



LYNNE ABRAHAM  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
1421 ARCH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Date:** November 4, 2008  
**Contact:** Cathie Abookire / 215-686-8711  
Director of Communications

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## **DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO MONITOR AND ENFORCE FAIR PRACTICES FOR NOVEMBER 4, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION**

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The District Attorney's Office will monitor and enforce fair practices to ensure a fair election for Tuesday's General Election (November 4, 2008—polling hours, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

Criminal activity will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

- Voters' complaints can be registered by calling the District Attorney's Office at 215-686-9643.
- The Committee of Seventy at 215-557-3600 will also answer election-related questions.
- Mobile units, each with an Assistant District Attorney and a District Attorney's Detective, will be dispatched to problem polling places to investigate any person who attempts to violate a citizen's right to vote. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Charges can include: assault, vote fraud, harassment, and terroristic threats. **Note that there will be NO Divisional Election Courts at Police Districts.** Central Election Court, Room 676 City Hall, will be in session throughout the day to settle voting disputes.

## **ELECTION DAY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

### **CITY COMMISSIONERS**

Chairperson, Honorable Margaret Tartaglione 686-3461  
Commissioners Office - Room 132  
Commissioner Anthony Clark 686-3462  
Commissioner Joseph Duda 686-3464

**COMMITTEE OF SEVENTY** 557-3600

**ELECTION DAY COMPLAINTS** 686-1590

**VOTING MACHINE MALFUNCTION** 686-7800

### **ELECTION BOARD**

686-3469, 3943, 7100  
(Absentee Ballots, Pollworkers)

**ELECTION LEGAL MATTERS** 686-3460

**MISSING ELECTION MATERIALS** 686-1530, 1531,  
1532

**WATCHER CERTIFICATES** 686-1535

**CITY HALL OPERATOR** 686-1776

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS INTERPRETERS** 1-866-874-3972  
686-1516

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S COMPLAINT INTAKE UNIT** 686-9641

**DEMOCRATIC CITY COMMITTEE** 215-241-7800

**REPUBLICAN CITY COMMITTEE** 215-561-0650

**CENTRAL ELECTION COURT (ROOM 676, CITY HALL)** 686-4278

## **REGULATIONS AT POLLING PLACES**

The following regulations apply to all polling places:

- a. No partisan political activity may take place within 10 feet from the entrance to the polling room. No electioneering is permitted within the polling place.

- b. Police and peace officers must remain 100 feet distant from the polls unless they are in the process of voting or have been summoned by the Judge of Elections to restore order within the polls.
- c. Campaign buttons may not be worn by Election Board members or Watchers while they are inside the polling room.
- d. Printed or written campaign leaflets, sample party ballots or other partisan materials may not be distributed inside the polls, or left or stored there during the course of the election.
- e. Voters may wear buttons or Tee shirts in support of any candidate. Voters are permitted to bring sample ballots or any written material into the polling place.
- f. Suggestions of any kind as to which party or candidate to vote for are not permitted inside the polling room.

### **QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED ON ELECTION DAY**

#### **1. What can watchers inside the polling place do?**

Candidates are entitled to two watchers for each polling place where their names are on the ballot. All watchers must have been selected before election day.

**When the polls are being set up** in the morning and when the count is computed at the end of the night, all watchers are allowed inside the polling place. During the time for voting, however, only one of each candidate's watchers is permitted inside the polling place.

When the election officials are preparing the polling place, all watchers must be permitted to examine the vote-tallying counters and the public counter on the machines to see that they are set at 000; the watcher must be permitted to stand somewhere in the room that permits them to exercise this right.

**When the room is open for voting**, watchers inside the room must stand "outside the enclosed space", which the Election Code describes as the "inner portion" of the room. The voting machines are supposed to be inside that enclosed space.

During the day, watchers usually try to keep track of who comes to vote. They are permitted to keep a list of voters and may challenge any would-be voter. In carrying out these duties, what if the watcher doesn't recognize a voter and wants to find out who he or she is? Although the Election Code is silent as to the procedure to be followed, generally, the election official will allow the watcher to look at the sign-in form which the

voter signed and to compare the name with the voter's name in the binder. May one of the election officials announce the name of the voter? Yes.

**When the polls are closed** and the count is being computed, all watchers are allowed inside the polling place, but they are not permitted to touch the machine.

**2. I mailed in my absentee ballot (or I received one but didn't use it). May I vote in person now that I have discovered I can make it to the polls?**

Yes. In fact, the law says that you must. When you go to vote in person, the Judge of Elections should set aside your unopened absentee ballot and it will not be counted. However, polling place officials may not know this rule; therefore if they give you an argument, have them call the Committee of Seventy (215-557-3600). Absentee ballots which were not received by the County Board of Elections by 5:00 p.m. on October 31, 2008, will not be counted.

**3. May I have assistance in voting?**

Yes. If the registration affidavit has the appropriate boxes marked, indicating need for assistance, the voter is entitled to assistance. (The caller should have checked those boxes when he or she registered, or should have gotten that information added after registering.) If the affidavit is not marked, the voter may still have assistance in voting, if at the time of voting, the voter completes a Declaration of the need for Assistance. The voter may be given assistance by any person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

**4. My name wasn't in the poll book, so the Judge of Elections wouldn't let me vote. Was that right? Is there anything I can do to vote?**

Yes. You may vote by provisional ballot. The Judge of Elections will have a supply of these ballots for use in these circumstances. must then let you vote.

**5. How much time may I take to vote once I've closed the curtain to the voting machine?**

The election code sets a maximum of 3 minutes, but if others are not waiting to vote, the election officers may allow you a longer time. (Voters may familiarize themselves with the ballot by examining the pink sample ballot posted at the polling place before they enter the voting machine.)

**6. If I'm in line at the polling place by 8:00PM, but haven't yet reached the voting machine, may I vote?**

Yes. If you are in the line by 8:00PM, you may vote, whether you are in line outside or inside the polling place. (This assumes you are qualified to vote and that your name is in the poll book). If the line is very long, it may take several hours before all those in line by 8:00PM have voted. This is entirely legal; however, no one who entered the line after 8:00 p.m. is permitted to vote.

**7. I'm a first-time voter. Can identification be required before I can vote?**

Yes, if you are a first-time voter or a voter new to the division and registered to vote. A number of forms of identification can be used, including a Pennsylvania drivers license, a Pennsylvania identification card, draft card or a voter registration card with the address supplied when you registered to vote.

This is also true for college students who have valid registration to vote in Philadelphia. Out-of-state identification will likely not be acceptable.

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