



Time and Money

September 21, 2023

The Democratic governor of Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, [expects](#) the state government to automate voter registration by the 2024 election. This will “save taxpayers time and money.”

Unless they opt out, prospective voters are to be enrolled when they get a state ID or a driver’s license at the DMV.

[According to](#) the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania, it will also make it easier for “uninterested, uninformed people to wield political power.” And perhaps also make it easier for ineligible noncitizens to vote — folks whom most Democrats, at least, strongly suspect would be more likely to vote Democrat were they somehow enabled.

It’s not fair to noncitizens, however, to register them without their consent and to send them the instruments of casting a ballot, when doing so is illegal and could ruin their chance to become citizens.

And registering and confusing immigrants has been [happening](#) in Pennsylvania — under a less lax system.

Shapiro pretends that security will be improved thereby, too. Automating voter registration adds “important levels of verification to the voter registration process.” But Pennsylvania doesn’t need to register people automatically to require a photo ID for registration or voting. (Which [it doesn’t](#), currently; a paycheck or utility bill suffices.)

Political figures often complain about the expenses involved in special elections, recall elections, citizen initiatives, and other paraphernalia of democracy that cater to motivated, informed, active citizens — it is almost as if they regard this kind of voting as coming at their expense. It does not take long dealing with incumbent politicians to intuit that they would rather we just accept everything that they do without demur.

Freedom, democratic institutions and their safeguards, sound electoral procedures, voting machines, getting to the voting booth — even acquiring, filling out and mailing absentee ballots — all such things cost time and money.

We’d save time and money by not eating, too. But that’s hardly a triumph of economy.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.