

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A VOTER

Voter Registration:

*Voters whose names have changed (e.g., marriage) or have recently moved cannot assume that voting records accurately reflect their information.

*To make sure, contact -866-OUR-VOTE (English)/ 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish) (well in advance of the election) to verify your voter registration. If you haven't voted since 2004, make sure you contact re-verify your registration.

*November 2008 elections will be first time that all the states will use statewide voter registration lists. Unfortunately, these lists are not always 100% accurate.

*Don't wait until October to register to vote. Register now because more than half the states cut off voter registration three weeks or more before the election.

Voting at the Polls:

*Voters should always stay at their polling place until all issues regarding their registration have been resolved. Do not leave the polling place without voting, ever.

*Know what voter ID, if any, is required when you go to the polls. And make sure you take it to the polls with you when you go to vote.

*The scope of voting machine breakdowns and other voting machine errors in recent years has been widespread.

*If you have a problem voting on a machine at the polls, stop and ask poll officials to help you or ask to use a different machine. It is better to get help and vote correctly than to vote without assistance and find out your ballot was not marked correctly or completely.

*If your right to vote is challenged by someone when you go the polls, keep your cool and encourage the polls officials to remedy the problem promptly. If you have registered properly and are at the correct polling location, you have nothing to worry about.

*If your city or county uses voting machines that produce a paper trail or receipt, you can check to make sure your vote was properly recorded.

*If you have a problem voting on Election Day, call 1-866-OUR-VOTE (English)/ 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish) to get help.

Student Voting:

*Students are entitled to register in the county where they attend college.

*Parents do not lose the right to declare the student as a dependent on their income taxes if the student registers to vote at college.

*The large anticipated voter turnout of students in November may result in the polls having insufficient ballots or long lines. Be prepared to wait so your vote is counted.

*Once you've register to vote, keep all your paperwork and bring it with you to the polls, just in case there is a problem.

Absentee Voting or Voting by Mail:

*All states allow some voters to vote by mail, but there is wide variation among them in who is allowed vote by mail.

*There are 3 steps to voting by mail: registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot, and sending the absentee ballot into the elections office.

*It is often better to vote during an early voting period or by mail because if there is a problem with your voter registration status or in casting a ballot, it can be fixed before Election Day.

You Can Make A Difference:

*Voters can control the following: registering properly, verifying voter registration status with local officials, and finding out in advance where your polling place is located.

*Voters cannot control the following: how well election officials do their job, how well the voting machines work, and whether there will be a problem with the vote count.

*Serving as a poll worker is one of the best ways to safeguard elections. With the increased voter turnout this fall, more poll officials will be needed and states are finding that they still need more people to serve as poll officials. Volunteer if you can.

*Political parties, campaigns, and candidates need volunteers to be at the polls on Election Day to watch the polls, or to help give rides to the elderly. Even if you can only help for part of the day, volunteer.

If you do not know where your polling place is, or witness any questionable incidents on Election Day call -866-OUR-VOTE (English)/ 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish) to get help.

(Guide adapted from publication by The Campaign Legal Center)