

## POLLING PLACE MONITORING

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PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION:  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2018**

GENERAL ELECTION:  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2018**

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a poll watcher. Your work is critical to helping us protect the right to vote for all Rhode Islanders, and we're grateful that you've given your time to this effort.

**Please carefully review the instructions below.**

### General Information:

- Polling places generally open at 7 AM. All close at 8 PM, although people waiting in line at that time must be given the opportunity to vote.
- As an observer, you can silently monitor and document activities from outside of the designated (railed) voting area. You will be watching for any problems or incidents that arise as people vote, especially issues related to photo ID requirements.
- Feel free to introduce yourselves to the poll workers to indicate you are there as an independent poll monitor. However, this is not required.
- Your primary role is to monitor activities, not to directly intervene in disputes. If a voter is turned away from voting, if there is a dispute about identification, if there are questions about issuing provisional ballots, or if there are any other problems, you should document what happened as well as the estimated age, gender, and race of the voter. Afterwards, you can talk with the voter outside the polling place if you feel comfortable doing so. Ask if they are willing to give you information about what happened and provide contact information for possible follow-up. Depending on the situation, we may try to help them immediately. If you are witnessing questionable conduct or a pattern of serious problems, call the ACLU at (401) 831-7171.

### What to look for when voters sign in:

- Are *all* voters being asked to provide ID?
- If a voter is NOT asked to provide ID, make a note of their race and general age.
- If a voter does not have proper ID, what are they told? Are they given a provisional ballot? Are they being denied the right to vote? Are they offered information about how to obtain proper ID for future elections?
- Make note of any disputes over the validity or type of ID that a voter presents, or of any misinformation you believe that poll workers are providing voters based on the information provided in these instructions.
- After you have finished poll monitoring, please fill out the "Poll Monitor Observation Form" at the end of this pamphlet and email your notes to [policy@riaclu.org](mailto:policy@riaclu.org).

## Excerpts from the State Board of Elections' regulations governing polling place conduct. Please read:

- The public may be present in the polling place to observe the conduct of an election. However, only voters and election officials are allowed in the railed or enclosed voting area.
- A table and chair for political representatives known as “checkers” and “watchers” must be provided outside the enclosed space where ballots are cast. In the absence of party representatives, the public is allowed to use the table and chairs.
- A voter in the act of voting has the right to display or wear political paraphernalia (e.g., t-shirts and buttons) within the polling place. Once a voter displaying or wearing any political paraphernalia has completed the voting process, however, he or she must immediately exit the polling location.
- Electronic recording of the election process is allowed inside the polling place as long as it is done outside of the railed or enclosed voting area. Electronic recording devices may not hinder the election process or compromise a voter's right to cast a secret ballot by recording the specific votes(s) cast by any person. However, voters may take photos of their own ballots.
- Only election officials conducting official election business are allowed to verbally communicate on a cell phone or other communication device within the polling place.
- A warden/moderator may cause to be removed or arrested any person or official who commits a violation of the election law in their presence or disturbs the conduct of the voting, including any conduct that is designed to discourage a person from exercising his/her right to vote; provided, that they shall not cause any removal or arrest without the approval of the election inspector, unless the clerk agrees with the warden/moderator that the person or official should be arrested or removed (R.I.G.L. 17-19-23(9)). If a person believes that an election official is violating state election laws, he/she may contact their local canvassing authority or the State Board of Elections to file a complaint.
- Full text of the regulations is available online at:  
<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/BOE/8372.pdf>

## Things to be aware of:

- Voter ID Law – Rhode Island law requires voters to show designated forms of photo ID in order to vote by regular ballot at the polls. **However, no voter should be turned away for lack of ID.** If a person claiming to be a registered and eligible voter does not present a valid photo ID to the polling place official, the person must be provided a provisional ballot. The voter should not have to ask for one. These provisional ballots will end up being counted if the voter's signature on the ballot application matches that contained in the local Board of Canvassers' records. Acceptable forms of photo ID include:
  - RI driver's license or permit
  - RI voter ID card
  - State or federal ID card
  - U.S. passport
  - U.S. military ID card
  - ID issued by any federally recognized tribal government
  - Student ID card from an educational institution located within the U.S.
  - Government-issued medical card
  - NOTE: An acceptable form of ID is valid even if the address on the ID differs from the person's current address. The purpose of voter ID is to confirm the voter's identity, not address.
- Electronic Poll Books – Some of the polls will have e-polling books, which are iPads that contain the entire voter registration list. People at these polls can be checked in by scanning their driver's license. If they don't have a driver's license, they can still use any of the other acceptable forms of photo identification. Additionally, if a voter shows up at the wrong polling place, locations with e-polling books can text them the directions to their new polling location. Make sure this is happening.
- Ballot Selfies – It is legal to take pictures of one's own ballot, but not ballots of other individuals.
- Voter Registration Disputes - People showing up at the wrong polling place should be apprised of their proper polling location. If a person insists on voting there, they should be given a provisional ballot, not turned away. A person whose name cannot be found on the voter registration list should also be offered a provisional ballot.
- Voter Intimidation - Be on the lookout for voter intimidation, such as aggressively questioning a voter about their citizenship or other qualifications, or providing false information about voting requirements.

If problems arise or you have questions, call the ACLU of RI office at (401) 831-7171.



ACLU of Rhode Island  
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400  
Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 831-7171  
[www.riaclu.org](http://www.riaclu.org)

# POLL MONITOR OBSERVATION FORM

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Poll Monitor Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Polling Place \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Monitor perceptions

Age of Voter \_\_\_\_\_  
Race of Voter \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender of Voter \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the option or options best describing what happened (check any/all that apply):

- Did Not Have ID
- ID Not Accepted
- Inaccurate Polling Place Information
  - From Board of Canvassers/Elections
  - From Secretary of State
  - From political party or organization
  - From other \_\_\_\_\_
- Inaccurate Voter Registration Information
- Denied Assistance/Interpretation
- Harassed/Intimidated
  - By poll worker
  - By election monitor/watcher
  - By campaign staff
  - By other \_\_\_\_\_
- Unable to Access Polling Place
- Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Were they allowed to vote, either by regular, absentee or provisional ballot?

- Yes
- No

Did they complain to poll officials? If yes, what was the response of poll workers?

- Yes
  - Poll worker response: \_\_\_\_\_
- No

Summarize what happened:

After you have finished poll monitoring, please fill out the above form and

- 1) Email to [policy@riaclu.org](mailto:policy@riaclu.org), OR
- 2) Return by mail or fax to:

ACLU of RI  
128 Dorrance Street, Ste. 400  
Providence, RI 02903

FAX: (401) 831-7175