

Do Registration Reforms Add New Voters or Keep Californians Registered?

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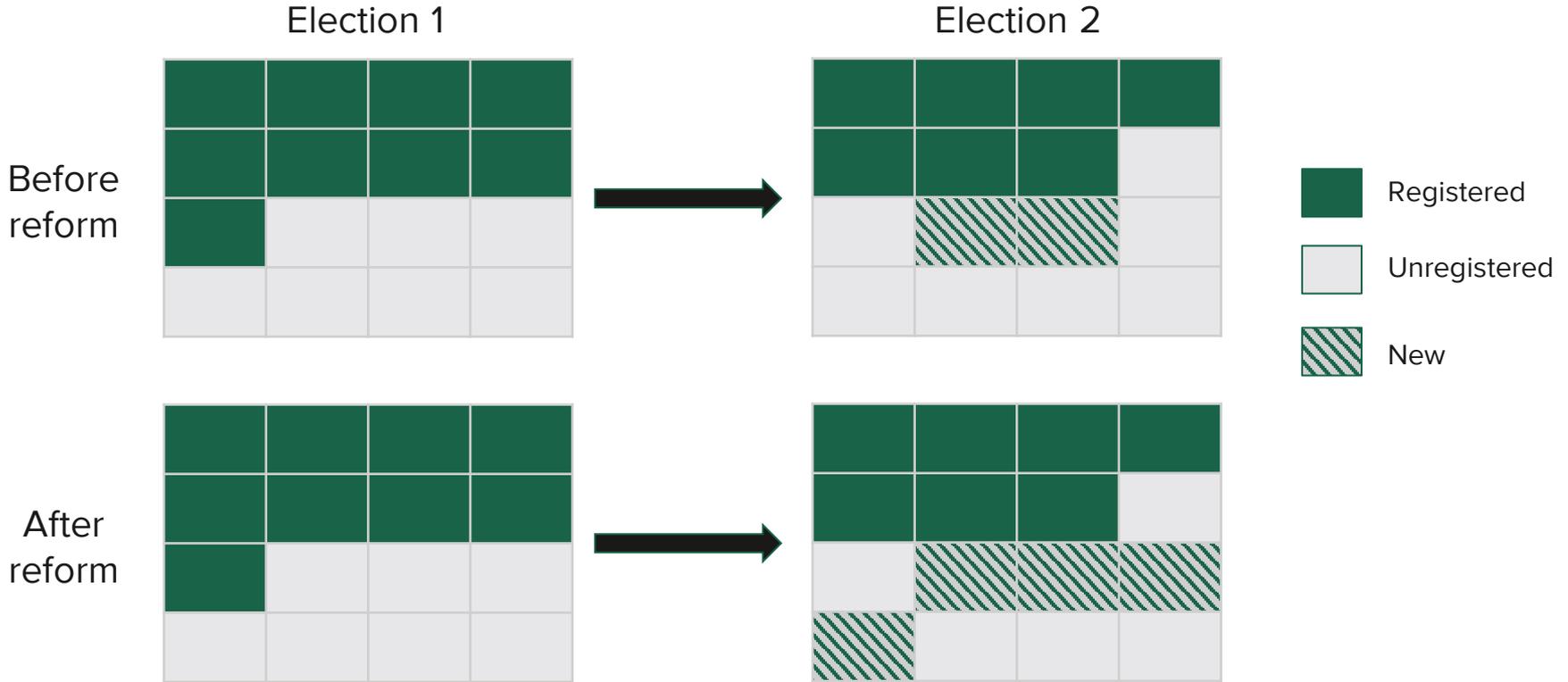
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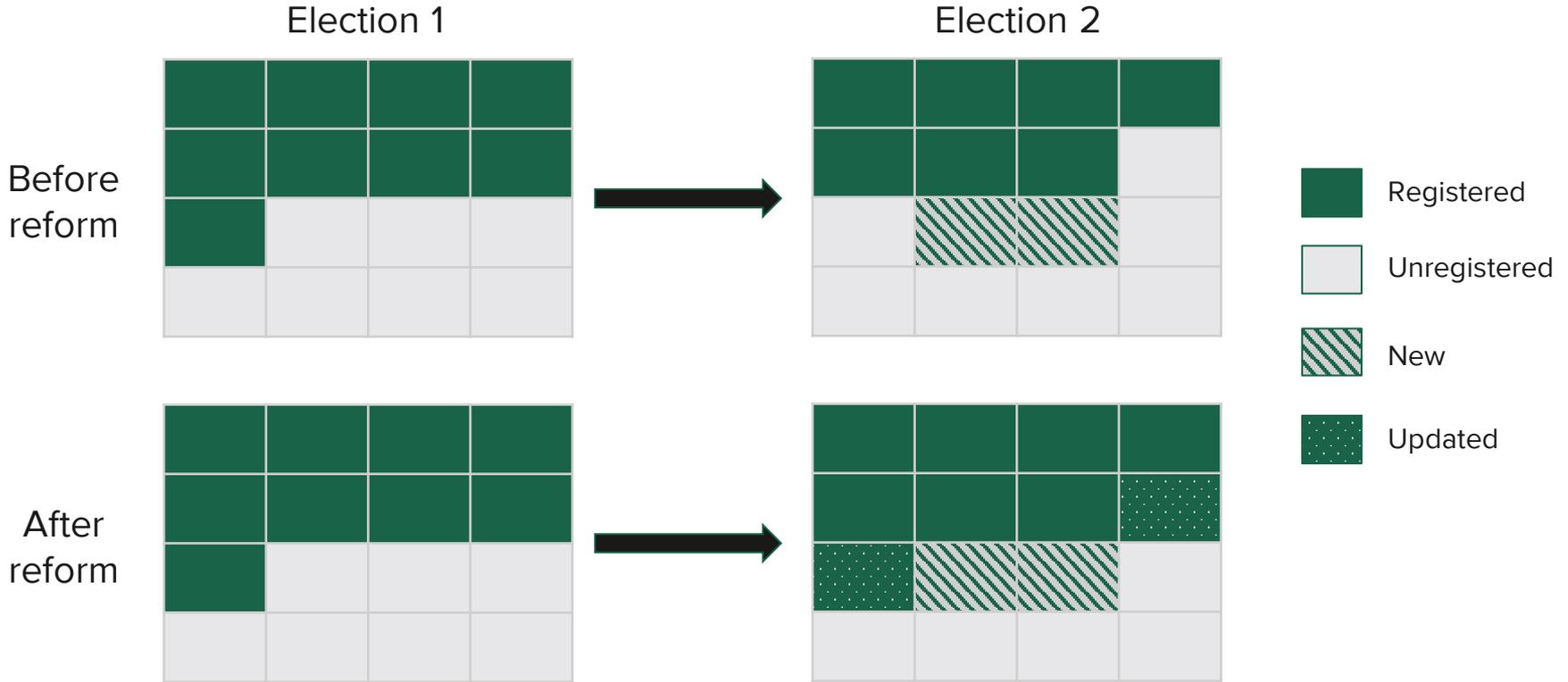
California New Motor Voter (CNMV) is designed to ease registration process

- Must answer registration questions to complete DMV transaction
 - New driver's license / renewal
 - New state ID /renewal
- CNMV has multiple goals
 - Increase registration
 - More representative electorate
 - Better voter file maintenance

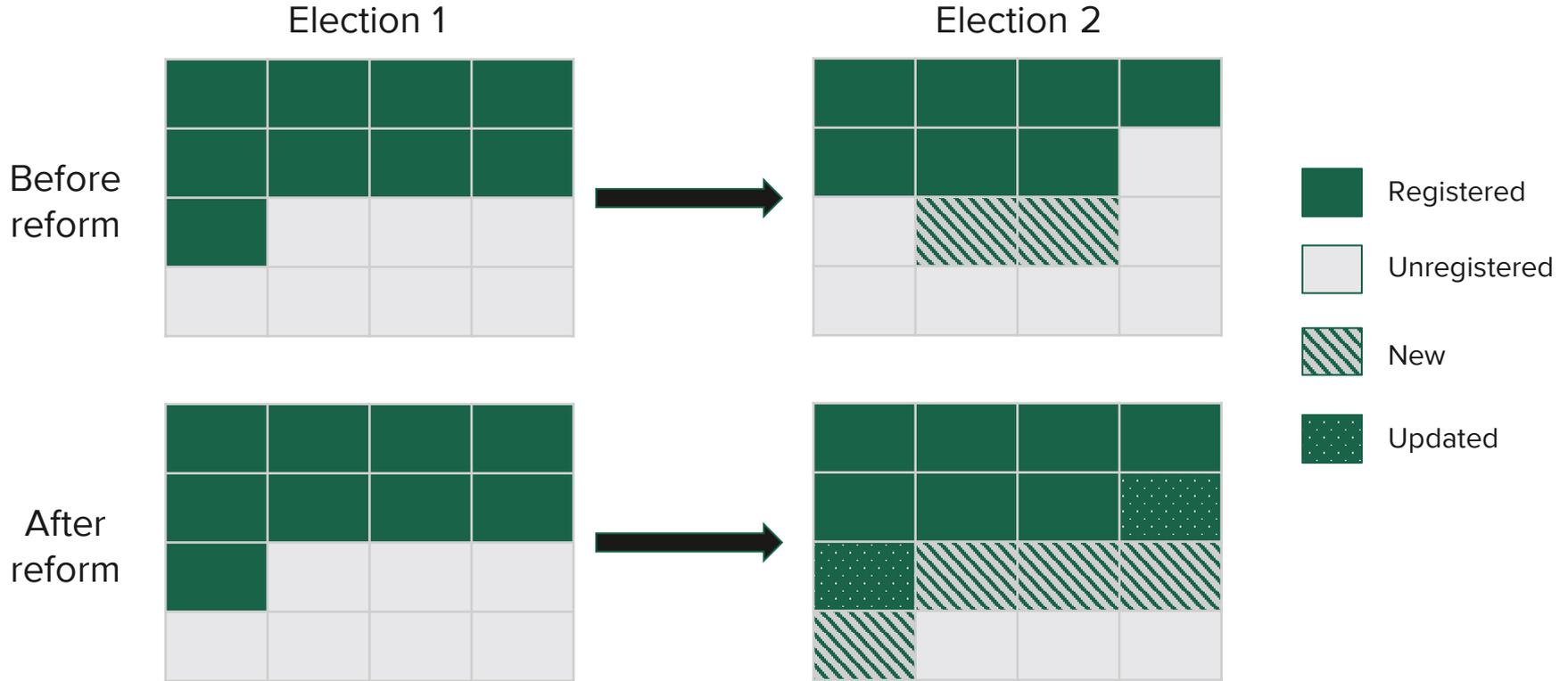
Registration can increase in two ways



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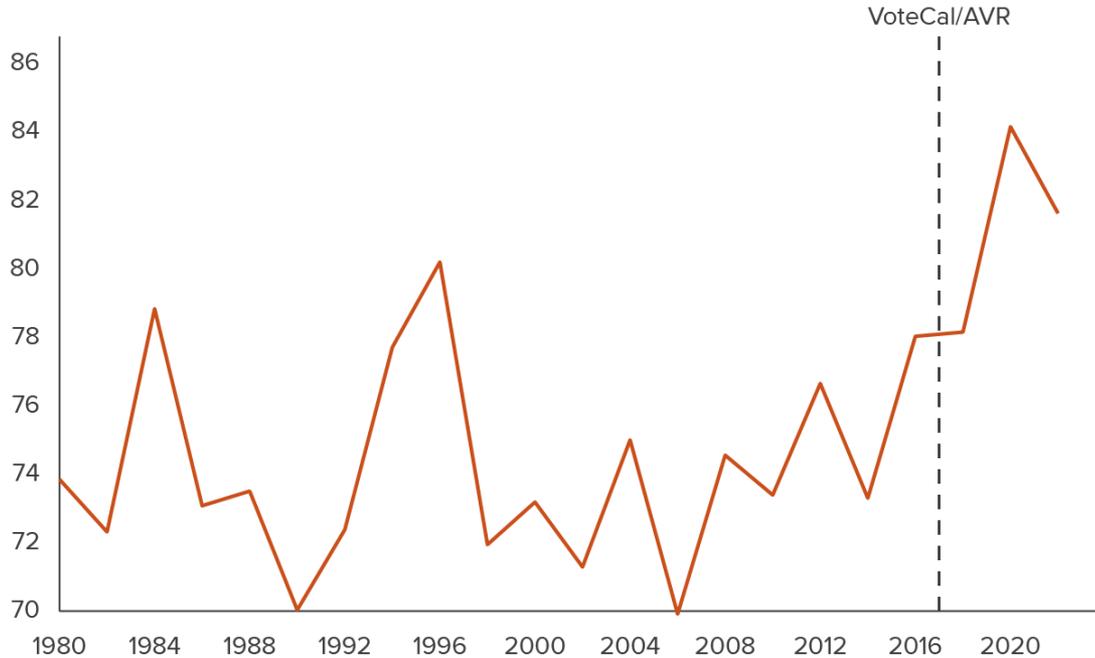


Separate from CNMV, some address updates have become easier

- Central statewide voter file (Votecal) made cross-county updates easier
- Before Votecal:
 - re-register in new county to update record
- After Votecal:
 - new county update happens automatically with DMV or post office address update

Registration has climbed with new options

Registered as a share of eligible (%)



Source: California Secretary of State.

Why does new vs. update distinction matter?

- Expanding the electorate vs. maintaining existing
- New registrants come from underrepresented groups
 - Younger; more likely Black, Latino, Asian American
- New registrants likely to be less engaged—different outreach strategy

How have the reforms affected the voter file?

- Address updates vs. new registrations
- CNMV vs. Votecal cross-county updates
- Equity effects: larger changes for underrepresented groups?

How do we identify our effects?

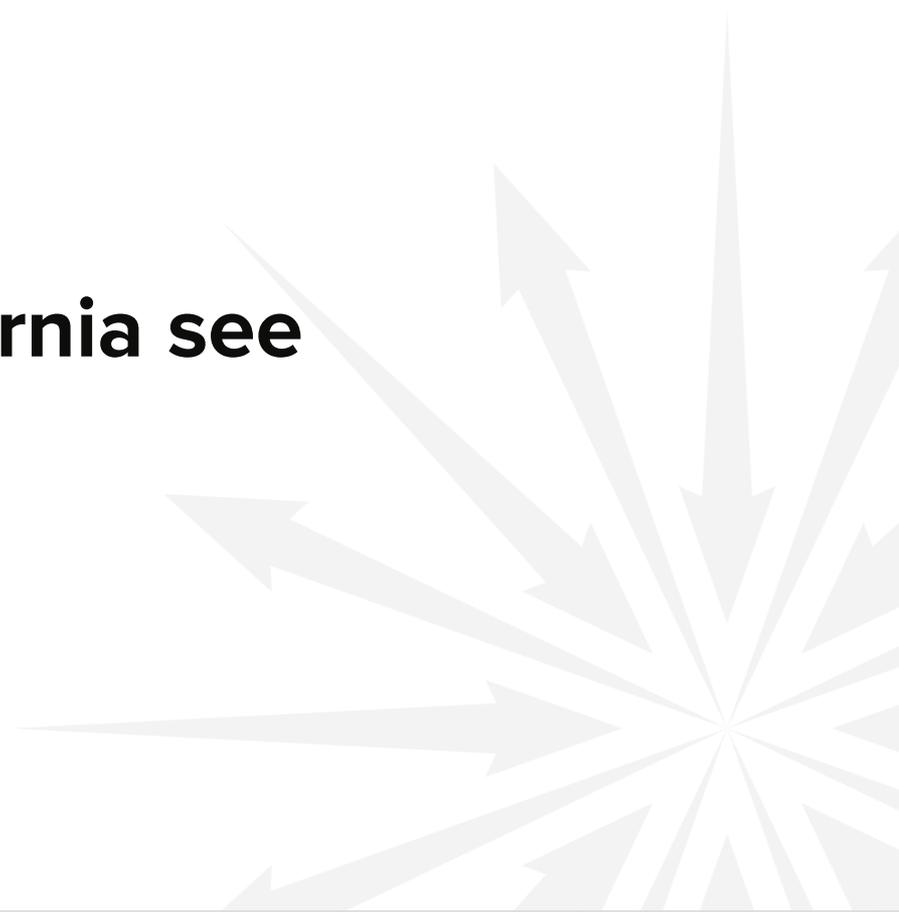


Our data and baselines for the study

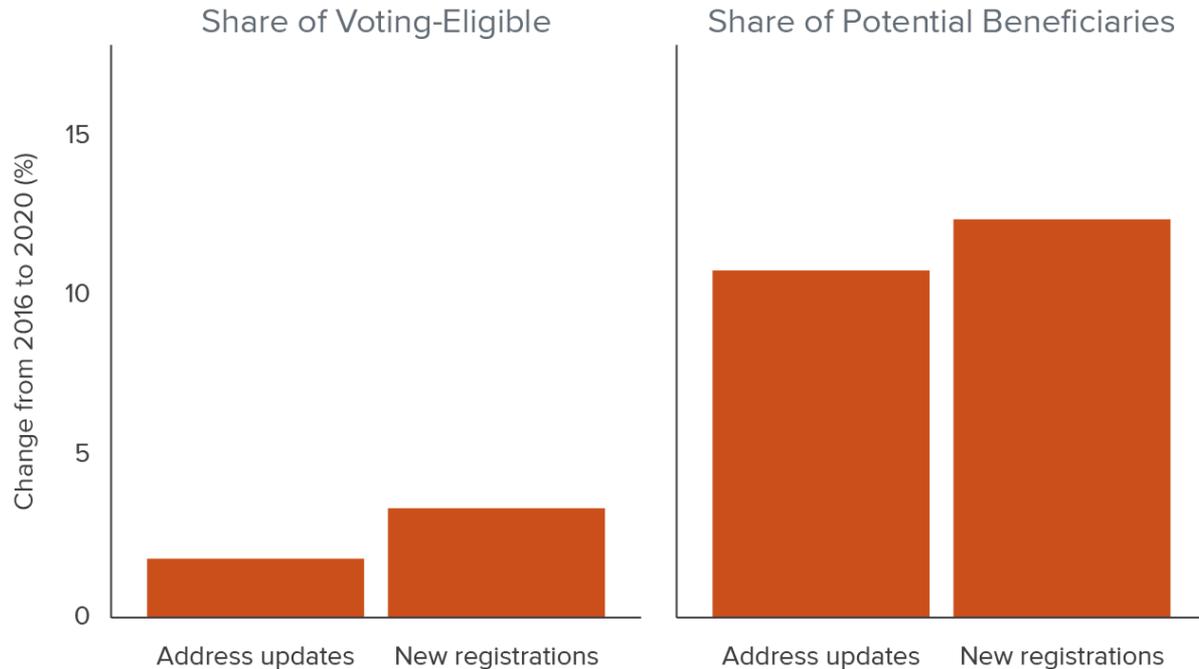
- California: Political Data, Inc. registration files
- National: Catalist county registration aggregates

- Baseline 1: Voting-eligible residents (all citizens 18 and over)
- Baseline 2: Potential beneficiaries
 - Address updates: registered voters who moved
 - New registrants: all voting-eligible residents not registered in the state in previous presidential election

What change did California see under the reforms?



Both address updates and new registrations are up

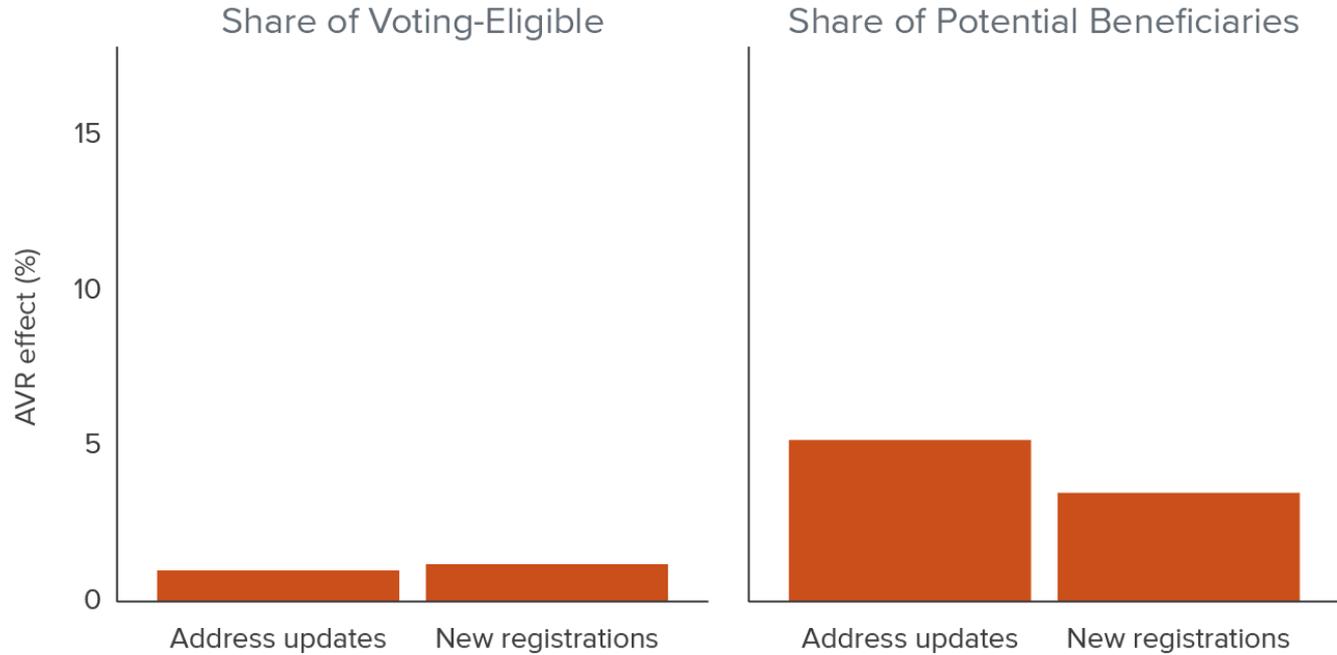


Sources: Political Data, Inc. (registration data); IPUMS USA (migration, citizenship, age); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (deaths).

CNMV has had a bigger effect than Votecal

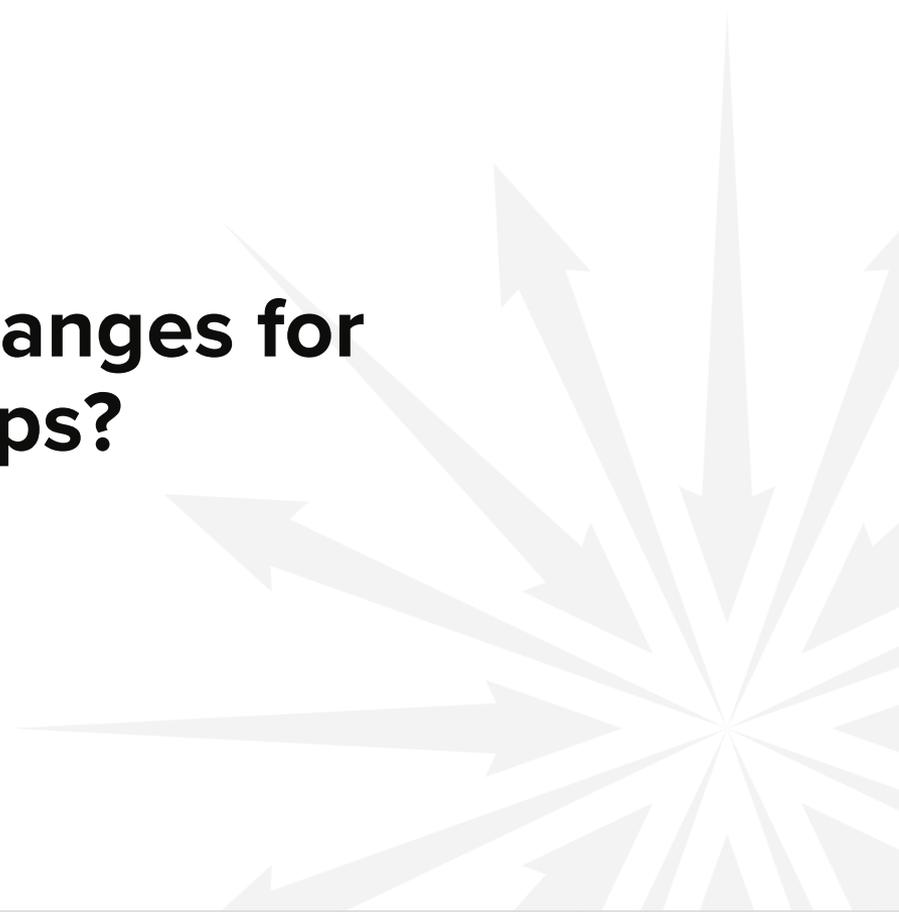
- Within-county updates increased almost as much as cross-county updates
 - Within-county updates: 8.0% increase
 - Cross-county updates: 9.8% increase
- Within-county moves unaffected by the Votecal change

National results suggest AVR changes are independent of other factors



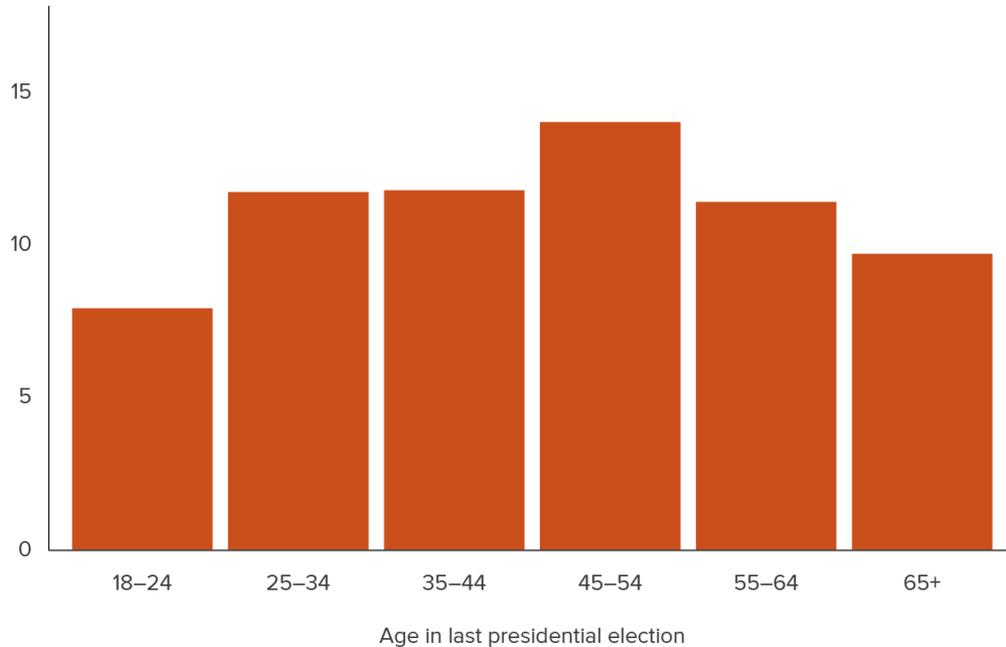
Sources: Catalist (registration data); Census Bureau (migration, CVAP); IPUMS USA (migration, citizenship, age); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (deaths).

Have we seen larger changes for underrepresented groups?



Address updates up most among middle-aged...

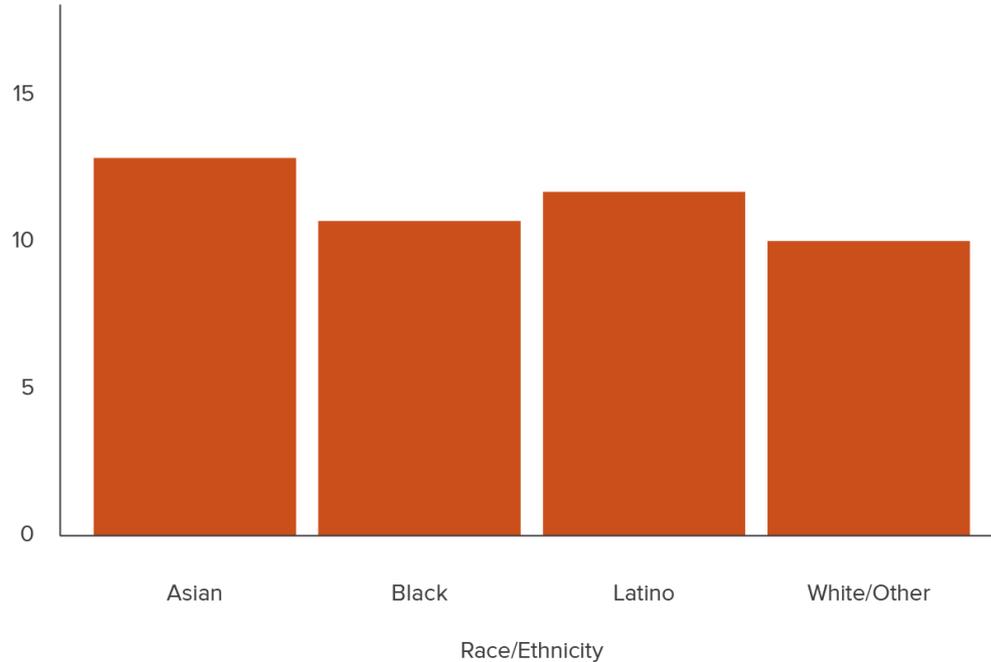
Change in movers as a share of potential: 2016 to 2020 (%)



Sources: Political Data, Inc. (registration data); Census Bureau (migration, CVAP); IPUMS USA (migration, citizenship, age); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (deaths).

...and among Asian Americans

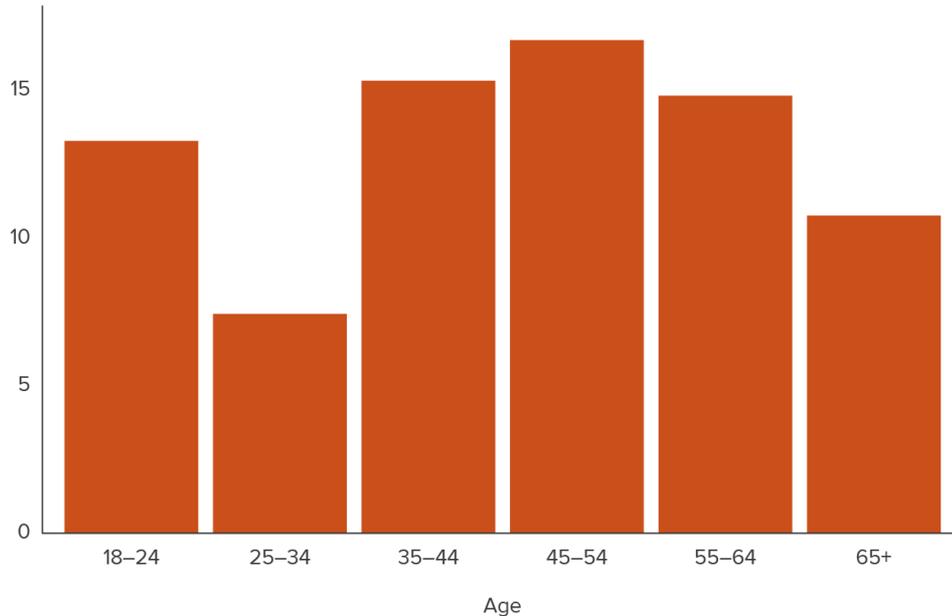
Change in movers as a share of potential: 2016 to 2020 (%)



Sources: Political Data, Inc. (registration data); Census Bureau (migration, CVAP); IPUMS USA (migration, citizenship, age); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (deaths).

New registrations up most among young and middle-aged...

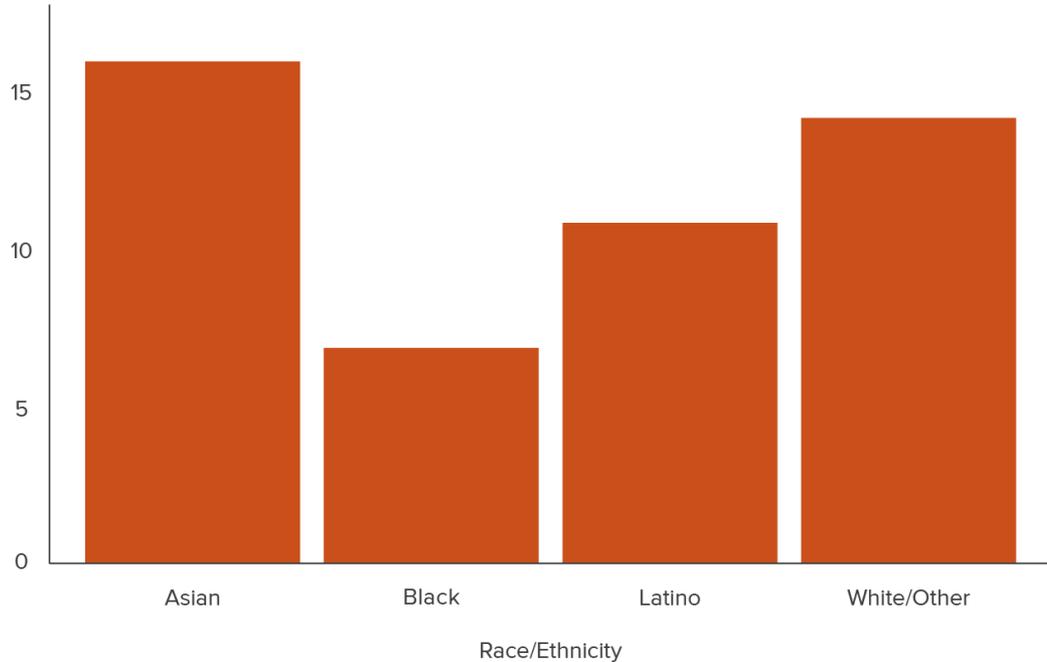
Change in new as a share of potential: 2016 to 2020 (%)



Sources: Political Data, Inc. (registration data); Census Bureau (migration, CVAP); IPUMS USA (migration, citizenship, age); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (deaths).

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Change in movers as a share of potential: 2016 to 2020 (%)



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Conclusions and policy recommendations

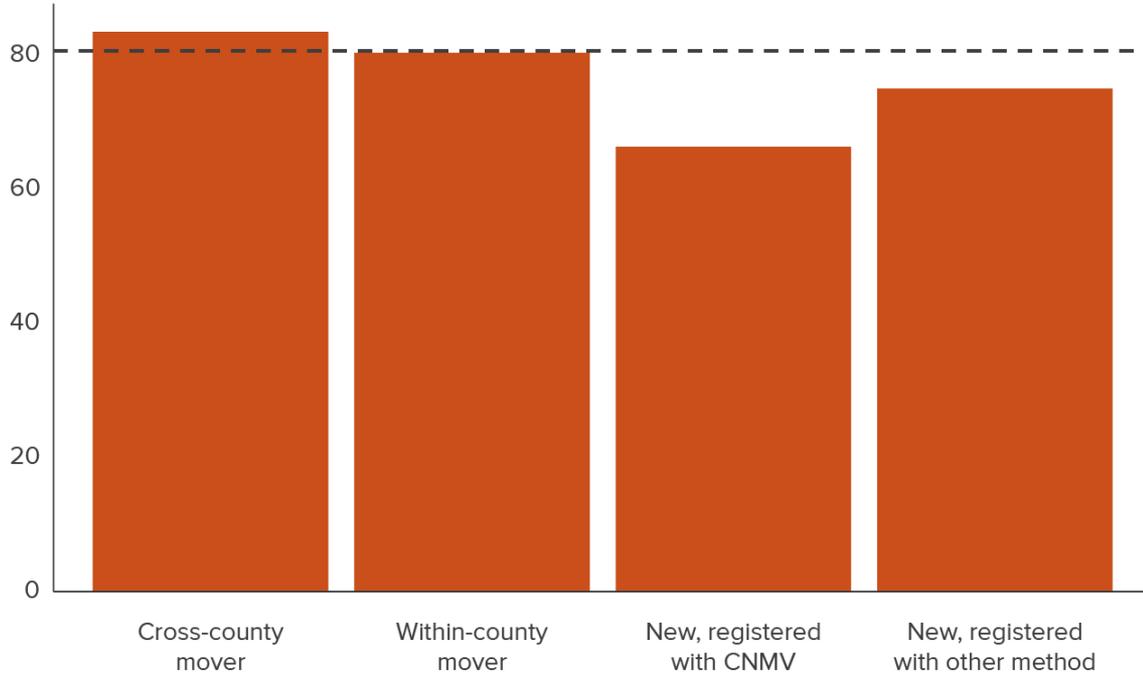


Conclusions

- Reform changes have been roughly split between new registrations and address updates
- CNMV accounts for most of the changes among address updates
- Equity effects are mixed: larger effects for Asian Americans, but less so for other groups
- Expectations about pace of change should be tempered

CNMV registrants have especially low turnout

Turnout in 2020(%)



Source: Political Data, Inc.

Policy recommendations

- Look for ways to promote more new registrations
 - Expand CNMV to more agencies where unregistered populations may be higher
 - e.g., Covered California, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, Cal EITC
- Targeted outreach to CNMV registrants
- Leverage “pre-registration” to mesh civics education and CNMV outreach

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.