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Voter ID fallacies

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Voting is the one form of politics most, but not enough, Americans participate in. Since barely half of the eligible population votes even in presidential elections, we need to encourage more, not fewer, citizens to express their decisions at the polls. Voter ID laws like Indiana's interfere with that democracy.

Some people say 'IDs are everywhere,' so just add them to elections. ID demands aren't as common as some think. Travelers don't need an ID to fly, since passengers without licenses get slightly more detailed screening. People entering the U.S. Supreme Court aren't asked for IDs. Americans don't need to be licensed to vote.

Government officials can't simply demand IDs from citizens. There has to be some evidence of wrong-doing for the police to insist on ID. Why should citizens have to produce government IDs to participate in the legal activity of voting?

Voter ID laws also hit minorities, women, and the elderly harder. Many lack licenses or cars. Married women's names may have changed. Older people may no longer drive.

There's no such thing as "free" ID for poor people. They have to buy background documents, often don't have cars to get to DMVs, and can't afford to miss work. It's insulting to have to swear to be "indigent" to get a "free" ID.

Voter ID laws aren't "neutral." Passed by party-line votes, they prevent hundreds from voting and discourage thousands more eligible voters from even trying to cast ballots. The results will skew more close elections like 2000.

Even one person stopped from voting is serious harm. Learning from Indiana, Illinois should keep registration and voting as simple as possible. It shouldn't burden voting by demanding official IDs.

Voter ID laws are partisan ploys to bias elections. They're bad for democracy. Illinois should encourage, not discourage, its voter to get to the polls.

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