

Existing research on voter turnout for minority groups in America to develop policy and societal reform to include the perspective and scope of the needs of important members of society frequently focuses on that of African American and Hispanic populations. However, research on voter turnout for the American Indian population is far less expansive. Lack of this research diminishes the opportunity for improvements to be made, and therefore further perpetuates the critical issues; including lack of education, high poverty levels, and the deficiency of social welfare programs. This research examines causes for Native American voter turnout for those living on reservations by using data from four states; South Dakota, Oregon, Arizona, and Michigan, as well as the incorporation a historical analysis of the relationship between Native Americans living on reservations and state and federal governments and how it has affected the American Indian vote. The voter data for this project was accumulated using different state or municipal resources for the 2016 elections from each of the states selected and compared to several different socioeconomic variables such as voting-age population, poverty rates, and educational attainment. I hypothesized that the leading variables for the lack of voter turnout are the high poverty rates and high unemployment rates among Native Americans living on reservations, but the findings of this research focus primarily on the institutional barriers to obtaining the data that make this research possible and impactful.