



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
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www.hawaii.gov/elections

FACTSHEET

POLL WATCHERS

WHAT IS A POLL WATCHER?

A representative from the political party authorized by the Chief Election Officer to observe the election process at the polls.

OVERVIEW

To provide an efficient and secure election, the Office of Elections encourages individuals to become a poll watcher and observe the election process at the precinct level.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Contact the political party of your choice to volunteer. Each qualified political party is entitled to appoint one (1) poll watcher who may be present at any time in each precinct and absentee polling place in which the candidates of that political party are on the ballot.

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes §11-77, each party shall submit its list of watchers to the Chief Election Officer or to the clerk in county elections not later than 4:30 p.m., on the tenth day prior to any election.

2008 Primary Election Deadline: Wednesday, September 10, 2008
2008 General Election Deadline: Friday, October 24, 2008

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS?

Under Hawaii Revised Statutes §11-77, party members may serve as poll watchers, provided they meet all of the following requirements:

- Be a registered voter in the State of Hawaii.
- Be able to read and write English.
- No person shall serve as a watcher who could not qualify to serve as a precinct official.

Under HRS §11-72 (b) (3), no parent, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary as defined in Chapter 572C, child, or sibling of a candidate shall be eligible to serve as a precinct official in any precinct in which votes may be cast for the candidate; nor shall any candidate for any elective office be eligible to serve as a precinct official in the same election in which the person is a candidate. No candidate who failed to be nominated in the primary or special primary election shall be eligible to serve as a precinct official in the general election next following.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Election Day:

- Observe the conduct of the election in your assigned precinct.
- Call to the attention of the Precinct Chairperson any violation of election laws.
- Appeal to the Chief Election Officer/County Clerk if the Precinct Chairperson fails to correct a violation.
- Volunteer your time and efforts, without compensation from the State or county.

Absentee Voting Site:

- Observe the operations of your assigned absentee polling place.
- Report any violations of election laws at your assigned absentee polling place to the Chief Election Officer/County Clerk.
- Volunteer your time and efforts, without compensation from the State or county.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- There may be only one poll watcher per party in a polling area at a time. A designated alternate poll watcher may relieve another poll watcher as long as there is no more than one watcher per party at a precinct.
- The precinct chairperson will request some form of personal identification to enter the polling place.
- The poll watcher will be given identification from the chief election officer, which states the watcher's name and the party represented.
- The poll watcher may turn the pages of the Poll Book upon receiving permission from the precinct chairperson. The precinct chairperson shall grant permission at times when there are reasonable breaks in voting activity.
- **Unless authorized under [HRS §11-97], it shall be unlawful for any person to use, print, publish, or distribute any voter registration information acquired directly or indirectly from the voter registration affidavits or any list prepared therefrom. [HRS §11-14 (e)]**
- **At no time are poll watchers allowed to disrupt the operations of the polling place.**

Any person who is disorderly or creates a disturbance during any meeting of precinct officials or the Board of Registration during any election shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. [HRS §19-6]

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes §710-1010, obstruction of government operations is a misdemeanor.

- The poll watcher may not use the polling place telephone.
- The poll watcher may not use their personal telephone within 200 feet of the polling place.

This Factsheet is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as an authority on the Hawaii election law and deadlines. Requirements and/or deadlines may change pending changes in legislation. Consult the Hawaii Revised Statutes and other sources for more detailed and accurate requirements.

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