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Participation in Elections by People with Disabilities

A Statistical Snapshot

Draft 5

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Disabled and Non-Disabled Voters Have Different Voting Experiences

- People with disabilities register and vote at lower rates
 - Use convenience voting at higher rates
 - Different disabilities affect voting and registration differently.
- People with disabilities get more information about voting from television
- More opportunities for convenience voting in a state may lead to more voting by people with disabilities.

WHAT DOES THE DISABLED POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES LOOK LIKE?

US Census:

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_S1810&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-format=&-CONTEXT=st

Census Disability Definitions

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census. It is the primary source of information on the labor force characteristics of the U.S. population. The CPS uses the questions below to identify persons with disabilities in the entire population (citizen and non-citizen). A yes response indicates that the person in question has a disability.

QUESTION: This month we want to learn about people who have physical, mental, or emotional conditions that cause serious difficulty with their daily activities. Please answer for household members who are 15 years old or over.

- Is anyone deaf or does anyone have serious difficulty hearing?
- Is anyone blind or does anyone have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- Does anyone have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- Does anyone have difficulty dressing or bathing?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

US Population with Disabilities

- 14.5% of people in the US over 18 have at least one disability
 - 10.0% of those 18-64
 - 36.7% of those 65 and older
- Almost 9% of people in the US over 18 have independent living issues.
 - More than 25% of those over age 64
- Mobility is most common disability.
- All disabilities are more prevalent among those over age 65.

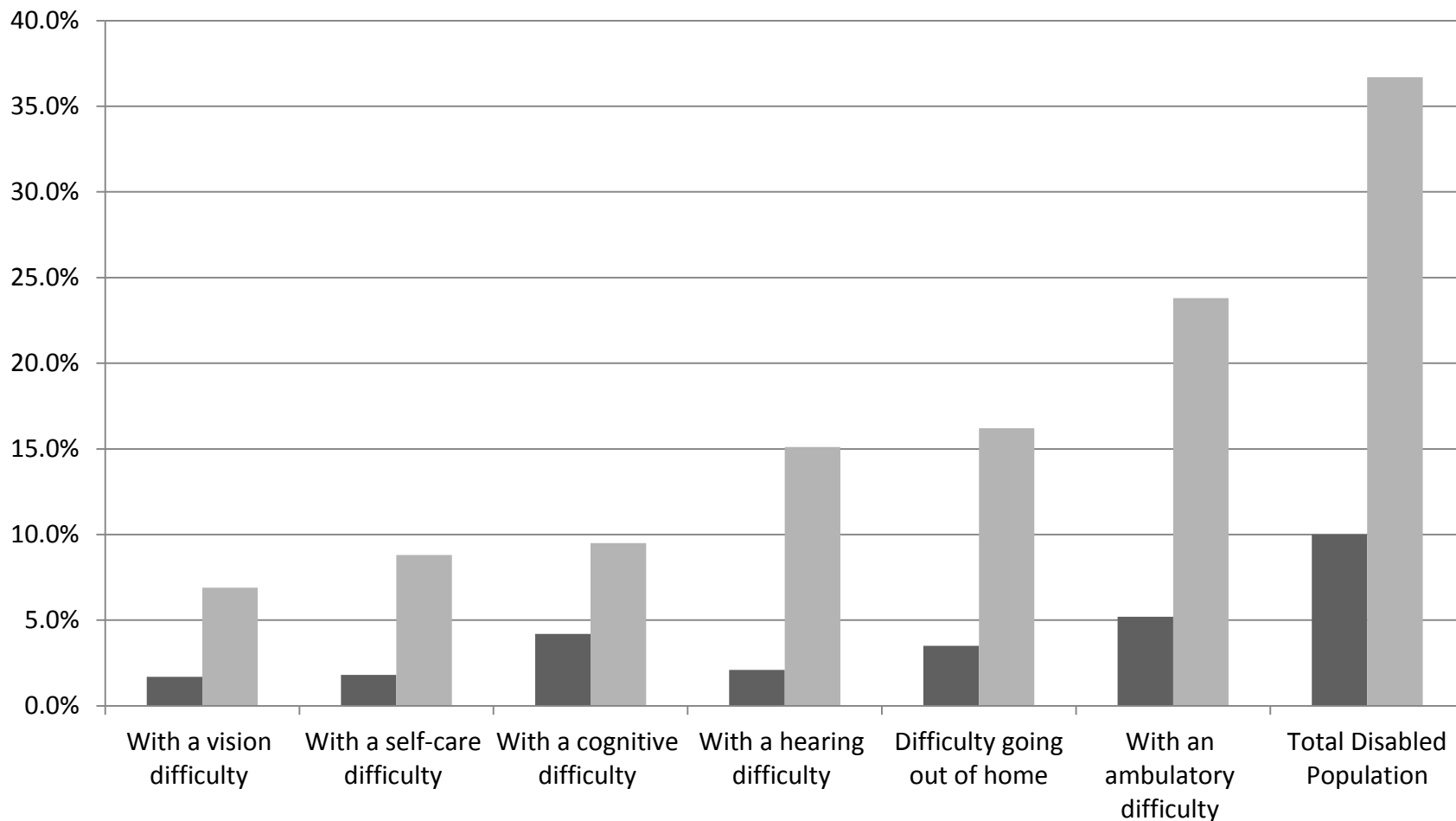
Disabilities in the United States

	Totals (Rounded)	Percent of US Population
With a vision disability	5,900,000	2.6%
With a hearing disability	9,800,000	4.3%
With a cognitive disability	11,700,000	5.1%
With a mobility disability	19,200,000	8.3%
With a self-care disability	6,900,000	3.0%
With an independent living disability	13,000,000	5.6%
Disabled Population	33,400,000	14.5%

The percentages and numbers for each individual disability do not sum to the total disabled population because a person can have multiple disabilities.



Percent of US Population with Disabilities

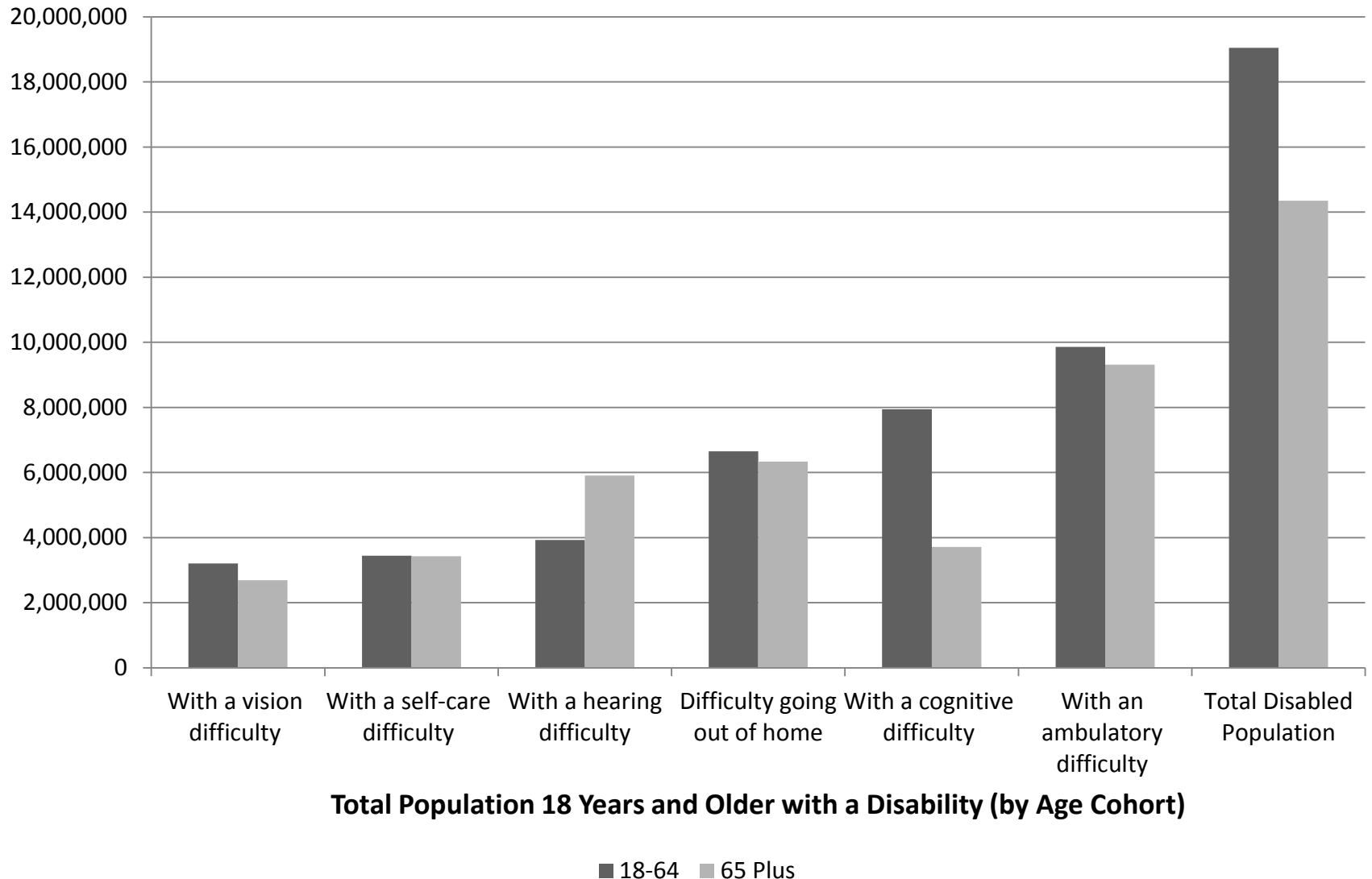


Percent of US Population 18 Years and Older with a Disability (By Age Cohort)

■ 18-64 ■ 65 Plus



Total Persons in US Population with Disabilities



Demographics: Age and Gender

- The proportion of people with disabilities increases with age, especially over age 65
- The proportion of women to men is higher for people with disabilities than people without disabilities.

	Percent of Age Range with No Disability	Percent of Age Range With a Disability	Percentage Point Difference (Positive = Higher Rate for People w/ Disabilities)
18 to 30	25.3%	7.4%	-17.90
31 to 45	26.6%	11.6%	-15.00
46 to 64	34.0%	35.2%	1.20
65 and older	14.0%	45.7%	31.70
Female	51.7%	54.0%	-2.30

Demographics: Income and Education

	Not Disabled	Disabled
Income		
Lowest quartile	20.0	46.0
Second quartile	35.4	34.8
Third quartile	24.2	12.2
Fourth quartile	20.5	6.9
Education		
High School/Less	39.4	60.9
Some College	30.5	24.2
College Grad	19.9	9.2
Graduate Degree	10.2	5.7

- People with disabilities are most likely to be in the lowest income quartile.
- People with disabilities most likely have a high school education, or less.

2010 Current Population Survey

**DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES VOTE?
HOW DO THEY VOTE?**

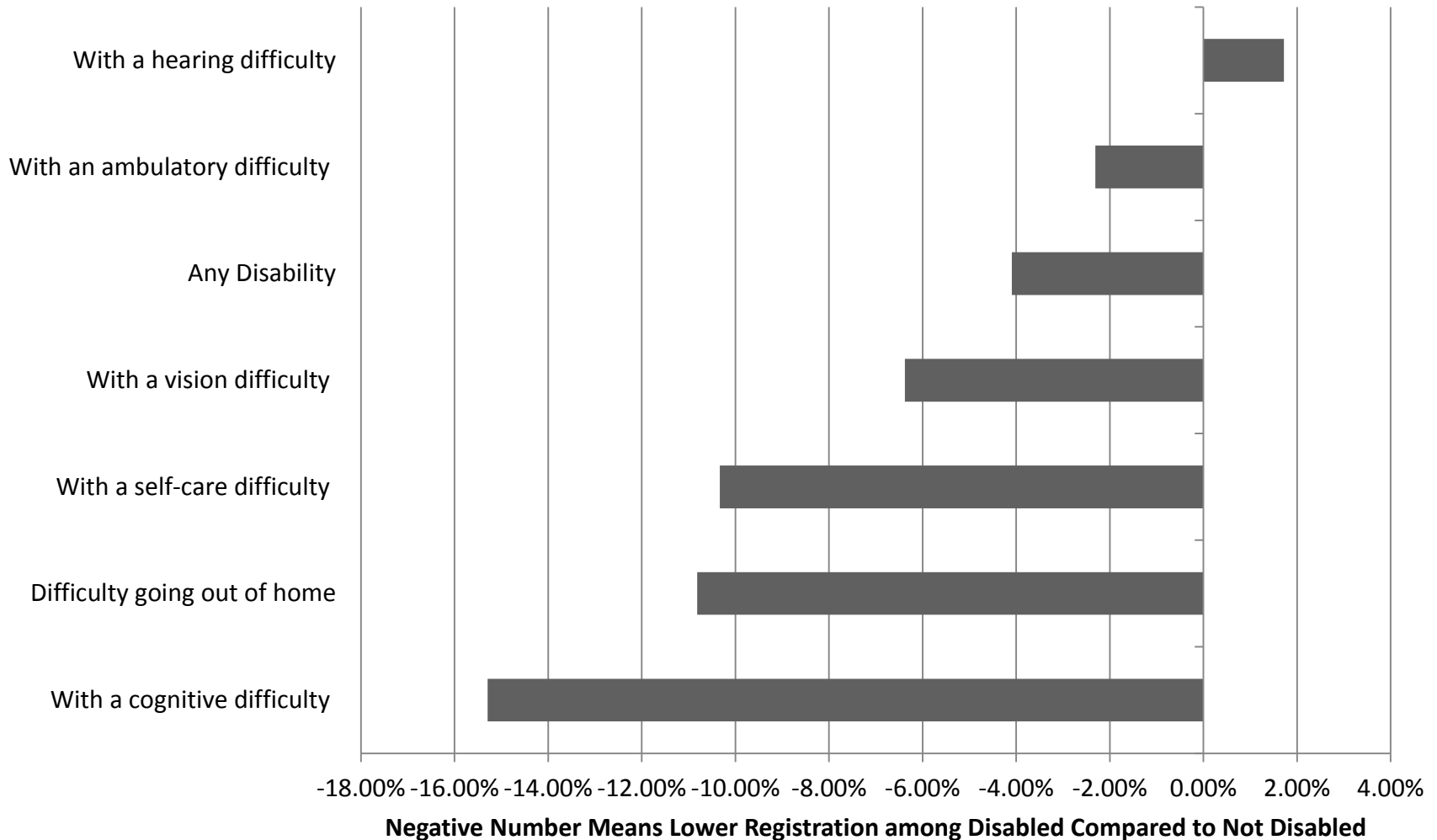
Disabled Register to Vote at Lower Rates

- Compared to the general population:
 - All but the deaf are registered to vote at lower rates.
 - Those with cognitive disabilities registered at lowest rate.
- CAUTION!
 - These tables report breakouts of registration and voting by each disability used in the CPS.
 - These samples are not very large; use caution in interpreting. There is likely a relatively large confidence interval (i.e., a report of 50% voting rate could actually be anywhere between 45% and 55%).
 - The “Any Disability” response is large and has a small confidence interval. It is best for comparison with “No Disability”.



Voter Registration Rates

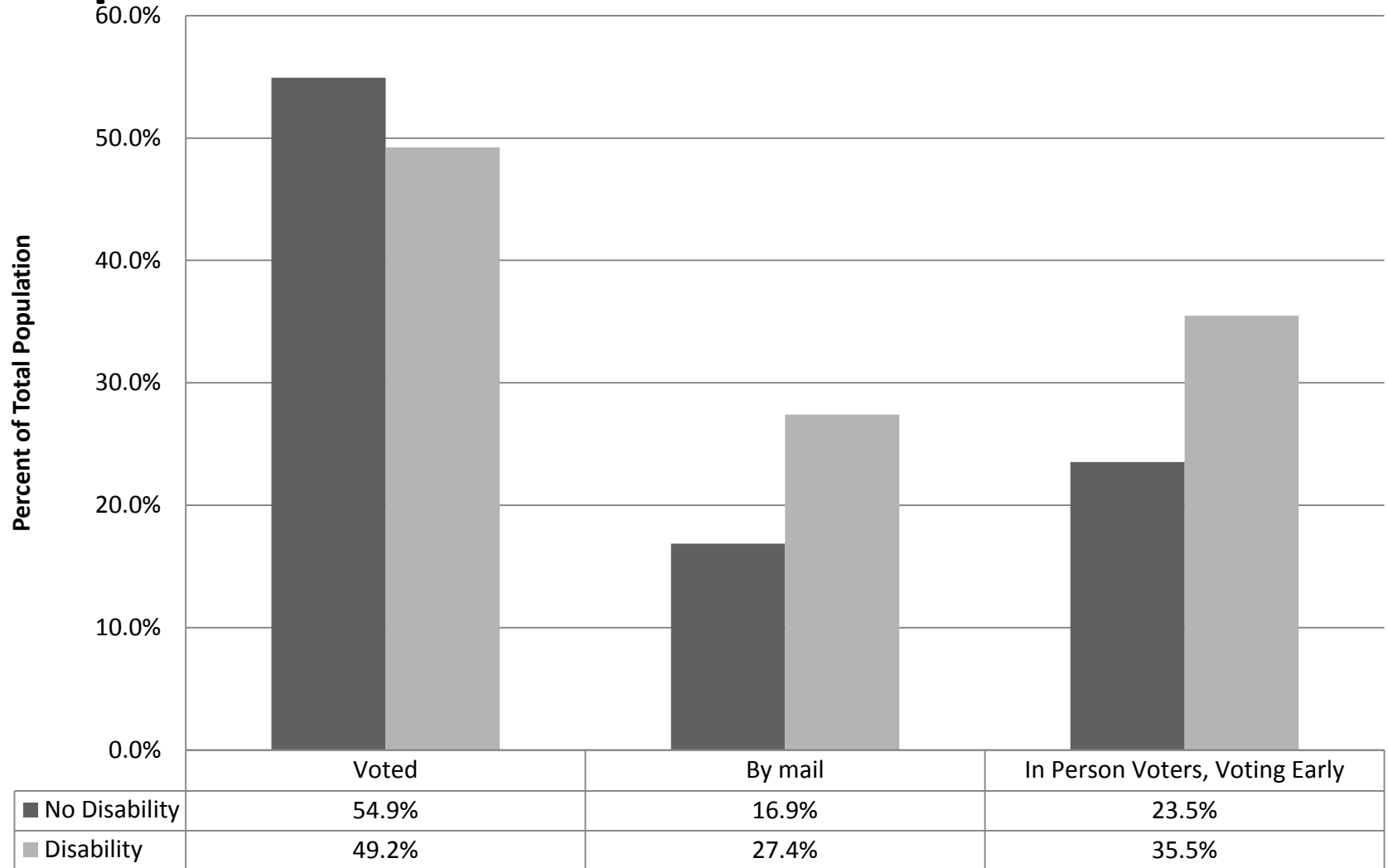
People with Disabilities Compared to Not Disabled



People with Disabilities Vote at Lower Rates than Non Disabled

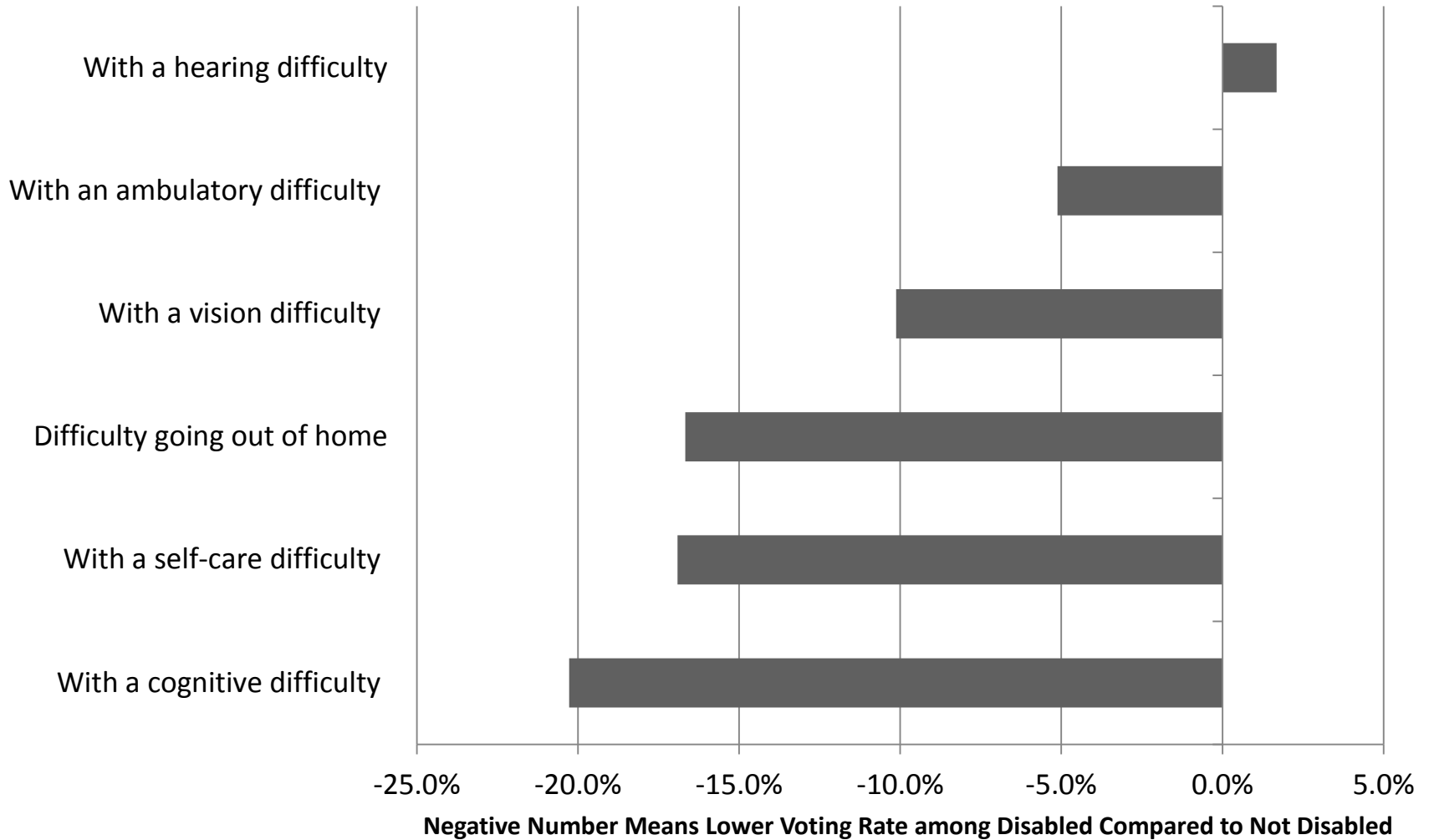
- 2010 Voting Rates
 - Non Disabled Population Voting Rate – 54.9%
 - Disability Voting Rate -- 49.2%
 - People with disabilities vote 5.7 percentage points less.
- Two types of disabilities are the biggest barriers to voting
 - Cognitive disabilities
 - Those affecting independent living.
- The deaf vote at rates similar to the general population.

Comparison of Voting Rates and Methods People with and Without Disabilities





Voting Rates by Disability and No Disability



2008 Survey of the Performance of
American Elections

**THE VOTING EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Survey of Performance of American Elections

People with Disabilities Question and Data

- Used different question from Current Population Survey regarding disability:
 - Does a health problem, disability, or handicap CURRENTLY keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities?
- Survey is a citizen survey (not a population survey like the CPS)
 - 10,000 respondents, 200 from each state.
- Only large survey with data on the voting experience.

2011 State Voter Identification Laws

Source: National Association State Legislatures

States that Request or Require Photo ID		States that Require ID (Photo Not Required)	
Strict Photo ID	Photo ID		
Georgia	Florida	Alaska	Montana
Indiana	Hawaii	Arizona	North Dakota
Kansas	Idaho	Arkansas	Ohio
Mississippi	Louisiana	Colorado	Oklahoma
Tennessee	Michigan	Connecticut	Rhode Island
Wisconsin	South Dakota	Delaware	Utah
		Kentucky	Virginia
		Missouri	Washington

States Seeking Justice Department Clearance for Voter ID Law
South Carolina Texas

Individuals with disabilities Less Likely to Have Government ID

	Without Disability	With Disability	Difference
Driver's License	96.04%	89.15%	-6.89%
Passport	43.19%	25.60%	-17.59%
Other	22.45%	30.83%	8.38%
Birth Certificate	87.90%	87.99%	0.09%

Individuals with disabilities Have Different In-Person Voting Experiences

	Without Disability	With Disability
No Voter Registration Problem	98.20%	97.70%
No Line	42.20%	46.30%
30 minute to 1 Hour Line	8.80%	7.20%
One Hour Plus Line	5.20%	3.80%
Voting Equipment Problem	1.70%	2.90%
Voter Required Help	5.50%	7.90%

- More likely to have a registration problem.
- More likely to need help
- Less likely to wait in line

All Voters Have Similar Absentee Voting Experiences

- Voters with disabilities are more likely to need assistance than the general population.
- All voters have similar problems getting, voting, and returning ballots.

Data from 2008 Cooperative Congressional
Election study

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PARTISANSHIP, AND
INFORMATION CONSUMPTION**

Cooperative Congressional Election Study

People with Disabilities Question and Data

- Used different question from both CPS and Survey of the Performance of American Elections regarding disability:
 - What is your current employment status? Permanently disabled response used.
 - This is a very narrow definition of disability
 - Gets at issues not covered in CPS or other surveys.
- Survey is a citizen survey (not a population survey)
 - 32,800 respondents – national sample.
- Only large survey with data on political participation.

Survey of Performance of American Elections

People with Disabilities Question and Data

- Used different question from Current Population Survey regarding disability:
 - Does a health problem, disability, or handicap CURRENTLY keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities?
- Survey is a citizen survey (not a population survey like the CPS)
 - 10,000 respondents, 200 from each state.

People With Disabilities Participate in Politics Less

	Without Disability	With Disability
Attend local political meetings	12.93%	8.16%
Persuade someone to vote	54.18%	47.74%
Put up political sign	28.87%	22.87%
Work for a candidate or campaign	11.15%	7.87%
Comment on political blog	27.55%	24.62%
Donate money to candidate or campaign	29.94%	19.31%

- Less likely to do all basic political activities.
- Especially less likely to donate money.
- Less likely to advocate for others to vote.

People with Disabilities More “Independent”

	Without Disability	With Disability
Strong Partisan	45.05%	43.52%
Weak Partisan	21.22%	19.77%
Lean to One Party	20.96%	19.31%
Independent	12.77%	17.39%

- People with disabilities are significantly more likely to be independent voters.
- Partisanship is tied to higher turnout.

Television Best Way to Communicate with People with Disabilities

		Without Disability	With Disability
Read a blog	Yes	27.43%	18.39%
Watched TV news	Yes	80.19%	84.18%
Read a newspaper	Yes	62.03%	50.03%
Listened to radio	Yes	47.25%	27.04%
TV News, Type Watched	Local Newscast	24.48%	29.65%
	National Newscast	22.85%	15.75%
	Both	52.67%	54.60%

- Candidates and policy makers need to communicate with people with disabilities.
- Television is the best mode for such communication.

Early In-Person and Absentee Voting

**CONVENIENCE VOTING AND INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES**

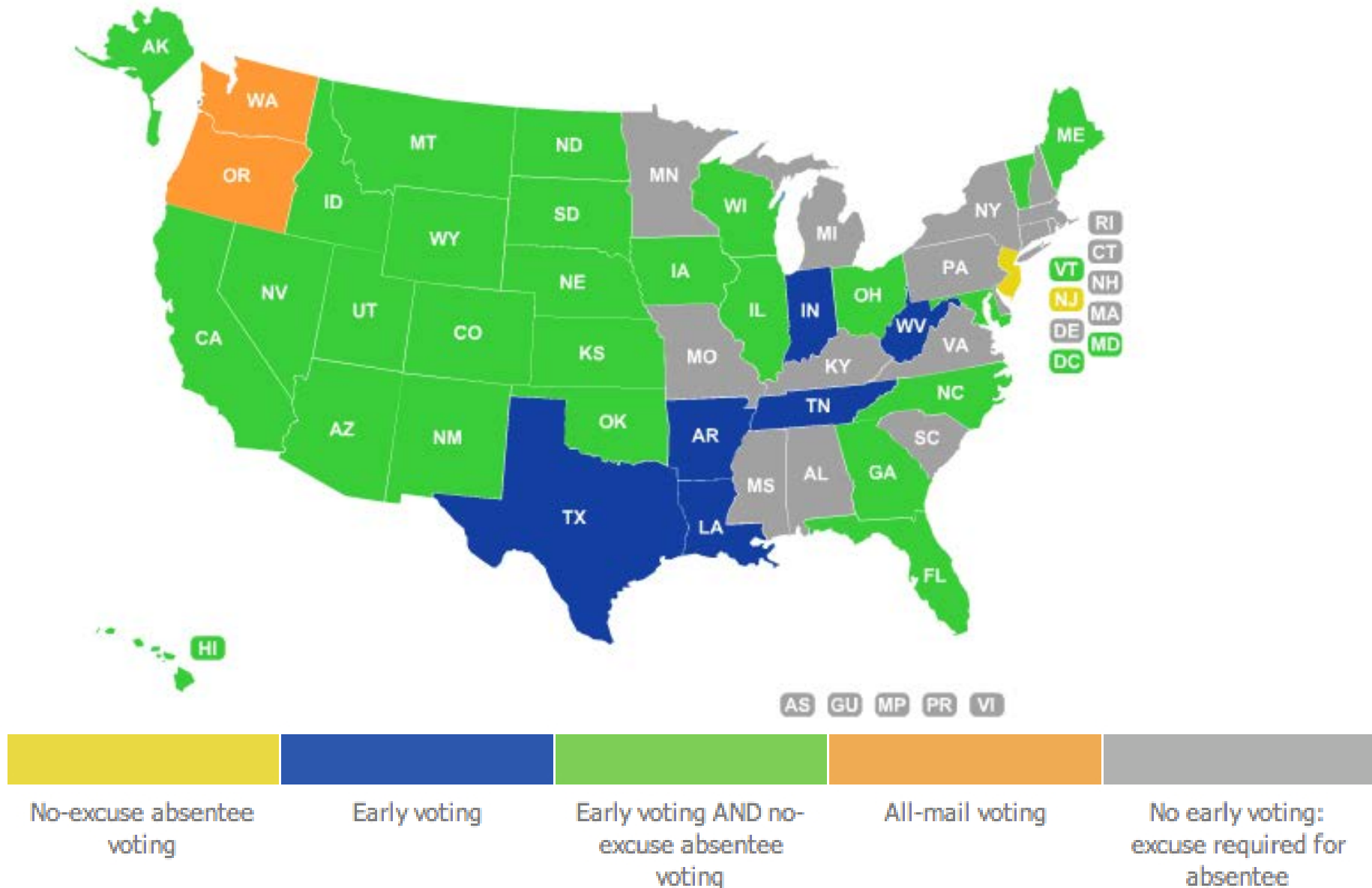
Convenience Voting: Definitions and Purposes

- Convenience voting intended to facilitate voting outside of the local voting precinct on election day.
 - Intended initially for people absent from voting jurisdiction on election day.
 - Expanded to make voting easier for all voters.
- Forms of convenience voting
 - Early voting: In-person voting prior to Election Day
 - No excuse absentee voting: Anyone can get an AV ballot
 - Permanent absentee voting: Anyone can sign up to have an AV ballot to be sent prior to every election.

Disabled People Use Convenience Voting (Absentee & Early Voting) More

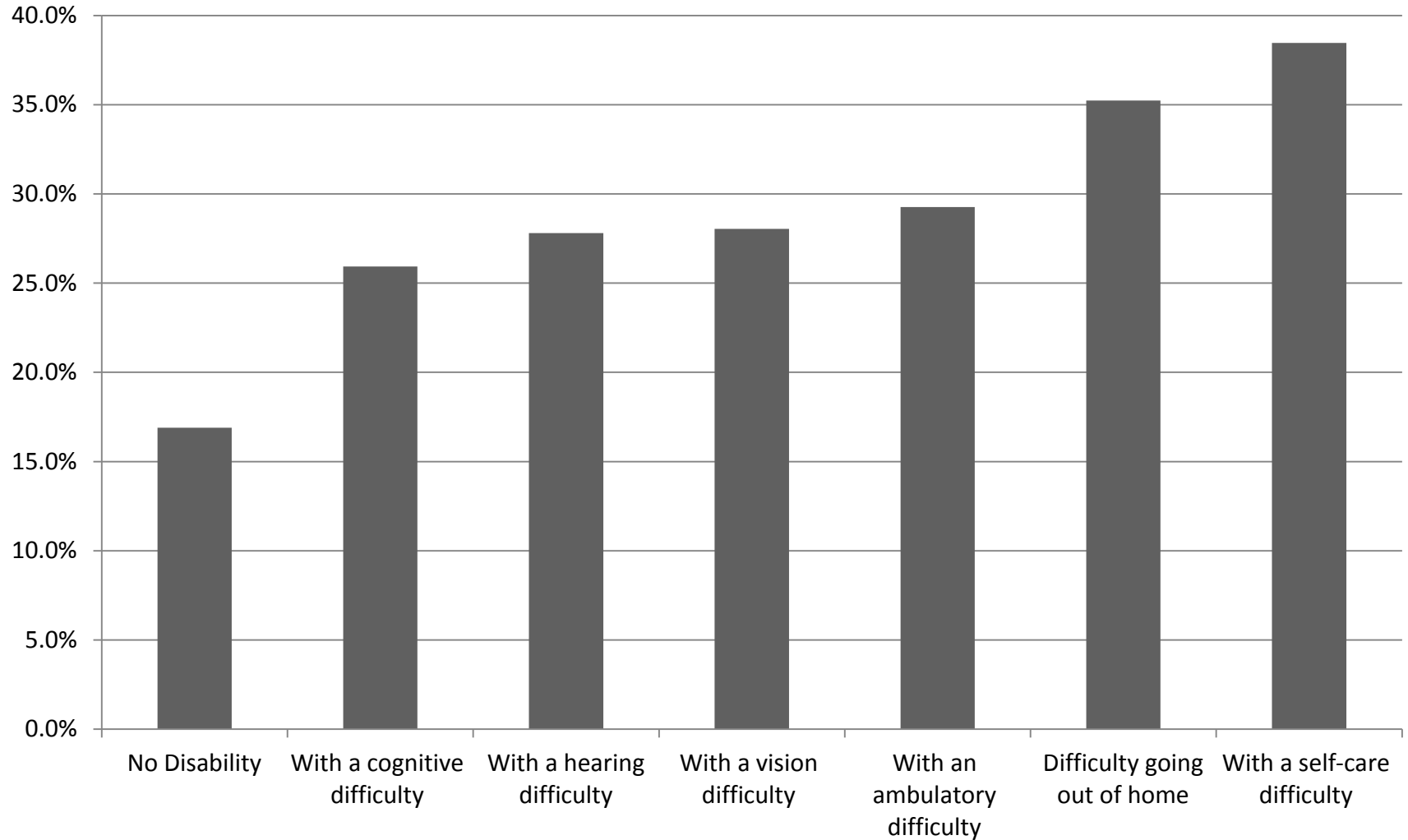
- Convenience voting is important for people with disabilities
 - 27% vote absentee (17% for not disabled)
 - 35.5% who vote in person vote early (23% for not disabled)
- Disabled are 62% more likely to Vote by Mail and 51% more likely to vote early.
 - Especially those with disabilities affecting independent living
- Barriers to convenience voting affect disabled
 - Limited days for early voting
 - Difficult requirements for obtaining an absentee ballot.

Convenience Voting in the United States



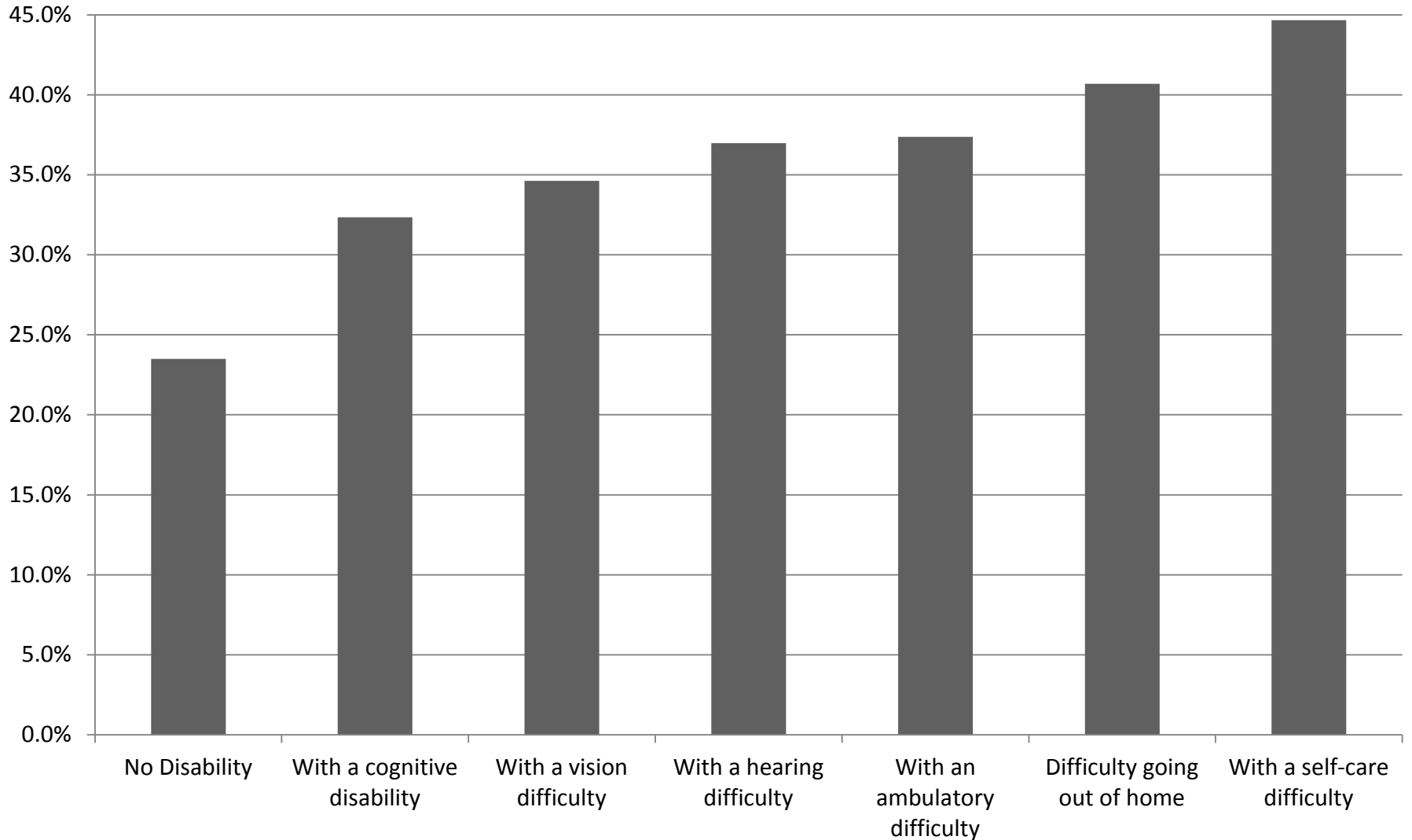


By Mail Voters by Disability

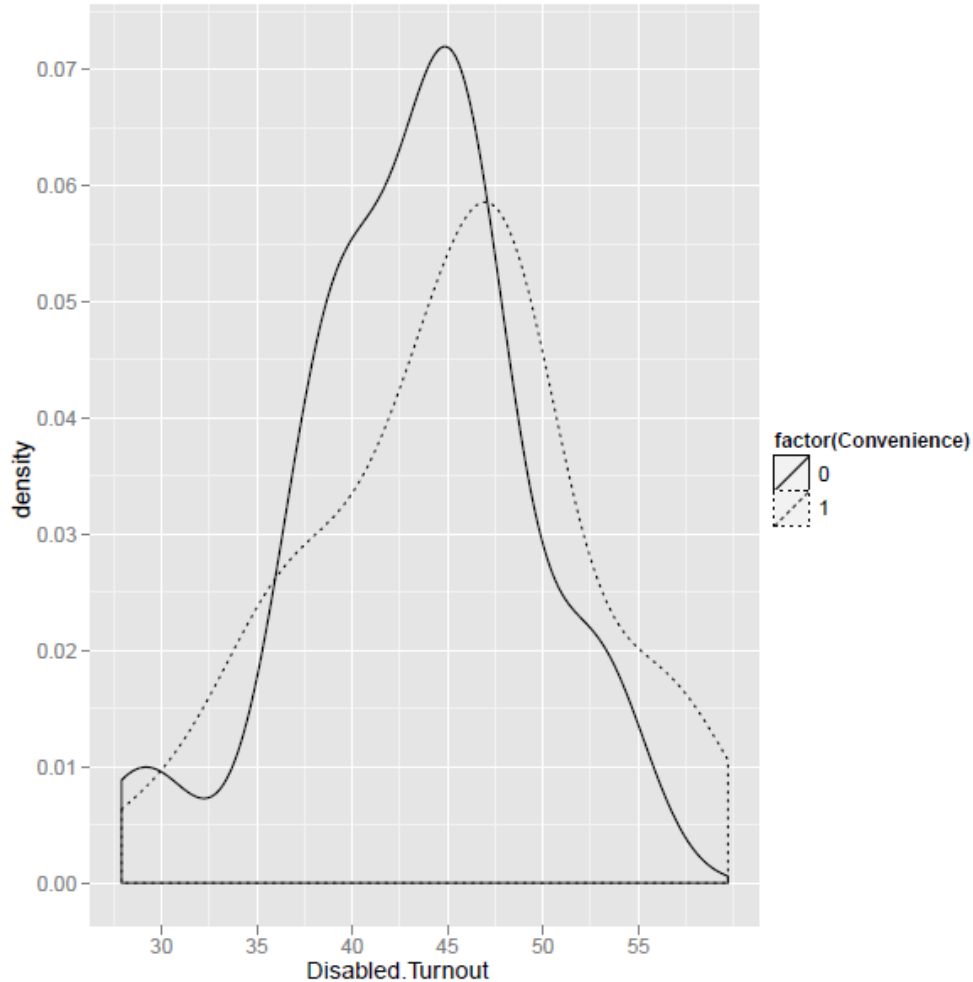




Percent of In-Person Voters Voting Early, by Disability



Convenience Voting May Increase Turnout by People with Disabilities



- The mean turnout by people with disabilities in those states with convenience voting (dotted) is skewed to higher turnout compared to states without convenience voting

People With Disabilities Barrier to Absentee Voting

**BARRIERS TO ABSENTEE VOTING:
STATES REQUIRING AN EXCUSE**

Barriers to Absentee Voting: States Requiring Excuse

State	Permanent Absentee	Definition of Disability	State	Permanent Absentee	Definition of Disability
Alabama	No	Physical	Missouri	Yes	Not clearly defined
Connecticut	No	Physical	New Hampshire	No	Physical
Delaware	No	Physical	New York	Yes	Physical
Kentucky	No	Not clearly defined	Pennsylvania	No	Physical
Massachusetts	No	Physical	Rhode Island	Yes	Not clearly defined
Michigan	No	Physical	South Carolina	No	Physical
Minnesota	Yes	Not clearly defined	Virginia	No	Physical, mental
Mississippi	No	Physical			

Definition of Disability

States Requiring Excuse for AV

- 15 states require application/reason for voting absentee.
- In 10 states, only a physical disability qualifies a person as eligible to obtain an absentee ballot.
- Virginia is the exception, recognizing persons with a physical or *mental* impairment as eligible to vote by means of an absentee ballot.
- Four states, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri and Rhode Island, do not provide a clear definition of the term.

Barriers to Absentee Voting:

States Requiring Excuses

Additional documents

- New Hampshire: documentation of residency (a copy of current driver's license, utility bill, or a letter from nursing home administrator stating that the applicant is a resident).
- South Carolina: asks for social security number and person's House of Representatives district number.

Physician's signature

- Some states required to have a physician's signature and affirmation that the applicant does indeed have a physical disability.

Oaths: Some states must take oath affirming application is correct.

- Alabama, Delaware, Mississippi, and Rhode Island.

Permanent Absentee Ballots

- Only Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island allow permanent AV.

Time: The timeframe for submitting an AV application varies by state.

- Michigan: applications received 75 days prior election day.
- Minnesota: applications accepted up to day prior to Election.