



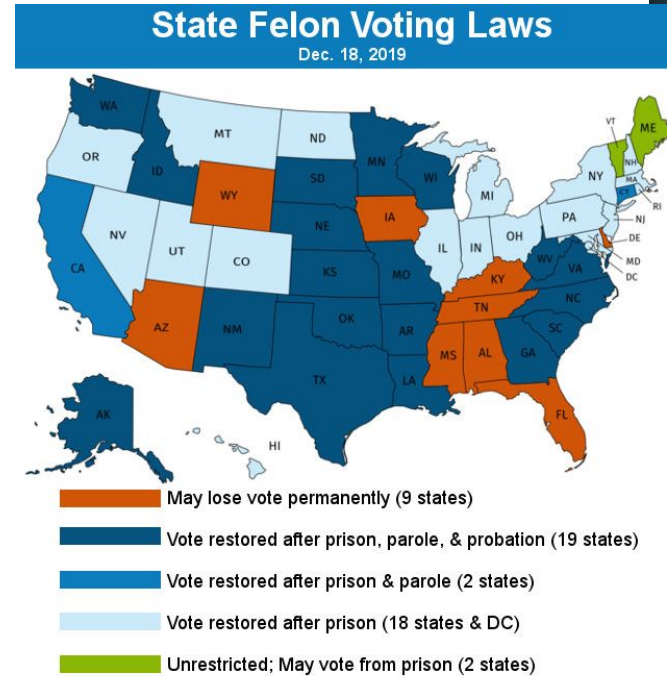
The Effects of Ex-Felon Enfranchisement Policy on Voting Demographics

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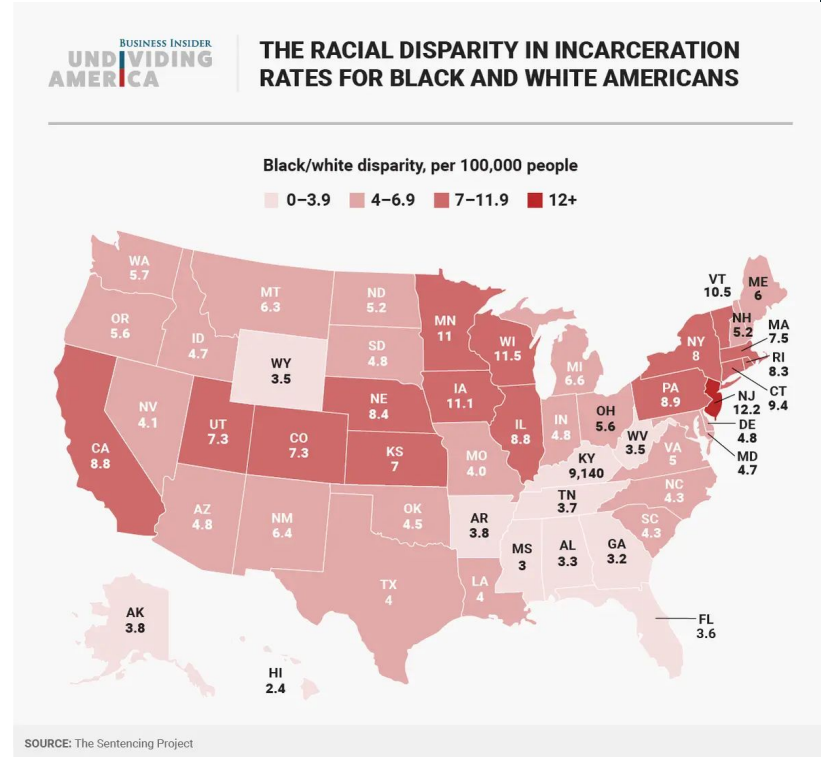
Introduction

- Felon disenfranchisement laws have been a glaring example of systemic inequality in the criminal justice system of the US for centuries.
- Many states have made changes to these laws over the past two decades to be more inclusive of ex-felons.



Overview

- Nevertheless, a significant portion of the population remain disenfranchised.
- Racial minorities are disproportionately affected by these policies.



Research Question

- How has Washington's current policy on felon re-enfranchisement affected levels of political representation based on changes in voter demographics before and after the policy came into effect?

Methodology

- Case study
 - Emphasizes the measurable effects over time of a significant policy shift on the representation on minority groups in a Washington state.
- Hypothesis:
 - If a state changes its policy voting rights for ex-felons to be more inclusive, then the amount of people within racial minority groups who are registered to vote will increase.

Case Selection

- US Census data on presidential elections used:
 - 2008 voter registration data on White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian citizens.
 - 2012 voter registration data on White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian citizens.

Literature Review

- The three prevailing themes in the literature on this topic:
 - voting restoration policy in Washington state
 - felon voting rights in politics
 - systemic inequality in political representation



Results/Data

- Percent of citizens registered to vote in the 2008 presidential election
 - White - 73.5, Black - 69.7, Hispanic - 59.4, Asian - 55.3
- Percent of citizens registered to vote in the 2012 presidential election
 - White - 73.7, Black - 73.1, Hispanic - 58.7, Asian - 56.3

Analysis

- There was some improvement to the representativeness of our elections after the policy change in 2009.
 - This improvement was most notable in the black demographic.
- There is still need for improvement, shown especially in the decrease of representativeness of the hispanic demographic.

Conclusion

- Policy changes can generate increases in the representativeness of elections.
- Washington state needs to continue its improvement of its policy on ex-felon and felon voting rights.

