

One woman's election story and other letters to the editors

Sunday, May 18, 2014

One woman's election story

Vote! That was my comment each time I had an opportunity. Even this past election on Tuesday, May 6, was important, I thought. So I reminded people at Alexian Village, where I live, and they arranged to have a bus to take us at 2 p.m. on Tuesday. When I arrived at the Presbyterian Church, where we vote, there was no line. Only the workers, mostly women, who know me.

I proceeded to pull out my driver's license which clearly says, "Valid without photo." Next came my Social Security card, and my Hamilton County 'permanent' voter registration card. I am an elderly lady and have not driven in 10 years, so why would I have a new driver's license? What does the word "permanent" mean?

I was not allowed to vote. I was told I had to go downtown (not easy for me) and get a Photo ID card and hurry back before the polls closed. Or I could vote, but must have this Photo ID by the next day or the vote would not count.

I called a couple of people I thought could help me, after I got home, but was told it was a new Tennessee law. Sorry, I did not know. However, I was embarrassed, hurt and disappointed. I wonder how many other people were kept from voting because of this ridiculous law!

MARGE McNUTT, Signal Mountain

Time to end CCA contracts

In "Critics point finger at CCA," CCA spokesman Jonathan Burns responded to ACLU-TN's assertion that CCA broke its promise to run jails better and for less money by citing a Temple University study claiming that private prisons are cheaper than public prisons.

But Mr. Burns omitted two facts: this study was funded by members of the private corrections industry, and its authors are currently the subject of a university ethics investigation for failing to adequately disclose study funding.

In reality, numerous studies have found there is no cost benefit to prison privatization. CCA not only fails to save taxpayers money, it has a record of violence and mismanagement. Tennessee's prisons should not be run by a corporation whose ultimate obligation is to the bottom line, not the public good.

ACLU is not alone in this conclusion. The Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other groups have condemned the inherent conflict between private prisons' profit motive and the justice system's goal of rehabilitation. Last month three investment groups pledged to divest \$60 million from CCA and other private prisons for ethical and financial reasons.

Citing a dubious study doesn't change the facts. Tennessee should end its contracts with CCA.

HEDY WEINBERG, Executive Director, ACLU of Tennessee

The real reason for Benghazi

Ambassador Chris Stevens is the real cause of the Benghazi mission incident. The U.S. military chief warned Stevens twice that security was inadequate, and twice he rejected the recommendations for improvements. The British and the Red Cross moved out of Benghazi because it was not safe. The militia sent numerous threats in the summer that they would retaliate for killing one of their leaders. The anniversary of 9-11 was not the time to be in Benghazi. Stevens was there only to talk to a Turkish official that could easily be done in safe Tripoli. The newly