

## WHO CAN VOTE

### Can I vote in Louisiana?

- You can vote in the November 2 election if you're registered to vote by Monday, October 4, 2010.
- You can register if you meet **all** of the following qualifications:
  - (1) you're a U.S. citizen;
  - (2) you're at least 17 years old and will be at least 18 years old on Election Day;
  - (3) you're a resident of the precinct in which you want to register;
  - (4) you're not in prison or on probation or parole for a felony conviction;
  - (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.
- If you were convicted of a felony in state or federal court, you can vote if you're not currently incarcerated or on probation or parole. Your right to vote is automatically restored when you complete your sentence.

### 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). You also have to identify a mailing address. You may want to use the address of a local advocacy organization, shelter, or outreach center, or anywhere else willing to accept mail on your behalf.

## REGISTRATION

### How do I register?

- You can register to vote:
  - (1) **in person**, by filling out a voter registration form at your parish Registrar of Voters office;
  - (2) **by mail**, by filling out a mail-in voter registration form and mailing it to your local Registrar of Voters office;
  - (3) **when you apply for services** at the Department of Motor Vehicles, Louisiana Department of Social Services offices and WIC offices, Food Stamp offices, Medicaid offices, offices serving persons with disabilities, such as the Deaf Action Centers and Independent Living Offices, and armed forces recruitment offices;
  - (4) **online** at <http://www.geauxvote.com>.

- You can get mail-in voter registration forms from your local elections office, from most libraries, colleges and high schools, or online at <http://www.geauxvote.com>.

### What's the registration deadline?

- The deadline for registering to vote in the November election is Monday, October 4.

### 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 other future elections.

### What if I've moved or changed my name?

- You must notify the Registrar of Voters office in your parish every time you move or change your name.
- If you moved outside your parish, you're no longer eligible to remain registered in that parish. If you were displaced by Hurricane Katrina or Rita, you can remain registered to vote in Louisiana as long as you do NOT register in another state. You should provide a mailing address to your registrar of voters in order to remain an active voter.
- If you don't re-register or make the necessary name changes before the deadline, or if you move after the deadline, you should call your parish Registrar of Voters office as soon as possible to find out where to vote.

### How do I know if I'm registered?

- You can check your registration status by calling your parish Registrar of Voters office, by calling the Secretary of State Elections Division at (800) 883-2805, or online at <http://voterportal.sos.louisiana.gov/>.

## VOTING EARLY

### Can I vote before Election Day?

- Yes. Between October 19 and 26, you can vote before Election Day by casting a ballot in person at an early voting center. Contact the Registrar of Voters in your parish for the hours and location of an early voting center near you.
- You may also be able to vote early by absentee ballot if you won't be able to vote at the polls on Election Day.
- **How do I get an absentee ballot?**
  - You have to request an absentee ballot no later than Friday, October 29. You can get a request form at your parish Registrar of Voters office or you can download one from <http://www.geauxvote.com>.
- **What's the deadline for returning my absentee ballot?**
  - To be counted, your absentee ballot must be received by your parish Registrar of Voters no later than Monday, November 1.

## VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

### When is Election Day?

- Tuesday, November 2

### When are the polls open?

- Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. You have the right to vote if you're in line or inside your polling place when the polls close. R.S. 18:542

### Can I get time off from work to vote?

- Maybe. 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 printed on the voter identification card that you should receive in the mail from your parish Registrar of Voters when you register.
- If you don't have your card, you can call your parish Registrar of Voters or look up your polling place online at <http://voterportal.sos.louisiana.gov/>.

### What if my polling place is not accessible?

- If you find this out before Election Day, call your parish Registrar of Voters office right away and ask for an accommodation or reassignment to an accessible polling place. You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine.
- Otherwise, bring one or more people to assist you. You have the right to have anyone you choose to 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. State law may require you to provide a physician's certificate regarding your disability. R.S. 18:564

### Can I get a ballot in my native language?

- If you vote in Allen Parish, you have the right to assistance in Coshatta language. Pollworkers are required to offer this assistance to you. If they don't, tell a poll worker that you want assistance in Coshatta. You're entitled to a translation of all ballots and other election materials. R.S. 18:106(D)
- If you live in any other parish, language assistance isn't required when you vote. You have the right to bring an interpreter with you to the polls or 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. State law may require you to provide a physician's certificate regarding your disability. R.S. 18:564

■ 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 not. Poll workers are required to ask for it, but most voters can cast a regular ballot without ID if they sign a form confirming their identity. You only need ID if:

- (1) you're a first-time voter in Louisiana;
- (2) you registered to vote by mail; and
- (3) you didn't provide any identification when you registered. R.S. 18:562(A)

### What are the accepted forms of ID?

■ Accepted forms of ID include a driver's license, a Louisiana Special ID, or some other generally recognized picture ID that contains your name and signature. R.S. 18:562(A)

■ If the first-time-voter ID requirements apply to you, the accepted forms of ID also include a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that includes your name and address.

### What if I don't have any ID?

■ If the first-time-voter ID requirements apply to you, ask for a provisional ballot. 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.

■ Otherwise, just ask for the Voter Identification Affidavit. You have the right to vote without identification if you sign this form. R.S. 18:562

## 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.

■ 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 isn't on the voter list. R.S. 18:566

### 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 parish Registrar of Voters office or look up your polling place online at <http://voterportal.sos.louisiana.gov/>.

■ 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 for your address 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.

### What if someone challenges my right to vote?

■ If anyone challenges your eligibility to vote even though you're on the list of registered voters, election supervisors at your polling place will rule on the challenge. You can't be denied the right to vote unless a majority of the supervisors rule against you. R.S. 18:565

### 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 parish Registrar of Voters office, call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card, or make a complaint online at <http://www.votingrights.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 your voting machine malfunctions, you may be able to request a different machine.

### How do I make a complaint?

■ You can call the principal office of the Registrar of Voters in your parish between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. on Election Day.

■ You can also make complaints to the Elections Compliance Unit of the Secretary of State's office at (800) 722-5305 or (225) 342-4479.

**Louisiana Secretary of State:**  
(225) 922-0900 or (800) 883-2805

**U.S. Department of Justice:**  
(800) 253-3931

**ACLU Voting Rights Project:**  
(877) 523-2792

**ACLU of Louisiana:**  
<http://www.laaclu.org>  
<http://www.votingrights.org>



# LOUISIANA

## VOTER EMPOWERMENT CARD

### 2010 ELECTIONS



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.

### QUICK TIPS FOR VOTING:

- Check your voter registration status at least 30 days before the election.
- Vote before Election Day, using early voting or absentee voting, if you're eligible to do so.
- If you plan to vote at the polls, locate your polling place at least 30 days before the election.
- Vote early in the day to avoid the last-minute rush.
- Bring some form of identification.
- Read all instructions carefully.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Take your time. You have up to three minutes to cast your ballot, or up to 20 minutes if you have a disability and need assistance. R.S. 18:563

