



# Pennsylvania Department of State

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Shapiro Administration Urges Voters to Know Their Rights at the Polls**

*The Department's website provides helpful information about voters' rights on topics ranging from first-time voters bringing acceptable ID to how to identify and report potential intimidation*

**Harrisburg, PA – Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** today encouraged Pennsylvania voters to educate themselves about their rights before they [vote in person](#) on Nov. 5. Ensuring that our elections are conducted freely, fairly, and securely – and that every eligible voter can make their voice heard – are top priorities of the Shapiro Administration.

“It’s important that voters know their rights and are informed about how to cast their ballot and make their voice heard,” **Schmidt** said. “They can find a wealth of useful information at the Department of State’s voter information website, [vote.pa.gov](http://vote.pa.gov).”

Here are some important tips regarding [voter rights](#) in Pennsylvania:

- First-time voters, or those voting for the first time in a new precinct, must show ID. [Acceptable ID](#) includes both photo and non-photo ID. First-time voters who do not bring ID to the polls can return with identification or must be offered a [provisional ballot](#).
- Voters who applied for a mail ballot and then decide they want to [vote at the polls](#) must bring their mail ballot – including the outer return envelope – with them to be voided.
- If a voter applied for a mail ballot but – for any reason – no longer has the mail ballot and outer envelope, they may vote by [provisional ballot](#) at their polling place on Election Day. Their [county elections office](#) will then make a determination on whether their provisional ballot can be counted.
- If a voter's name is not in the poll book, poll workers can call the county elections office to see if the voter is registered in another precinct in the county.

Registered voters who are in the wrong polling place should go to the correct [polling place](#) to vote, but a voter who believes they are registered in that precinct and should be listed in the poll book is entitled to cast a [provisional ballot](#) there.

- Voters who moved within Pennsylvania but did not update their address in time before the election may vote one more time in their previous precinct, but they must update their address at the polling place.

- If a voter is challenged based on their identity or residency, the voter may vote normally by signing a challenge affidavit and producing a witness who is also a registered voter in the precinct to vouch for them. If the voter cannot or does not want to produce a witness, the voter may cast a [provisional ballot](#). Identity and residency are the only bases for challenging a voter at a polling place.

- Voters have the right to [assistance at the polling place](#), including foreign language or literacy assistance. A voter may select any person to assist as long as the person is not their employer, their union representative, or the precinct's Judge of Elections. Voters do not need to be designated as "assistance permitted" in the poll book to receive help.

- Voters have the right to refuse assistance.

- Voters have the right to vote without being subjected to [intimidation, harassment, or discriminatory conduct](#). A voter who experiences intimidation should report it to the Judge of Elections, their [county elections office](#), their county district attorney's office, or the Department of State's year-round voter hotline at 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

**Schmidt** also reminded Pennsylvanians who are voting by mail-in or absentee ballot to return their completed ballot immediately, either by delivering it in person to their [county elections office](#) or, if their county provides one, a [ballot drop-box location](#).

The deadline for county elections offices to receive completed mail ballots is 8 p.m. Nov. 5. Completed mail ballots received after that time do not count, even if they are postmarked by then. **Schmidt** reminded voters who are returning completed mail ballots to sign and write the current date on the outer envelope to ensure their vote is counted.

The Department of State voter information website, [vote.pa.gov](http://vote.pa.gov), can help voters with election-related questions and information, including:

- [Confirming voter registration](#)
- [Locating their polling place](#)
- [Voting at the polls](#)

For more information on voting in Pennsylvania, follow #ReadyToVotePA on social media.

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# Election Day Nov. 5, 2024



Election day is Nov. 5. Find your polling place or return your mail ballot by 8 p.m. Nov. 5.  
Visit [vote.pa.gov](https://vote.pa.gov) for trusted election information.