

SENIOR CITIZEN VOTER BILL OF RIGHTS

Senior citizens can face unique challenges with the electoral process as they deal with issues of aging. These can include sensory and mobility changes, access to transportation, or even a residence change to a new voting jurisdiction.

At the American Constitutional Rights Union, we believe voting jurisdictions and senior residence communities must take all steps necessary to provide easy voting access for our seniors while also protecting their ballots from every form of vote fraud.

ACRU is presenting the Senior Citizen Voting Bill of Rights to honor our seniors and their constitutional freedom to cast ballots in safety and security.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The federal Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 (VAEHA) is designed to assure the fundamental right to vote by directing polling locations to provide access for elderly and handicapped voters.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REGISTER TO VOTE

You also have the right to register to vote if you have changed your place of residence. Registration requirements vary by state and are found by calling your state, county or city election office. You may find your state's requirements or directly register to vote at <https://www.eac.gov/voters/register-and-vote-in-your-state>. To avoid fraud, we recommend you contact your previous voting jurisdiction to ensure you are removed from their voter rolls.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE AWARE OF VOTE FRAUD

After every recent election, there have been reports and prosecutions of people taking advantage of seniors to commit vote fraud by changing votes, inputting false choices and other crimes. Vote fraud is often committed face-to-face by people who will approach you to "assist" with filling out your ballot, or "delivering" your ballot to a polling location. You should only rely on trusted and known individuals to assist you with voting, and you have the right to refuse assistance from anyone you do not know or trust.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

If any person is assisting you at your private home or residential facility with filling in your mail-in, absentee or in-person ballot, your choice is yours alone and should not reflect the political choices of the person providing assistance. You have the right to confirm your vote or to ask assistance from another trusted friend or relative to make sure your choice is clearly marked.

Any person assisting you with transportation or accommodation at your home, residential facility or polling station has no right to ask you about your personal and private voting preferences or make a voting suggestion. Voting is confidential!

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ASSISTANCE FROM UNKNOWN PERSONS

Many political operatives are active in neighborhoods or facilities with a large senior population and have been known to manipulate or change votes. If you are approached by a stranger with offers of voting assistance, you have a right to refuse such help and request that the operative or unknown person leave your property or residential unit.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO AN ABSENTEE OR VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT

Although procedures for voting by mail or absentee ballots vary by state, every state must provide senior citizens with an absentee or mail in ballot when requested. You can find this information by calling your state or local election office or online at <https://www.usa.gov/election-office>.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO CONFIRMATION OF YOUR VOTE CHOICE

If you live in a senior residence, you may rely on staff or volunteers to assist you with filling out your absentee or mail in ballot. Although it would reveal your vote, you have the right to ask for a third party (friend, relative, other staff member) to confirm your voting choice as marked is accurate.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REQUEST VOTE ASSISTANCE TRAINING OF STAFF

You have a right to request your facility provide staff training on privacy, how to read a ballot to you, how to complete it, and how to ensure the integrity and privacy of your choice with any employee who might be called upon for such help. Staff must understand they cannot influence or comment on your choice.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT VOTING

The federal website www.U.S.A.gov provides full information about your polling station and requirements in its "Find My State or Local Election Office" tab. This information can be accessed directly here: <https://www.usa.gov/election-office>.

If you live in a residential facility, the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center can provide information and resources to you by calling 202.332.2275 or online at <https://ltombudsman.org/issues/voting>.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO APPLY FOR PHOTO ID FROM YOUR STATE

Seniors who have given up a driving license have a right to receive photo ID from their state. Presenting ID at polling stations helps to ensure no vote fraud will be committed in your name

and affirms your right to vote in states requiring ID. Most states provide free photo ID to seniors; you or a trusted friend or relative can check with your state's motor vehicle department to determine procedures, required documentation and fees.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATION AT POLLING STATIONS

Federal law provides you with the right to ask your polling location for accommodation and alternate means of voting on election day if you have sensory or mobility issues. These accommodations include visual aids, telecommunication devices for the hearing impaired or wheelchair ramps, without a medical certificate being required.

YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO MOVE TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE

If you are over 70 years of age or physically disabled, federal law gives you the right to move to the front of the line at your polling location by making a request at check in.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO VOTE EVEN IF YOUR POLLING LOCATION IS NOT ACCESSIBLE

If your home polling location cannot provide adequate accommodation for your physical disability, that location must direct you to the nearest polling station that can accommodate your sensory or mobility restrictions or provide another means of voting for you on Election Day.

YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO CURBSIDE VOTING

Many states and local election locations are provide drive-up voting to accommodate people who wish to vote in person but have mobility challenges. In this case, a designated curbside official will show you their credential then provide you with a paper or electronic ballot. Please call ahead or check the website of your state or local election officials to find out if this service is available to you.

YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO EARLY VOTING

With shorter lines and fewer crowds, early voting is often a good option for seniors. As of December 2019, thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia permit early voting. Check with your state or local election office to see if your voting jurisdiction allows early voting.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REDRESS IF NOT ACCOMMODATED ON ELECTION DAY

If you believe your rights to accommodation have been violated, you can report this to your local election official. Be sure to notify your election official with specific detail, including time and place, within 45 days of the election violation.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST CANDIDATE VISITS AT YOUR SENIOR RESIDENCE

Many candidates visit senior residences before elections. You have the right to request your residence manager invite candidates of all parties to visit your residence, hear your concerns, and explain their policy positions.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO HARNESS INTERNET TALENT OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Many procedures and requirements for absentee or mail ballots and in-person voting accommodations can be found online on state and local voting information websites, as well as local political party pages. As not all seniors have easy access to the Internet, you have the right to ask for help from family members and friends or trusted residential staff. Learning about voting rights is a great civics lesson for young citizens.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMAND YOUR VOTING RIGHTS

You've earned it! If you feel your rights are being violated on election day, speak up for those rights or ask for assistance from a relative or trusted friend to ensure you can trust the integrity of your voting choice and be provided full federally-protected sensory or physical accommodation.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO MARK VOTING DAY ON YOUR CALENDAR

Despite concerns about voting requirements related to COVID-19, the national election is still scheduled for November 3, 2020. If you prefer to vote absentee, we recommend you request your ballot no later than Labor Day, September 7, 2020. Don't miss your chance to have your voice heard in the political process.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE PROUD OF YOUR VOTE

America celebrates and treasures its senior voters who have left an indelible mark on our strength and patriotic culture. Because seniors receive benefits from programs like Social Security and Medicare, your voice and personal stake in the policy process is critical. We thank you for your leadership and life-long demonstration of exemplary citizenship.