

Don Davis

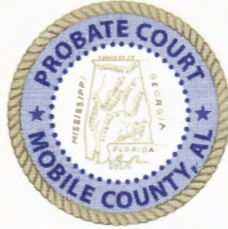
Judge of Probate

C. Mark Erwin

Chief Clerk/Administrator

W. Rushing Payne, Jr.

Chief of Staff/Chief Deputy Clerk



Judicial Division - (251) 574-6001
Recording Division - (251) 574-6040
Records Division - (251) 574-6070
Elections Division - (251) 574-6080
Accounts Division - (251) 574-6101
Facsimile - (251) 574-6003

PROBATE COURT OF MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

PRESS RELEASE

To: All Mobile Area News Producers

From: Don Davis, Judge of Probate and Chief Election Officer of Mobile County, AL

Date: October 1, 2020

Re: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING

Through the years, our experience has shown that we field some questions regarding certain aspects of the election/voting process on a repeated basis. We would appreciate your help in sharing information regarding these frequently asked questions to Mobile County citizens. An informed electorate makes informed decisions and the community profits from informed decision making. The following are frequently asked questions regarding voting.

I TURNED IN A VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION. AM I REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Just because you turned in a voter registration application does not necessarily mean you are registered to vote. Once your application has been processed by the Mobile County Board of Registrars, you should receive an acknowledgment from the registrars indicating the status of your application. This acknowledgment will be a voter identification card confirming that you are registered to vote. Alternatively, you can verify your registration status through use of the Alabama Secretary of State's Internet web portal [www.alabamavotes.gov]. You can access this web portal directly or through the Mobile County Probate Court's Internet web site [www.probate.mobilecountyal.gov]. If you discover errors or believe you have not registered - you can register to vote through the Secretary of State's Internet web portal or you can do so by contacting the Mobile County Board of Registrars at 574-8586.

I TURN 18 AFTER THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE, BUT BEFORE THE ELECTION. CAN I VOTE IN THAT ELECTION?

Yes. As long as you turn 18 years of age before the election, even if your birthday is after the voter registration deadline, you can register to vote (you must also meet other voter qualifications). Please note though, that you must submit your voter registration application before the deadline for registering passes. The deadline to register to vote is October 19, 2020, for the 2020 General Election.

I HAVE MOVED FROM ONE PART OF THE COUNTY TO ANOTHER AND WANT TO VOTE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You must contact the Mobile County Board of Registrars and update your voter registration record *before October 19, 2020*. Alternatively, you can update your registration status through use of the Alabama Secretary of State's Internet web portal [www.alabamavotes.gov]. You can access this web portal directly or through the Mobile County Probate Court's Internet web site [www.probate.mobilecountyal.gov]. **If you do not update prior to the election day, you should report to the poll that serves the precinct *where you***

currently reside and you can participate in the election through the provisional ballot process. By doing so, your voter registration will be updated and your vote will count. If you vote through the provisional ballot process in a precinct where you do *not* currently reside, your vote will not count.

I HAVE MOVED FROM ONE COUNTY TO ANOTHER AND WANT TO VOTE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

When you move across county lines, you must register to vote in your new county of residence. Voter registration does not automatically follow one from county to county.

IT'S THE DAY BEFORE THE ELECTION AND I FORGOT TO REGISTER TO VOTE. IS IT TOO LATE?

Yes, it is too late to vote for that election. To participate in the 2018 General Election, the citizen must submit the application before registration closes for that election (October 19, 2020). When the registration process resumes, a person can register to vote for future elections.

WHAT IF I MAKE A MISTAKE WHILE VOTING?

If a voter changes a vote on their paper ballot and the precinct ballot reader will not accept a voter's ballot, the voter can obtain a new fresh paper ballot to utilize for voting.

CAN I HAVE ASSISTANCE WHILE IN THE VOTING CENTER MAKING VOTING DECISIONS?

Yes. Anyone may assist a voter upon request of the voter. The voter may bring someone to the poll precinct to assist the voter. The exceptions to this rule are a voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. A poll worker is available to provide assistance, upon request.

I AM A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY OR I CAN NOT READ AND WRITE, ARE THERE SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE FOR ME?

Yes. ALL Mobile County election polls are compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act. Further, Mobile County's voting machine system, includes equipment designed to address most disability situations and situations where a voter can not read and write. The poll workers have been instructed to assume that everyone is able to vote utilizing the standard method. If you are a person with a disability or a person who can not read and write and you want to utilize the specialized equipment, you must notify the poll worker at the registration table.

WHAT IS PROVISIONAL BALLOTING?

Provisional balloting was implemented nationwide in 2004. It is designed to make certain that no person votes more than once in any given election. The four most common instances prompting use of the provisional balloting process are: (1) a voter has requested and been issued an absentee ballot and they are seeking to vote at the precinct; (2) a person's name is not on the precinct's list of registered voters; (3) the voter does not have an acceptable form of identification and two poll workers can't verify the identity of the person seeking to vote; and (4) the inspector of the poll challenges the voter (voter doesn't reside in precinct).

MAY I CARRY A SAMPLE BALLOT INTO THE VOTING BOOTH?

Yes. However, the voter should not leave the sample ballot in the polling precinct after the voter has voted.

ARE CANDIDATES ALLOWED TO CAMPAIGN OUTSIDE MY POLLING PLACE?

Yes. Campaigning is permitted outside a polling precinct. However, this activity must not be closer than 30 feet to the entrance of the polling place. If the polling place is within a building, the campaigning must be no closer than 30 feet to the entrance to the building.

MAY I WEAR CAMPAIGN BUTTONS OR TEE SHIRTS OR HATS WITH POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS ON THEM INTO THE POLLING PLACE?

Yes. However, the voter should not leave any campaign materials in the polling center and the voter must immediately leave the poll as soon as the voter has cast his vote.

IS THE NEWS MEDIA PERMITTED INSIDE OF A POLLING PLACE DURING THE HOURS THE POLL IS OPEN?

No. The news media must abide by the same rules pertaining to candidates campaigning at a voting place (30 foot setback rule).

MAY I TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEOTAPE INSIDE MY POLLING CENTER?

Alabama law permits a VOTER to take a photograph of their PERSONAL ballot - BUT NOTHING ELSE WITHIN AN ELECTION POLL. Voters have a right to cast their ballot in secrecy and in private. Photography or videotaping inside a polling place may actually intimidate voters exercising their right to vote. **Violation of the “ballot selfie” law is a criminal offense. Use of cellular telephones inside an election poll remains prohibited except for accessing an Alabama electronic drivers license for voter identification purposes.**

CAN I VOTE FOR CANDIDATES ON BOTH PARTIES’ TICKETS?

Yes. In the general election, a voter will be able to “split” their ticket and vote for candidates from each political party or cast a “write-in” ballot for someone whose name is not on the printed ballot.

I VOTED IN THE 2020 DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION - CAN I NOW VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION?

Yes. In the general election, a voter will be able to “split” their ticket and vote for candidates from each political party or cast a “write-in” ballot for someone whose name is not on the printed ballot.

DO I HAVE TO FURNISH IDENTIFICATION BEFORE I WILL BE PERMITTED TO VOTE?

Yes. There are MANY acceptable forms of identification for voting purposes. Acceptable forms of identification include:

1. current Alabama drivers license (including an electronic-digital drivers license downloaded on a “smart phone”);
2. valid Alabama non-driver identification card;
3. valid Alabama voter identification card containing the photograph of the voter;
4. valid identification card issued by a branch, department, agency, or entity of the State of Alabama OR any other state authorized to issue personal identification, provided that such identification card contains a photograph of the voter;

5. valid identification card issued by a branch, department, agency, or entity of the United States Government authorized to issue personal identification, provided that such identification card contains a photograph of the voter;
6. valid United States passport, passport card or “global entry” card;
7. valid employee identification card containing the photograph of the voter and issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the State of Alabama or any Alabama county, Alabama municipality, Alabama board, Alabama “authority” or other entity of the State of Alabama;
8. valid employee identification card containing the photograph of the voter and issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the United States Government;
9. valid student OR employee identification card issued by a public OR private college, university, or postgraduate technical or professional school located within the State of Alabama, provided such card contains the photograph of the voter;
10. valid United States military identification card provided the card contains the photograph of the voter; and
11. valid tribal identification card provided the card contains the photograph of the voter.

IF I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THE ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION WILL I BE PERMITTED TO VOTE?

Yes. A voter who does not have any of the acceptable forms of identification will be permitted to vote if the voter is positively identified by two *election officials* at the voting center as being a voter on the voters list who is eligible to vote and the election officials sign an affidavit confirming the identity of the voter and that the voter resides within said precinct. Alternatively, the voter can cast a “provisional ballot”. If authenticated, the provisional ballot will be counted.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

The deadline to submit an application to vote absentee is October 29, 2020.

HOW CAN I REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

A registered voter can request an *application* for an absentee ballot by: (1) letter, (2) calling the Absentee Election Manager’s Office at 251-574-6400, or (2) downloading the application from probate.mobilecountyal.gov/elections or alabamavotes.gov. All applications should be sent to the Absentee Election Manager. The mailing address for the Absentee Election Manager is P. O. Box 7, Mobile, AL 36601.

IF I REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION - HOW QUICKLY CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE IT?

The absentee ballot application is mailed within 24 hours of receipt.

HOW QUICKLY CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE MY ABSENTEE BALLOT UPON SUBMISSION OF MY APPLICATION?

The absentee ballot is mailed within 24 hours of receipt of the application.

IF I DO NOT HAVE PERSONAL ACCESS TO A PHOTOCOPY MACHINE TO MAKE A COPY OF AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF PHOTO IDENTIFICATION- IS THERE A LOCATION AT WHICH I CAN OBTAIN A FREE COPY OF SAID IDENTIFICATION?

Yes. The Mobile Public Library branches offer free copy service to citizens who live in Mobile and need to make a copy of their photo identification for voting purposes.

I UNDERSTAND THAT MY SIGNATURE ON THE ABSENTEE BALLOT OUTER ENVELOPE MUST BE WITNESSED BY EITHER A NOTARY PUBLIC OR TWO (2) PERSONS. IF I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A NOTARY PUBLIC OR IF I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO TWO (2) PERSONS WHO CAN WITNESS MY SIGNATURE, IS THERE A LOCATION AT WHICH I CAN HAVE MY SIGNATURE NOTARIZED FOR FREE?

Yes. The Mobile Public Library branches offer free notarization services to citizens who live in Mobile and need to have their signature notarized for absentee ballot purposes.

CAN I COME TO THE ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER'S OFFICE AND COMPLETE MY BALLOT THERE - ON SITE?

Yes. The Absentee Election Manager's Office is located on the first floor of the Mobile County Government Center Annex (also called the "Probate Courthouse") at 151 Government Street, Mobile, AL 36602. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

IF I COME TO THE ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER'S OFFICE TO COMPLETE MY BALLOT ON SITE - DO I NEED TO BRING ANYTHING WITH ME?

Yes. You should be prepared to offer a form of acceptable photo identification when you come.

IF I VOTE ON SITE AT THE ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER'S OFFICE BEFORE ELECTION DAY - HOW SECURE IS MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

It is very secure. It will be docketed and kept under lock and key until election day.

WILL MY ABSENTEE BALLOT BE COUNTED?

Yes. On election day a team of citizen election officials review all submitted absentee ballot materials. If your outer envelope associated with your absentee ballot is properly executed (or marked) by you and properly witnessed, your absentee ballot will be counted on election day.

I REQUESTED AND OBTAINED AN ABSENTEE BALLOT, WHICH I DID NOT COMPLETE AND RETURN TO THE ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER'S OFFICE, CAN I GO TO MY ASSIGNED VOTING PRECINCT AND VOTE?

No. When a person is issued an absentee ballot, their name on the precinct voting list is marked, indicating that an absentee ballot was issued. They are not permitted to vote at the voting precinct, except through the provisional ballot process. This prevents anyone from voting twice in an election.

I WAS ISSUED AND HAVE COMPLETED AN ABSENTEE BALLOT, CAN I RETURN THE BALLOT TO MY VOTING PRECINCT INSTEAD OF MAILING OR DELIVERING IT TO THE ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER'S OFFICE?

No. You cannot return an absentee ballot to a voting precinct. You can either mail it (make certain it is *postmarked* no later than November 2, 2020). Mailed absentee ballots must be received by the Absentee Election Manager's office *by 12:00 o'clock noon on the Election Day (November 3, 2020) to be counted*. Ballots may also be hand delivered to the Absentee Election Manager's office by 5:00 p.m. on November 2, 2020. If hand delivered, please be prepared to show your photo identification.

I FORGOT TO INCLUDE A COPY OF AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF PHOTO IDENTIFICATION WITH MY COMPLETED APPLICATION FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT. WILL AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BE SENT TO ME?

If you fail to include a copy of an acceptable form of photo identification with your completed application and your application is received by the Absentee Election Manager more than 8 days before the deadline date to request an absentee ballot, you will be notified by mail that your application was not processed for lack of photo identification. You can resubmit your application with a copy of an acceptable form of photo identification. If the application is received within 8 days before the deadline date to request an absentee ballot, you will be sent a provisional absentee ballot and instructed to either furnish a copy of your photo identification with your voted ballot OR to mail a copy of your photo identification to the Mobile County Board of Registrars on or before November 9, 2020. If the copy of your photo identification is timely submitted, the Mobile County Board of Registrars will instruct the Mobile County Election Canvassing Board to count your absentee ballot.

WILL MOBILE COUNTY BE UTILIZING THE CDC'S COVID-19 PANDEMIC SUGGESTED GUIDELINES ON GENERAL ELECTION DAY? DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK INSIDE AN ELECTION POLL IN ORDER VOTE?

ALL election officials are required to wear a mask inside an election poll while they are interacting with voters. ***VOTERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO WEAR A MASK INSIDE AN ELECTION POLL IN ORDER TO VOTE.*** Other CDC recommended hygiene guidelines will be utilized (gloves, wipes, hand sanitizer, periodic wipe-down of commonly used surfaces and machines throughout the day). A "sneeze shield" barrier will be utilized as to all election officials who are seated and interact with voters. The CDC's social distancing guidelines will be utilized as to election officials and voters (inside and outside election polls).

We ask that you alert your audiences of the aforesaid information on a variety of occasions between now and November 3, 2020.

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For further information contact:
Ms. Kim Tillman
Elections Coordinator
Probate Court of Mobile County, AL
Mobile County, Alabama
251-574-6080 or ktillman@probate.mobilecountyal.gov