

WISCONSIN 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.

TIPS TO AVOID PROBLEMS

- Check your voter registration status at least three weeks before the election by calling your city, town, or village clerk or checking Wisconsin's voter public access website at <http://vpa.wi.gov/>.
- Vote before Election Day by casting an absentee ballot.
- If you plan to vote at the polls, locate your polling place at least three weeks before the election by calling your city, town, or village clerk's office or checking Wisconsin's voter public access website at http://vpa.wi.gov.
- Vote early in the day to avoid last-minute rush.
- Bring some form of identification or proof of residence, even if you believe you already provided identification when you registered.
- Read all instructions carefully.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Take your time in the voting booth. You have up to 5 minutes to complete your ballot. W.S.A. §6.80(3)

WHO CAN VOTE

Can I vote in Wisconsin?

- You can vote in the November 2, 2010 election if you're registered to vote.
- You can register if you meet all of the following qualifications:
 - (1) you're a U.S. citizen;
 - (2) you will have been a Wisconsin resident for at least ten days on Election Day;
 - (3) you'll be at least 18 years old on Election Day;
 - (4) you're not currently incarcerated or on probation, parole or extended supervision for a felony conviction; 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 either your school address or your home address.

What if I've been convicted of a crime?

- If you were convicted of any **felony**, you can vote if you're not currently incarcerated or on probation, parole or extended supervision.
- If you were convicted of any misdemeanor, you can vote but, if you're in jail on Election Day, you have to vote by absentee ballot.

What if I'm homeless?

- You don't need a home to register.
- You have to identify a place of residence, which can be a homeless shelter, park bench, or other place where you usually stay.

- You also have to provide "proof of residence," like a letter from a shelter or other service agency on official letterhead that



identifies you and describes the location of your residence. If you can't get a letter, you can bring someone with you to the poll who's eligible to vote in your city or town and can vouch for your identity. That person must be able to provide proof of his or her own residence.

REGISTRATION

How do I register?

- You can register to vote:
 - (1) in person, by filling out a voter registration application at your city, town, or village clerk's office;
 - (2) by mail, by filling out a mail-in voter application and mailing it to your clerk's office;
 - (3) through a voter registration drive, by filling out a voter registration application and giving it to a special registration deputy; or
 - (4) on Election Day, by filling out a voter registration application at your polling place.
- You usually must provide an ID number when you register to vote.
 - (1) If you have a Wisconsin driver's license, you have to provide the number of the license (you do not have to show the clerk the license, but you do have to give the number).
 - (2) If you do not have a Wisconsin driver's license, you have to give either the number of your Wisconsin state ID card (if you have one) or the last four digits of your social security number.
 - (3) If you do not have a Wisconsin driver's license, state ID, or social security number, you have to mark that on your registration application.
- You can get mail-in voter registration applications from your clerk's office and many fire houses, police stations, public libraries, schools, supermarkets, community centers, and banks. You can also find them online at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/registration-voting>.

What's the registration deadline?

- You can register at your polling place as late as Election Day itself.
- To register to vote by mail, your registration has to be postmarked by Wednesday, October 13, 2010.
- To register to vote in person at the clerk's office, the deadline is 5 p.m. or the close of business (whichever is later) on Monday, November 1, 2010.

What if I've moved or changed my name?

- You have to register to vote every time you change your name or you move to a new address, even if you've registered before.
- If you move before October 23, 2010, you should vote at the polling place for your new address. If you move between October 23 and Election Day, you should vote at the polling place for your old address. W.S.A. §6.10

How do I know if I'm registered?

- You can check your registration status by calling your city, town, or village clerk, or by accessing Wisconsin's Voter Public Access site at <http://vpa.wi.gov>.

PROOF OF RESIDENCE

How do I prove my residence (where I live) so I can register to vote?

- Acceptable forms of proof of residence include:
 - (1) a current and valid Wisconsin driver's license or Wisconsin state ID card;
 - (2) any other official identification card or license issued by a Wisconsin governmental body or unit;
 - (3) an employee ID card with your photo on it (but not a business card);
 - (4) a 2009 or 2010 real estate tax bill or receipt;
 - (5) a current residential lease (except that first-time voters who registered by mail can't use a lease as proof of residence);
 - (6) a university, college, or technical institute fee card or ID card with your photo on it;
 - (7) a utility bill (such as gas, electric, phone, cable TV) from the last 90 days;
 - (8) a bank statement;
 - (9) a paycheck or government check; or
 - (10) some other government document. W.S.A. §§6.29, 6.34
 - Your proof of residence must contain your full name and your current and complete residential address (including a numbered street address, if you have one, and the name of your city, town, or village).
 - A student who lives in college, university or technical college housing may prove residence with a student ID card that does not have his or her address, as long as before the election the school gives the clerk a certified and current list of students who reside in that housing, and the student is on the list. W.S.A. §6.34(3)(a)7
- ### What if I don't have proof of residence?
- If you don't have a document that proves your residence, you can have someone who lives in your city, town, or village accompany you and vouch for your identity and residence. That person must provide proof of residence, sign the registration form and provide his or her address. W.S.A. §6.55(2)(b).
 - If you're a first-time voter who registered by mail but you don't have proof of residence and can't find someone to vouch for you, you can cast a provisional ballot. Your provisional ballot will be counted only if you bring proof of residence to your city, town, or village clerk's office by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 3. If you have time and have proof of residence at home or work, it's usually better to get it and return to the poll to cast a regular ballot. W.S.A. §6.97

Do I have to show proof of residence when I vote?

- Probably not. Most people who register before Election Day can vote without showing proof of residence.
- You have to provide proof of residence when you vote ONLY if:
 - (1) you're registering to vote at the poll on Election Day;
 - (2) you're registering and voting by absentee ballot at your clerk's office after 5 p.m. on October 13; or
 - (3) you're a first-time voter in Wisconsin who registered to vote by mail and didn't provide proof of residence when you registered. W.S.A. §§6.29, 6.34, 6.55

ABSENTEE VOTING

Can I vote before Election Day?

- Yes. Any registered voter can vote before Election Day by casting an absentee ballot by mail or in person at the clerk's office or a location designated by the clerk.

How do I vote by absentee ballot ?

- To vote absentee by mail, you can get an application from your city, town, or village clerk or online at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/absentee>.
- If you mail in an absentee ballot application, the clerk must receive it by 5 p.m. on Thursday, October 28.
- You can vote absentee in person at your clerk's office from Monday, October 3 until 5 p.m. on Monday, November 1.

What's the deadline for returning my absentee ballot?

- To be counted, the clerk's office must receive your absentee ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day (you can't just put it in the mail that day).

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

When is Election Day?

- Tuesday, November 2, 2010

When are the polls open?

- From 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. You have the right to vote if you're in the polling booth or in line when the polls close. W.S.A. §6.78

Can I get time off from work to vote?

- Maybe. If your work schedule would prevent you from voting in person while the polls are open, you have the right to take time off work (up to three hours without pay) in order to vote. You have to ask your employer at least one day before Election Day for time off, and your employer has the right to decide which hours you get to take off to vote. W.S.A. §6.76

Where do I vote on Election Day?

- 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 registration postcard that you may receive in the mail after you register.
- If you didn't get a postcard or can't find it, you can also call your city, town, or village clerk's office for polling place information, or look up your polling place online at <http://vpa.wi.gov>.

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

- Yes. You can take written or printed materials with you as long as they're for your own use in casting your ballot. Examples include a sample ballot, a voter guide, or this card. But you're not allowed to show or distribute these materials to anyone else within 100 feet of the entrance of your polling place, and you may not be allowed to wear campaign clothing, stickers, or buttons in your polling place unless you cover them up. W.S.A. §12.035 .

What if I have a disability and my polling place is not accessible?

- If you find out before Election Day, notify your city, town, or village clerk right away and ask for an accommodation or reassignment. You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine. W.S.A. §5.25(4)(a). Or, if you prefer, you can vote by absentee ballot.
- On Election Day, you can send someone into the polling place to request curbside voting on your behalf. Poll workers will bring a ballot to the entrance and allow any person (except your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union) to assist you in casting the ballot without having to enter the polling place. W.S.A. §6.82(1)
- You can also bring one or more people to assist you inside the polling place. 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. W.S.A. §6.82(2)

Can I get a ballot in my native language?

- Most election materials in Wisconsin are available only in English, but you have the right to bring an interpreter with you to the polls or to get language assistance 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 voting because of a disability or because you have difficulty in reading, writing or understanding English, tell a poll worker when you get to your polling place. You have the right to vote on an accessible voting machine. You also 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. W.S.A. §6.82(2).

■ If you need instructions on how to use the voting equipment, ask a poll worker for help before you enter the voting booth. Poll workers are required to help you, but Wisconsin law prohibits them from giving instructions after you've entered the voting booth unless you're having difficulty reading or writing or have a disability that prevents you from being able to mark the ballot or work the machine. W.S.A. §5.79, 6.82(2)

PROBLEMS AT THE POLLS

What if I'm not on the voter list?

■ If a poll worker tells you that you are not on the list of registered voters, first ask him or her to check the list again and to confirm that you're at the right polling place for your address. If you are at the right place, ask for a voter registration application. You have the right to register at the polls on Election Day and to vote immediately after you register. W.S.A. §6.55

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 for your address. You can also call your city, town, or village clerk's office or look up your polling place online at <http://vpa.wi.gov>.

What if I make a mistake 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 up to two replacement ballots as long as you catch your mistake before you cast your ballot. If you make a mistake on a voting machine, you have the opportunity to correct the error before casting your ballot. The machine will prompt you to review your ballot before selecting the cast vote function. W.S.A. §§5.91(15-18), 6.80(2)(c-d)

What if someone challenges my right to vote?

■ Stay calm. If you are eligible and in the right location, you should be allowed to vote after the challenge process.

■ An election inspector will administer an oath to the person who challenged you and question them about why they believe you're not qualified to vote. If the election inspector believes there is a legal basis for the challenge, an inspector will then administer an oath to you and ask questions about your qualifications to vote. If the challenger doesn't withdraw the challenge after the questioning and your answers indicate that you're eligible to vote, the inspector will have you swear to your eligibility to vote. You will then be issued a ballot and allowed to vote. The ballot will be marked with an identifying number but will be counted the same as any other ballot.

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 municipal clerk's office, call the Elections Division at the Government Accountability Board or call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card, or make a complaint online at <http://gab.wi.gov/complaints> or <http://www.votingrights.org>.

How do I make a complaint?

■ First, ask for the chief election inspector 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 whom you voted for, or if they can't resolve your complaint, call your city, town, or village clerk's office or the Elections Division of the Government Accountability Board, or make a complaint online at <http://gab.wi.gov/complaints>.

■ 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>.

MORE INFORMATION

Government Accountability Board, Elections Division

(608) 266-8005

or on the web at <http://gab.wi.gov>

U.S. Department of Justice

(800) 253-3931

ACLU of Wisconsin

(414) 272-4032

or on the web at <http://www.aclu-wi.org>

ACLU Voting Rights Project

(877) 523-2792

or on the web at <http://www.votingrights.org>

or e-mail us at vrp@aclu.org

ACLU of Wisconsin

(414) 272-4032

or on the web at <http://www.aclu-wi.org>

Wisconsin Election Protection Hotline

(866) OUR-VOTE or (866) 687-8683

