

Accuracy in Media Interview: Catherine Engelbrecht; President, True the Vote
April 25, 2014

True the Vote

In 2010, homemaker and small business owner, Catherine Engelbrecht created [True the Vote](#) (TTV), an organization dedicated to combating voter fraud. TTV trained Houston poll watchers for the 2010 election and lodged over 3,000 complaints, including intimidation, harassment and illegal voter assistance conducted by Democrat poll judges and workers. Thus began Engelbrecht's trial by fire. For her efforts, Engelbrecht, her husband, TTV and Engelbrecht's tea party group, [King Street Patriots](#), were sued by Texas Democrats. All the suits were defeated. Not to be intimidated, TTV rapidly grew into a nationwide powerhouse, and is at the forefront of efforts to promote voter integrity through volunteer affiliates in all 50 states.

After TTV applied for non-profit status in 2010, the Engelbrechts found themselves surrounded by an alphabet soup of government agencies. They were audited two years in a row by the IRS, both personally and their business. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives visited their company twice, although the ATF director [could not explain why](#). OSHA made a surprise visit and fined the company \$25,000. An anonymous complaint brought in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Additionally, in 2010 and 2011, the FBI repeatedly visited the King Street Patriots, asking probing questions about their activities.

For three years, the IRS made endless demands for information in a [deliberate effort](#) to target TTV. Engelbrecht, TTV and independent affiliates [in Maryland](#) and [Ohio](#) were also relentlessly harassed by Democratic Rep. [Elijah Cummings](#) (MD), ranking member on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Cummings issued threatening letters to the group and claimed on CNN to be launching an investigation. This was [a blatant lie](#) as he has no authority to do so. It has since come to light that Cummings [coordinated efforts](#) with the IRS. Engelbrecht has [filed ethics charges](#) against him.

Engelbrecht [testified before Congress](#) regarding her group's ordeal at the hands of the IRS and others. She defiantly told the Committee, "I will not retreat. I will not surrender. I will not be intimidated and I will not ask for permission to exercise my constitutional rights." TTV finally sued the IRS to demand an up-or-down decision and were granted tax-exempt status in September 2013.

Interview

AIM: Judicial Watch recently revealed that the IRS coordinated with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in an effort to seek criminal indictments against tea party and conservative organizations that had applied for tax exempt status. Do you know whether or not you and/or TTV were specifically targeted by DOJ?

Engelbrecht: When DOJ sued the state of Texas over its voter ID law, DOJ attorneys repeatedly asked deposed elected officials and staff about my organizations and whether or not I had spoken with them. We can prove this, and I look forward to doing so.

AIM: What is the status of your non-profit application now?

Engelbrecht: We sued the IRS to compel an up or down vote on the application. Last September they relented and agreed to give TTV non-profit status.

AIM: What do you think is the most important voter integrity issue at this moment?

Engelbrecht: We just had a major victory for voter integrity when the Supreme Court threw out the provision of the Voting Rights Act that required DOJ preclearance for new voting laws. Texas and South Carolina have now implemented their photo voter ID laws Holder's DOJ had blocked for years, and ID laws in other states will now move forward.

Inexplicably, Congressman James Sensenbrenner has now proposed [H.R. 3899](#), the *Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014*, which would restore DOJ authority that the Supremes just took away. Sensenbrenner's bill would reopen a wound that's just starting to heal. Why would any representative of the people want to do that?

AIM: What do you think his goal was in proposing this bill?

Engelbrecht: Why would any Republican work with Eric Holder's Justice Department to deny the rights of states to set their own voting laws? We know Congressman Sensenbrenner is working with leftwing groups and with far-left Members of Congress to craft a Federal takeover of state elections. They'll use Sensenbrenner's bill that will make it impossible for states to set Voter ID requirements, control voter registration standards, or to set the rules of how to conduct fair and honest elections. The Holder-Sensenbrenner bill is a license for Eric Holder to control state elections in 2014, 2016 and beyond.

AIM: The Holder Justice Department has gone to the mats to stop voter ID laws, they have pointedly fought all efforts to clean the voter rolls and even stopped states, [like Florida](#), from purging non-citizens from voter rolls. We all know the voter rolls are a mess, and voter ID is an effective way to prevent vote fraud. Why would anyone, especially the nation's chief law enforcement officer, want to oppose voter integrity measures?

Engelbrecht: It [makes no sense](#). Voter integrity is not a partisan issue. It goes to the heart of what America is all about. It should unite, not divide us. Anyone who opposes it is immediately suspicious in my mind. Polls consistently show that Americans strongly support Voter ID.

AIM: You have been busy. Despite the government harassment, TTV, along with Judicial Watch, has made major accomplishments. Tell us about Ohio.

Engelbrecht: We [sued the Ohio Secretary of State](#) to compel the state to clean its voter rolls. They were a mess. We found that in three counties, the number of registered voters exceeded the voting age population. Another 31 counties had registered voters totaling between 90 and 100 percent of the voting age population. Nationwide, 71 percent of the voting age population is registered. Thus it seemed clear to us that Ohio was failing in its duty to maintain voter rolls. The

settlement compels them to take a number of measures that should vastly improve both the state of voter rolls and future maintenance. Through this settlement they also agreed to join Kansas' Crosscheck program.

AIM: Speaking of Crosscheck, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach has greatly expanded and refined their Crosscheck program. It seems to be a great idea.

Engelbrecht: It is an essential program. It has already provided a wealth of information about potential duplicate votes in the 28 participating states. Furthermore, it reminds us that administration of elections should remain at the state level.

AIM: It is surprising to see that Texas hasn't joined. Do you know why?

Engelbrecht: The office of the Texas Secretary of State has stated they want legislative approval before joining. We hope that that approval will come in the next legislative session.

AIM: What does True the Vote plan for this coming year?

Engelbrecht: The Obama Administration, the Justice Department, the IRS, and their allies in Congress and the media did everything they could to stop True the Vote, but we're still here, and we're stronger than ever. They used the enormous power of the Federal government to try to intimidate us, and they failed. This year, in 2015, and in 2016, we're facing challenges that will shape the future of this nation for generations. We know that our work to ensure that elections are fair, honest, and transparent is vital, and we're now expanding our national network of citizen activists and volunteers. We're providing training, education, organization, and software to election observers and poll watchers who know that clean elections are vital to preserving the Republic.

People ask me all the time, "Isn't it intimidating to be a target?" To me, my story just makes it clear how much is at stake, for every American. And that's why we'll continue our fight for free, fair, and honest elections at the grassroots, at the polling place, in the halls of Congress and state legislatures, and in the courts.

AIM: Thank you for your time, Mrs. Engelbrecht.