

# Tribune Star – Terre Haute, IN

## Editorial: Say yes to voting center

May 23, 2016

Election Board should grant request

If the Vigo County Election Board agrees to place a voting center on the Indiana State University campus, more people in our community will vote.

In a democracy, any increase in accessible voting sites is inherently positive. If an additional voting outlet is possible and economically feasible, only a compelling problem should prevent that outlet from becoming a reality.

The benefits of placing a voting center at ISU are apparent. More than 14,000 students and 1,500 faculty and staff employees live, study and work on the campus. That's 25 percent of the Terre Haute population. The university presented a proposal to the Election Board in March, offering to pay for the necessary voting equipment and then donate it the county. A large segment of county residents, plus any local folks who wish, could cast ballots in that central spot, with little or no extra cost to the county.

The Election Board meets today at 3 p.m. to discuss a May 13 request by the League of Women Voters of Vigo County to reconsider ISU's proposal and approve a new campus voting center for the November general election. The board should agree to do so.

In March, ISU's proposal for the voting center was rejected by the Election Board on a party-line vote. State statute requires a unanimous vote by county election boards to change the number of county polling sites. The Election Board's two Democrat members voted for the ISU proposal, while the Republican member opposed it because the university would be "basically sponsoring [the voting center]. We are walking a slippery slope, a fine line, with sponsoring voting locations. I am not comfortable with that fine line." Thus, no voting site was open at ISU for the May 3 primary.

ISU is a public, state-funded university, not a business, corporation or a political-action organization. No conflict to the voting process would exist by ISU donating the equipment and hosting the site. County election officials would oversee the site, just as they do the other 18 already in place. Undoubtedly, more Americans would cast ballots. More young people would cast their first ballots, an act that statistically leads to a lifetime of civic engagement. Those positives overwhelm a vague doubt about the university covering the cost of voting equipment.

We urge the Election Board to reverse its previous decision and accept this opportunity to expand voting in the county.