

POLL WATCHER

INFO SESSION

Agenda

- What are poll watchers?
- Overview of the polling place and Election Board
- Common voting procedures
- Rules at the polling place and challenge process
- What can watchers DO and NOT DO?

What are poll watchers?

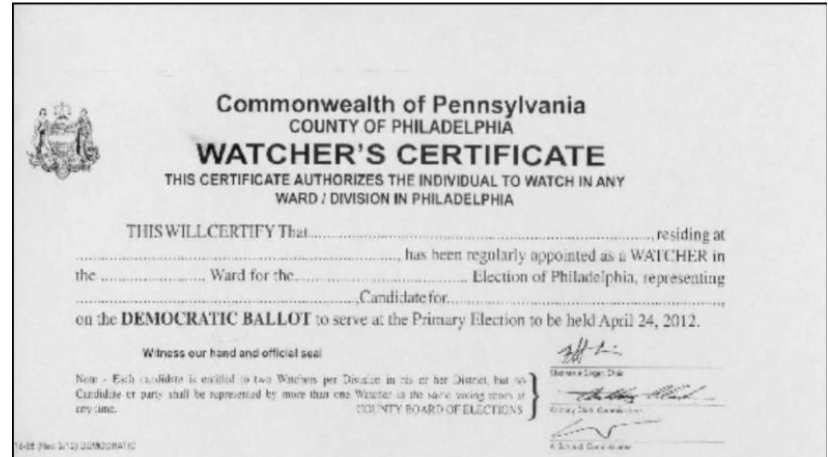
- State law provides for poll watchers requested by political parties and candidates to observe and, in certain circumstances, challenge a person's eligibility to cast a ballot at an election precinct
- **The primary responsibility is to WATCH the election process as a representative of a candidate or political party**

What are poll watchers?

- In Primary, General and Special Elections:
 - Each candidate may appoint up to two (2) poll watchers for each election precinct
- In General and Special Elections:
 - Each political party may appoint up to three (3) poll watchers for each election precinct
- **Only one poll watcher (per candidate or party) may be present in the polling place at a time**

What are Poll Watchers?

- A Poll Watcher must:
 - Be a registered voter in the county
 - Have a certificate issued by the County Board of Elections



Overview of the polling place

Election districts (or precinct/division), each with their own Election Board.

Polling place locations sometimes house multiple precincts in the same room.



Overview of the polling place

Election Board

- **Judge of Elections** - Responsible for overseeing the election process and ensuring compliance with the law
- **Majority Inspector, Minority Inspector, and Clerk** - Assist the Judge of Elections in conducting the election and facilitating a smooth experience for voters
- **Machine Inspector** - Operates the voting systems and instructing voters in their use

Who can be in a polling place?

Only certain people are permitted in polling places:

- Election Board Members (poll workers)
- Voters (and their children)
- Persons providing authorized voter assistance or language translation
- Certified poll watchers
- County election staff
- Law enforcement summoned by the Judge of Elections

Overview of voting procedures

Voter check-in process

- A registered voter located in the poll book must sign their name before proceeding to use a voting system
- In some instances, additional steps will be required:
 - Voters with inactive records have to affirm their eligibility
 - First-time voters must show an approved form of ID
 - Surrendering and voiding a mail-in ballot (and return envelope)

Overview of voting procedures

Approved forms of voter ID for *first-time voters*

Photo ID:

- PA driver's license or PennDOT ID card
- ID issued by any Commonwealth agency
- ID issued by the U.S. Government
- U.S. passport
- U.S. Armed Forces ID
- Student ID
- Employee ID

Non-photo ID*:

- Voter registration card issued by the County Voter Registration Office
- Non-photo ID issued by any agency of the Commonwealth or U.S. Government
- Firearm permit
- Current utility bill
- Current bank statement
- Paycheck
- Government check

*Must include name and address

Overview of voting procedures

Provisional ballots

- Paper ballots required by federal law to provide to protect the integrity of the election process and rights of voters
- Every provisional ballot is reviewed due to confirm the voter's eligibility before being included in the certified election results

Overview of voting procedures

Reasons that a voter may need to use a **provisional ballot** include:

- A person cannot be located in the poll book, but they believe they are a registered voter
- A person applied for, but did not return, a mail-in or absentee ballot
- A person is a first-time voter but does not have the required ID
- A person is voting due to a Court Order
- An Election Official (eg, Judge of Election) asserts that a person is not an eligible voter in the division

Overview of voting procedures

Surrendering a mail-in or absentee ballot

- A voter who applied for and received a mail-in or absentee ballot can use the voting system but ONLY if they take the following steps:
 - Surrender their mail-in ballot and return envelope to the Judge of Elections
 - Affirm that they are a registered voter and want to void their mail-in or absentee ballot
- Voters are NOT allowed to return completed mail-in ballots to poll worker at their precinct

Overview of voting procedures

Voter assistance

A voter with a disability or limited English proficiency may obtain assistance from (almost) anyone they choose. Unless already indicated in the poll book, a voter and the person providing assistance **MUST** complete a declaration form.

The following individuals are **NOT** permitted to assist:

- 1) The Judge of Elections
- 2) The voter's employer or an agent of that employer
- 3) An officer or agent of the voter's union

Voting Systems in Philadelphia

Express Vote XL

- Certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and PA Department of State
- ADA-compliant
- Voter-verifiable paper ballot

32" Full-Faced Voting Surface
All candidates will be displayed on one screen, text can be enlarged, contrast can be changed, and voters can toggle between available languages

Voter-Verifiable Paper Ballot
Voters can verify their ballot before casting their vote and results can be recounted and audited

Privacy Curtain
Not pictured, voters will still have the privacy to cast their ballots behind a curtain

Secure Ballot Container
Voted paper ballots are stored behind locks and security seals

Battery Backup Power
Can continue to operate in the event of power loss

Easily Transported
Large, heavy-duty, lockable wheels make for smooth steering and stability



Rules at the polling place

Electioneering is not allowed within 10 feet of the polling place (the room or space where voting is taking place).

Electioneering can include:

- Handing out, posting or leaving behind campaign materials
- Telling voters which candidates to support
- Wearing a t-shirt or button supporting a candidate, campaign or party (except voters in the act of voting)

Rules at the polling place



Rules at the polling place

Harassment, intimidation and interference

- Any activity that threatens, harasses or intimidates voters or poll workers inside or outside of the polling is illegal. This includes any activity intended to, or having the effect of, interfering with any voters' right to vote.
- Incidents should be reported to the County Board of Elections and District Attorney.

Rules at the polling place

Examples of Prohibited Conduct:

- Blocking or interfering with access to the polling place
- Direct confrontation or questioning of voters, including asking voters for documentation or proof of eligibility
- Disseminating false or misleading election information (voting eligibility, polling place procedures, polling place hours, or voting methods)
- Aggressive or threatening brandishing of weapons
- Photographing or videotaping voters to intimidate them
- Questioning voters about citizenship, criminal record or political choices

Rules at the polling place

Firearms

- Voters with a legal right to carry a firearm cannot be barred from entering the polling place unless there's a prohibition on a particular location (e.g., courthouse, school building)
- Individuals who behave aggressively with a firearm will be reported to the appropriate authorities for investigation and prosecution
- Constables may be at some polling sites





Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association

PDAA Election Guidance for District Attorneys and Pennsylvania Law Enforcement



**DAO ELECTION TASK FORCE HOTLINE:
215-686-9641**

**NATIONAL NONPARTISAN ELECTION
PROTECTION HOTLINE: 866-OUR-VOTE**

**PROTECTING YOUR
RIGHT TO VOTE**

Challenges

Grounds For Challenges

- *A person is presumed to be a bona fide qualified elector and must be allowed to vote if his or her name appears on the poll book.*
- Voters who are lawfully in the polling place, local election officials, and poll watchers may challenge a voter's right to vote.
- *Such challenges are limited to identity and residency, i.e., that the voter is not the person they say they are or that the voter does not live in the voting precinct.*

Challenges

Challenge Process

- The Judge of Election must determine if a challenge rests on a good faith basis.
- If the Judge cannot determine in good faith the residency or identity of the voter, that voter may bring another voter from the precinct to sign an affidavit vouching for their identity or residence. Once this procedure is followed, the voter can use the voting system.
- A challenged voter who is unable to find a witness is given a provisional ballot.

What can poll watchers NOT do?

Poll watchers CANNOT....

- Disrupt or interfere with the voting process
- Engage or attempt to influence voters
- Harass or intimidate voters
 - Blocking door to polling place, asking voters for documentation, videotaping voters
- Electioneer inside polling place or within 10 feet of polling place (space where voting is taking place)

Judge of Elections is obligated to remove a poll watcher if they engage in prohibited activities

What can poll watchers do?

Poll watchers CAN....

- Make *good-faith* challenges to elector's identity and residence in the division
 - Discriminatory or frivolous challenges infringe on the right to vote and are unlawful
- Examine the poll book when no voters are in the precinct
- Observe the precinct before polls open and after close
- Report issues to the County Board of Elections and/or District Attorney

Q&A

POLL WATCHER
TRAINING SESSION