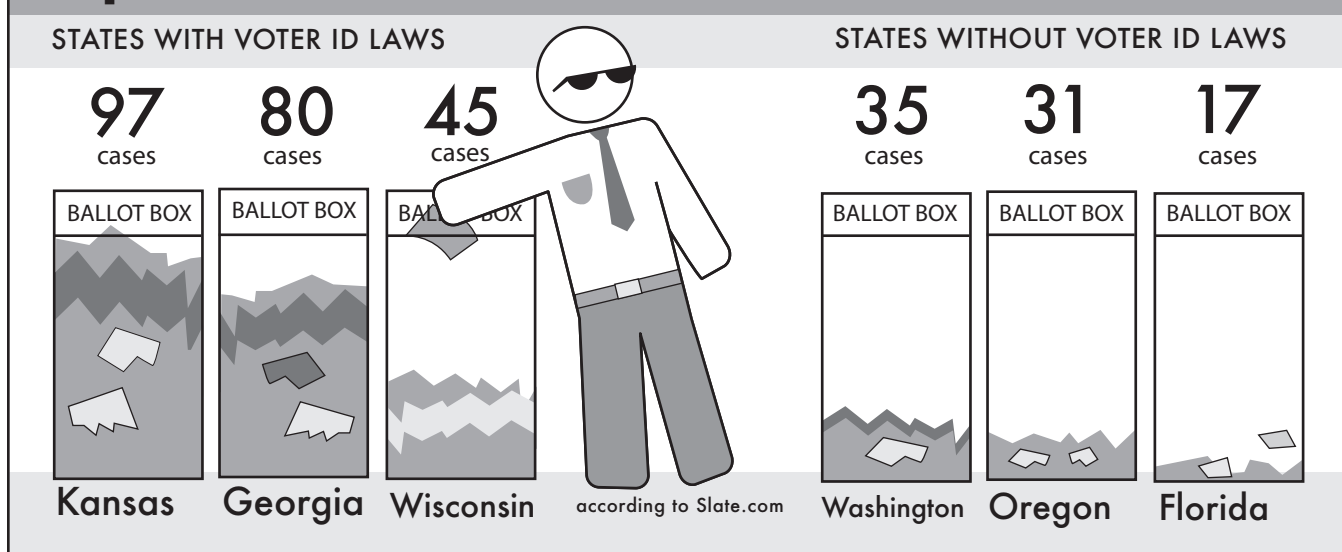


Top States For Known Cases of Voter Fraud Since 2000



Drone policy threatens U.S. justice systems



Sarah Muir

A U.S. Department of Justice memo surfaced Feb. 4 that claimed legal justification for killing American citizens, according to a Feb. 4 NBC article. This follows the September 2011 strike in Yemen that killed a U.S. citizen who allegedly had been part of al-Qaida, according to the previously mentioned NBC article. Justifying these acts is hypocritical of the Obama administration and undermines the legitimacy of our legal system.

Missouri Senator Roy Blunt, a former Senate Intelligence Committee member, points out the hypocrisy of the administration's stance on enhanced interrogation versus targeted killing. Blunt argues that enhanced interrogation provides U.S. government prosecutors the opportunity to gain new information, whereas targeted killing does not, according to a Feb. 6 St. Louis Post Dispatch article.

If Obama wants to take a strong stance when it comes to human rights, especially in the realm of counterterrorism, the policy of killing Americans for being suspected of terrorism without the proper legal proceedings is a significant move against that. That is not to say enhanced interrogation techniques should be allowed if targeted killing is permitted. Instead, claiming one is acceptable while the other is not is, at best, false reasoning and, at worst, blatant hypocrisy.

The memo says the person in question doesn't have to be actively planning an attack against the U.S. for the killing to be legal, according to the previously cited NBC article. Therefore, the immediate security of the U.S. doesn't even have to be at stake for the government to target them. Obviously government officials don't make a decision like that on a whim and they most likely have strong evidence tying these people to terrorist organizations. This doesn't, however, give them the authority to kill American citizens without due process of law.

Imagine if the police, FBI or prosecutors used this logic when dealing with suspects. The police might have solid evidence against a suspect, and they might deem them to be capable of committing a dangerous crime during the future, yet there could be something preventing an arrest. The police don't take matters into their own hands and kill that suspect because that's not how a legal system should function, and it's certainly not how a democratic government should operate.

What does this policy say about our legal system? It says it is somehow flawed and the only solution is for the government to handle it themselves without due process. It also implies we should trust our government blindly. This allows them to act without transparency or constraints.

Sure, terrorism is a different beast than other domestic crimes. Often the people engaging in terrorism are not in the U.S. creating a problem that expands beyond regular law enforcement boundaries. But does this difference somehow give the government powers it never had before when dealing with U.S. citizens? The government can effectively argue in favor of its drone program but when dealing with U.S. citizens, different legal considerations have to be accounted for. The memo doesn't address any of them, and actually has less restrictive conditions than regular drone strikes call for, according to a Feb. 5 Washington Post article.

Supporters often will say Americans get too worked up about the idea that a citizen could be killed by the government because they don't think the U.S. government would go to such extremes without good reason unless necessary. The only definitive time an American citizen has been targeted and killed with a drone strike was the Sept. 2011 Anwar al-Awlaki case, according to the previously cited NBC article. However, Americans should be upset about this — especially young Americans. Not because they think it might make any citizen a potential target, but because it undermines the legitimacy of our supposedly fair and just legal system that we will one day inherit.

Sarah Muir is a freshman political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

Voter ID requirement is sensible



Lacy Murphy

The Missouri House of Representatives gave first round approval to a controversial voter identification bill that would require voters to present a government-issued photo ID at the polls. If passed, voters would have to approve the change through an upcoming vote. This is perfectly reasonable — it would significantly prevent voter fraud without undue discrimination.

Currently, acceptable forms of ID for registering to vote include a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or other federal government document. Valid identification issued by the state of Missouri, an agency of the state or local election authority, a Missouri institution of higher education, or a driver's license or state identification card issued by another state can also serve as voter identification. Out of these forms of IDs, the majority include a photo.

The bill is receiving resistance from those who argue that the bill is racist and suppresses minorities who don't have an ID because it's too expensive

or difficult to obtain because they don't drive. Opponents of the bill contend it disproportionately affects elderly, minority and low-income groups.

Democrats are even comparing the bill to a poll tax with which states imposed voting fees to discourage black and poor white people from voting in the past. Because getting an ID can cost money, many who are opposing the bill are declaring it to be a financial barrier. But just how expensive is getting a photo ID in Missouri? The fee for a driver's license is either \$10 or \$20, depending on the expiration of the license and its class. The fee for a non-driver ID card is \$11, according to www.dmv.org. For Missourians, obtaining an ID through the DMV generally is inexpensive.

Many would still argue that cost isn't the problem and finding transportation for those pursuing an ID is problematic. However, I find it absurd. Difficulty coordinating transportation once every three years to renew an ID shouldn't be a deal breaker for this bill.

When I was working at JC Penney during high school, we were instructed to ask for photo identification when a customer paid with a credit card. We were not allowed to process a transaction unless an ID was produced. Rarely did we run into that issue, though. Most people happily produced an ID and many people even thanked us for asking. Why are people suddenly crying foul when being asked for an ID during an important process like voting? They seemed pretty happy about it when we asked them for a photo ID to save them from losing money.

These issues aside, some say voter

ID laws are superfluous. Why do you need a solution when there is no great problem? News21, a national investigative reporting project, found that since 2000, there have only been 2,068 alleged voter fraud cases, 10 of which were found to be in-person fraud, according to www.votingrights.news21.com. Those 10 cases represent times where a photo ID could have prevented fraudulent voting. However, a photo ID law is not limited to impersonation. It would deter wrongful voters from registering in more than one state or using phony names.

Besides, there are other situations in which having a photo ID can be useful. For example, buying alcoholic beverages requires a license proving proper age. I find it difficult to believe all the voters who are hypothetically supposed to be affected by this bill never purchase alcohol. Do all of these affected groups also never fly on a plane?

Missourians need to view the bill from the perspective of who it protects, not who it theoretically limits. The bill does not selectively protect only a certain group of people. It protects people of all genders and races. We have enough corruption in politics as is. A law that protects voting, the cornerstone of democracy, is important. I'm not claiming voter fraud to be a widespread problem, but if we can eliminate a problem — no matter the size — we must. Integrity at the polls must be assured.

Lacy Murphy is a junior French major from Springfield, Mo.

What should U.S. government policy be on the use of drones within our national borders?

"Any use of drones doesn't seem right to me. It would look bad for the U.S. on the international stage"

Jordan Whitener junior

"Making robots to kill American citizens without due process doesn't sound like a good idea. But I can understand if there are thousands of lives at stake."

Lizzie Salsich junior

"I don't think you can fight a war against gun violence and justify drone usage against your own citizens."

Brendan O'Brien senior

"I'm inclined to think that drone usage is not a good idea internationally, and especially not within our borders."

Olivia Brady junior



AROUND THE QUAD

Valentine's Day should be about more than materialism



Adam Rollins

I can't tell you how much I spent for Valentine's Day. I can't tell you where I went for dinner. I can't describe to you cards exchanged or relate to you words whispered.

I can't tell you these things because they are "mushy" and I have a reputation to uphold, and because my significant other would be displeased. As the modified Jeff

Foxworthy saying goes, "if your significant other ain't happy, ain't nobody happy."

What I can tell you is this — I bought her two roses, red and white, and a bubble wand. If you saw a car driving around with bubbles coming out the window, that was us. Dinner was nothing fancy, but we enjoyed it. The card I gave her was handmade and contained an inside reference upon which I will not elaborate.

As for the words exchanged between myself and my significant other, they were ... significant. One of them was repeated several times and starts with "L." Lastly, I can tell you I never had to worry about breaking the bank.

On the Truman State campus, I am probably not alone. Many college students are equally as stingy and/or poor as me. But among society at large, we are the minority. The average person was "expected ... to spend \$130.97 on candy, cards, gifts and more," this year for Valentine's Day, according to the National Retail Federation. That includes gifts for family, friends and pets, but not dinner and a movie.

That seems like a lot of money to me. Spending more than \$100 for gifts, mostly for one person and not even for their birthday or Christmas, strikes me as excessive. When I learned of this statistic several days ago, my emotions were somewhere between shock and outrage.

I'm here to tell you a week after the fact that my Valentine's Day was as pleasant as could be with the budget similar to that of a 10-year-old's allowance.

Every year it seems like Valentine's Day becomes less about who we spend time with and more about how much we spend on them. We are bombarded with messages that we must buy expensive gifts to truly prove our love. But if I shell out for a silver bracelet, will my date, who already is beautiful and already owns jewelry, actually interpret such a gift as a sign of my undying love?

Would that mean rich people are more loving than those of us who get by with loans and scholarships? If I bought that expensive bracelet, could I simply slide it across the table while texting, saying

"here you go," and expect good results? No and no.

Cost does not matter as much as intent, and the gift does not matter as much as the presentation. I could spend \$2 for a Valentine's present, and as long as it means something to her, she will love it. I could give her a bracelet strung together from loose pieces of string and she wouldn't mind as long I told her "I love you" while I tied it around her wrist, and meant it.

Valentine's Day is about taking the time with your closest companion, if you have one, to let them know you love them. As long as they love you back, it doesn't matter how much you spend in doing it as long as you are sincere. Love doesn't need fancy jewelry. It shines on its own.

Now I'm going to put my anti-consumerist soapbox someplace safe until I need it for Easter.

Adam Rollins is a sophomore communication major from St. Charles, Mo.