



EMPOWERED AT THE POLLS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Our democracy is strongest when our elections are safe, free and fair and when voting is accessible to more voters, not fewer. Tennessee has protections in place to ensure that all voters are able to cast their ballots safely, privately, and independently during early voting and on Election Day. Make sure you know your rights as a voter.

Polls are closing soon and I'm still waiting in line – can I still vote?

Yes. If you're in line, stay in line. As long as you are in line before the close of polls on Election Day or during early voting, you are allowed to cast your ballot and your vote will be counted, even if the polls have officially closed by the time you make it to the voting booth.

Can I get a ballot in my native language?

Election materials in Tennessee are generally available only in English, 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 an agent of your labor union.

Who is allowed to be in my polling place?

Tennessee state law makes it clear that the only people allowed in a poll during early voting and on Election Day are:

- **Voters, those assisting them, and their minor children;**
- **Election officials;**
- **The press;**
- **No more than two official poll watchers per polling location; and**
- **Others bearing written authorization from the county election commission.**

Law enforcement agents are specifically prohibited from coming within ten feet of the poll entrance, unless they are there at the request of the election commission, there to make an arrest, or there to vote themselves.

Can someone challenge my right to vote?

We do not have evidence that this happens often. A person can only challenge your ballot on certain grounds. You should be able to resolve the issue if you are registered, voting under your own name, voting in the right place, voting only once in the election, and have not become ineligible to vote since registering.

If someone challenges your right to vote, election judges will ask you some questions and rule on the challenge. Unless the judges rule against you unanimously, you have the right to cast a regular ballot. *Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 2-7-102, 2-7-123, 2-7-125*

Will my ballot be disqualified if a poll worker writes on it?

There is no reason for a poll worker to write anything on your ballot, but if they did, writing on the ballot would not disqualify it or prevent it from being counted. However, if a poll worker writes on your ballot and you want to request a new one, you can mark an "X" on it or tear it in half and request a new one. Voters are allowed to request up to three replacement ballots if they spoil their ballots before casting their votes.

For more information, please visit this page on our website at: www.aclu-tn.org/vote/

What if I'm not on the voter list or I go to the wrong polling place?

First, ask a poll worker to check the list again and to confirm whether or not you're at the right polling place. If you're at the right polling place but your name isn't on the voter list, demand 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. *Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112.*

If you're not at the right 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 election commission office or look up your polling place online at <https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/>.

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.

What clothing/political swag is and isn't allowed in the polls?

Clothing or promotional materials (like t-shirts or buttons) that promote a candidate or issue that is on the ballot are not permitted on anyone inside the polling place or within 100 feet of the polling place entrance. However, voters are allowed to wear clothing that includes speech (like a t-shirt that bears the phrase "Black Lives Matter" or "Let People Vote") as long as the speech is not related to a candidate, political party, or ballot measure that is on the ballot for that election.

Is voter intimidation a crime?

Yes. Voter intimidation violates both federal and state laws. It is a federal crime to "intimidate, threaten, [or] coerce ... any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of [that] other person to vote or to vote as he may choose." In Tennessee, private actors who seek to disrupt the electoral process violate the law and are subject to arrest and charges. Federal officials and agents remain bound by the Constitution and cannot be deployed to intimidate voters.

Prohibited behaviors include things like aggressive questioning voters about their citizenship, criminal records, qualifications to vote, or political choices; posing as an elections official; blocking polls; spreading misinformation about voter requirements; displaying false or misleading signs about voter fraud and criminal penalties; threatening, calling names or yelling at people; and disrupting or harassing voters.

In addition, Tennessee does not allow private, unauthorized militias to engage in activities reserved for the state militia, including enforcing voting laws. If you see a person you suspect is acting as a member of a private militia at or near a polling location, tell a poll worker immediately.

What do I do if I experience voter intimidation?

It is the responsibility of the TN Secretary of State, the state elections coordinator, and your local election commission to ensure that the laws that protect voting are enforced and that the right of all eligible Tennesseans to vote free from intimidation is honored.

If you believe you are the victim of voter intimidation, tell a poll worker right away. If the poll worker is the problem, tell a poll watcher, call your county election commission, and report the incident to the **Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683).**

Assistance is also available in **Spanish at 888-VE-Y-VOTA (888-839-8682)**, in **Arabic at 844-YALLA-US (844-915-5187)**, and in **Asian languages at 888-API-VOTE (1-888-174-8683)**. A video call number for **American Sign Language is available at 301-818-VOTE (301-818-8683).**

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