

## Indiana student voter ID law reinstated

### Appeals court upholds ban complicating early voting

By Vivian Richey  
POST-TRIBUNE

An Indiana law banning the use of university-issued IDs for voting is back in effect after a Monday order from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, as early voting for the state's May 5 primary continues. Senate Enrolled Act 10, now known as Public Law 70, removes

student IDs from the list of acceptable voter identification. The measure, passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 2025 and signed by Gov. Mike Braun, reverses a previous policy that allowed their use if they met certain requirements.

ACLU of Indiana Advocacy Manager Danielle Drake said the decision adds "confusion for young voters at a time when Indiana should be doing everything it can to encourage participation and strengthen confidence in our elections." Drake said that the confusion

dates back to the passage of SEA 10 in 2025, when the state ended a two-decade policy allowing eligible students to vote using qualifying university IDs.

"Now, in the middle of early voting, student voters are once again being asked to keep up with changing rules just to know what ID they can use to cast a ballot. That kind of uncertainty discourages participation and makes the process feel less fair and accessible," Drake said. "In a state that already struggles with turnout, this is exactly the wrong approach."

State officials say the change is

necessary to protect election security.

"Our voter ID law now fully applies again," a spokesperson for Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita's office said in a statement posted to Twitter/X. "Only secure, government-issued IDs like Indiana driver's licenses are accepted at the polls."

The appeals court's decision reverses a federal judge's earlier ruling that had blocked the law. In that decision, the court found the policy likely placed an unconstitutional burden on student voters.

For nearly two decades, Indi-

ana's voter ID law allowed public college and university students to vote using school-issued identification, as long as it included a name, photograph, expiration date and was issued by the state or federal government.

According to the Indiana Capital Chronicle, Indiana University student Josh Montagne, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit challenging the law, has already cast a ballot using his student ID.

"All ballots voted in which the voter presents with a student ID

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Kelly Jurkowski, of Wheatfield, right, and Liz Engel, of Valparaiso, mend used items during an Earth Day celebration at the Porter County Expo Center on Saturday. MICHAEL GARD/FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE PHOTOS

### PORTER COUNTY

## Earth Day celebration focuses on mending, reducing waste

By Shelley Jones  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

The logo of the Porter County Recycling & Waste Reduction District shows the iconic recycling triangle sitting in the palm of an upturned hand.

The county's Earth Day event, put on by the district at the Porter County Expo Center Saturday, combined the efforts of many hands to steward the patch of earth that is Porter County.

The annual event offered 60 booths with many focused on reusing items and helping others along the way. At the Fix-It Fair, people were bringing in electronic devices, clocks, clothing and jewelry for free repairs.

Volunteer Liz Engel often

donates her time at the textiles and sewing booth that's part of the fix-it fairs held regularly by the Porter County Public Library System, and said someone suggested doing one for Earth Day. "Everybody's like, 'Sure,'" she said.

She and her booth partner Kelly Jurkowski had already put some patches on a jacket, made zipper pull tabs for a bag, and fixed a hole in a pair of jeans by mid-morning. Across the aisle, Jeff Hofferth was troubleshooting what might be wrong with Chesterton resident Beverly Ashton's all-in-one desktop.

"It won't boot up," she said. "I turned it on one day and it went to the DOS screen."

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Ellen Kapitan gives out free tree saplings during an Earth Day celebration at the Porter County Expo Center on Saturday.

### LAKE STATION

## Accident ruled in teen's drowning

### Coroner's office release a statement about crash in river last month

By Meredith Colias-Pete  
POST-TRIBUNE

A Lake Station teen's death was ruled an accident Monday after he drowned in a river following a crash last month.

Rodrigo "Rico" Montes, 18, died from asphyxia, or being unable to breathe. The drowning was "complicated with hypothermia" with evidence of "blunt force trauma" to his head from a crash, the Lake County Coroner's office said in a statement.

Police said after the March 22 crash that the driver, believed to be 17, was taken into custody. He was placed in juvenile detention.

The Post-Tribune is not naming him because he is a minor.

Family members previously said Rodrigo received a ride home from an acquaintance after a gathering.

The incident unfolded when Lake Station police found a black pickup truck about 4:20 a.m. submerged in the river near 27th Avenue and Wyoming Street. No one was inside.

Saul Montes, his brother, said he learned Rodrigo's friend, who was bringing him home, left the scene and went home after the crash.

He said the friend had a broken nose and bruises but declined to talk to the family.

A Lake County Prosecutor's Spokeswoman declined comment Monday, saying it was an ongoing investigation.

In the past, they have charged others for leaving the scene of fatal crashes.

Carole Carlson contributed.

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## GIS experts discuss privacy, ethics while mapping data



Valparaiso University math professor Patrick Sullivan looks over an old map, part of the Henry F. Moelling Collection, during the Moelling Academic Panel on Spatial Sciences, hosted Friday by VU's Department of Geography, Meteorology and Environmental Science and the Christopher Center Library. DOUG ROSS/FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

By Doug Ross  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

Privacy and ethics while matching data with locations were hot topics during Friday's panel discussion on GIS technology and uses.

The discussion was part of the Moelling Academic Panel on Spatial Sciences event hosted Friday by Valparaiso University's Department of Geography, Meteorology and Environmental Science and the Christopher Center Library.

"I think the biggest ethical risk with GIS today is what I would call repurposing," GIS pioneer Michael Goodchild, professor emeritus at the University of California-Santa Barbara, said. "It's easy for the user to repurpose, to use GIS to analyze data for which it's not really suitable."

GIS, or geographic information system, links data to specific locations to help users visualize patterns

and make informed decisions. But whether those decisions are ethical is left up to the users, Goodchild said.

Nefarious purposes like surveillance can be done by following location services on a user's phone, for example.

"We need to make a case that it's also on the software developer to make sure the software is used for an ethical purpose," Goodchild said.

Indiana Geographic Information Officer Marianne Cardwell said her agency's GIS data can show how many bedrooms are in homes, verify addresses and other useful purposes.

Some people can ask that their data not be included. Police officers, judges and victims of certain crimes can ask, for example. But shielding that data can be conspicuous, too.

"I don't think there's any such thing as privacy anymore," Cardwell said. "Probably there's a pinpoint

application on your phone right now that is selling your data."

"The data you're creating, think about how it can be used in a negative way," she said.

Where you're buying, what you're buying, whether you're using a rewards card all combine with open data on an Indiana map, said Stephen Aldrich, Indiana's deputy geographic information officer. When a cashier asks you about signing up for a loyalty program, you likely don't think about the terms and conditions of it, he said.

"It's your data. It's your publicly produced information," Aldrich said. "I think we need to be aware that we are always accidentally creating data about our behavior and that our data may not be the way you want it to be."

"We create a lot more data than you think," and bad actors can

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