LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Explain what's happening in voter registration probe

Maybe it's me, but Dave Bangert's Oct. 11 column seems to conflate the concern that outsiders can make changes to someone's voter registration data by going online to the state's online voter registration database (which, if true, is indeed chilling) and the ongoing investigation by the Indiana State Police into the activities of the Indiana Voter Registration Project, an investigation which should also be of concern to Hoosiers who care about protecting their fellow citizens' right to vote.

The Secretary of State and Indiana State Police have never clearly explained the reasons for this investigation, and no one in the media has been able to make sense of it either. Mass registration efforts by nonpartisan groups such as ACORN and the League of Women Voters are a time-honored and noble tradition. Unfortunately, too often due to human errors or negligence, some registration forms aren't accurately or fully completed. But that is not "voter fraud," a catchphrase thrown around far too casually by Republicans and echoed by far too many in the media.

Obviously, everyone should be concerned about making certain that a citizen who thinks he or she has properly registered to vote is, in fact, properly registered. If due to an error or omission, that person has not been registered, our election officials should be (if they're not already) reaching out to those people to obtain missing or incomplete information.

But for the Secretary of State and state police to suggest that this is "voter fraud" simply feeds into the lies fueled by Donald Trump that cheating is rampant in our electoral system. From my 40-plus plus years of experience working with elections and election laws, negligence or ignorance of our election laws (which are already far too complicated by things such as our unnecessarily restrictive voter ID law), not "fraud," is what is more likely to lead to voter disenfranchisement.

The public has the right to know why this investigation is being conducted, what it has revealed thus far and whether it is motivated by a desire to suppress the vote of persons who are simply attempting to register so they can exercise their right to vote. I hope you or someone in the media, or the Department of Justice, can explain to the public exactly what is going on here. **William R. Groth Indianapolis**

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