

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a nationwide, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with more than 500,000 members dedicated to defending the principles of liberty and equality embodied in the Constitution and our nation's civil rights laws. The ACLU doesn't endorse or oppose any candidate or party, but we believe that no civil right is more important in our democracy than the right to vote.

This card is designed to help you protect your own right to vote. Keep it handy, and take it with you to the polls on Election Day.



## WHO CAN VOTE

### Can I vote in Iowa?

- You can vote in the November 4 election if you're registered to vote by 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 25, 2008. You can also register to vote at the polls on Election Day.
- You can register if you meet **all** of the following qualifications:
  - (1) you're a U.S. citizen;
  - (2) you're an Iowa resident;
  - (3) you're at least 18 years old;
  - (4) you've given up your right to vote in any other place;
  - (5) you haven't been convicted of a felony (unless your rights have been restored);
  - (6) you haven't been declared by a court to be mentally incompetent to vote (unless the court certifies you are no longer incompetent).

### What if I'm a student?

- You can register to vote at whatever address you regard as your primary legal residence. This can be your school address or your home address.

### What if I've been convicted of a crime?

- If you're convicted of a felony or an aggravated misdemeanor in Iowa, you can vote if you're not currently incarcerated, on probation, parole, and/or supervised release and have had your rights restored.
  - If you completed your sentence **before July 4, 2005**, your rights have been restored.
  - If you completed your sentence **after July 4, 2005**, your rights are automatically restored approximately 3 months after you have completed your sentence. You should receive notice of your restoration in the mail. If it's been more than 3 months since your release and you haven't received a notice of restoration, you can find out if your rights have been restored by calling the Office of the Governor at (515) 281-5211.
  - Your rights can be restored even if you never receive a certificate, but you should check your eligibility with the Office of the Governor. **You don't**

**need to include a copy of your certificate with your voter registration application.**

- If you were convicted of a **non-aggravated misdemeanor**, you can vote, but you may have to vote by absentee ballot if you're still in jail.

- If you have a federal felony conviction, your right to vote is automatically restored after you have fully completed your sentence **and** your parole officer has sent the state confirmation of your discharge. Contact the Office of the Governor if you're unsure whether your voting rights have been restored.

- If you were convicted of a felony in another state you can register to vote if your voting rights were restored in the state where you were convicted. If your voting rights weren't restored in that state, you must apply for restoration of voting rights in Iowa. To receive an application for voting rights restoration, contact the Office of the Governor at (515) 281-5211.

### What if I'm homeless?

- You don't need a home to register, but you do have to identify a place of residence (which can be a street corner, a park, a shelter, or any other place where you usually stay or sleep).

## REGISTRATION

### How do I register?

- You can register to vote:

(1) **in person**, by filling out a voter registration form at your county auditor's office;

(2) **by mail**, by filling out a mail-in voter registration form and mailing it to your county auditor's office; or

(3) **when you apply for services** at the Motor Vehicle Driver's License Stations, state agencies that provide public assistance (such as Medicaid, WIC, and food stamps) or services to people with disabilities, and armed forces recruiting offices. You may also be able to register at many other state and federal offices and agencies.

(4) **on Election Day** at your polling place.

- You can get mail-in voter registration forms from your county auditor's office, from most libraries, colleges and high schools, by calling the Secretary of State's office at (515) 281-8849 or (888) SOS-VOTE, or online at [http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/voterreg/reg\\_to\\_vote.html](http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/voterreg/reg_to_vote.html).

### What's the registration deadline?

- To register by mail or at your county auditor's office, the deadline is Saturday, October 25, 2008. If you haven't registered by that deadline, you can register and vote at your polling place on Election Day.

### What if I miss the deadline?

- You can still vote by registering at the polls on Election Day. Bring proof of your identity and residence (such as a driver's license or other photo ID) or a registered voter in your precinct who can vouch for your identity and residence.

### What if I've moved or changed my name?

- You have to submit a written notice to your county auditor every time you change your name.
- You have to update your existing registration every time you move within the same county. You have to fill out a new registration form every time you move to a new county in Iowa or if you move from a different state to Iowa.
- If you moved and didn't re-register, go to your new precinct on Election Day and register at the polls.

### How do I know if I'm registered?

- You can check your registration status online at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/VoterReg/RegToVote/search.aspx>, or by calling your county auditor.

## VOTING EARLY

### Can I vote before Election Day?

- Yes. Any registered voter can vote before Election Day by casting an absentee ballot by mail or in person at your county auditor's office.

### How do I get an absentee ballot?

- You first have to submit an application for an absentee ballot. You can get an application at your county auditor's office, by calling (515)-281-0145 or (888) SOS-VOTE, or you can download one at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/AbsenteeBallot/index.html>.
- Your completed application must be received by your county auditor by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 31, if you submit it by mail, and no later than Monday, November 3, if you submit it in person.

### What's the deadline for returning my absentee ballot?

- To be counted, your absentee ballot must be hand-delivered to your county auditor's office no later than 9 p.m. on Election Day or postmarked no later than Monday, November 3, and received by your county auditor no later than noon on Monday, November 10.

## VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

### When is Election Day?

- Tuesday, November 4

### When are the polls open?

- Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. You have the right to vote if you're in line or on the premises of your polling place when the polls close. Iowa Code § 49.74

### Can I get time off from work to vote?

- Maybe. If your work schedule doesn't give you three consecutive hours off from work while the polls are open, you have the right to take time off

■ SECRETARY OF STATE'S ELECTION HOTLINE: (888) SOS-VOTE

■ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE: (800) 253-3931

■ ACLU VOTING RIGHTS PROJECT: (877) 523-2792  
[www.votingrights.org](http://www.votingrights.org)

■ ACLU OF IOWA: (515) 243-3576



125 BROAD STREET 18TH FLOOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400

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from work (up to three hours of which must be paid time off) in order to vote. You have to give your employer written notice before Election Day, and your employer has the right to specify which hours you get to take. Iowa Code § 49.109

#### Where do I vote?

■ On Election Day, you have to vote at the polling place to which you're assigned.

■ Your assigned polling place will be listed on the voter registration acknowledgment card that you should receive in the mail when you register.

■ If you don't have your card, call your county auditor's office to find out where to vote or look up your polling place online at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/VoterReg/PollingPlace/search.aspx>.

#### What if my polling place is not accessible?

■ If you find this out before Election Day, contact your county auditor or the Secretary of State right away and ask for an accommodation. You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine. Or, if you prefer, apply for an absentee ballot.

■ On Election Day, you can send someone into the polling place to request curbside voting on your behalf. Pollworkers will bring a ballot outside so you can vote. Iowa Code § 49.90

■ You also have the right to have anyone you choose assist you at the polls, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union.

#### Can I get a ballot in my native language?

■ Election materials in Iowa are generally available in English only, but you have the right to bring an interpreter to the polls or to get assistance in your language from anyone you choose, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union.

#### What if I need help in the voting booth?

■ If you need help because of a physical disability or because you can't read the ballot, tell a poll worker when you get to your polling place. You have the right to vote on an accessible voting machine. You also have the right to have anyone you choose assist you

in the voting booth, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union. Iowa Code § 49.90

■ If you need instructions on how to use the voting equipment, ask a poll worker for help. Poll workers are required to help you at any time you ask—even after you have entered the voting booth.

## VOTER ID

#### Do I have to show ID?

■ Maybe. You will need ID if:

(1) you're a first-time voter in your county, you registered to vote by mail on or after January 1, 2003, and you didn't provide any identification when you registered;

(2) your name doesn't appear on the election register as an active voter;

(3) you're registering to vote in person on Election Day;

(4) your right to vote is challenged;

(5) your registration is inactive;

(6) you moved to a different precinct **or**

(7) precinct officials don't know you and ask for identification.

#### What are the accepted forms of ID?

■ Accepted forms of ID include a current and valid photo ID card, and a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, pay check, or any other government document that shows your name and address. Iowa Code §§ 47A.7A, 48A.8

#### What if I don't have any ID?

■ You can cast a provisional ballot, but that ballot won't be counted unless you bring ID to your county auditor's office before noon on Thursday, November 6. If you have time and have ID at home or work, it's usually better to get your ID and return to the polls to cast a regular ballot. Iowa Code §§ 49.80, 49.81

## PROBLEMS AT THE POLLS

#### What if I'm not on the voter list?

■ First, ask a poll worker to check the list again and to confirm that you're at the right polling place for your address.

■ If you're at the right polling place but your name isn't on the voter list, you may either register and vote or ask for a provisional ballot. Iowa Code § 49.77

#### What if I go to the wrong polling place?

■ Go to the right polling place. You can ask a poll worker to help you find the polling place where you're registered. You can also call your county auditor's office or look up your polling place online at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/VoterReg/PollingPlace/search.aspx>.

■ If you can't figure out where you're registered, go the polling place that you think is most likely to be the right one for your address and either register and vote or ask for a provisional ballot. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot even if you're not sure that you're at the right polling place, but your provisional ballot probably won't be counted unless

election officials determine after the election that you voted in the right precinct.

#### What if someone challenges my right to vote?

■ A poll worker may ask you and the challenger some questions. If the challenge is withdrawn, you have the right to vote on a regular ballot. If the challenge is not withdrawn, you still have the right to cast a provisional ballot. Your provisional ballot will only be counted if election officials determine after the election that you were eligible to vote. Iowa Code §§ 48.80, 49.81

#### What if someone tries to intimidate or harass me?

■ Tell a poll worker right away. If the poll worker is the problem, tell a poll watcher, call your county auditor's office, call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card, or make a complaint online at <http://www.votingrights.org>.

#### What if I make a mistake on my ballot or the voting machine malfunctions?

■ Tell a poll worker before you cast your vote. If you spoil a paper ballot, you have the right to up to two replacement ballots as long as you catch your

mistake before you cast your ballot. If your voting machine malfunctions, you can request a different machine or a paper ballot. Iowa Code §§ 49.28, 49.100

#### How do I make a complaint?

■ First, ask for the person in charge of your polling place. He or she can handle most routine complaints that arise on Election Day. Candidates, political parties, and nonprofit groups may also have poll watchers at your polling place who might be able to assist you. If any of those people ask you who you voted for, or if they can't resolve your complaint, call your county auditor's office or the Secretary of State.

■ You can also call one of the election hotline numbers listed at the end of this card or make a complaint online at <http://www.votingrights.org>.

## TIPS FOR AVOIDING PROBLEMS

■ Check your voter registration status before the election.

■ Vote before Election Day, using absentee voting by mail or in person.

■ If you plan to vote at the polls, locate your polling place before the election.

■ Vote early in the day to avoid the last-minute rush.

■ Bring some form of identification even if it's not required.

■ Read all instructions carefully.

■ Ask for help if you need it.

■ Take your time. You're allowed up to 3 minutes in the booth. Iowa Code § 49.88

# 2008 IOWA VOTER EMPOWERMENT CARD



IOWA