

Poll Watcher Guidelines

For use on Election Day by a Party Committee, Candidate, or Independent Body
Section 8-500, NYS Election Law

Watchers at Election Sites

The appointment of watchers for any election shall be by a watcher's certificate signed by the duly authorized candidate for office or chairperson or secretary of the county, city, town, or village committee of a political party or independent body. Such certificate must be filed with an inspector at the election district appearing on the certificate. You must have a certificate for each district at the poll site you plan on observing. The inspector shall retain such certificate and return it with their supplies on election night. It is sufficient for a watcher to file one certificate which shall remain in effect throughout Election Day at the election district appearing on the certificate. (5-206.1) *Each watcher must be a qualified voter in the jurisdiction in which he/she is to serve.*

Poll Watcher Limitations

The Poll Watcher may not:

Be a candidate for public office to be voted for by the voters of the election district in the same election district in which the watcher is to serve

Electioneer in any manner

Assist in the conduct of the election

Question any voter in any manner

Remove or handle any election materials on the board of inspectors table

Impede the election process in any way

Poll Watcher Rights

The Poll Watcher may:

Be present at the polling place at least 15 minutes before the unlocking and examination of any voting machine or ballot box at the opening of polls, until after the signing of the inspector's canvass at the close of polls. (8-500.2)

Before any voter casts his/her vote, a watcher may challenge voters through the board of inspectors whom they believe are not qualified to vote. (8-502)

Notify the Board of Inspectors that they have observed an individual soliciting votes or electioneering (distributing posters or banners, wearing or carrying buttons) within the polling place or within the 100-foot distance markers immediately outside of the polling place.

Ask the board of inspectors to repeat a voter's name as he/she approaches the table.

Sit at a close proximity to the inspector's table but not at the inspector table.

For more information or questions please contact:

Dem Commissioner Ashley Torres (845)334-5430 or Deputy Commissioner Jen Fuentes (845)334-5423
Rep Commissioner John Quigley (845)334-8287 or Deputy Commissioner Keri Williams (845)334-5427