



## NEW YORK STATE – VOTER REGISTRATION COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **Q. Do I need any identification in order to vote on Election Day?**

**A.** Newly registered voters should bring an ID to the polls but, if you've voted in a previous election you shouldn't need one. Most voters who have voted in a previous election will not have to show any identification or proof of citizenship to vote. The voter ID card you may have received in the mail is intended to help you locate your polling site, but it is not required to vote. As a voter all you will have to do is sign your name in the poll site book.

However, voters registering for the first time in their present county/NYC, may be asked to show ID at the polls in order to vote on a machine, if they did not include their license (or non driver ID) number or the last four digits of their social security number on their registration form, or if their license/ID number/social security number couldn't be verified with the State's database. So new voters should make sure they bring ID with them to the polls. But, even if you are asked to produce ID and that ID is rejected by poll workers it is still your right to vote by paper/affidavit ballot.

If you are asked to show ID all that is required is a "current and valid photo identification" with your name and picture such as a drivers license or college ID. Government documents and utility bills or bank statements with your name and address are also acceptable forms of ID. Contact your local Board of Elections or NYPIRG at the number below for more info.

### **Q. If I register, am I registered forever?**

**A.** The details are a bit confusing. No matter where you live you should re-register if you move, change your name or change political parties. To make sure you get to vote on a machine on Election Day play it safe – fill out a new form. Current federal and state laws prohibit registered voters from being removed from the rolls for simply choosing not to vote. However, if you haven't voted in a long time or if you haven't received any recent mail from the Board of Elections you should probably fill out a new form.

### **Q. Where do I vote?**

**A.** You should receive a card from the Board of Elections telling you where your polling site is. If you don't, voters within New York City can call toll free (866) VOTE-NYC or 311, and other can call the local Board of Elections or NYPIRG office. You can also find out your polling site online in New York City at: <http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us/>

### **Q. I wasn't born in the USA. Can I still register to vote?**

**A.** Any citizen of the United States can register to vote. You are a citizen if you were born in USA (including Washington DC, Guam, Puerto Rico or the US Virgin Islands). You can also become a citizen through the naturalization process. Holders of green cards are not eligible to vote.

### **Q. Should I enroll in a political party?**

**A.** It's up to you. Most people register with a political party, but there is no requirement to do so. Registering as a party member grants you the right to vote in that party's primary election, such as the presidential primaries that will take place in February 2008. Regardless of whether you choose a party or not, you're free to vote for whomever you wish in the general election. If you wish to change your party enrollment you must re-register before a general election deadline to be able to vote in the following primary election. That means that anyone who wishes to change party and then vote in the February 2008 presidential primaries must re-register before October 12, 2007. If you do not wish to become a member of any party check off the bottom choice in the 'choose a party' box on the form or it won't be considered complete by the Board of Elections.

### **Q. If I vote in a party's primary election, do I have to vote for that party in the general election?**

**A.** No. In the general election, (no matter what party you chose to enroll in) you have the right to vote for the candidate of any party -- or even to write in your own candidate.

**Q. Do I have to vote on all of the officials and issues on the ballot?**

**A.** No. You can vote for as many or as few of the candidates & issues on the ballot as you like.

**Q. Will I be called for jury duty if I register to vote?**

**A.** Currently, the names of jurors are drawn from many lists, including licensed drivers, state taxpayers, registered voters, and library card holders. So, if you have (or plan on getting) a driver's license or a library card, or if you have been mailed a state income tax return, your chances of avoiding jury duty by not registering are very slim.

**Q. I'm homeless and don't have a permanent address, can I vote?**

**A.** Yes. It is your right to vote. All you need is a place where you live – which could be a shelter, train or bus station, park, doorway, etc. — and a place where you receive mail – which could be a PO Box, a shelter or a friend's home. Write the location where you live in the "Address Where You Live" space on the registration form. Put your place you receive mail in the "Address Where You Get Your Mail" space. You'll get a card in the mail from the Board of Elections sent to your mailing address. It will assign a space near your residence address to vote. If you are a new voter, you may be subject to an ID check - see the first question on this sheet.

**Q. I was convicted of a felony, can I vote?**

**A.** If your crime was/would be a felony in New York State, you can register once finished with your sentence or parole. If you are awaiting sentencing at a facility, on felony probation, or were convicted of a misdemeanor, you can also register and vote.

**Q. How will I know I am registered to vote?**

**A.** As a registered voter you should receive a postcard from the Board of Elections with information about your election and assembly district plus the address of where you go to vote (your polling place). If you're told your name is not on the list at your polling place on Election Day you are still entitled to vote on a paper ballot. (First, ask the poll workers to check that you're at the right table and site.) If you're at the right place and your name isn't on the list, you can also go before a judge on Election Day to secure your right to vote on a machine. If you have any questions or are having problems casting your vote, a flyer about your rights as a voter is required to be at all polling places.

**Q. How do I get an absentee ballot?**

**A.** Ask the people registering you if they have an absentee ballot application. If they don't, look on the top left-hand side of the voter registration form for a small box where you can request to have an application for an absentee ballot sent to you. You should fill out and return the application to the Board of Elections as soon as possible. The absentee ballots are sent just prior to the election. If a person is permanently disabled and unable to go to the polls they may apply for permanent absentee ballot status on the application form.

**Q. Whom should I contact for additional forms or information?**

**A.** In New York City, you can call the Board of Elections hotline toll free at 866-VOTE-NYC to find out if you're registered and to request additional forms. Or, contact your local Board of Elections or NYPIRG office. On the web try [www.vote.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us), or [www.elections.state.ny.us](http://www.elections.state.ny.us).

**Q. I won't be 18 until later this year. When can I register?**

**A.** You can fill out and submit a voter registration form if you will turn 18 by Dec. 31. You can only vote, however, if you are 18 on the day of the vote. Several weeks after you register, or after your 18th birthday, you should receive a card in the mail from the Board of Elections telling you where and when you can vote.

**Q. I moved recently, can I vote in the election?**

**A.** Federal and state laws say you shouldn't lose your right to vote because you've recently moved. If you moved within the same election district (E.D.) you should be able to vote on a machine at the same site you always have. (If you've moved within the same apartment building or dorm, you probably have the same E.D.) If you moved within the same county or within the five boroughs of NYC, you'll have to go to your new polling site to cast a special paper ballot. If you've moved from out of state, from county to county, or into or out of NYC you'll need to re-register before the deadline. Contact your local Board of Elections, or 866-VOTE-NYC in New York City, for more info.