



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on September 13, 2011

The Wisdom of Voter ID Laws

Moreover, when elections are bought or stolen, then the “winner” can not only claim to hold the political offices that his gang won in the election, but also don the mantle of that vague and potentially dangerous title “champion of the people” (or something like that). And the artificial creation of a democracy (pure majority rule) in our nation, rather than a republic (rule by law), has inured us to the myth that the majority can determine right and wrong.

As bad as pure democracy is for any nation, the democracy that counts votes dishonestly is even worse. There is very little doubt that voter fraud is a major problem in our nation today. The Senate election campaign between Al Franken and Norm Coleman was one recent example, but ballot stuffing in Chicago and the ACORN efforts to register nonexistent voters, on the taxpayer’s dime, were calculated ploys to hold on to political power.

State governments are granted the right under the Constitution to set standards for voting. The Constitution has been amended a few times to restrict what states may do. States may not limit the right to vote on account of race (13th Amendment). They may not limit the right to vote on account of sex (19th Amendment), nor may they limit the right to vote based upon the payment of a poll tax (24th Amendment). States may not limit the right to vote based upon age of a person 18 years old or older (26th Amendment).

Nothing in these amendments or the Constitution prohibits states from adopting reasonable steps to protect the sanctity of the vote by preventing voter fraud and insuring that a prospective voter is who he claims to be. But efforts by state legislatures recently to require voter identification, to reduce the time allowed for early voting, and to monitor more closely groups that engage in voter registration drives (such as ACORN) have raised the ire of politicians such as [Richard Durbin](#) of Illinois, Majority Whip of the U.S. Senate and Chairman of the Senate Civil Rights Subcommittee.

Durbin recently observed that he was “deeply concerned by this coordinated, well-funded effort to pass laws that could have the impact of suppressing votes in some states.” Likewise, an associate professor of law at Loyola University testified against laws requiring voter identification cards, which some Americans do not have, saying, “That’s an awful lot of people to shut out [from voting] for no reason.” Emanuel Cleaver, Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, called these state laws an “onslaught of voter suppression laws,” adding, “We’re still fighting the battle to protect the right to vote.”

The arguments against a Voter ID hinge on the idea that minorities and the poor will be disenfranchised





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and that vote fraud is a myth. Ocean State Action, a Rhode Island advocacy group, used these talking points in their state when *Democrats* passed a voter-ID bill into law, as reported by the [Providence Journal](#):

On the last day of the session, after an hour and a half of debate and, against the strong objections of progressive legislators, the [General Assembly](#) passed a voter-identification bill that will disenfranchise low-income voters, communities of color, the elderly and students across the State of Rhode Island....

All to address the MYTH of voter fraud. [Emphasis in original.]

But IDs are already required for adults to do almost anything in our society, as the [author at the website Logical Observations](#) points out:

I have to have a photo ID for everything else that I do anyway. I cannot purchase alcohol or tobacco, stay in a hotel room, rent a car, buy a mature video game or movie, gain entrance into a bar, club, or casino, own a car, own a boat, cash a check, open a bank account, get a job, join a community sports team, go to an R rated movie, get a plane ticket, get a credit card, get an ATM card, get married, get insurance, join a gym, get a library card, drive a car, get a dog license, return items to (some) stores, or even so much as have a conversation with a police officer without my photo ID anyway.

The author at Logical Observations continues to hammer home the point:

The claim that this law takes a toll on specific groups doesn't hold any water when closely scrutinized. Group 1: College students. How does one graduate high school, gain admission to college, and either pay admission or gain college grants without a birth certificate or photo ID? Group 2: Elderly. How does one pick up prescription drugs at the pharmacy or get past the local doctor's secretary to get regular care without a photo ID? Group 3: Minorities. Minorities live here too. Minorities need an ID for everything that non-minorities do as well, what does skin color have to do with anything? Group 4: Poor people. The Rhode Island bill offers to waive the fee for anyone already registered to vote that needs a photo ID. Why is money an issue then?

The [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) reports that bills to require voter identification were introduced in 20 state legislatures this year. Kansas, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island enacted laws, and Governors vetoed bills in Minnesota, New Hampshire, and North Carolina. Alabama and other states strengthened existing voter identification laws. A voter ID law will be on the ballot in Mississippi this November.

Wendy Underhill, a policy specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures, noted that "voter ID has certainly been a big item this year in state legislatures. I do not see this as a Southern issue at all. Legislation has been proposed and moved throughout the nation." Supporters of these bills such as Senator Lindsey Graham observe that 30 states have such laws and that "this is the future of the country." Hans A von Spakovsky, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a former high-ranking official at the Justice Department, said that court decisions have upheld such state laws and that, moreover, in some states the voter identification laws have actually resulted in greater voter turnout.

The idea that high voter turnout is indicative of a healthy republic, though, is another matter. Obligatory voting in communist countries and in other nations around the world is evidence of a coercive, bullying government which views citizens as servants. In a truly healthy and free republic, elections would be supremely trivial events. Modest, honest, thrifty government would be the only goal



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of voters and the less intrusive, the less powerful, and the less extravagant the government — especially the federal government — the more Americans would live their lives as if there were hardly any need for government bureaus, legislative chambers, executive offices, or courthouses.

During the 1960s antiwar movement, a common slogan was, “What if they gave a war and nobody came?” Today might not our hope be this: “What if they held an election and nobody came?” What if the state became so unimportant in our lives that it really did not matter too much who won elections? When we reach that point, if we can reach that point, then we will have taken a giant step back to the foundational principles of our nation.



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