

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, but we believe that no civil right is more important in our democracy than the right to vote.

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



WHO CAN VOTE

Can I vote in Alabama?

■ You can vote in the November 4 election if you're registered to vote by Friday, October 24, 2008.

■ You can register if you meet **all** of the following qualifications:

- (1) you're a U.S. citizen;
- (2) you reside in the county in which you want to vote;
- (3) you'll be at least 18 years old on Election Day;
- (4) you haven't been convicted of a disqualifying felony (unless your voting rights have been restored); and
- (5) you haven't been declared by a court to be mentally incompetent.

What if I'm a student?

■ You can register to vote at whatever address you regard as your primary legal residence. This can be your school address or your home address.

What if I've been convicted of a crime?

■ If you were convicted of a misdemeanor, you can vote, but you have to vote by absentee ballot if you're still in jail.

■ You can vote if you were convicted of one of the following state felonies: doing business without a license; driving under the influence; possession of any drug or controlled substance; simple assault; violation of liquor laws; and aiding/permitting/facilitating a prisoner to escape.

■ If you were convicted of any other felony, you can't vote unless you've had your voting rights restored. For more information and for help applying to have your voting rights restored, visit <http://www.aclualabama.org/vote>.

What if I'm homeless?

■ You don't need a home to register, but you do have to identify a place of residence (which can be a street corner, a park, a shelter, or any other place where you usually stay).

REGISTRATION

How do I register?

■ You can register to vote:

(1) **in person**, by filling out a postcard voter registration application at your county's Board of Registrars.

(2) **by mail**, by filling out a mail-in voter registration form and mailing it to your county's Board of Registrars;

(3) **when you apply for services** at a driver's licensing office and state agencies that provide public assistance (such as Medicaid, WIC, and food stamps) or services to people with disabilities. You may also be able to register at many other state and federal offices and agencies.

■ You can get mail-in postcard voter registration forms from your county's Board of Registrars, at many colleges, libraries, and state agencies, or by calling the Secretary of State's Voter Hotline at (800) 274-8683. You can also download the form at <http://www.sos.state.al.us/Elections/VoterRegistrationInfo.aspx>.

What's the registration deadline?

■ The deadline for the November election is Friday, October 24.

What if I miss the deadline?

■ You won't be able to vote in the November 4 election, but you can register to vote in future elections.

What if I've moved or changed my name?

■ You have to re-register every time you move to a different county.

■ If you moved to a new county before the deadline and didn't re-register, you won't be able to vote in the November 4 election.

■ If you moved to a new county after the deadline, call your county's Board of Registrars as soon as possible to find out where to vote.

■ If you changed your name or moved within the same county, and didn't notify your county's Board of Registrars, you can fill out an update form for your registration and vote on the day of the election at the polling place for your new address.

How do I know if I'm registered?

■ Your county's Board of Registrars will mail you a voter identification card when it processes your registration form. You can also check your registration status by calling your county's Board of Registrars or the Secretary of State's Voter Hotline at (800) 274-8683.

VOTING EARLY

Can I vote before Election Day?

■ Maybe. You can vote by absentee ballot before Election Day if you're registered to vote and you meet **any** of the following conditions:

- (1) you'll be away from your county on Election Day;
- (2) you're ill or have a physical disability that prevents a trip to the polling place;
- (3) you're a registered Alabama voter living outside the county, such as a member of the armed forces or a college student;
- (4) you're an appointed election officer or poll watcher outside your precinct; or
- (5) you have to work a required shift of 10 hours or more on Election Day while the polls are open.

How do I get an absentee ballot?

■ You have to fill out an application or written request for an absentee ballot and return it by hand or by mail to the Absentee Election Manager (usually the Circuit Clerk) in your county by Thursday, October 30.

■ If you find out after October 30 that you can't vote at the polls because of an emergency business trip or medical emergency, you can submit an emergency application for an absentee ballot until 5 p.m. on Monday, November 3.

What's the deadline for returning my absentee ballot?

■ If your absentee ballot is returned by mail, it must be postmarked no later than November 3 and received by noon on Election Day.

■ If your absentee ballot is returned hand, it must be in the office of your Absentee Election Manager by the close of business (but no later than 5 p.m.) on November 3.

■ ALABAMA SECRETARY OF STATE:
(800) 274-0VOTE (8683)

■ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE:
(800) 253-3931

■ ACLU VOTING RIGHTS PROJECT:
(877) 523-2792
<http://www.votingrights.org>

■ ACLU OF ALABAMA:
(866) 454-VOTE (8683)
<http://www.aclualabama.org/vote>



125 BROAD STREET 18TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400

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VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

When is Election Day?

- Tuesday, November 4

When are the polls open?

- Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., local time.

Can I get time off from work to vote?

- Probably not. The law doesn't require employers to give their employees paid or unpaid time off from work to vote, but your employer might have its own policy allowing you to do so. Ask your employer well before Election Day.

Where do I vote?

- On Election Day, you have to vote at the polling place to which you're assigned.
- Your assigned polling place will be listed on the voter identification card that you should receive from your county's Board of Registrars when you register.
- If you don't have your card, contact your county's Board of Registrars to find out where to vote.

What if my polling place is not accessible?

- If you find this out before Election Day, notify your county's Probate Judge right away and ask for an accommodation. You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine. Or, if you prefer, you can vote by absentee ballot.
- Otherwise, bring one or more people to assist you. You have the right to have anyone you choose assist you as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union. Ala. Code § 17-9-13.

Can I get a ballot in my native language?

- Election materials in Alabama are generally available in English only, but you have the right to bring an interpreter with you to the polls or to get assistance in your language from anyone you choose, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union.

What if I need help in the voting booth?

- If you need help because of a physical disability or because you can't read the ballot, tell a poll worker when you get to your polling place. You have the right to have anyone you choose assist you in the voting booth, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union. Ala. Code § 17-9-13.
- If you need instructions on how to use the voting equipment, ask a poll worker for help. Poll workers are required to help you at any time you ask— even after you've entered the voting booth.

VOTER ID

Do I have to show ID?

- Probably. State law requires all voters to show some form of identification before receiving a regular ballot unless two poll workers are willing and able to identify you. Ala. Code § 17-9-30.

What are the accepted forms of ID?

- The accepted forms of ID include: a current and valid government-issued photo ID card; a photo ID card issued by your employer; a current and valid photo ID card issued by an Alabama college, university, technical or professional school; a utility bill, bank statement, government check or paycheck that shows your name and address; a non-photo ID card issued by any State or the federal government; a valid Social Security card; a valid Medicaid or Medicare card; an electronic benefits transfer (EBT card); and many other official documents that show your name and address.

What if I don't have any ID?

- If two poll workers are willing and able to identify you, you can cast a regular ballot without showing ID. Otherwise, you'll have to cast a provisional ballot. That

ballot probably won't be counted, however, unless you bring ID to your county's Board of Registrars before 5 p.m. on Friday, November 7. If you have time and have ID at home or work, it's usually better to get your ID and return to the polls to cast a regular ballot. Ala. Code § 17-10-2.

PROBLEMS AT THE POLLS

What if I'm not on the voter list?

- First, ask a poll worker to check the list again and to confirm that you're at the right polling place for your address.
- If you're at the right polling place but your name isn't on the voter list, ask for a provisional ballot. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot, even if your name is not on the voter list, as long as you're willing to swear that you believe you registered to vote. Ala. Code § 17-10-2.

What if I go to the wrong polling place?

- Go to the right polling place. You can ask a poll worker to help you find the polling place where you're registered. You can also call your county's Board of Registrars.

- If you can't figure out where you're registered, go to the polling place that you think is most likely to be the right one and ask for a provisional ballot. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot even if you're not sure that you're at the right polling place. Ala. Code § 17-10-2.

What if someone challenges my right to vote?

- Ask for a provisional ballot. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot even if you're challenged at the polls, but your provisional ballot will only be counted if election officials determine after the election that you were eligible to vote. Ala. Code § 17-10-2.

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's Probate Judge or Sheriff, call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card, or make a complaint online at <http://www.aclu.org>.

What if I make a mistake on my ballot or the voting machine malfunctions?

- Tell a poll worker before you cast your vote. If you spoil a paper ballot, you have the right to a replacement ballot as long as you catch your mistake before you cast your ballot. If your voting machine malfunctions, you can request a different machine.

How do I make a complaint?

- First, ask for an election supervisor at your polling place. He or she can handle most routine complaints that arise on Election Day. Candidates, political parties, and nonprofit groups may also have poll watchers at your polling place who might be able to assist you. If any of those people ask you who you voted for, or if they can't resolve your complaint, call the Secretary of State or your county's Sheriff or Probate Judge.
- You can also call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card or make a complaint online at <http://www.votingrights.org>.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING PROBLEMS

- Check your voter registration status at least 10 days before the election.
- Vote before Election Day, using absentee voting, if you're eligible to do so.
- If you plan to vote at the polls, locate your polling place at least 10 days before the election.
- Vote early in the day to avoid the last-minute rush.
- Bring an accepted form of identification.
- Read all instructions carefully.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Take your time. You have at least five minutes to complete your ballot—and longer if there's no line. Ala. Code § 17-9-13.

2008 ALABAMA VOTER EMPOWERMENT CARD



ALABAMA