

We must defeat Voter ID

Written by Fred Easter
Friday, 17 August 2012 13:38

I heard the Rev. Al Sharpton say, "The way to stop voter suppression is to expose it."

As much as I respect the Rev. Sharpton, I disagree.

The way to stop voter suppression is to stop it! Republicans know what they are doing – and why. They don't care what we think.

I commented months ago that Republicans had analyzed, in detail, how Pres. Obama got elected in 2008 and were going to ride the 2010 backlash elections into preventing that from recurring. That's what they have been doing.

A lot of students live in one state and go to college in another. The proposed voter ID amendment means no more absentee ballots.

Many older folks vote early. Nineteen states have changed the that law. African-Americans and Latinos voted in record numbers therefore, purge the rolls.

Everything you have read recently makes it clear that there are more poor and middle class people than there are rich, wealthy, upper class, super rich folks. For this planned "theft of the country" to succeed, as many poor people as possible have to be disenfranchised and large numbers of lower and middle class folks have to believe – or be confused enough by the lies to vote against their own self interest.

So churches, community organizations, unions, and all progressive political organizations have to educate their constituents on how to navigate the new, freshly-legislated voting realities. But, even those activities will not stop voter suppression efforts. They only have the capacity to dull its desired effect. The suppression efforts must be stopped at the ballot-box and in the courts.

Slowly, over time, the country enfranchised white men who didn't own property, white women and, finally, people of color. For a long time, white men and women without property sided with the rich whites because it helped them feel superior to African-Americans and Native-Americans. Today, sadly, this President has reunited some disparate, socioeconomic, caucasians.

The biggest gap in this country today is the gap between what America says it is and its real character. America used to be the "land of the free, home of the brave." It was the place where oppressed people the world over could find freedom from persecution and a chance at prosperity. America's creed said, "Send me you poor, your tired, your huddled masses, yearning to be free." The Statue of Liberty at Ellis Island stood in New York Harbor welcoming and processing immigrants. Today it seems we point to every small difference between us as proof of "otherness." Today we are divided, rich vs. poor, African-American vs. white, gay vs. straight, Republican vs. Democrat, Tea Party vs. Reagan-Republican and Judeo-Christian vs. anyone else.

A few short years ago, American citizens fleeing Hurricane Katrina's ravages were shot trying to enter some communities. At Pearl Harbor, through two World Wars and on 9/11 we mourned the loss of American lives.

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Voter ID is un-American. It is wrong. Defeat it!

I think it was Ben Franklin who said, when the Declaration of Independence was being signed, "Now, we must all hang together, or we will, most assuredly, hang separately."