

Our Voices

This snipe hunt is not good fun

Anyone who went to summer camp or attended a sleepover as a kid in the Midwest has likely participated in a snipe hunt. Whether you were the one left holding the pillowcase or part of the group pulling the gag, it's usually a harmless prank all in good fun.

Unfortunately, our current secretary of state and other Republicans are hyper-focused on the non-issue of non-citizens voting. They're hunting snipe for sure, but it's not good fun.



JULIA VAUGHN

Indiana may have problems with voting, but ineligible people casting ballots isn't one of them. Secretary of State Diego Morales has spent almost four years and countless resources scouring Indiana's voting records for widespread fraud. The most he's been able to uncover is one case in Vigo County that has yet to be adjudicated.

Indiana's experience is like other states, such as Texas and Georgia, where partisan election

officials went feverishly hunting non-citizens committing coordinated election fraud and instead ended up with a handful of unrelated cases usually involving a legal immigrant being misinformed of their voting eligibility. Organizations as different as the Brennan Center for Justice and the Cato Institute have both come to the same conclusion: non-citizen voting is astonishingly rare and does not impact the outcome of elections.

Voting examined

So what's the motivation for this big lie? To create doubt about the integrity of elections among the broad electorate so that if Republicans lose the midterms, it will be easier to get county election boards to refuse to certify the vote.

Claiming that ineligible voting is rampant also helps justify the documentary proof of citizenship laws that Indiana enacted in 2025, despite not having a single case of election fraud to justify the action. These new laws aren't uncovering illegal acts by non-citizens but instead are forcing naturalized citizens to jump through an extra set of hoops to register to vote. This is clearly contrary to federal law, which says all voters must be treated equally. Common Cause Indiana and several other voting rights groups are challenging these laws, and our discovery in the case has shown that hundreds of eligible voters have been forced to prove their citizenship.

What's the problem with that? No native-born citizen will be asked to prove their citizenship to register — so we've created a different set of rules for one group, i.e. naturalized citizens.

SAVE Act?

So why not force everyone who registers to prove their citizenship — like the federal SAVE Act would require? It's simple. Estimates indicate 21 million Americans lack easy access to a birth certificate or passport — documents typically used to prove citizenship. There is significant time and expense involved in obtaining these documents, so it's probable that a significant percentage of that 21 million would be disenfranchised by the requirement.

The crusade to ensure "citizen only voting" not only threatens to disenfranchise voters; it also threatens our privacy and the security of our voting list. When Morales eagerly turned over an unredacted copy of the Indiana voter file to the feds last summer, he put millions of Hoosiers' personal information at risk.

This risk was acknowledged last month when a federal judge ordered the Department of Human Services and Social Security Administration to discontinue using unreliable information to target voters. The judge said "they haphazardly combined and repurposed the private information of millions of Americans, including citizenship data that they knew to be unreliable. Since then, states have partnered with the federal government to access the database and are actively removing United States citizens from voter rolls based on inaccurate information. All in all, the federal government has knowingly trampled on the privacy rights of American citizens in a manner that threatens the sacred right to vote."

The judge is right. Indiana should tackle its real voting problem — low turnout — and give up the snipe hunt for good.

JULIA VAUGHN is the executive director of *Common Cause Indiana*. *Common Cause* is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. The Washington, D.C.-based group was founded in 1970 and works to create open, honest and accountable government that serves the public interest; promotes equal rights, opportunity and representation for all; and empowers all people to make their voices heard in the political process.



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Letters To The Editor

Respect shown for funeral processions is appreciated

To the Editor:

I would like to commend the construction workers that were working Wednesday at the four corners roundabout. We were in a funeral procession that slowly drove by there under police escort. Not only did all the men stop working, they also took off their hard hats in a sign of respect.

Thank you so much. Every one of us noticed and appreciated your gesture.

**The family of Iris Thomas
Angola**

History on the abolition of slavery

To the Editor:

Juneteenth is our newest federal holiday. President Joe Biden signed legislation to declare this federal holiday on June 17, 2021, after the bill passed both houses of Congress.

Serious reservations remain whether it is the most appropriate national observance to commemorate abolition of slavery, though.

No reasonable American should object to commemorating the abolition of slavery.

Scripture teaches all people are created in the image of God. The kidnapping, buying and selling of human beings under the Atlantic slave trade was a profound moral evil.

The question is not whether emancipation should be celebrated, but whether Juneteenth is the proper date to commemorate it.

Juneteenth marks June 19, 1865, when Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced slaves in Texas were free.

President Abraham Lincoln had already issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freeing slaves in the

Confederate states.

Ironically, slavery in Union states like Delaware and Kentucky remained legal until the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified.

The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified and became part of the Constitution on December 6, 1865.

Unlike Juneteenth, which commemorates the announcement of emancipation in Texas, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery nationally.

If America seeks a historically accurate national emancipation holiday, December 6 makes more historical sense.

In recent years, woke activists have promoted Juneteenth as a national holiday for reasons that extend beyond historical accuracy.

It is accompanied by narratives that diminish the significance of Independence Day (July 4) and emphasize America's historical failures.

Woke activists portray Juneteenth rather than Independence Day as America's most authentic celebration of freedom.

The name of the act that established it as a federal holiday, the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, illustrates this effort to redefine America's central freedom narrative and to position Juneteenth as a substitute for Independence Day.

Activists conveniently overlook the fact that the Declaration of Independence articulated principles abolitionists used to attack slavery.

The Founding Fathers understood slavery conflicted with the ideals expressed in our founding documents.

Men like Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, and Benjamin Franklin recognized the tension between slavery and these principles.

However, they faced a political reality: Southern states would not join the Union if slavery was immediately abolished.

Their dilemma resembles today's abortion debate. Many Americans,

including myself, regard abortion as a profound moral evil, yet immediate nationwide abolition is not presently politically achievable.

Revisionist historical interpretations by left-wing activists like Nikole Hannah-Jones of the 1619 Project present a caricature of the founders as those who founded the nation to protect slavery.

This caricature ignores political and economic realities of the era.

Enslaved people were legally treated as property and often served as collateral for debts.

Jefferson, for example, died deeply in debt. His indebtedness meant that some enslaved people on his estate were subject to creditor claims and could not legally be freed.

This does not excuse slavery, but it illustrates one of many reasons simplistic modern leftist narratives distort history.

Many founders hoped slavery would eventually disappear.

History proved otherwise. The cotton economy expanded, and slavery became more deeply entrenched.

Americans should commemorate emancipation. However, a national holiday should commemorate a national event.

Juneteenth is best understood as a Texas observance that gained wider recognition through woke activism.

The Thirteenth Amendment was approved by Congress, ratified by the states, and became binding law throughout the nation.

Emancipation Day, observed annually on December 6 to commemorate the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, would be a more fitting and unifying federal holiday.

It would honor the abolition of slavery as a national achievement while preserving Independence Day as America's principal celebration of liberty.

**Robert Sparkman
Rome City**

Fourth of July in small town USA

Finally the Fourth of July is here with all the fanfare it deserves in my little town. There are so many culminating events ... the Philharmonic, the Americana, the fireworks, the park events, and how can we forget the parade? Kathy's daughter and friends came from San Diego to enjoy an old-fashioned Fourth of July parade and all the fun the lakes offer.

I pulled my wagon out of the garage, loaded it up with three lawn chairs, sunscreen, water, and my phone for photos. I was excited to visit with Emma and her friends. I went down a little early to set up camp! They really were great seats, even at the end of the parade. Emma and her friends brought the rest of the chairs and were over the top with parade enthusiasm! "Best parade in northern Indiana," I said. We settled into our lawn chairs to wait, and were not disappointed. (I told that when Bill's Towing showed up, that was the end — and I was right!) Lots of years I am in the parade, but not this one, so I could just cheer from the sidelines! The parade was everything they hoped it would be ... candy in their pockets, smiles on their faces, and an appreciation for small town U.S.A. After the parade, I hauled all my chairs back up the hill. As I went to put them away, I noticed the garage remote was not where I usually keep it! Hmm ... I never put it in a different place or lose it, so it is somewhere, but the picnic at Aaron and Rachel's calls me. No problem, I can put everything away later. By later, I guess I meant on Sunday morning after all



LOU ANN HOMAN-SAYLOR

the festivities.

By Sunday morning my wagon was drenched. No problem. It will dry out, but in the meantime, where is that remote? I started my search. I really dislike losing things and I am always telling my kids, "put things back where you found them." Yes, I say that, but on this day, I didn't follow my own advice. Three hours later I have searched every nook and cranny in my house and yard. I checked in weird places — every drawer, every seat cushion, every roll of toilet paper — even in the toilet. Okay, that is really extreme, but I am being honest here. Once the search was complete, I didn't find it, so, of course, I do it all over again. Don't we all? In the meantime (yes, there is a meantime) I realize the downstairs toilet is plugged. I have had lots of guests this week ... now what did they do? I am handy with the plunger. So, I plunged away, but with no success. Again, try the same thing over every hour because surely it will work. Sadly, no. I donned the rubber gloves. Aha ... I can fix this. Nope, I can't. I continued this saga through the day on Sunday ... remote, toilet, remote, toilet. By 4 in the afternoon, I finally came to the realization that the two must meet. (Twain meet?) I think I solved the riddle. The remote must have fallen out of my back pocket and into the toilet. Sure. That's what happened.

I make my call to Bradley Overhead Doors, and my long time handyman, Lee. I make the confessions and hope to see them both soon. Bradley Doors appeared first. Of course, they wanted to get into

the garage to make me a new remote. Alas. Alas.

As I sit and wait for the finder's keepers, I am reminded of the book by Judith Viorst, "Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday." Last Saturday morning I had a working remote. Last Saturday I had a working toilet. Last Saturday I used to be rich. Now what do I have now? A lost remote. A broken toilet. Oh, and two blank checks.

Update: Doug from Bradley Doors used a wire coat hanger and was finally able to get into the garage through a side door. (When he first asked if I had a coat hanger, I answered, "Yes. And it's in the garage!" But I found one upstairs.) I had a chat with Doug about his son, who wants to be a writer. Anyway, the garage door now operates, I have two working remotes and a \$261.61 dent in my checking account.

The toilet mystery is still unsolved, but Lee said if there really is a remote control stuck in there, I'll have a topic for my next column.

*If these shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
(Puck, Act 5 Scene 1)
Midsummer Night's Dream
William Shakespeare*

LOU ANN HOMAN-SAYLOR lives in Angola at the White Picket Gardens where you can find her gardening or writing late into the night under the light of her frayed scarlet lamp. She is a storyteller, teacher, writer, actress and a collector of front porch stories. She can be contacted at locketof7time@aol.com.