

LWVIL POLLWATCHER POLICY

The League of Women Voters is one of the most respected volunteer non-partisan civic organizations whose mission reflects 100 years of history in making our democracy work.

Pollwatchers are election observers who aid in ensuring the free and fair conduct of elections.

PER THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois and its local Leagues are part of a state nonpartisan civic organization, therefore, they may apply for pollwatcher credentials from the Illinois State Board of Elections or their election authority (county clerk or board of election commissioners), respectively.

Each League pollwatcher must be a rostered member of LWVUS and their local League, in addition to meeting the state of Illinois criteria listed below. Please notify LWVIL Voter Service when your League applies for pollwatcher credentials. It is strongly encouraged that any League that applies for pollwatcher credentials requires their members to attend an outside training approved by LWVIL.

While observing, each League pollwatcher must represent the League and never represent a political party, entity or candidate. League poll watcher credentials may not be passed on to other organizations, other individuals, or individuals from other organizations.

The League does not have the authority to certify the accuracy of an election or competency of an election authority.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is in accordance with Illinois law.

Pollwatchers will work in accordance with current Illinois law.

PER ILLINOIS LAW:

- A pollwatcher is either a representative of a candidate, political party, state nonpartisan civic organization, or ballot proposition who is legally in the polling place to observe the conduct of the election.
- Each organization choosing to participate shall have registered the names and addresses of its principal officers with the proper election authority at least 40 days before the election.
- Each pollwatcher must be a registered voter in Illinois

- Each pollwatcher must have credentials issued by the election authority (county clerk or board of election commissioners) or by the Illinois State Board of Elections.
- All pollwatchers must present valid credentials to the election judges immediately upon entering the polling place. Only one pollwatcher per qualified state nonpartisan civic organization may be appointed in each precinct. No more than two pollwatchers appointed by state nonpartisan civic organizations shall be present in a precinct polling place at the same time, subject to the majority of the election judges' assessment of availability of space.
- Where ballots are counted in the office of the election authority, each political party, candidate, qualified organization of citizens, state nonpartisan civic organizations, and organized proponents or opponents of ballot propositions shall be entitled to have one pollwatcher for each panel of election judges.
- Pollwatchers shall be permitted to observe all proceedings and view all reasonably requested records relating to the conduct of the election, provided the secrecy of the ballot is not impinged.
- Pollwatchers may not handle or touch election supplies and materials.
- In any primary election held to nominate candidates for the offices of a municipality of less than 3,000,000 population that is situated in 2 or more counties, a pollwatcher who is a resident of a county in which any part of the municipality is situated shall be eligible to serve as a pollwatcher in any polling place located within such municipality.

PER THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

- The judges of elections are the sole authority in the polling place.
- Pollwatchers are official observers only. They may observe the conduct of the election before, during, and after the polls close. They may observe early voting, election day voting, counting of all ballot forms and final ballot certification.
- Where ballots are counted in the office of the election authority, each political party, candidate, qualified organization of citizens, state nonpartisan civic organizations, and organized proponents or opponents of ballot propositions shall be entitled to have one pollwatcher for each panel of election judges.
- If the pollwatcher observes an error or an apparent violation, they should politely inform the election judges. If the error or violation continues, the pollwatcher should record their observations, immediately contact the election authority and remain at the polling place until proper authorities arrive. Under no circumstances should a pollwatcher argue with the election judges or interfere with the election process.
- A pollwatcher may not:
 1. Remain in the polling place without surrendering a credential to the judges.
 2. Instruct voters inside the polling place or within 100 feet of the door to the room serving as the polling place.
 3. Electioneer inside the polling place.
 4. Touch or handle any election materials.
 5. Be disorderly or disruptive of the voting process.
 6. Continue protesting to the judges after the judges have ruled on a challenge.

Sources:

[Illinois Compiled Statutes 10 ILCS 5/7-34](#)

[Illinois State Board of Elections Pollwatcher Guidance](#)