

GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

Protocol for Political Party Observers

The Gila County Department of Elections in their efforts to carry out Arizona election laws and procedures has established Protocol for Political Party Observers. These protocols are intended to provide guidance to observers and ensure that questions or issues are handled quickly and efficiently and that observers participate in the election process with minimal disruption to the voter, the polling place election board and elections staff.

Observer Appointments and Procedures

A.R.S. § 16-590 provides for the appointment of challengers and party representatives:

- A. The county chairman of each party may, for each precinct, by written appointment addressed to the election board, designate a party agent or representative and alternates for a polling place in the precinct who may act as challengers for the party which appointed him.
- B. At each voting place, one challenger for each political party may be present and act, but no challenger may enter a voting booth except to mark his ballot.
- C. Not more than the number of party representatives for each party which were mutually agreed upon by each political party represented on the ballot shall be in the polling place at one time. If such agreement cannot be reached, the number of representatives shall be limited to one in the polling place at one time for each political party.

The county party chairman must provide the Gila County Department of Elections with a copy of a signed letter of appointment for each party representative, designating the duties of the representative (as an observer, challenger, or to pick up poll list pages, or all three), no later than 5:00 p.m. two weeks before the election. The letters may be provided by fax to the attention of Gila County Elections at (928) 402-4319, or mailed, or hand delivered, to Gila County Elections at 5515 S Apache Avenue, Globe AZ 85501. The county party chair must sign each letter. Each party representative must have the appointment letter in hand when entering the polling place and must show the appointment letter to the polling place Marshal who will direct them to the Inspector.

Each county chairman will notify the county elections office of the number of party representatives agreed upon for each polling place. If notification is not received by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election, only one representative from each party will

be allowed in a polling place at one time, except for the party representative arriving solely for the purpose of picking up the poll list pages.

If the challenger makes a Challenge:

Questions or concerns regarding the voting process or activities at the polling site or any challengers should be brought to the attention of the Inspector. If the Inspector is unavailable, call the Gila County Department of Elections at 928-402-8750 or 928-402-8708.

Observers should “observe” as quietly as possible. Observers may not: enter a voting booth, except to mark their own ballot; touch any ballot; approach any voter; disrupt the polling place; engage in protracted or political conversation; or interfere with the voting process in any way. Violators will be asked to leave the polling place.

Poll List Page Distribution

Arizona Revised Statutes §16-571(B) allows for the distribution of poll list pages:

Immediately upon the completion of each page of the poll list one copy shall, upon request, be given to a representative designated by each major political party (Democrat and Republican).

Representatives appointed by the county party chairman to pick up the poll list pages MUST have a signed letter of appointment in hand when entering the polling place. The representative must show the letter to the polling place Marshal who will direct them to the Inspector. The representative may visit a polling place as often as necessary.

75-Foot Zone

Arizona Revised Statutes §16-515(B) requires that three “75 Foot Limit” signs be posted at each polling place:

No person shall be allowed to remain inside these limits while the polls are open, except for the purpose of voting, and except the election officials, one representative at any one time of each political party represented on the ballot who has been appointed by the county chairman of such political party, and challengers allowed by law. Voters having cast their ballots shall at once retire without the seventy-five foot limit. A person violating any provision of this notice is guilty of a class 2 misdemeanor.

The polling place election board Marshal is appointed by the Gila County Board of Supervisors to preserve order at the polls and prevent violation of the election laws.

Arizona Revised Statutes §16-1018 prohibits unlawful acts by persons with respect to voting:

- A. A person who knowingly electioneers on election day within a polling place or in a public manner within 75 feet of the main outside entrance of a polling place or on-site early voting location established by the county recorder is guilty of a class 2 misdemeanor.

Any item is considered campaign material if it displays support or opposition of a candidate or ballot measure. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: signs, flyers, buttons, pencils, clothing, hats/caps, or bumper stickers. The polling place election board workers are instructed to remove or cause to be removed or covered all campaign material within the 75 foot limit. No voter with visible campaign material will be permitted to remain inside the 75 foot limit or to enter the polling place.

Voter Assistance

Arizona Revised Statutes § 16-580(G) defines assistance for certain electors:

- G. Any registered voter may, at the voter's option, be accompanied by a minor who is permitted in the voting booth pursuant to § 16-515(E), be accompanied and assisted by a person of the voter's own choice or be assisted by two election officials, one from each major political party, during any process relating to voting or during the actual process of voting on a paper ballot, machine or electronic voting system. A person who is a candidate for an office in that election other than the office of precinct committeeman is not eligible to assist any voter.

Reservation Protocol

As there may be other rules that govern behavior on the Indian Reservations, candidates and other interested persons may want to check with tribal officials before planning activities on the reservations.

Early Voting Sites

"Polling Place Protocol" as outlined by the Elections Director should be followed by an observer at any of the Early Voting Sites; except the party chairman shall present a copy of the letter of appointment to the County Recorder for all Early Voting observers. This letter shall be delivered to the County Recorder at least two weeks prior to the date of observer actions. Designated party representatives MUST have the "original appointment" letter in hand when they enter the Early Voting polling sites.

Updated April, 2012