

**WRBLSA VOTER
KNOW YOUR
RIGHTS GUIDE:
*“ENGAGE WITH
OUR DEMOCRACY”***



Dear WRBLSA Student,

This serves as a “Voter Know Your Rights Guide.” This guide is to help you know what constitutional rights that you have to the ballot box. We hope that this guide will be comprehensive and help you answer any potential questions. We encourage you and ask you to engage with our democracy. To use your voice and your power to vote.

Voting is a fundamental right protected by federal and state laws. Understanding your rights helps ensure your vote is counted. Here is an extensive guide below to help you navigate Election Day with confidence.

1. Your Rights as a Voter

The Right to Vote if You Meet Eligibility Requirements:

You are eligible to vote if you:

- Are a U.S. citizen.
- Are 18 years old on or before Election Day (some states allow pre-registration at 16 or 17).
- Meet your state's residency requirements.
- Are registered to vote by your state's deadline.
- Have restored voting rights if you've been previously convicted of a felony (varies by state).

The Right to Vote Free from Intimidation or Coercion

Federal and state laws protect you from voter intimidation, including:

- Threats or aggressive behavior from poll workers, other voters, or outside groups.
- Being told you can't vote based on false or misleading information (e.g., false claims about ID requirements).
- Being coerced into voting for a specific candidate or issue.

What to Do if You Experience Intimidation:

- Report the incident to a poll worker.
- Call the **Election Protection Hotline** at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683).

The Right to Vote if You Are in Line When Polls Close

If you are in line at the time the polls close, **you have the right to vote**. Even if the polls are closing, you cannot be turned away if you're in line.

The Right to Request Assistance at the Polling Place

If you have a disability or face language barriers, you have the right to:

- **Bring someone with you** to assist you in the voting booth (except an employer or union representative).
- Request help from poll workers if you need assistance in casting your vote.

Polling places are required to provide accessible voting options for people with disabilities, such as accessible voting machines and accommodations for those with visual or mobility impairments.

The Right to Cast a Provisional Ballot

If your name does not appear on the voter list or if there's an issue with your registration, **you have the right to request a provisional ballot**. The provisional ballot ensures you can still vote, and it will be counted once your eligibility is verified.

Reasons you may need a provisional ballot include:

- Your name isn't on the voter list due to registration issues.
- You don't have the required identification at the polling place (varies by state).
- You've been challenged as a voter, but believe you are eligible to vote.

After casting a provisional ballot, follow up to check if it was counted and to provide any additional information, if required by your state.

The Right to a Private and Independent Vote

You have the right to cast your vote in private without interference or anyone viewing your ballot (unless you're receiving assistance due to a disability or language need). Poll workers are required to ensure your vote is secret.

The Right to Review a Sample Ballot

You have the right to take a sample ballot or personal notes with you into the voting booth to help you cast your vote. Sample ballots and voter guides are often available from your state or local election office in advance of the election.

2. Common Issues and What to Do

Your Name Isn't on the Voter List:

If you believe you are registered but your name does not appear on the voter list:

- Ask the poll worker to double-check the spelling and registration details.
- Present proof of registration (if available) or ID to verify your identity.
- **Request a provisional ballot** if the issue is not resolved.

You're Asked for ID and Your State Doesn't Require It

If you live in a state where ID is **not required to vote** but are still asked for one:

- Politely inform the poll worker that your state doesn't require ID for voting.
- If the issue persists, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- If you are still denied the right to vote, **request a provisional ballot** and report the incident.

You Face Long Lines at Your Polling Place:

Long lines at polling places can be discouraging, but remember that **you have the right to vote as long as you are in line when polls close**.

- Bring water, snacks, and any necessary medications if you anticipate a long wait.

- If you face barriers to waiting in line (due to a disability or other reasons), inform a poll worker—polling places must provide reasonable accommodations.
- We also encourage you to wait in line. ***Your voice and your vote matters.***

You're Denied the Right to Vote:

If you believe you've been unfairly denied the right to vote, follow these steps:

1. **Ask for clarification:** Politely ask why you're being denied.
2. **Request a provisional ballot:** If the issue persists, ask for a provisional ballot, which allows you to vote while the issue is resolved.
3. **Report the issue:** Contact the **Election Protection Hotline** at 1-866-OUR-VOTE to report the incident.

You Witness Voter Intimidation:

If you observe or experience intimidation at the polls, you should:

- Notify a poll worker immediately.
- Call the **Election Protection Hotline** at 1-866-OUR-VOTE or the **Department of Justice Voting Rights Hotline** at 1-800-253-3931.
- Document details, such as names, actions, and times.

You Face Issues with Absentee or Mail-In Voting:

If you vote by mail and encounter issues, such as not receiving your ballot on time or receiving incorrect information, follow these steps:

- Contact your local election office to verify the status of your ballot.
- If your absentee or mail-in ballot is rejected for any reason, many states provide a “cure” process that allows you to correct any issues (e.g., missing signatures).
- If you cannot resolve the issue, request a provisional ballot or vote in person, if allowed by your state.

3. Election Day Reminders

Check Your Voter Registration:

Before Election Day, check your voter registration status and polling place. Visit Can I Vote or your state's election website to confirm.

Plan Your Voting Day

- **Find your polling location:** Your polling place is determined by your address. Verify it before heading out.
- **Know your state's voting hours:** Polling places typically open early in the morning and stay open into the evening. If you're in line when polls close, stay in line—you have the right to vote.
- **Bring the necessary ID:** While not all states require voter ID, it's a good idea to bring one just in case. Check your state's specific voter ID requirements.

Double-Check Your Ballot:

Before submitting your vote, review your ballot to ensure all selections are correct. If you make a mistake, ask a poll worker for assistance or for a new ballot (depending on your state's rules).

4. Federal Laws Protecting Your Voting Rights

Voting Rights Act of 1965:

The **Voting Rights Act (VRA)** prohibits racial discrimination in voting. It also requires some states and localities with a history of discrimination to get federal approval before changing their voting laws.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA):

The **Help America Vote Act (HAVA)** of 2002 establishes standards for voting systems and ensures that every state provides provisional ballots for voters whose eligibility is in question.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** requires polling places to be accessible for voters with disabilities. It also guarantees the right to receive assistance in voting, if needed.

5. Resources to Protect Your Rights:

- **Election Protection Hotline (1-866-OUR-VOTE):** Free, nonpartisan assistance to resolve voting issues.
- **U.S. Department of Justice Voting Rights Hotline (1-800-253-3931):** Report voting rights violations.
- **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):** Legal resources and tools to protect your rights.
- **League of Women Voters:** Nonpartisan voter guides and election information.

6. Stay Informed and Report Problems

Knowing your rights is key to making your vote count. If something feels off or you're unsure about the voting process, seek help from official resources. Report any problems promptly to election authorities or voter protection groups.

Conclusion:

WRBLSA encourages you to actively participate within our democracy and to use your power and your voice. We are here for you via email. Email our Attorney General at wrblsa.ag@nblsa.org with any questions or concerns that arise now until Election Day.