

Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote

Warning Signs at the Polls

Voters today are more vulnerable to disenfranchisement because of the 2013 US Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which removed federal oversight over states and jurisdictions with a history of voter discrimination. Be aware of potential issues, and at a minimum, report any problems you see at the polls to a voter hotline, such as 866-OUR-VOTE, run by the Lawyers Committee.

Warning Signs of Voting Obstacles:

- **Excessively long wait.** Voters report waiting in line for hours before voting.
- **Equipment malfunctions.** Poll workers encounter machines that fail to tally, record, or retrieve voter data.
- **Delayed opening of the polls.** Polls delay the opening due to late ballots or late personnel.
- **Polling places that are inaccessible to persons with disabilities.** The building and its surrounding area may violate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements or lack accessible voting machines.
- **Voters leaving without voting.** Long lines, insufficient ballots, machine malfunctions, and etc. result in voters leaving the polls without having had the chance to vote.
- **Electioneering.** Attempts to persuade, influence, or intimidate a voter when casting their ballot in a polling place fall into this category. States have varying parameters of where electioneering and the distribution of campaign materials is permissible while polls are open. Learn more about what is permitted: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/electioneering.aspx>

What to Do If You Witness or Experience Obstacles to Voting:

- Alert a poll worker, nonpartisan citizen observer, poll watcher, or election official if you suspect someone is distributing campaign materials or trying to influence someone's vote inside your polling location.
- Request a provisional ballot. If you or another voter are at the wrong polling location and cannot travel to the correct polling location, you can cast a provisional ballot.
- Call the Election Protection hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683) or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682) for Spanish language services.
- Contact your county's election administrator / official (<https://www.usa.gov/election-office>).
- Contact your state's board of elections (Resource 5.2).
- Contact the Department of Justice (<https://www.justice.gov/crt/voting-section>) at (202) 307-2767 or toll free at (800) 253-3931.