Benefits to Voting Literature Summary
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Increased Influence over Policy Decisions


- Policy preferences of voters, rather than non-voters, predicts how Senators cast roll-call votes that surpasses the relationship of any shared political party affiliation. This is significant because voters are more conservative than nonvoters therefore, policy enacted by elected officials will be more conservative. Three factors explain this relationship: voters elect those with policy positions similar to their own, voters are more likely to communicate with Senators, and Senators need to please citizens who vote, in order to be reelected. Griffin, J. D., & Newman, B. (2005). Are voters better represented? Journal of Politics, 67(4), 1206-1227.

State social welfare policies reflect the interests of those who vote. Because citizens who are have the highest levels of education and incomes are also the most likely to vote, class bias becomes reflected in state policy. Hill, K. Q., & Leighley, J. E. (1992, May). The policy consequences of class bias in state electorates. American Journal of Political Science, 36(2), 351-365.

Greater Access to Community Resources


- The act of voting is a means to increase federal resources within a geographical area. Members of Congress strategically use the allocation of federal funds within their district to reward the areas with the highest voter-turnout. Counties with the highest voter turnout receive higher per capita federal resources. Martin, P. S. (2003, January). Voting’s rewards: voter turnout, attentive publics, and congressional allocation of federal money. American Journal of Political Science, 47(1), 110-127.

- The interests of communities with high voter turn-out receive greater political attention, resources, and representation of their policy interests than those with less voter-turnout. Areas in a district with the highest levels of voter turn-out receive the most attention from legislators and their staff. Martin, P. S., & Claibourn, M. P. (2013). Citizen participation and congressional responsiveness: new evidence that participation matters. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 38(1), 59-81.

Benefits to Overall Health


- Political participation and community involvement lowers the risk of psychological problems, especially in women with a history of depression. Political engagement lessens some of the negative mental health consequences related to oppression and