



2010 PA VOTER GUIDE

May 2010 Primary



The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a nationwide, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with more than 500,000 members dedicated to defending the principles of liberty and equality embodied in the Constitution and our nation's civil rights laws. The ACLU doesn't endorse or oppose any candidate or party.

This guide is designed to help you protect your own right to vote. Keep it handy, and take it with you to the polls.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Be sure to meet all deadlines for registration and voting.
- Plan ahead if your native language isn't English, you're disabled, or you need to take time off work to vote.
- You have the right to vote if you're a former felon and aren't incarcerated on Election Day.
- Vote by absentee or alternative ballot if you're eligible to do so.
- Locate your polling place **before** Election Day.
- Bring some form of identification if you have it.
- Ask for a *Provisional Ballot* **only** if there's no other way for you to vote.
- Take your time voting. You have up to three minutes in the voting booth. You can take more time if no voters are waiting in line.
- You can get free internet access at most public libraries. The forms mentioned in this guide are on the web at <http://votespa.com>

WHO CAN VOTE

Can I vote in the May 2010 primary?

- Yes, if by primary day (May 18th):
 - You've been a U.S. citizen for at least a month.
 - You've lived in PA and your election district for at least 30 days.
 - You're 18 years old.
 - You registered to vote.

What if I'm a student?

- You can register to vote at your school **or** home address, **but not both places.**

What if I've been convicted of a crime?

- You **can** vote if you were convicted of a misdemeanor; but you have to vote by *Absentee Ballot* if you're still in jail.
- You **can** vote if you were convicted of a felony and you're on probation or parole, or you've completely served your sentence by Election Day.
- You **can** vote if you're on probation, released on parole, under house arrest, or waiting for trial.

What if I'm homeless?

- If you don't have a permanent address, you can register using the address of a shelter or other facility that will accept mail for you.

REGISTERING TO VOTE

How do I register?

- You can get a voter registration application from your county voter registration office, most libraries, post offices, colleges and high schools, by calling 1-800-552-VOTE, or online at <http://votespa.com>.
- You can register when you apply for a driver's license.
- You can register at many offices that provide help with public assistance (such as Medicaid, WIC, and food stamps), services to people with disabilities, and at many other government offices.

What's the registration deadline?

- Monday, April 19.

What if I miss the deadline?

- You won't be able to vote in the May primary, but you can register to vote in future elections.

What if I've moved or changed my name?

- You should register again using your new name or address, but you can still vote at your old polling place and change your registration there.

How do I know if I am registered?

Contact your county board of elections or call 1-877-VOTESPA. You can also check online at <http://votespa.com>

VOTING BY ABSENTEE OR ALTERNATIVE BALLOT

What's an *Absentee Ballot*?

■ An *Absentee Ballot* is a way to vote in the election if you can't get to your polling place on Election Day. You have to apply to get a ballot, fill out the ballot, and then return it by mail or by hand to your county board of elections before the deadline.

■ You may be eligible to vote by *Absentee Ballot* if you can't get to your polling place because of your job, an illness, or a disability, or because you have one of the other excuses allowed by state law.

What's an *Alternative Ballot*?

■ An *Alternative Ballot* is a way to vote in the election if you've been assigned to an inaccessible polling place. Like an *Absentee Ballot*, you have to apply to get a ballot, fill out the ballot, and then return it by mail or by hand to your county board of elections before the deadline.

■ You can vote by *Alternative Ballot* if you're 65 or older or have a disability and you've been assigned to an inaccessible polling place. You can vote by *Alternative Ballot* even if you're physically able to access your polling place.

How do I get an *Absentee Ballot* or an *Alternative Ballot*?

■ You have to apply for an *Absentee Ballot* or an *Alternative Ballot* by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11.

■ You can apply for an emergency ballot as late as 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Where can I get an application?

■ Go to <http://votespa.com> or contact your county board of elections to apply for these ballots.

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

Where do I vote?

■ You have to vote at the polling place to which you've been assigned.

■ Your polling place is listed on your voter registration card.

■ You can contact your county board of elections **before** Election Day to find out where to vote.

■ You can also look up your polling place online at <http://www.votespa.com>. All you have to do is enter your home address.

When are the polls open?

■ Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. You have the right to vote if you're in line when the polls close.

Can I get time off from work to vote?

■ Employers are not required to give employees time off from work to vote. Some employers will allow employees to leave early or come in late. Ask your employer **before** Election Day.

What if I need help voting?

■ If you need help using the voting machine, talk to a poll worker. Poll workers are required to help you even if you're in the voting booth.

■ If you need help because of a disability or medical problem, or because you can't read or write, you have the right to bring a person to help you. It can be anybody except your employer, a labor union representative, or a judge of elections. Ask a poll worker to give you a form called *Declaration of the Need for Assistance*.

What if my polling place is not accessible?

■ If you find this out **before** Election Day, contact your county board of elections right away to request an *Alternative Ballot*. Otherwise, ask a poll worker where to go to file an *Emergency Application for an Alternative Ballot*. You can't file this at your polling place. You will most likely have to file it at your county board of elections.

Can I get a ballot in a language other than English?

■ If your native language is not English, you have the right to bring an interpreter with you. It can be anyone except your employer, a labor union representative or a judge of elections.

■ In Philadelphia and the City of Reading, all voting material should be printed in Spanish and English and each polling place should have a Spanish-English interpreter. Poll workers are required to offer you this assistance, but you can ask for it if they don't.

VOTER ID

Do I have to show ID?

■ Most voters can vote without showing any ID at all.

■ You **only** need ID if this is your **first time** voting at your polling place.

■ It's a good idea to bring an ID, if you have one, even if you're not a first-time voter.

What type of ID will be accepted?

■ Accepted forms of photo ID include: a valid PA driver's license or other ID card issued by PennDOT; an ID issued by a PA or U.S. agency; a passport; a military ID; a student ID; or an employee ID.

■ If you don't have a photo ID, you can use a non-photo ID, including: your voter registration card; an ID issued by a PA or U.S. agency; a gun permit; a utility bill; a bank statement; a paycheck; or a government check. **These IDs must have your name and address on them.**

What if I don't have any ID?

■ You can cast a *Provisional Ballot*. Or, if you have time and have ID at home or work, you can get your ID and return to the polls to cast a regular ballot.

PROBLEMS AT THE POLLS

What if I'm not on the voter list?

- First, ask the poll worker to check the list again. Offer to spell your name.
- If a poll worker tells you that you're at the wrong polling place, ask for help finding the right polling place. You can also call your county board of elections or look up your polling place online at <http://votespa.com>.
- If you believe you're at the right polling place but your name isn't on the voter list, ask for a *Provisional Ballot*.

What is a *Provisional Ballot*?

- A *Provisional Ballot* is used to record your vote when there's a question about your eligibility. It will only be counted if election officials determine after the election that you were eligible to vote.
- **A very high percentage of provisional ballots in Pennsylvania are rejected on technical grounds. You should use one only if there is no other way for you to vote.**

What if someone tries to intimidate or harass me?

- Tell a poll worker right away. If the poll worker is the problem, tell a poll watcher, call your county board of elections, or call the Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (toll-free).

What if I make a mistake on my ballot or the voting machine doesn't work right?

- Tell a poll worker **before** you cast your vote. If you make a mistake on a paper ballot, you have the right to get another one as long as you catch your mistake before you cast your ballot.

Can I take election materials with me into my polling place?

- You can take election materials with you—such as a sample ballot, a voter guide, or this card—as long as they're for your own use.
- You can't hand out materials inside a polling place.

NEED HELP?

All numbers listed below are toll-free.

- **Pennsylvania Department of State:**
1-877-VOTESPA
<http://votespa.com>
Information about voting procedures, forms, and deadlines.
- **Election Protection Coalition:**
1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)
<http://www.866OurVote.org>
Do you have a question about where or how to vote? Want to report a problem voting?
- **ACLU of Pennsylvania:**
(877) PHL-ACLU (Philadelphia)
(877) PGH-ACLU (Pittsburgh)

<http://www.aclupa.org>
vote@aclupa.org

DEADLINES FOR MAY 2010

- **Monday, April 19**
Deadline for registering to vote.
- **Tuesday, May 11**
Application for Absentee or Alternative Ballots must be received by the Board of Elections.
- **Friday, May 14**
Absentee Ballot must be received by the Board of Elections.
- **Tuesday, May 18**
Vote – Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Alternative Ballots and Emergency Absentee Ballots due by 8 p.m.

The PA government has a text and email reminder system for registration, absentee ballots, and in-person voting. Go to <http://votespa.com> and sign up. You will be contacted the day before each deadline.