

COURT ISSUES FINAL VOTER ID RULES FOR NOVEMBER 2016 ELECTION AND BEYOND

On August 10, 2016, US District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos of Corpus Christi issued an order prescribing what Texas voters need to bring to the polls when they vote in person. The new procedures remain in effect until further Court notice.

New Procedures for Voting in Person All citizens wishing to vote must still be on the official list of registered voters. *For the November 8th election, the deadline to register is October 11th.*

Voters may still use one of seven (7) forms of photo ID, listed below. **IDs may be expired up to four years.** (Previously IDs could be expired no more than 60 days.)

- Driver license
- Texas Election Identification Certificate (EIC)
- Texas Personal Identification Card issued by DPS
- Texas license to carry a handgun issued by DPS
- US military identification card containing the person's photograph
- US citizenship certificate containing the person's photograph
- US passport

ADDITIONALLY, **new procedures** allow registered voters without photo ID to sign a simple form* and present one of the following documents to **vote a regular ballot**:

- **Valid voter registration certificate (card)**
- **Certified birth certificate**
- **Current utility bill**
- **Bank statement**
- **Government check**
- **Paycheck**
- **Any other government document with the individual's name and address**
- *The one-page form is called the "Voter's Declaration of Reasonable Impediment or Difficulty"

Prohibition of Voter Harassment

The Judge also ordered:

- Election officials cannot question a voter about the use of an ID type
- Poll watchers may never question a voter about Voter ID issues
- The ID address does not have to match the voter registration address. It was also made clear that the **ID address does not have to match the voter registration address.**

Judge Ramos' order followed a decision by the full US Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling the existing Texas Voter ID requirements had a discriminatory effect and directed Judge Ramos to arrive at an interim solution. She will continue to consider the subject of discriminatory intent.

No Provisional Ballots

Contrary to rules issued by Judge Ramos immediately after the ruling for use in a handful of special elections, voters who present one of the alternate documents and sign the declaration form "shall be permitted to vote a regular ballot." The previous order had required voting by

provisional ballot for those presenting an alternate document as proof of identification. However, the provisional ballot did not require any additional actions by the voter.

Other Provisions

- Declaration forms must be translated into Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese for use in those counties required to provide voting materials in those languages.
- A signed declaration form can be rejected "only upon conclusive evidence that the person completing the declaration is not the person in whose name the ballot will be cast."

Educational Effort

Voter Education-- The State of Texas is required to have a detailed voter education plan, including timetables, for the November 2016 election no later than August 15, 2016. The order requires expenditure of at least \$2.5 million on the effort to demonstrate its significance. Educational work must begin immediately and continue in subsequent elections concerning voter ID requirements and the opportunity for voting.

Election Official Education - A training program for election officials is also required. The plan must be outlined by August 15 and implemented prior to the November election.

Case History

Judge Ramos is the US District Court Judge in the Corpus Christi Division of the Southern District of Texas. This ruling responds to litigation of Marc Veasey, et al, Plaintiffs, vs. Greg Abbott, et al, Defendants.

In the order, Judge Ramos stated, "Nothing in the order shall prevent any party from seeking relief based on future events, including but not limited to legislative action."

For a full history of actions leading to the release of these new voting procedures:

- [Texas Tribune's TRIBPEDIA: Voter ID](#)
- The August 10, 2016 full Court Order may be found [here](#).
- [League of Women Voters of Texas - Urges Quick Remedy Following Voter ID Ruling, Press Release 7/20/16](#)