

Political Observer Workshop



2016

State law authorizes the appointment of party representatives who can be present at the polls and in voting places and who may act as challengers or political observers for the party which appointed the representative.

A.R.S. 16-590.

Federal observers & election officials are the only other observers who are eligible to be present in the polling place.

They have different access & standards to adhere to than party observers.



APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL OBSERVER



Q. Who appoints a political observer on behalf of political parties?

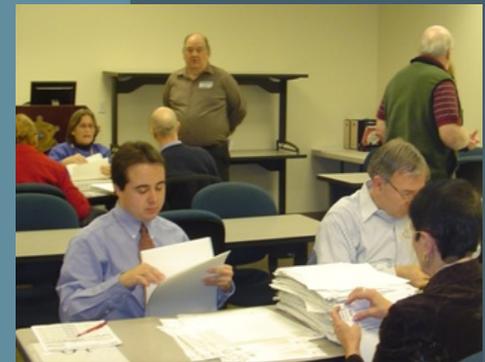
A. The county chair of each recognized political party may appoint political observers.

Q. What is the maximum number of political observers that may be appointed by each appointing authority?

A. 1 A.R.S. 16-590(C).

Activities a political observer may observe:

- Early voting satellite activities.
- Election Day polling place activities.
- Early voting ballot board meeting activities.
- Central counting station activities.
- Activities of other election boards (receiving, duplicating, processing, etc.)
- Voter being assisted by an election official.
- Tabulation and election results.
- Hand count auditing of ballots



QUALIFICATIONS OF POLITICAL OBSERVER



Q. What are the qualifications of a political observer?

A. A political observer must have an original, signed letter of appointment from the county chair of the recognized political party in the precise format provided by the county chair to the election officer at least thirty days prior to the election. **A.R.S. 16-590**

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script on aged, yellowed paper. The signature reads "John Hancock" and is written in dark ink. The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

Presenting certificate of appointment:

- A political observer must deliver a certificate of appointment to the inspector or board worker at the time the political observer reports for service.
- A political observer may not be accepted for service if the political observer has possession of audio or video equipment. The board worker may inquire whether a political observer has possession of any prohibited recording devices before accepting the political observer for service.



Q. Does a political observer need to live within the election precinct in which the political observer is serving?

A. No, you can be assigned by the party to any precinct.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF POLITICAL OBSERVER



A. At the polling place on election day, a political observer:

- May begin service at any time after the inspector arrives and may stay at the polling place until election officials complete their duties.
- May arrive at a time of the political observer's choosing, although frequent remittance may be regulated as directed if determined by an election official to avoid interference or disruption of voting activities.



Q. What are the duties of a political observer?

- Ensure that all eligible voters are allowed to vote.
- Oversight of election procedures.
- A party representative may also challenge a voter for lack of qualifications under [A.R.S. 16-121.01](#) or on the ground that the person has voted before at that election.

Q. What **is** a political observer permitted to do while on duty?

A. Political observers must observe the rules for polling place conduct provided by state law and the county election office. *Political observers are required to observe instructions given by election inspectors and officials.*

Q. What **is** a political observer permitted to do while on duty?

A. A political observer may, but is not required to:

- Bring into the polling place a portable telephone, and *use it only at the discretion of the election inspector.*
- Sit or stand conveniently near the election officials to observe the activities of the election.

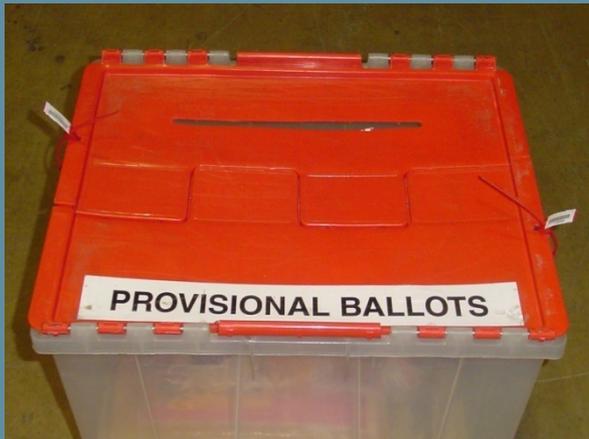
Q. What **is** a political observer permitted to do while on duty?

A. A political observer may, but is not required to:

- Make written notes while on duty.
- Observe assistance given to voters by election officials or others.
- Obtain a copy of the duplicate poll list (tear sheet) when the board worker has completed the sheet, if the observer is appointed by a major political party as defined by **A.R.S. 16-571**.

Q. What are political observers **not** allowed to do while on duty?

- A. Political observers *may not* be within six feet of ballot boxes or voting booths unless by authority of the election officer (**A.R.S. 16-562, 16-590**).



Q. What are political observers **not** allowed to do while on duty?

- A. Political observers **may not** enter a voting booth except in their own voting precinct to mark their own ballot (**A.R.S. 16-590**).



Q. What are political observers **not** allowed to do while on duty?

A. To avoid disruption or interference with election procedures and voting at the polling place, political observers should not:

- Talk with an election officer regarding the election except to call attention to an irregularity or violation.
- Converse with a voter.
- Converse with other political observers.
- Communicate in any manner with a voter regarding the election.



Q. What are political observers **not** allowed to do while on duty?

- Interfere with voting or the discharge or performance of official duties (A.R.S. 16-1004) or other unlawful acts set forth by state law (e.g., A.R.S. 16-1001 to 16-1021)
- Reveal the following information before one hour after the polls close:
 - How a voter has voted. This offense is subject to criminal sanctions. (A.R.S. 16-1007)
 - The number of votes that have been cast, or the number of votes received for a candidate or for or against a measure, and whether a candidate or measure is passing or failing.

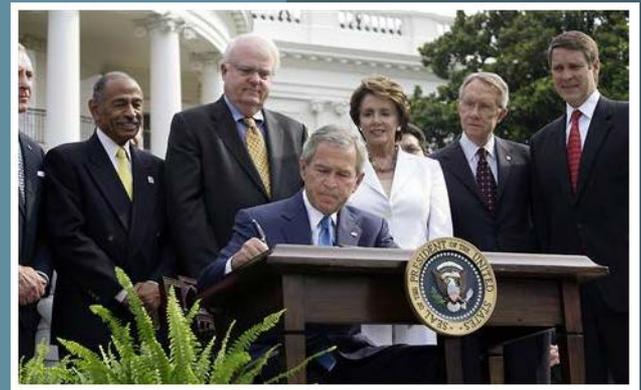
Q. What **is** a political observer permitted to do while on duty?

A. A political observer may, but is not required to:

- Observe the tallying and counting of the votes.
- Witness securing of the voting machines at the time the polls close.
- Receive an English translation of any communication spoken other than English between a voter and an election official.

Voting Rights Act

- Portions of the Voting Rights Act, including Minority Language coverage, was extended in 2006 by a unanimous vote in the Senate.
- It was signed by President Bush to be in place for another 25 years.



Possible Illegal Activities



Q. What illegal activities should a political observer look for?

A. The election board workers should be notified of any activity that appears to be prohibited by law. If any of the following activities occurs, bring it to the Inspector's attention and note the individual(s) involved, including time and place of occurrence, if possible.

Q. What illegal activities should a political observer look for?

- Electioneering and loitering within 75 feet of the main entrance of the building in which a polling place is located. (A.R.S. 16-515, 16-1017, 16-1018)
- Candidates in the polling place for a purpose other than voting.

Q. What illegal activities should a political observer look for?

- Unlawfully telling another person information that was obtained at the polling place about how a voter has voted.
- Unlawfully giving information about the status of the count or the names of people who have voted before one hour after the polls close.



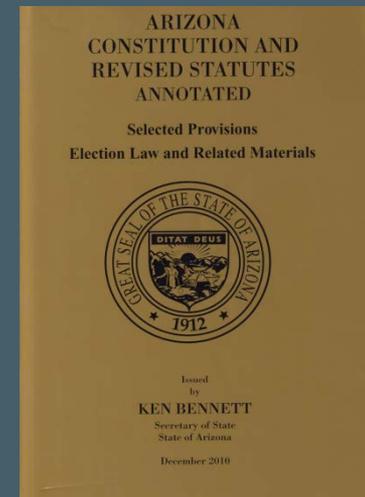
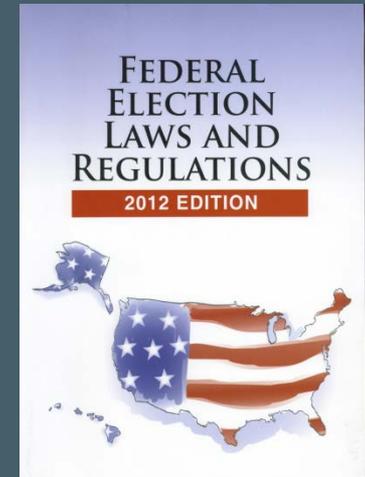
Q. What illegal activities should a political observer look for?

- Unlawfully influencing voters.
- Coercion of voters.
- Tampering with voting equipment.
- Illegal voting.
- Interfering with the election officials.
- Unlawful voter assistance or instruction.



Q. What illegal activities should a political observer look for?

- Inconsistent application of the law.
- Interfering with the voting process.
- Disregard of Federal and the State of Arizona election laws.



Final Reminders



Key points to remember:

- All voters must be asked for ID.
- If the voter has ID from the list and the address doesn't match they vote a provisional but DON'T have to come back.
- The ID does NOT have to be a photo ID—2 non-photo IDs suffice.
- Voter must vote in the precinct where they live in order for their vote to count.

Key points to remember:

- All voters have the right to assistance and can bring in someone of their choice to assist them.
- Two poll workers from different parties may assist a voter.

Key points to remember:

- Voters can drop off their early ballots at ANY polling place in the county—they do not have to sign in or show ID.
- Voters dropping off their early ballot do not need to wait in line.
- Voters designated as already returning their early ballot in the ePollbook MUST vote a provisional ballot.

Key points to remember:

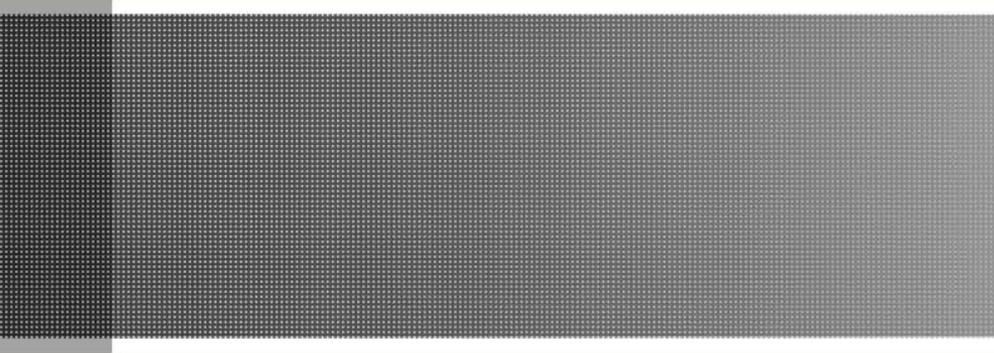
- You are acting as a representative of your Party to the public, and there is an expectation of:
 - Civility
 - Mutual respect
 - Patience
 - Cooperation.

Key points to remember

- Voter Information Line:

602-506-1511





On behalf of
Maricopa County Elections:
Thank you for your services in
the polls on Election Day.