

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Yes, voting *is* important

Most Americans have opinions about government – local, regional state and federal – and we can loudly proclaim those opinions without worrying about being arrested. But we didn't just wake up one day with a right to free speech; we got here with an effort that included the violent overthrow of a ruling monarchy, and the radical institution of a democratic government.

That effort started long before the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and continued long after. Our Constitution was adopted in 1787 and went into effect in 1789. The first ten constitutional amendments, called the "Bill of Rights", were ratified by three-fourths of the states in 1791.

The right to speak freely was so important to our founders that it was included in the first amendment. And, though few seem to realize it, the right to vote is a vital extension of that speech. When we mark a ballot, we are making our opinions part of our government, because *we are the government*.

Today, after more than two centuries of effort to enable more Americans to vote (including men who didn't own property, women and minorities), there are efforts to limit that right. This seems as distinctly anti-American as efforts to limit free speech.

Our 30th President, Calvin Coolidge, who wasn't noted for his oratory, spoke passionately about voting:

"...the right to vote is conferred upon our citizens not only that they may exercise it for their own benefit, but in order that they may exercise it also for the benefit of others. Persons who have the right to vote are trustees for the benefit of their country and their countrymen. They have no right to say they do not care. They must care! They must remember that their country and their countrymen cannot get along, cannot remain sound, cannot preserve its institutions, cannot protect its citizens, cannot maintain its place in the world, unless those who have the right to vote do sustain and do guide the course of public affairs by the thoughtful exercise of that right on election day. They do not hold a mere privilege to be exercised or not, as passing fancy may move them. They are charged with a great trust, one of the most important and most solemn which can be given into the keeping of an American citizen. It should be discharged thoughtfully and seriously, in accordance with its vast importance."

Yes, voting is both important and necessary.

POP QUIZ

**WHAT SCARED THIS MAN?
HERE'S A CLUE
HE LIVES IN VERNONIA**

**A • A TRICK OR TREATER
B • THE PRICE OF GAS
C • HIS UTILITY BILL**

ALL THE ABOVE

Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



Yes, I know it's a presidential campaign, but how many more lies do we need?

Big Lie 1: Obama hurt seniors by cutting \$716 billion from Medicare.

The \$716 billion cut from Medicare doesn't affect benefits at all, it came from overpayments to insurance companies for overly generous Medicare Advantage plans, and from payments to pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. These groups all agreed to lower payments because more people will be covered with health insurance as the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is fully implemented. Paul Ryan took exactly the same amount out of Medicare in his budget. The difference: Ryan wants it used to cut taxes for the wealthy; Obamacare uses it to reduce the cost of drugs and increase preventive care for seniors. Romney wants to put it back for overpayments to insurance companies.

Big Lie 2: Obama took the work requirement out of welfare!!! The waivers requested by, and granted to two states will let them try different methods to get people back to work, including targeted job training, apprenticeships, etc. The waivers also *require* the changes to produce a 20% increase in jobs.

Big Lie 3: Obama hurt the economy by raising taxes!!! Nope, 40% of the "stimulus" was in tax

cuts, which is why it was less effective than it could have been. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the stimulus raised employment by between 1.4 million and 3.3 million jobs. Recently, even Mitt Romney had to admit that jobs have *increased* under Obama.

Big Lie 4: Obama is gutting defense!!! Nope, the GOP budget provides \$554 billion for the Pentagon – \$29 billion more than the Dep't of Defense requested.

Big Lie 5: Obama was born in 1961 in Kenya to a socialist mother and an anti-colonialist father, with a Mau Mau midwife, all of whom conspired with Hawaii's newspapers and hospitals and state government to lie about him being born in Hawaii so he could run for President of the United States in 2008. He was educated by Muslim communists and Nazis and registered for college as a foreign student. He was a lousy student so the conspiracy was expanded and he was named editor of the Harvard Law Review Oh, yes, he also hates white people and is secretly gay. This is only slightly more stupid than Lies 1 thru 4...but he really was born in 1961.

Romney is a disappointment; I expected him to run a good campaign. We should hear his policies, but he will not provide details. His veracity is questionable. We know he lied about his address on his tax return, when challenged about residency requirements, as he ran for Massachusetts governor. He actually used his Utah address to, in his words, "reduce his taxes." (He was allowed to file an amended tax return – which didn't amend the lie.)

Flip-flopping or lying, he is not trustworthy.