



# Texas Democratic Party Workshop: Voter Protection



# Voter Rights

- If you are inside or are in line at your polling place any time between 7am and 7pm on Election Day, you have the right to vote
- If you are physically disabled or over 65, you can vote curbside
- If you have a physical disability, or can't read or write, you can request assistance
- You have a right to an interpreter
- A voter may bring written materials (such as candidate literature or voter guides) into the voting booth
- No one can question a voter's residency when they come to vote, for any reason, not even the election judge.



# Voter Rights

- You have the right to vote without presenting your voter registration certificate.

If your name is on the voter registration roll you must do both of the following:

- Sign an affidavit stating that you do not have your voter registration certificate with you
- Present proof of identification



# Voter Rights

If your name is not on the voter registration roll, you must do both of the following:

- Sign an affidavit attesting to your eligibility to vote
- Present proof of identification

If your name does not appear on the voter registration roll when you arrive at the polls, you have the right to vote a provisional ballot. However, you must cast your ballot in the correct precinct for it to count.



# What can you do?

- Understand the election laws
- Work as election judge or clerk at a polling place during Early Voting or on Election Day\*
- Serve as a poll watcher at a location where problems are anticipated
- Be a “poll greeter” or a member of a Data Retrieval Team
- Give rides to the polls and make sure elderly/disabled voters received the assistance to which they are entitled

\*In most cases the precinct chair should not be the election judge or clerk but this may be necessary in some precincts



# Election Judges and Clerks

- Last person the voter interacts with before voting
- Need to be well-trained
- Online Poll worker training:  
<http://www.texaspollworkertraining.com/> -  
Does not replace mandatory in-person training



# Poll Watchers

- ✓ Presence prevents voter intimidation
  - ✓ Ensures every vote is counted!
- ✓ Can be appointed by candidate or political party
- ✓ Can serve during Early Voting or on Election Day
- ✓ Should have strong personality and not be easily intimidated



# Early Voting Ballot Board

- Appointed by the county election board via a list process
- Both parties get equal representation
- Determines which mail ballots and provisional ballots will be counted and which will not
- Elections have been won and lost in the early voting ballot board
- Some large counties also have a Signature Verification Committee
- Need strong personalities to serve on the EVBB and to be Ballot Board Poll Watchers



# Poll Greeters

- ✓ Have volunteer “poll greeters” holding signs or giving out literature at polls (at least 100 ft. from entrance)
- ✓ Greeters should talk to voters going into the polls to encourage them to vote Democrat AND coming out of the polls to find out if there are any problems.
- ✓ If a greeter needs to go inside the poll location (i.e. bathroom break, make a phone call, etc.) they must remove or dispose of any campaign items (buttons, t-shirts, literature, etc.)
- ✓ Greeters should have the phone number of the campaign/county party office and have a way to call in case of an emergency



# Data Retrieval Teams

- ✓ Data Retrieval Teams act as the eyes and ears for the county party and campaigns
- ✓ DRTs report back to the “central command” and can be quickly mobilized to deal with any problems
- ✓ Can also be used to take voters to the polls
- ✓ State law requires voter turnout totals be posted by election judge on polling place doors every two hours from 9:30 AM until 5:50 PM



## DRTs should:

- ✓ Carry extra materials, water and snacks for Election Day workers
- ✓ Have a cell phone or walkie-talkie
- ✓ Have a reliable car
- ✓ Check poll location signage and replace if necessary
- ✓ Check on poll greeters
- ✓ Ask poll greeters if they have seen/heard about any problems inside the polling location



# Voter Protection Staff

- VP Phone Staff
  - Answer basic voter protection questions
  - Record details of incidents and refer to appropriate entity
  - Triage calls to keep the legal team available
  - Need to be patient and detail-oriented



# Voter Protection Staff

- Legal Team
  - Volunteer lawyers or law students
  - Need to be well-versed in Texas election laws (TX Election Code available at <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/el.toc.htm>)
  - Last resort
  - TDP has sample pleadings and affidavits available in case legal action is necessary
  - Phone lines should be reserved specifically for the legal team



# Voter Protection

## Numbers to Know

Texas Democratic Party

(512) 478-9800

[www.txdemocrats.org](http://www.txdemocrats.org)

TX Secretary of State

(800) 252-VOTE (8683)

[www.votexas.org](http://www.votexas.org)

[www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)

