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AMERICANS WITH PHOTO ID: A Breakdown of Demographic Characteristics

by Vanessa M. Perez, Ph.D.

It is becoming increasingly common for states to require government-issued photo identification at the polls. This is the source of a heated debate in American politics today.

Many argue that photo identification requirements potentially suppress electoral participation among those least likely to have identification, namely low-income people, young people, and racial and ethnic minorities.

This memo presents an overview of government-issued photo identification ownership based on the 2012 American National Elections Study (ANES).

Key findings show:

- Rates of identification-ownership are highest among White individuals, while other ethnic groups disproportionately lack necessary photo ID. Thirteen percent of Blacks, 10 percent of Hispanics, but only 5 percent of Whites lack photographic identification.
- Lower-income individuals are less likely to have photo ID. Twelve percent of adults living in a household with less than \$25,000 annual income lack photo ID, compared to just 2 percent in households with over \$150,000 annual income.
- Young adults are less likely to have photo ID: 15 percent of 17-20 yearolds lack photo ID, and 11 percent of those ages 21-24 lack photo ID.

Americans with Photo Identification According to the American National Elections Study, 2012

This research memo uses the American National Election Studies 2012 (ANES) time series data to assess the extent to which Americans have photo identification. The ANES, commonly referred to as the NES, is a widely used survey on American public opinion. It has been conducted every four years since 1948. This time series consisted of in-person and Internet interviews.

This memo focuses on a set of specific questions regarding individuals' possession of photo identification, including driver's licenses and other forms of government-issued identification. Cross-tabulations of these variables are presented here. While the findings must be taken with a degree of caution—due to a smaller-than-usual sample size—these tables present a picture of how many people have government-issued photo identification in the United States, and how rates of ID possession vary by socio-economic characteristics.

	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	CONFIRMED ID	NO CONFIRMED ID
White	71%	95%	5%
Black	12%	87%	13%
Hispanic	11%	90%	10%
Other	6%	89%	11%
Don't Know	۱%	49%	51%
Total	100%	93%	7%

Table 1: Individuals with Confirmed ID by Ethnicity

Table 1 shows the breakdown of individuals confirmed as having at least a non-expired driver's license, a passport, or some other type of government-recognized photo ID.

According to this data, the vast majority of Americans have photo identification. The highest rates of possession of government-issued photo identification are among people identifying as White. The rates among Hispanics are similarly high, but dip by five percent. Among Blacks, 87 percent report having photo identification.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME*	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	CONFIRMED ID	NO CONFIRMED ID
Below 25,000	14%	88%	12%
25,000 to 29,999	4%	92%	8%
30,000 to 34,999	4%	90%	10%
35,000 to 39,999	4%	9 4%	6%
40,000 to 49,999	5%	91%	9%
50,000 to 59,999	5%	9 4%	6%
60,000 to 74,999	8%	94%	6%
75,000 to 84,999	4%	9 4%	6%
85,000 to 99,999	4%	95%	5%
100,000 to 124,999	6%	96%	4%
125,000 to 149,999	3%	96%	4%
Over 150,000	4%	98%	2%
Inapplicable	35%	94%	6%
Total	100%	93%	7%

Table 2: Individuals with Confirmed ID by Household Income

*Slight deviation in Household Income totals due to individuals being surveyed exclusively online.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of Americans with photo identification by income levels.

People with low incomes (those making \$25,000 or less annually) are less likely to have identification than individuals in any other income category.

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	CONFIRMED ID	NO CONFIRMED ID
17-20	4%	85%	15%
21-24	6%	89%	11%
25-29	10%	94%	6%
30-34	8%	92%	8%
35-39	7%	93%	7%
40-44	9%	95%	5%
45-49	7%	94%	6%
50-54	10%	93%	7%
55-59	10%	94%	6%
60-64	8%	95%	5%
65-69	7%	96%	4%
70-74	5%	95%	5%
75+	6%	92%	8%
Age missing	۱%	92%	8%
Total	100%	93%	7%

Table 3: Individuals with Confirmed ID by Age Group

Table 3 presents the total number of people with confirmed photo identification by age group.

It shows that the majority of those who report not having identification are younger than 25 years of age.

ETHNICITY	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
White	71%	91%	8%	0%
Black	12%	73%	27%	0%
Hispanic	11%	83%	17%	0%
Other	6%	84%	۱6%	۱%
Refused/DK	۱%	46%	10%	44%
Total	100%	87%	12%	۱%

Table 4: Individuals with Driver's License or Passport by Ethnicity

Table 4 shows the breakdown of individuals with driver's licenses or passports broken down by race and ethnicity.

It shows that people identifying as White are more likely to have government-issued identification than others: 91 percent of Whites have such identification, compared to 73 percent of Blacks and 83 percent of Hispanics. This represents an 18 point difference between Whites and Blacks, and an 8 point difference between Whites and Hispanics.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PERCENTAGE OF WHITE POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
Below 25,000	١7%	81%	19%	۱%
25,000 to 29,999	5%	91%	9%	0%
30,000 to 34,999	6%	88%	11%	2%
35,000 to 39,999	6%	95%	5%	0%
40,000 to 49,999	8%	86%	14%	0%
50,000 to 59,999	9%	91%	8%	۱%
60,000 to 74,999	12%	91%	9%	0%
75,000 to 84,999	8%	97%	3%	0%
85,000 to 99,999	7%	95%	5%	0%
100,000 to 124,999	11%	96%	4%	0%
125,000 to 149,999	5%	97%	3%	0%
over 150,000	7%	96%	4%	0%
Total	100%	91%	9 %	0%

Table 5 presents the breakdown by income of White Americans reporting having some type of government-issued identification.

It shows that people with incomes of \$25,000 or less are least likely to have some type of government-issued identification. Only 81 percent of these individuals possess government-issued identification.

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF WHITE POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
17-20	3%	80%	20%	0%
21-24	6%	90%	10%	0%
25-29	9%	88%	11%	1%
30-34	7%	90%	10%	0%
35-39	7%	89%	10%	۱%
40-44	9%	95%	5%	۱%
45-49	7%	92%	8%	0%
50-54	10%	90%	9%	١%
55-59	11%	93%	6%	۱%
60-64	9%	95%	5%	0%
65-69	8%	93%	7%	0%
70-74	6%	93%	7%	0%
75+	7%	88%	11%	۱%
Age missing	۱%	96%	4%	0%
Total	100%	91%	8%	0%

Table 6: White Individuals with Driver's License or Passport by Age Group

Table 6 shows that among Whites, the lowest rate of identification are among people younger than 20 years of age, for those between the ages of 25 to 29, and for the elderly 75 and older.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
Below 25,000	39%	61%	39%	0%
25,000 to 29,999	9%	79%	21%	0%
30,000 to 34,999	6%	92%	8%	0%
35,000 to 39,999	6%	61%	37%	۱%
40,000 to 49,999	8%	82%	18%	0%
50,000 to 59,999	5%	94%	6%	0%
60,000 to 74,999	9%	86%	14%	0%
75,000 to 84,999	5%	61%	39%	0%
85,000 to 99,999	5%	89%	0%	11%
100,000 to 124,999	3%	72%	28%	0%
125,000 to 149,999	2%	81%	19%	0%
over 150,000	3%	85%	15%	0%
Total	100%	73%	27%	۱%

Table 7: Black Individuals with Driver's License or Passport by Income

Table 7 shows that, among Blacks, rates of ID possession vary by income category, with those making \$25,000 or less among the least likely to have government issued identification. However, the rates are similar for Black individuals in higher income categories (\$35,000 to \$39,999 and \$75,000 to \$84,999). The data does not suggest that higher incomes are necessarily associated with greater rates of identification-possession for Black Americans.

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
17-20	8%	64%	36%	0%
21-24	8%	59%	41%	0%
25-29	10%	64%	36%	0%
30-34	8%	79%	21%	0%
35-39	7%	75%	25%	0%
40-44	10%	86%	14%	0%
45-49	6%	68%	32%	0%
50-54	12%	74%	23%	3%
55-59	10%	71%	29%	۱%
60-64	7%	77%	23%	0%
65-69	5%	85%	15%	0%
70-74	4%	67%	33%	0%
75+	2%	81%	19%	0%
Age missing	۱%	75%	25%	0%
Total	100%	73%	27%	0%

Table 8: Black Individuals with Driver's License or Passport by Age Group

Table 8 shows the rates of government-issued identification for Blacks broken down by age group.

It shows that the youngest individuals are least likely to have identification (those younger than 25). But rates are also low for other age groups, particularly for those 25 to 29, and 70 to 74.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANIC POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
Below 25,000	30%	71%	29%	0%
25,000 to 29,999	7%	75%	23%	2%
30,000 to 34,999	5%	80%	20%	0%
35,000 to 39,999	7%	75%	25%	0%
40,000 to 49,999	9%	88%	12%	0%
50,000 to 59,999	7%	88%	12%	0%
60,000 to 74,999	13%	95%	5%	0%
75,000 to 84,999	4%	72%	28%	0%
85,000 to 99,999	4%	95%	5%	0%
100,000 to 124,999	6%	94%	6%	0%
125,000 to 149,999	3%	100%	0%	0%
over 150,000	3%	81%	19%	0%
Total	100%	82%	18%	0%

Table 9: His	panic Individuals	with Driver's L	icense or Pass	port by Income

Table 9 presents the breakdown of government-issued identification for the Hispanic population broken down by income.

It demonstrates that Hispanics with incomes \$25,000 or below, and those making \$75,000 to \$84,999, are less likely to have government-issued identification.

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANIC POPULATION	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT	NEITHER	REFUSED/ DON'T KNOW
17-20	8%	64%	36%	0%
21-24	8%	59%	41%	0%
25-29	10%	64%	36%	0%
30-34	8%	79%	21%	0%
35-39	7%	75%	25%	0%
40-44	10%	86%	14%	0%
45-49	6%	68%	32%	0%
50-54	12%	74%	23%	3%
55-59	10%	71%	29%	۱%
60-64	7%	77%	23%	0%
65-69	5%	85%	15%	0%
70-74	4%	67%	33%	0%
75+	2%	81%	19%	0%
Age missing	۱%	75%	25%	0%
Total	100%	73%	27%	0%

Table 10: Hispanic Individuals with Driver's License or Passport by Age Group

Table 10 presents the breakdown of government-issued identification for Hispanics by age group.

It shows that individuals less than 30 years old are less likely to have government-issued identification. The rates are comparable to those of the Black population, but differ sharply from those of White Americans (the lowest rates for these groups were 80 and 90 percent).

Conclusion

This memo presents trends in government-issued photo identification ownership among Americans. Overall, it shows that the vast majority of Americans have some form of government-issued identification, but rates of possession vary by socio-economic characteristics. Young and low-income people are least likely to have photographic identification. Rates also vary by race and ethnicity, with Blacks least likely to have government-issued identification relative to other groups.

The patterns help to illustrate how the issue of ID ownership informs the policy debate over the passage of identification requirements for voting.

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850 15th Street NW Suite 250 Washington, DC 20005 www.projectvote.org

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vanessa M. Perez is senior public policy analyst at Project Vote. She holds a B.A., M.Phil, and Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

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