



# Voter RIGHTS Facts PENNSYLVANIA

In 2012, Gov. Tom Corbett signed into law a strict photo ID bill that will make it more difficult for people to vote. While that law probably will be challenged in court, it is scheduled to be in effect for the Nov. 6 elections. Here's what you need to know if you're voting in Pennsylvania in 2012.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

### Registering to Vote

You can register to vote at a county voter registration office or other designated sites, such as state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) photo license centers.

In addition to PennDOT, you can register to vote at many other state government offices, including:

- State offices that provide public assistance and services to persons with disabilities;
- Armed Forces recruitment centers;
- County clerk of orphans' court offices, including each marriage license bureau;
- Area agencies on aging;
- Centers for independent living;
- County mental health and mental retardation offices;
- Student disability services offices of the state higher education system;
- Offices of special education; and
- Complementary paratransit offices.

You can get a voter registration from <http://www.votespa.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/13514> and either mail it or hand deliver it to your local county voter registration office.

You can find your county voter registration office at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (868-3772). The registration deadline is 30 days prior to each election.

## VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS

For the April 24, 2012, primary election, all voters are being asked to show an acceptable photo ID but are not required to do so. You will be able to vote, as in the past, without your ID, unless you are a first-time voter. Voters who appear at a polling place for the first time must show approved forms of ID. As of the Nov. 6 general election, ALL voters must show photo ID to vote. All photo IDs must contain an expiration date that is current, unless noted otherwise.

### Acceptable IDs include:

- Photo IDs issued by the U.S. federal government or the commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver's license photo ID (IDs are valid for voting purposes 12 months past the expiration date);
- Valid U.S. passport;
- U.S. military ID—active duty and retired military (a military or veteran's ID must designate an expiration date or designate that the expiration date is indefinite). Military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date;
- Employee photo ID issued by the federal, Pennsylvania, county or municipal government;
- Photo ID cards from an accredited Pennsylvania public or private institution of higher learning; and
- Photo ID cards issued by a Pennsylvania care facility, including long-term care facilities, assisted living residences and personal care homes.

**If you don't have an ID, you may be able to get one free of charge.**

If you do not have one of these IDs and require one for voting purposes, you may be entitled to get one **FREE OF CHARGE** at a PennDOT Driver License Center. To find the center nearest you, and learn what identification and residency documentation you will need to get a photo ID, visit: <http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/voter/voteridlaw.shtml> or call the Department of State's Voter ID Hotline at 1-877-868-3772.

**NO ONE legally entitled to vote will be denied the right to do so.**

If you do not have a photo ID or are indigent and unable to obtain one without payment of a fee, you may cast a provisional ballot and will have six days to provide your photo ID and/or an affirmation to your county elections office to have your ballot count. If you have a religious objection to being photographed, you still can vote by presenting a valid without-photo driver's license or a valid without-photo ID card issued by PennDOT.

## **ABSENTEE VOTING**

### **Who is eligible to vote absentee?**

In Pennsylvania, you need a reason for voting absentee. You can find a full list of acceptable reasons for a registered voter to vote absentee at [www.votespa.com/](http://www.votespa.com/). The following are just some of the reasons you may be eligible to vote absentee:

- You are serving in the U.S. military;
- Your duties, occupation or business (including leaves of absence for teaching, vacations and sabbatical leaves), will cause you to be absent from your municipality during all voting hours;
- You are a qualified war veteran who is bedridden or hospitalized and unable to make it to the polls;
- You are a county employee who expects that your Election Day duties relating to the conduct of the election will prevent you from voting; or
- You will be observing a religious holiday on Election Day and will not be able to vote at the polls.

### **How do I apply to vote absentee?**

You can apply to vote absentee in person or by mailing in an absentee ballot application to your county election office. An absentee ballot application

can be found online at:

<http://www.votespa.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/13514>. You can find your local county election office at the same website or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (868-3772).

### **What is the deadline to apply to vote absentee?**

The county board of elections must receive your application for absentee ballot no later than 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election. In emergency situations, you can submit an Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot by no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day.

### **What is the deadline to apply to vote absentee?**

Completed non-emergency absentee ballots must be received by 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day. In presidential election years, absentee ballots received by the close of the polls on Election Day will be counted for the offices of president and vice president only.

### **What about the new voter ID law if I'm voting absentee?**

Voters must provide a driver's license number, the last four digits of the Social Security number or a copy of an acceptable photo ID when applying for an absentee ballot. See the previous section on voter ID requirements for a list of acceptable photo IDs. Voters may provide this identifying number to the county over the phone, by e-mail or mail. Your identification will be verified by the county board of elections before your ballot will be counted. Voters have six days following an election to provide the necessary identification. UOCAVA voters and voters affected by the Voting Accessibility for Elderly and Handicapped Act are exempt.

### **What about an emergency absentee ballot application?**

If you have an emergency and did not apply for an absentee ballot by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to Election Day, you may download an application from:

<http://www.votespa.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/13514> and apply for an Emergency Absentee Ballot by 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day. This application must be notarized before it is submitted.

If you don't apply for an emergency ballot by 5 pm on the Friday before Election Day, you'll have to go to your county's Court of Common Pleas to receive an emergency absentee ballot. For more information, contact your local county election office or the secretary of state's office.

**For more info & bilingual versions on other states, go to:**

<http://www.aflcio.org/Legislation-and-Politics/Voters-Rights/Know-Your-Rights-in-Your-State>

