

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CHALLENGERS – PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE**

ALL CHALLENGER PERMITS ARE ISSUED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS OFFICE.  
THE HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVOKE THE CREDENTIALS OF ANY DISRUPTIVE CHALLENGER UP TO AND INCLUDING ELECTION DAY PURSUANT TO 19:7-4.

### **CHALLENGERS MAY NOT SPEAK TO VOTERS IN THE POLLING PLACE.**

CELL PHONES SHOULD NOT BE USED BY ANY CHALLENGER WITHIN 100 FEET OF THE POLLING ROOM UNLESS IT IS TO CONTACT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS.

## **RULES FOR CHALLENGERS**

1. Every Challenger shall wear the challenger badge while they are present in the polling place. Challenger badges shall **not** be passed from one person to another.
2. **Not more than one challenger appointed by a party or by a candidate shall be present at any one time.**
3. Challengers shall not move around the polling place or converse with the voters, either before or after they have voted, except on an official challenge.
4. Candidates and Election Board members automatically serve as challengers. They do not need appointment certificates or challenger badges.
5. Challengers must stand back when the results are being removed from the back of the machines by the District Election Board Members.
6. Challengers are **not** to ask the District Election Board Members to check the challengers list for them while they go on break.
7. Voters are not required to “check-in” with Challengers.
8. Challengers may not impede on voters’ progress or disrupt the election process.
9. The poll workers are in charge of the polling place and have the right to ask any disruptive person to leave the area where voting is taking place. Any problems that may arise should be reported immediately to the Municipal Clerk and Board of Elections.
10. Challengers may not handle election materials (poll books, authority slips, etc.)
11. Challengers may not electioneer by showing support of any candidate or party. *(Including discussions regarding the election within 100 feet of the polling place)*
12. Challengers may not sit alongside the poll workers. They should be in a location that does not interfere with the signing in of voters, yet is close enough to hear the poll workers calling out the voters’ names.

## **APPOINTMENT OF CHALLENGERS**

**Holding a Municipal, County or other public office does not entitle a person to be present in the polling place during an election. All challengers and election observers must be appointed and credentialed by the Board of Elections.**

The Chairs of the Democratic and Republican County Committee may appoint challengers to represent the political party in any Primary or General Election. It is a standard practice in Hunterdon County for the Party Chairs to appoint all County Committee Members as challengers.

Candidates may appoint challengers per election by filing a Challenger Appointment Sheet with the Board of Elections.

People wishing to challenge for or against any Public Question must file an individual written request with the Board of Elections.

**All Challenger Appointments are due 4:30pm the second Tuesday preceding the election.**

## PERSONS ALLOWED IN THE POLLING PLACE

- Election judge (poll workers), inspector, and clerks, Board of Elections staff and members
- Challengers with badges and certificates
- Persons admitted to vote, their dependent children, and persons providing assistance to a voter.
- Candidates on the ballot (no badge or certificate is required)
- Law enforcement authorities

## ON AN OFFICIAL CHALLENGE

A challenger should not challenge the voter directly; only the poll workers may ask the voter questions. **Notify poll workers if you wish to issue a challenge.**

The challenger must complete a challenger's affidavit stating the reason why the voter should not be allowed to vote.

When making a decision on a challenged voter the poll workers, after reviewing the voter's documents, vote on whether the voter will be allowed to vote. A majority vote determines whether the voter is allowed to vote. In the event of a tie, the voter is allowed to vote. If a voter is denied the right to vote they have the right to appear before a Superior Court Judge and appeal the decision.

It is a criminal offense to challenge a voter for any of the following reasons:

- Because you think you know how the voter is going to vote
- Because of the race or ethnic origin of the voter
- Because of stereotyping due to where the voter lives within the town or county

## DUTIES AND PRIVILIGES OF POLL WATCHERS

**The New Jersey State Statutes of Title 19 (19:7-1 through 19:7-6.1) establish the challenger's role in an election. The integrity of elections is a concern of all citizens, and although challengers may represent particular candidates, political parties, or public questions, their main interest should be in the conduct of a fair election in which only legally eligible voters are casting ballots.**

A Poll Watcher, better known as a Challenger, is a person appointed to observe the conduct of an election on behalf of a candidate, a political party, or the proponents & opponents of a public question.

The primary duty of a challenger is to observe the election, keep a record of who votes, and challenge any voter for whom they have reasonable basis to believe is not qualified to vote. No person who is serving a sentence through incarceration, parole, or probation as a result of a criminal conviction is entitled to vote.

Challengers may be present at the polling place when it is opened and may observe the opening of the voting machine, may examine the zero proof report (19:52-1) as well as be present at the closing of the polls. Challengers may observe voters entering and exiting the voting booth.

**This guide is for general reference only. Any specific inquiries as to the application of statutes relating to challengers should be addressed to individual legal counsel.**