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Examples of previous research topics

Question	Data source(s)
Does the death penalty deter murders?	U.S. Justice Department crime statistics; Book of the States
Are more senior members of Congress able to bring more “pork barrel” spending to their districts?	Rice University data set on federal spending disaggregated to CD level; Congressional Directory
Is housing quality racially segregated in Boston?	Census bureau data
What role do congressional committee politics play in the geographic allocation of federal spending on science and technology	Rice University data set on federal spending disaggregated to CD level; Congressional Directory
Do political contributions to congressional candidates from PACs interested in gay rights increase representatives’ support for those rights?	FEC data; Roll call data (ICPSR)
Did the increase in the drinking age in the early 1980s reduce drunk-driving fatalities among teenagers?	Book of the States; Bureau of Justice Statistics data
Does requiring high school seniors to take high-stakes standardized exams hurt or help academic achievement?	Data from Mass. Dept. of Education; Census data
Do congressional districts with more members of environmentalist groups elect more environmentalist members of Congress?	Sierra Club membership data; ICPSR roll call data
What method of privatization has been the most economically effective in Eastern Europe following the fall of communism?	OECD data; World Bank data
Do actions taken by the U.S. to punish terrorism increase or decrease the number of terrorist actions aimed at the US?	Coding of NY Times articles; Rand Corporation terrorism yearbook
Are some sports agents able to negotiate better contracts for their clients than others?	Basketball statistical almanacs; client lists from agents
Does the presence of large numbers of members of environmental groups in a congressional district cause members of Congress to be more pro-environmental in their voting records?	Membership data from groups; interest group ratings reported in reference works.
Does requiring freshmen to live on campus cause drinking to be lowered among freshmen?	Alcohol Use and Abuse among American College Students, 1993 (ICPSR data set)

What explains the vigor with which local communities implement wetlands regulations?	Economic data from the census; legal information from an association of governments
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