

We have connected via our marches and rallies. We have written postcards through the hand cramps. Our feet have calluses and our cell phone bills an exceptionally lengthy list of numbers we never called before. Here we are, voting day or as we can say proudly in Illinois, voting days.

With the fervor aimed at getting out the vote, often we concentrate on how to register, find out one is registered and researching one's ballot. So, what happens when one is voting? Most of the time there is no issue, you fill out an application to vote, vote and then get that sticker. But what if I have or I observe an issue trying to vote? What then?

First, keep calm. Cliché? Yes! But best to keep your wits about you than toss them all about the polling space. Be persistent but be patient. There are record numbers of voters and people are being very vigilant in their observations, which means lots of people in small spaces and possibly long lines.

Here are some other things to consider. Prepare first.

1. Take a hard copy screen shot of your voter registration as backup. While voters in Illinois have Grace Period and extended Early Voting options, there should be fewer issues with registrations. Again, being prepared helps keep things calm.
2. Be sure to check with your voting authority, county or other, and see what you can bring, should bring, or should not bring. Cell phones are problematic, some polling places are far more lenient, others are hard-nosed. There are issues with showing the world your hard copy ballot or screen shot of a touch screen.

Check here to find your voting authority and their polling place rules:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionAuthorities/ElecAuthorityList.aspx>

3. Check over your ballot, sometimes touch screens change up with the slightest of touches. Just make sure what you want to vote is voted. Take the time to check over your hard copy ballot too. This is not a test, this is voting!
4. Take pride in the vote, your vote.

Also know that some voters are entitled to assistance when voting: those with disabilities and language challenges and registered to vote can receive assistance. Affidavits must be signed by the person requesting assistance and the provider of assistance. Instruction is different from assistance, assistance relates to the process of casting the vote. If the voter needing assistance does not have a designated person to help, the polling place may provide two people from different parties to assist, but there must be two assisting. Here is a document on that process and rights:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/assistdisabled.pdf>

Numbers and resources: While there are generally few reported issues, given our current political and social climate, better to be prepared than caught unaware. Here are a few numbers to keep handy, organizations that help protect votes and a few documents to have handy or least have read over before you go.

1. Ask for the Election Judge, Precinct Captain or whomever oversees the polling location. Usually one starts with the Election Judge. Talk with them about the issue.
2. If you feel the issue is still not being addressed, seek out an election monitor (I was called a poll watcher in Colorado, but that always makes me giggle), or representative of a party or organization such as monitoring voters and the voting process, tell them of your concerns. Often monitors have numbers to call and can provide action steps.
3. Say there is no monitor in the polling place, often they are only in very strategic locations. Then what? Notify organizations of your issue.

Know some basics of voting in Illinois:

https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/VotingInformation/PDF/Illinois_Voter_Information.pdf

and here is the landing page for Illinois Board of Elections for voting information

<https://elections.il.gov/InfoForVoters.aspx>

The **ACLU** offers information on how to report intimidation and a nifty podcast on voting. This link provides information in English and Spanish plus other important, good-to-know info.

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/what-do-when-faced-voter-intimidation>

And here is the podcast link:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-456756816/episode-4-voting-in-the-2018-election>

The **IL Democratic Party**: Voters can call the 24-hour hotline at **833-VOTER18 (833-868-3718)**. The service is also available in Spanish.

Different advocacy groups staff these numbers, all trained! From the article found here:

<https://lawyerscommittee.org/press-release/problems-at-the-polls-non-partisan-toll-free-hotline-866-our-vote-available-now-through-election-day/>

If you have trouble voting, contact a trained volunteer:

☎ 866-OUR-VOTE -- English hotline

☎ 888-VE-Y-VOTA -- Spanish hotline

☎ 888-API-VOTE -- Asian & Pacific languages hotline

☎ 844-YALLA-US -- Arabic language hotline

☎ Text ELECTION PROTECTION to 97779 -- SMS hotline

And **866 Our Vote** has a nice summary of Illinois related information for voting day:

<https://866ourvote.org/state/illinois/#1520425465318-96ce1a43-70d3>

AAJC (Asian-Americans Advancing Justice Center) has a great resource page for Asian, Central Asian language speakers and they staff the 866-line noted above.

<https://www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org/hotline>

IL Democratic Party: hotline Voters can call the 24-hour hotline at:

833-VOTER18 (833-868-3718)

If you have trouble voting, contact a trained volunteer:

ENGLISH: 866-OUR-VOTE, or 866-687-8683

SPANISH: 888-VE-Y-VOTA or 888-83-9-8682

ASIAN & PACIFIC LANGUAGES: 888-API-VOTE or 888-274-8683

ARABIC: 844-YALLA-US or 844-92552-87

You text **ELECTION PROTECTION** to **97779** for SMS assistance.

To report voting issues, also contact your Voting Authority, the BOE:

- Board of Elections: (312) 814-6440, TTY: (312) 814-6431

If you experience any problem or confusion while voting report the situation to one of the poll workers or election officials immediately. Do not wait until you have finished voting.

If the election officials at the polling place are unable or unwilling to help you, the problem should be reported directly to the [Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice](#) at 800 253-3931 (toll free). You can also fill out a form, scroll to the bottom of the follow webpage link: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/how-file-complaint#nine>