



Editorial: Don't give away your vote

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Just a couple of weeks ago in this space, we wrote about the importance of voting as an opportunity to influence key government decisions that affect your life.

So it was disappointing to see a group that says it represents the interests of gay, bisexual and transgender Hoosiers urge Republicans not to vote in the governor's race in next week's Indiana primary.

The group wants GOP voters to just skip over that race on the ballot.

The reason? Equality Indiana doesn't like the candidates' stances on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, according to an Indiana Capital Chronicle story written by Leslie Bonilla Muñiz.

"If any of these Republican candidates for governor get elected, they will weaken Indiana's economic future by rejecting the Hoosier Hospitality welcoming values of diversity, equity and inclusion," said G. David Caudill, executive director of Equality Indiana.

So, according to the story, Caudill said "any" Hoosier—"especially LGBTQIA+ Hoosiers and allies"—who is voting in the Republican primary should boycott the gubernatorial race.

We just don't get the logic. Boycotting a race doesn't help a candidate understand why a particular voice or a particular group of voices is important. It doesn't do anything to help a candidate appreciate and empathize with a voter's story or concerns. It doesn't build a relationship.

Of course, we understand that Equality Indiana's statements are meant to draw attention to its cause. And we acknowledge this might be a particularly difficult group of candidates for an organization focused on gay and transgender rights to influence.

But we think Katie Blair, vice president of advocacy at national gay rights group PFLAG and a former director of advocacy for the ACLU of Indiana, summed it up pretty well. She posted on X that Equality Indiana is “actively doing harm by encouraging LGBTQ+ folks not to participate in democracy. Love or hate the candidates, this is not a good look.”

We completely agree.

There are so many better alternatives. Volunteering for campaigns, going to candidate forums or writing letters to candidates allows voters to explain their points of view and help candidates put a face to a story.

In addition, boycotting a race over a single set of issues assumes that no other issues matter. That’s just not the case. At issue in the GOP gubernatorial primary are questions about economic development, mental health funding, education, taxes and much more.

Voters will rarely find candidates with whom they totally agree. Voting is always about choosing which issues are most important and weighing a candidate’s pros and cons to pick the best option.

Voters who pull a Republican ballot but can’t find any reason to choose one of the seven candidates running for governor might be voting in the wrong party’s primary. And that’s an easy fix. There are races on the Democratic side, as well.

But we don’t think boycotting a race is the answer. Don’t give away your vote.

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