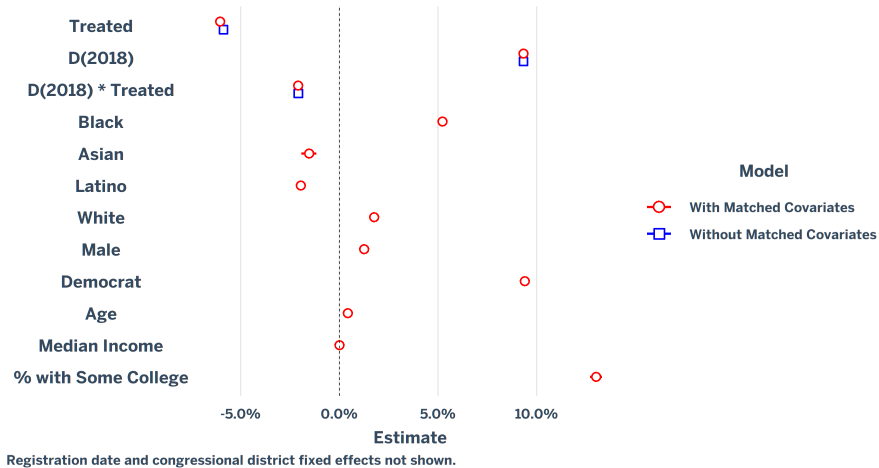
Individual Level Results



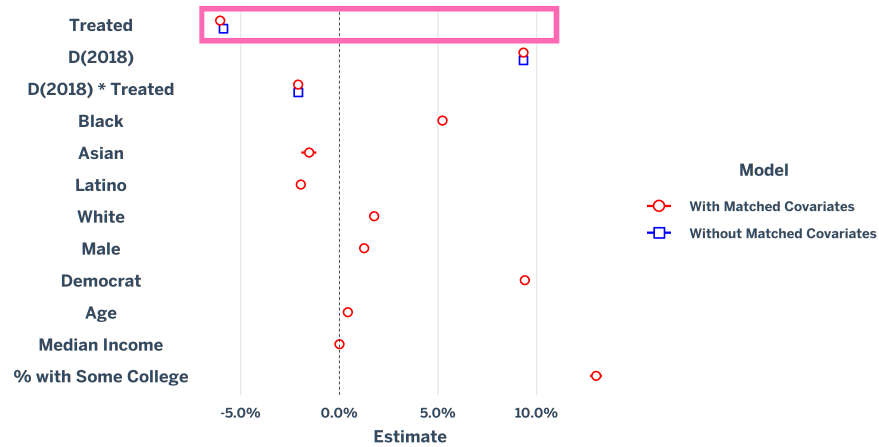
Post-Match Difference-in-Differences



Regression Results

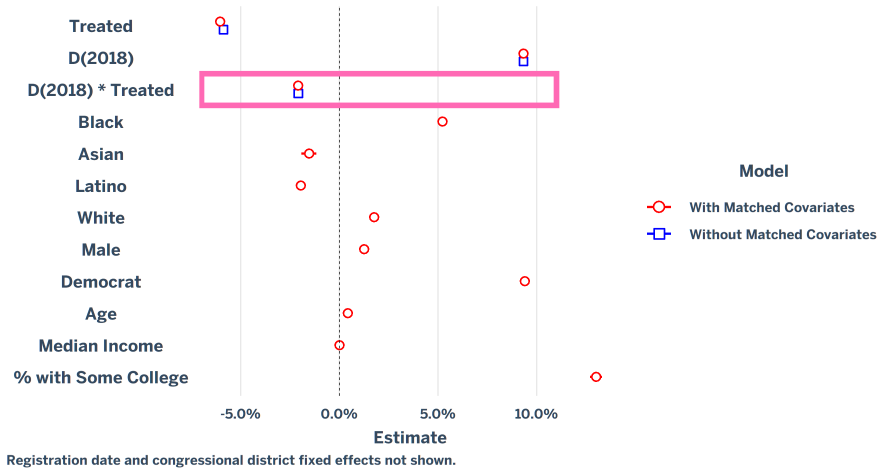


Regression Results



Registration date and congressional district fixed effects not shown.

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SB 7066 and Litigation

- In the months following the passage of Amendment 4, the Florida legislature re-defined what it means to “complete one’s sentence.”
- The state is incapable of knowing who has paid off their LFOs — and, therefore, is eligible to vote.
- It remains to be seen how restrictive legislation will shape these individuals’ participation, but it is likely to re-inforce the negative political socialization associated with the carceral state.

Thanks!

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