



## PAPER BALLOTS

### **Before entering to vote**

You must be registered to vote at least 20 days before the election. In order to become familiar with the candidates and ballot questions, a specimen ballot is always posted in your polling location for your review before voting.

Also, the League of Women Voters provides nonpartisan information about candidates and ballot questions. Check local and statewide newspapers, call the League's Voter Information Phone at 800-882-1649 or visit [www.votinginfo.info](http://www.votinginfo.info) for election and voting information

You may bring notes, fliers, and voters guides into the voting booth to assist you but no visible campaign materials. Please be sure to remove these materials when you leave the voting booth.

### **Check-in**

A poll worker will ask for your address including street number and first and last names. Once you are located on the voting list, the poll worker will mark your name on the voting list.

If you are voting for the first-time and did not include your driver's license number or the last four digits of your social security number on your voter registration application or if those numbers could not be verified and you did not submit identification with your name and address with your voter registration application, you will be asked to present identification at the check-in. Sufficient identification includes a copy of current and valid photo identification, current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document showing your name and address, including the voter acknowledgment you received after you registered to vote.

If your name is on the inactive voters list, you will need to sign an affirmation of current and continuous residence and show identification.

Once your name is checked off and, if required, you have provided identification if required, the poll worker will hand you a ballot (there is an optional privacy or secrecy sleeve which you can get with the ballot) and direct you toward the voting booth.

### **Provisional Ballots**

If your name is not on the voting list, you will be able to vote using a provisional ballot. You will be asked to sign a roster and provide your name, address, signature, date of birth, and political party affiliation if applicable. You will be asked to show suitable identification showing your name and current address. You must fill out a provisional ballot affirmation declaring that you are a registered voter in the city or town and reside within the precinct. Once you have completed the affidavit, a poll

worker will put a number on your provisional ballot envelope and on the roster, mark the ballot with the word "provisional" and hand you the ballot with the provisional ballot envelope. You will cast your vote on this ballot, seal it in the envelope, and hand it back to a poll worker. You will receive an information sheet telling you how you can find out if your ballot was counted.

A provisional ballot will be counted if your voter eligibility is verified. To find out if your provisional ballot was counted, call the Secretary of the Commonwealth Elections Division at 1-800-462-8683 or 1- 617-727-2828 or ask you local municipal election official. The information will be available seven days after a primary election and 20 days after a general election.

### **Preparing to vote**

The voting booth is provided to ensure your privacy.

At your request poll workers can show you where voting information is located and/or demonstrate the voting process with specimen ballots. They must not inform, persuade, or influence your voting selection.

### **Accessibility**

Should you require assistance, you can ask someone to accompany you into the booth. That could be any friend or relative, but not your employer or a union official or someone connected either. Also two poll workers of two different parties could help you.

By law, entrance to every polling place must be accessible for people with disabilities. Every polling place must have at least one voting booth that is workable for those in wheelchairs.

### **Voting**

#### **Candidates**

The candidates will be listed with ballot boxes to the right of their names. There will be occasions when you will be asked to select more than one candidate for an office. The number to vote for will be denoted above the candidates' names when applicable.

Indicate your selections by making an "x" in the box next to the candidate's name.

Write-in candidate: In order to support a candidate not listed on the ballot, you may write-in the candidate's name and address, if possible, in the space provided under the printed candidates' names for a given office. You may also indicate this selection by making an "x" in the box next to your written candidate's name.

#### **Ballot questions**

There may also be ballot questions on your ballot. In some cases it may be necessary to turn the ballot over to complete your voting. At the end of each ballot question, there will be the words "yes" and "no" with a box next to each. Make an "x" in the box next to either "yes" or "no."

#### **Spoiled ballots**

If you make an error in marking your ballot, ask a poll worker to exchange the spoiled ballot for another ballot. Do not try to erase or change the ballot. You can spoil up to two ballots; the third ballot will be counted as the final ballot.

### Unmarked positions

Any unmarked position on the ballot is recorded as a blank. If you vote for too many candidates for a particular office the vote for that office will not be counted. Some scanners will detect this and return your ballot to you for correction. You may then turn in your "spoiled" ballot and get a new ballot (provided you had not already spoiled two ballots.)

### Check-out

When you have finished voting, proceed to the checkout table. A poll worker will ask for your address including street number, and first and last names. Once you are located on the checkout voting list, the poll worker will mark your name as having voted, and then you turn in your vote at the ballot box.

Simply insert the end of the ballot into the ballot box. Should you have any problems inserting your ballot, contact a poll worker for help.

### Absentee Voting

If you cannot get to the polls on Election Day, you may vote absentee. Absentee ballots are available upon written request to your town clerk or city election commission approximately three weeks before Election Day. Written requests for absentee ballots MUST be made no later than noon (12:00 P.M.) the day before election.

All absentee ballots must be received no later than 8:00 P.M. Election Day, unless you are in armed forces stationed overseas. Faxes of absentee ballots will NOT be accepted. Ballot boxes will only accept original ballots

### Closing

Voting is your right and responsibility. It is how you make your voice heard and your views known. Should you have any questions or concerns, contact your town clerk or city election commission or the League of Women Voters at 617-523-2999 or 1-800-882-1649 or e-mail [lwwma@lwwma.org](mailto:lwwma@lwwma.org).