

Edwardsville *the*Intelligencer

Democracy is on November Ballot

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More than 800 people who attempted to stop the democratic process of confirming the 2020 election are either sought, charged or sentenced with various criminal acts for participating in the Jan. 6 insurrection. Attempts were made by the former president and his associates to pervert the process of counting electors by creating fake electors and presenting them to the U.S. Senate for approval. The governors of Florida and Texas has subverted the laws regarding immigrants' rights. Many states have passed or are considering legislation to suppress voting in election, and the Supreme Court has revoked women's right to choose.

At any other time in our history, these would be shocking developments, although that has not been evident in people's reactions to them. No, we are all accustomed to seeing so much anti-democratic and unlawful acts being committed by our elected officials over the past seven years.

We are numb.

But we are not a failed democracy – yet. Freedom House has ranked the United States 51st in terms of freedom among all nations in the world. The Human Freedom Index (Cato Institute) ranks us 15th. According to Wikipedia, The index is based on measures of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, individual economic choice, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, violence and crimes, freedom of movement, and women's rights among other components.

The countries that took the top 10 places, in order, were Switzerland, New Zealand, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Canada and Finland (tied at 6), Australia, Sweden, and Luxembourg.

Eight in 10 people are living in a nation that is partly free or not free, according to Freedom House. Countries in every region of the world have or are leaning toward an autocratic form of government. China, Russia, Nicaragua, Hungary, North Korea, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iran, and Mali. Even Italy, a nation we would traditionally think of as free, recently elected a right-wing leader. Others are gaining ground.

What does all this have to do with Edwardsville/Glen Carbon? I'll tell you. Your vote is essential in stopping this trend. Yes, yours. National trends begin locally and expand to the national level. Without a base in the countryside, autocrats or wannabe autocrats like Trump and Florida

Governor DeSantis cannot gain power. They are just fringe elements in an otherwise rational democracy. It starts down ballot at the precinct level, then to city council, mayor, school board, community college, county board, judges, state representatives and senators, governor and so on.

I know many people who vote for the top of the ticket and quit. In terms of saving democracy, that is too late to help. I urge you to learn all you can before filling in the little space next to a candidate's name. Who are they? What qualifies them to represent you? What do they stand for? It isn't easy but it is worth it to save our democracy from becoming a dictatorship in the future.

If women's rights can be taken away by nine men and women in robes or state legislatures, then what rights are safe? Voting rights? Free press? Free speech? Elect people who respect your rights or you will lose them.

Please vote. Democracy is on the ballot in November.