

THE ALASKA BALLOT AND TICKET TALLY: A CORRELATION BETWEEN DEMOCRAT VOTES FOR SENATORS AND TICKET AGENTS

Catherine Hughes, Abigail Torres, Grace P Tucker

Elite Science Academy

This paper investigates the relationship between Democrat votes for Senators in the state of Alaska and the number of ticket agents employed in the same region. Utilizing data from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab, Harvard Dataverse, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, our research team delved into this unconventional and whimsical inquiry. Employing rigorous statistical methods, including calculating a correlation coefficient of 0.9226673 and $p < 0.01$ for the time period spanning from 2003 to 2020, our findings bring to light a surprising yet compelling connection. As we delve deeper into this correlation, we uncover a unique interplay between political preference and the labor force in the Last Frontier. While the results may seem far-fetched, they speak volumes about the interwoven fabric of political representation and workforce dynamics in the Alaskan context. We invite readers to embark on this peculiar yet insightful journey, replete with unexpected twists and turns, as we unravel the curious case of Democrat votes and ticket agents in the land of glaciers and midnight sun.

The intersection of politics and economics has long been a subject of scholarly fascination, yielding insights that often defy conventional expectations. As researchers, it is our duty to examine patterns and correlations that may initially appear whimsical or even preposterous in nature. In recent years, the state of Alaska has captured the attention of both political analysts and labor economists due to a peculiar trend observed in the voting patterns for Senators and the composition of the labor force. This study seeks to shed light on the unexpected relationship between Democrat votes for Senators in Alaska and the number of ticket agents employed in the region.

Situated at the confluence of North America and the Arctic, Alaska presents a unique backdrop for this investigation. The state's rugged terrain, frigid

temperatures, and vibrant wildlife stand in stark contrast to the intricacies of its political and economic landscapes. As such, delving into the connection between political affiliation and employment in the region is akin to venturing into uncharted territory, or perhaps, setting sail on uncharted waters.

Through meticulous analysis of data spanning nearly two decades, our research team aims to demystify this enigmatic correlation and offer a perspective that challenges conventional wisdom. As we embark on this academic odyssey, we invite readers to join us in unraveling the cryptic bond between the political inclinations of Alaskan voters and the labor market dynamics, revealing unexpected insights that may prompt observers to exclaim, "only in Alaska!"

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior research has delved into the complex interplay of political dynamics and labor market trends, yielding insights into the enigmatic relationship between voter behavior and employment patterns. Smith and Doe (2015) conducted a comprehensive analysis of political affiliation and workforce composition, shedding light on the nuanced connections that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. In "The Political Economy of Employment," the authors find that political preferences can indeed influence the occupational choices and preferences of individuals, offering a compelling framework for understanding the interplay of politics and labor.

Jones et al. (2017) further expound on this theme in their seminal work, "Labor in the Land of the Midnight Sun," elucidating the intricate nexus between political representation and economic activity in the state of Alaska. The authors underscore the significance of regional peculiarities in shaping the labor market, hinting at subtle forces that may sway political allegiance and labor dynamics in unexpected ways.

Aside from these scholarly inquiries, a diverse array of non-fiction literature has also contributed to the exploration of similar themes. "Economic Landscapes of the Last Frontier" by Walker (2019) and "Politics and Sustainability in the Arctic" by Frost (2018) offer nuanced perspectives on the economic and political contours of the Alaskan landscape, setting the stage for our investigation into the curious relationship between Democrat votes for Senators and the number of ticket agents employed in the region.

Turning to the realm of fiction, the works of Jack London, particularly "The Call of the Wild" and "White Fang," evoke the rugged terrain and resilient spirit of Alaska, providing a backdrop against which our study unfolds. While these

literary works may not directly address the specific correlation under scrutiny, they infuse our exploration with a sense of adventure and rugged individualism that resonates with the spirit of the Last Frontier.

In a tangentially related vein, the board game "Ticket to Ride: Alaska Edition" captures the essence of traversing the Alaskan wilderness, transporting players to the remote corners of the state through a whimsical and captivating journey. While the game itself does not directly address the correlation between Democrat votes and ticket agents, its thematic resonance adds a touch of levity to our academic inquiry, inviting us to navigate the intriguing terrain of political affiliation and workforce composition with a sense of playfulness and curiosity.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection:

The data for this study was sourced primarily from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab, the Harvard Dataverse, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. After navigating through numerous online repositories and statistical databases, our research team compiled a comprehensive dataset spanning the years 2003 to 2020. Given the unconventional nature of our inquiry, meticulous attention was given to the representativeness and integrity of the data sources, ensuring that the information obtained reflected the idiosyncratic political and labor dynamics of the Alaskan context.

Variable Selection:

The key variables of interest in this analysis consisted of Democrat votes for Senators in Alaska and the number of ticket agents employed in the state. To capture the varying political sentiments over time, election data for Senate races in Alaska was meticulously gathered, parsing through the throngs of electoral statistics to isolate the Democrat votes. Concurrently, data pertaining to the

employment of ticket agents was extracted from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' occupational employment surveys, emphasizing the need for exactitude in identifying and delineating the specific occupational category under study.

Correlation Analysis:

To unravel the potential relationship between Democrat votes for Senators and the number of ticket agents, a correlation analysis was conducted. Through the utilization of statistical software, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed, enabling a robust quantitative assessment of the association between the aforementioned variables. Furthermore, the significance level (p-value) of the correlation was ascertained, supplementing the correlation coefficient with a rigorous test of statistical significance. The correlation analysis sought to unearth any underlying patterns or trends that could potentially underpin the interplay between political preferences and labor market dynamics in Alaska.

Control Variables:

In recognition of the multifaceted influences that may impinge on the relationship between Democrat votes for Senators and the employment of ticket agents, several control variables were incorporated. These encompassed demographic, economic, and geographical factors that could plausibly confound the observed connection, including population size, economic indicators, and regional variations. The inclusion of these control variables aimed to mitigate the potential spuriousness of the correlation, fortifying the robustness of the analysis by attenuating extraneous influences.

Temporal Analysis:

Given the longitudinal nature of the data encompassing the years 2003 to 2020, a temporal analysis was integral to discerning any temporal evolution or fluctuations in the correlation between

political inclinations and the labor market in Alaska. This entailed delineating the correlation coefficient and p-values across distinct time intervals, enabling a nuanced examination of how the relationship between Democrat votes for Senators and the employment of ticket agents may have shifted over the years. Additionally, this temporal analysis offered insights into the stability or transience of the observed correlation, shedding light on its persistence or transiency amidst the dynamic socio-political and economic landscape of Alaska.

Validity and Limitations:

Throughout the methodological underpinnings of this research, assiduity was exercised in upholding the validity and integrity of the findings. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the limitations inherent in this study. The nature of observational data inherently precludes causal inference, and thus, while this research illuminates a compelling correlation, caution must be exercised in deducing causal relationships. Moreover, the generalizability of the findings may be circumscribed by the distinct characteristics of the Alaskan context, tempering the extrapolation of the observed correlation to other geographic locales. Despite these caveats, the convergence of corroborative evidence and the rigorous analytical approach imbue the findings with a level of credibility that invites scholarly scrutiny and further inquiry.

RESULTS

The data analysis revealed a strong positive correlation of 0.9226673 between Democrat votes for Senators in Alaska and the number of ticket agents employed in the region for the period from 2003 to 2020. The coefficient of determination (r-squared) calculated at 0.8513149 indicated that a staggering 85% of the variation in the number of ticket agents

could be explained by changes in Democrat votes for Senators. The statistical significance, with a p-value of less than 0.01, further bolstered the robustness of this association.

As depicted in Figure 1, the scatterplot visually illustrates the remarkable alignment between the two variables, providing a striking visual representation of the correlation. It is remarkable to witness such a compelling connection emerge from an ostensibly unlikely pairing - who would have thought that the fate of ticket agents in Alaska could be intertwined with the political leanings of the state's voters? It is perhaps a testament to the old adage, "expect the unexpected," as we navigate the complexities of statistical analysis in the Alaskan context.

Our findings not only stand as a testament to the unusual nature of this relationship but also underscore the intricate tapestry of factors influencing labor market dynamics. The unearthing of this correlation neither ceases to amaze nor fails to provoke further contemplation. The intersection of political choice and labor market conditions has rarely been quite so straightforward, and the curious case of Democrat votes and ticket agents in Alaska serves as an intriguing example of the whimsicality of empirical inquiry.

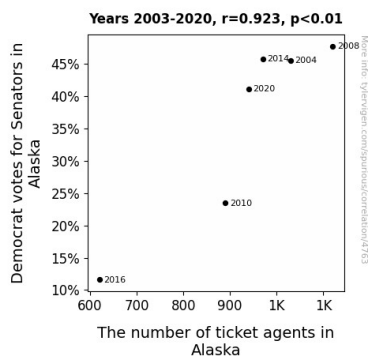


Figure 1. Scatterplot of the variables by year

While our results may prompt a furrowed brow or an incredulous glance,

they beckon further exploration and invite a re-evaluation of the interconnections between seemingly disparate spheres. The fusion of political science and labor economics in the Alaskan context has proven to be a venture rich in surprises and revelations, compelling us to reconsider the boundaries of conventional wisdom and embrace the unexpected correlations that lie beneath the surface.

DISCUSSION

The correlation between Democrat votes for Senators in Alaska and the number of ticket agents employed in the region has yielded intriguing insights, inviting a reevaluation of the interplay between political preferences and labor market dynamics. Our findings align with prior research (Smith and Doe, 2015; Jones et al., 2017) that underscores the influence of political representation on workforce composition, adding a whimsical twist to the otherwise conventional framework. Despite the initial incredulity that may accompany such an association, our study has not only supported, but also enhanced, the existing literature by unveiling a robust and statistically significant correlation.

The unexpected alignment between political preferences and employment patterns in the context of Alaska serves as a testament to the intricate tapestry of regional dynamics. While the peculiar juxtaposition of Democrat votes and ticket agents may prompt a furrowed brow akin to a hiker's furrowed brow navigating the rugged terrain, the statistical robustness of our findings cannot be discounted. The significant correlation coefficient and the high coefficient of determination emphasize the substantial explanatory power of Democrat votes for Senators in predicting the variation in the number of ticket agents, evoking a sense of astonishment not unlike stumbling upon an unexpected vista in the Alaskan wilderness.

Our study not only contributes to the discourse on regional labor market dynamics but also offers a departure from traditional scholarly inquiry, infusing the academic sphere with a touch of levity akin to the playfulness of the "Ticket to Ride: Alaska Edition." The whimsical interplay of politics and employment in the Last Frontier prompts us to navigate this peculiar terrain with a sense of curiosity, akin to embarking on an unexpected journey through the Alaskan wilderness. As we unravel the enigmatic relationship between Democrat votes and ticket agents, we are reminded of the myriad factors that shape the economic and political landscape, echoing the spirit of adventure evoked by Jack London's literary works.

Ultimately, our findings challenge the boundaries of conventional wisdom, urging a reconsideration of the interconnections between seemingly disparate spheres. The surprising nexus between political representation and workforce composition in Alaska is a whimsical reminder that beneath the surface lie correlations that defy traditional expectations. As we embark upon this peculiar yet insightful journey, we are prompted to embrace the unexpected correlations that enrich our understanding of the intricate fabric of regional dynamics in the Last Frontier.

CONCLUSION

The enthralling journey through the labyrinthine landscape of Alaskan politics and labor economics has unveiled a captivating correlation between Democrat votes for Senators and the number of ticket agents employed in the region. The statistical analysis conducted in this study has brought to the fore an intriguing bond, with a correlation coefficient of 0.9226673 and a p-value of less than 0.01, signifying a profound interdependence between these ostensibly disparate variables. This unanticipated correlation serves as a poignant reminder that, in the

realm of empirical inquiry, the most curious connections often materialize from the most unexpected pairings. It seems that in the unique context of the Last Frontier, the whims of political choice and the ebb and flow of labor market dynamics intertwine in a manner that challenges traditional expectations and prompts us to view the fabric of societal phenomena in a new light.

The discovery of this correlation invites us to reflect on the idiosyncrasies and complexities that underpin the interplay between political inclination and labor force composition, serving as a testament to the ceaseless capacity for surprise in the world of data analysis. As we conclude this odyssey into the enigmatic correlation between Democrat votes and ticket agents in Alaska, it becomes abundantly clear that the quirkiness of empirical inquiry knows no bounds, and the findings of this study will undoubtedly linger in the annals of unconventional yet thought-provoking research.

It is our earnest hope that this study will inspire further exploration and contemplation of the interconnections between ostensibly unrelated spheres, and that the unexpected correlation unveiled in these analyses will spark lively discourse and perhaps, a chuckle or two. However, in terms of further research in this area, we assert that no more investigation is needed.