THE MAYOR'S OFFICES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



The Houston
Commission
on Disabilities
Presents



Accessible Elections Townhall

Special Guests:



Sylvester Turner
City of Houston Mayor



Isabel Longoria
Elections Administrator

Thursday February 10

4:30-6 pm Zoom Webinar

Presentations by:



Voter Accessibility

OFFICE OF ISABEL LONGORIA
HARRIS COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR
FEBRUARY 9, 2022









Harris County Elections provides the following free of charge to individuals with communication disabilities:

- Live ASL Interpreters
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- Tactile Sign Language Interpreters
- Accessible Voting Machines
- Access Device

VRI During Early Voting



- All Early Voting locations have one designated iPad for VRI.
- Ask an election worker at your location to use the iPad.





- Upon request, an iPad with VRI will be sent to your Election Day location.
- Ask an election worker at your location for the VRI iPad, and they will notify the Elections Office to send one immediately.

Live Interpreter Requests



- Individuals may request live interpreters via phone and email
- If possible, please provide request at least 24 hours prior to the date services are needed

Accessible Voting Machines



- Tablets have built-in font and contrast modification
- Every voting location will have at least one wheelchair accessible booth

Access Devices



- Ask an election worker at your location for the access device, also known as the audio tactile interface (ATI)
- Provides text-to-speech audio output
- Allows voters to navigate the ballot using wheel control and paddle buttons
- Buttons and wheel have Braille labels
- Elections Office provides headphones, but individuals may also bring their own

Accessible Voting Locations



- Our office surveys all potential voting locations for accessibility
- Implement temporary remedies
 - Installing ramps
 - Van accessibly spaces
 - Putting plates in gaps in the walkway





We welcome your feedback!

- 713-755-6965 Ask for the ADA Coordinator, Angel Ponce
- Email ada@vote.hctx.net

Elections Administrator's Office Harris County Administration Building

1001 Preston, 4th Floor, Rm. 439 Houston, TX 77002



In Person (Curbside) v. Vote By Mail

February 10, 2022

Ms. Nancy Kral Vice President of Voter Services League of Women Voters of Houston









League of Women Voters!

100 plus years of empowering voters and defending democracy.





Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

-LWV-US



CURBSIDE VOTING

Curbside voting is mandated in the Texas
Election Code. ALL polling places in Texas
must offer voting at the curb or the polling
place entrance to voters who 1) are
physically unable to enter the polling place
without personal assistance or 2) are likely
to injure their health by entering the polling
place.

If a voter is physically unable to enter the polling place, he or she may ask that an election officer bring a ballot to the entrance of the polling place or to a car parked at the curbside. After the voter marks the ballot, they will give it to the election officer, who will put it in the ballot box. Or, at the voter's request, a companion may hand the voter a ballot and deposit it for him or her.

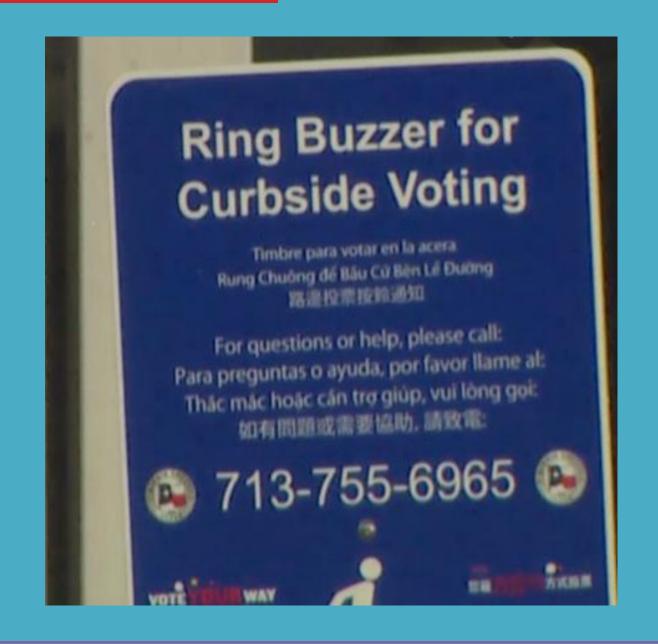
TIP FOR VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES: If you plan to go alone to vote curbside, it is wise to call ahead so election officials will expect you. Generally speaking, you may vote curbside during the early voting period or on Election Day.



POLL WORKER CAN'T CHALLENGE THE VOTER

Poll workers can't challenge a voter's eligibility for curbside, question them on what their disability is, or discourage the use of curbside voting.

For example, poll workers can't instruct voters to go to another polling place or fail to answer curbside requests by phone.



DEMOCRACY NEEDS EVERY VOTER TO PARTICIPATE!

- There should be visible signage with instructions for curbside voting.
- Every voter should be able to make their voice heard in our democracy regardless of their current physical condition or disability status.
- Voters with disabilities are to have equal access to cast their ballots.



IN PERSON VOTING

• Each polling place will offer at least one type of accessible voting equipment, to allow voters with disabilities to vote directly on the system or assist them in marking the paper ballot.

• This includes accommodating no vision, low vision, no hearing, low hearing, limited manual dexterity, limited reach, limited strength, no mobility, low mobility, or any combination of the foregoing (except the combination of no hearing and no vision)



ASSISTANCE AT THE POLLS

Tell the election official if you are a voter who needs help to vote. (no proof of disability required) Assistance available if they: cannot read or write; have a physical disability that prevents them from reading or marking the ballot; cannot speak English or use sign language.

Voters may be assisted by:

- Any person the voter chooses who is not an election worker or their employer or union rep;
- 2 election workers on Election Day or 1 during early voting.



NEW SB1 – MORE POLL WATCHERS/MONITORS

The person assisting the voter must read him or her the entire ballot, unless the voter asks to have only parts of the ballot read. The person assisting the voter must take an oath that he or she will not try to influence the voter's vote and will mark the ballot as the voter directs. If the voter chooses to be assisted by polling place officials, poll watchers and election inspectors may observe the voting process, but if the voter asks to be assisted by a person the voter chooses, no one else may watch him or her vote.



VOTE BY MAIL

Application for a Ballot by Mail

- •be 65 years or older;
- •be sick or disabled;
- •be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or
- •be expected to give birth within three weeks before or after Election Day; or
- •be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.



Para recibir esta información o la Solicitud de Voto por Correo hoặc Đơn Xin Bầu Cử Bằng

Contact vbm@harrisvotes.com To receive critical election updates,

THE OFFICE OF ISABEL LONGORIA THARRIS COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR

Please print out this application, affix a stamp, and mail to:

Isabel Longoria 🛊 Harris County Elections Administrator 🛊 P.O. Box 1148 🛊 Houston, TX 77251-1148

HARRIS COUNTY APPLICATION FOR MAIL-IN BALLOT		
Do You Qualify? If you properly apply to vote by mail under any categories of eligibility, the Harris County Elections Office must send you a mail ballot.		You are eligible to vote by mail if: 1. You are age 65 or older by Election Day. 2. You will be outside of Harris County for all of the Early Voting period and on Election Day. 3. You are confined in jail or involuntary Civil Commitment but otherwise eligible to vote. 4. You have a disability. Under Texas law, you qualify for a ballot by mail if you have a sickness or physical condition that prevents you from appearing at the polling place on Election Day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or of injuring your health. 5. You are pregnant and expecting to give birth within three weeks before or after Election Day.
Print Your Name Please print your name exactly as you registered to vote. You must provide either your Texas identification number or the last 4 digits of your SSN	1	Last Name First Name Middle Name or Initial Jr Sr II III IV (Circle if applicable) If no Texas Driver's License or Personal Identification, give last 4 digits of your Social Security Number. We have not been issued a Texas Driver's License or Personal Identification Number or Social Security Number.
About You Providing this information is helpful to the Early Voting Clerk, but not required.	2	Birth Date M M D D V V V Phone - -
Print Your Address Please print your address exactly as you registered to vote and select ballot language.	3	Apt. Number City State Zip English/Español English/Tiếng Việt English/中文
Where to Mail Ballot? Please print your alternative address and select the reason for alternative address.	4	City Address on Hospital or Voter Registration Certificate Care Facility Address on Certificate Care Facility Address State Correctional Address Out of County Chil Commitment Facility Address Facility Address Address
Which Election? Which Party?	5	Annual Application Send me a ballot for all Elections in this woting year (January – December) Annual Applications only available for voters 65 and older and voters with disabilities. You must select a party to vote in a primary. Select only one party's primary and its resulting runoff. November 8th Uniform Election and Runoff
Why Are You Applying to Vote by Mail?	6	Have a Disability. By checking this box, Tofftom inval hore a diskineauer physical or distribution and the country during early voiding and produce and the country during early voiding and or distribution and the distribution of the country during early voiding and on the distribution of the country during early voiding and on the distribution of the country during early voiding and or distribution of the country during early voiding and or distribution of the country during early voiding and or distribution of the country during early voiding and or distribution or
Declaration	7	I certify that the information given on this application is true, and I understand that giving false information on this application is a crime. Date: Signature: Signature: If applicant is unable to sign or make a mark in the presence of a witness the witness must complete box 8 of this application.
Help with this form Check one or both boxes if you served as a Witness, an Assistant or both. All information in this section must be completed. Failure to complete this section is a Class A Middemeanor if applicant's signature was witnessed or applicant was assisted in completing this application	8	If the applicant is unable to make a mark, you must check this box and complete all information below. Witness- If you are acting as a Witness to the applicant's mark, or signing on the applicant's behalf, you must state your relationship to the applicant here. Assistant- If you assisted the applicant in completing this application in the applicant's presence or mailed/emailed/or faxed the application on behalf of the applicant. Signature of Witness/Assistant Street Address Apt. Number Printed name of Witness/Assistant City State Zip Code
How to Return Return this application by mail or drop off in person at any Harris County Elections branch location	9	Visit harrisvotes.com for branch location details. Common or contract carrier: The application may be submitted via a bona fide, for profit carrier. Fax or Email Transmission: This application can be faxed to Harris County Elections at 713. 755.4983 or emailed to VBM@harrisvotes.com "IF YOU FAX OR EMAIL THIS APPLICATION, YOU MUST ALSO PHYSICALLY SEND THE ORIGINAL TO THE EARLY VOTING CLERK SO THAT IT IS RECEIVED BY FAX OR EMAIL.

LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR **VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT-FEBRUARY 18, 2022**

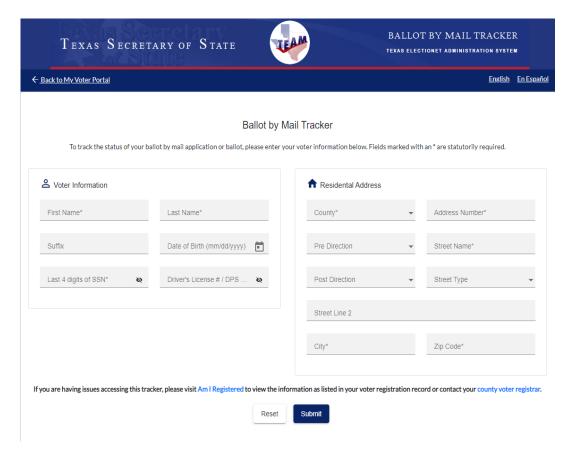


Note: LWV recommends that you put BOTH your Texas driver's license number AND the last 4 digits of your Social Security number.



VOTE BY MAIL— THIS HAS CHANGED!! SB1

- Voters would have to provide, on their VBM application and carrier envelope, their Texas DL/election identification certificate/personal ID card number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.
- If the number provided doesn't identify the voter, using the same form of identification as was used when initially registering to vote, then the VBM application/carrier envelope is rejected. LWV recommends that you include both Texas DL number AND last 4 digits of SS#.
- If the VBM application is rejected because of a number issue, the county must provide notice of the rejection and the voter will be able to correct the situation.
- There is also a newly created VBM online tracker but it wasn't working exactly as hoped previously (they're trying to get consistency from county to county)



Vote By Mail – A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- If you are 65 years or older, or are sick or disabled, mark the box for "Annual Application."
- Don't forget to sign the application!!
- Applications must be RECEIVED (not postmarked) at your county election office by the deadline (Feb. 18)
- Mark your ballot using a blue or black pen.
- Complete all information on the carrier envelope and SIGN the flap of the envelope.
- You can hand deliver your marked ballot in person to the county election office on Election Day while polls are open. You must show your photo ID.
- You can take your unmarked Vote by Mail ballot with you to the polling station and turn it in to the voting clerk. You will be allowed to vote a regular ballot
- If you lose or forget your Vote by Mail ballot, you may cast a provisional ballot.



GOOD RESOURCES



VOTERS OF HOUSTON VOTERS GUIDE

https://lwvhouston.org/vc

Vote411.org

Harrisvotes.com

Texas Secy of State https://www.sos.state.tx.us/

Houston Chronicle article on VBM:

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGmtrJxxZxwjx MzzbjfSCxtPPMP

AND LWV Houston's Voters Guide

https://lwvhouston.org/voters-guide/



State of Women Voters- House



Register! Educate! Vote!
Use (your) Power!

Chamane Barrow REV Up Texas



Significant Barriers to Voting Already Exist

- Physically inaccessible polling sites,
- Election workers refusing to provide accommodations,
- Mail-in ballots that cannot be used by people who are blind,
- And many more.

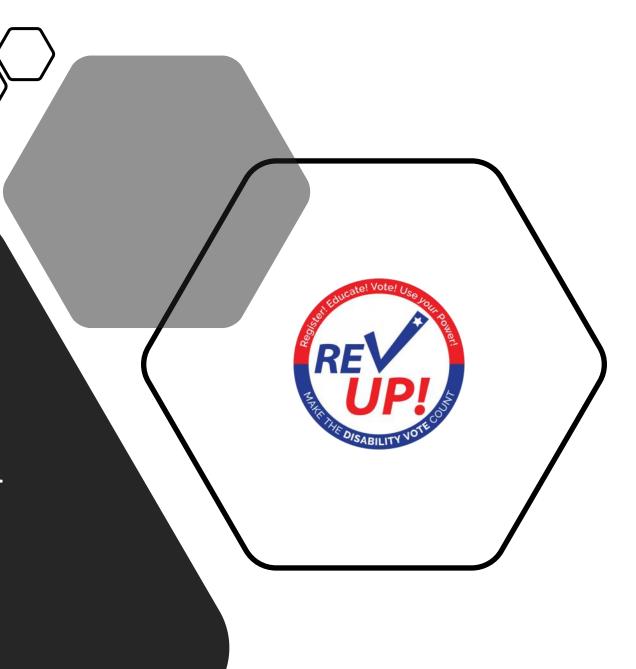


Texas SB 1 Voting Law

Creates even more unnecessary barriers and silences the voices of Texans with disabilities and others, by placing illegal restrictions on our access to voting.

Mail in Ballot Changes

New Law requires a wet signature (ink on paper) without allowing for a reasonable accommodation – this creates problems for some with disabilities.



Mail in Ballot Changes

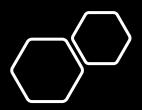
- New law requires a voter to include the last 4 digits of Texas ID/DL or Social Security number on both the application for a mail ballot and the ballot itself.
- Must enter these same numbers to match when voting. If numbers on application and ballot do not match, ballot will not be counted and will be rejected.
 - Problem some voters do not know they must include these numbers or due to disability (like being in an institution) do not have access to the numbers so cannot provide this.



Receiving Assistance at the Polls

- Another access issue is the restricting any assistance by personal attendants or other assistors outside of reading & marking of the ballot.
 - Must also take an oath under penalty of perjury and jail time to only provide assistance allowed by State law.
 - Must now also provide their name, address, relationship to & if they are being compensated.





Receiving Assistance at the Polls

These restrictions also cause access issues for:

- Deaf individuals using ASL Interpreter to access the voting process at the polls when untrained poll persons thinks that the interpreter is providing too much assistance to Deaf individual.
- There have been other issues in which an untrained poll person does not allow a person with hidden disability such as TBI, to be provided a requested accommodation from their support person because they do not believe the individual is a qualified voter with a disability entitled to a reasonable accommodation.

Other Access Issues

Limitations on early voting hours and a ban on 24-hour voting.

The elimination of drive-thru voting centers.

The prohibition of mail-in ballot drop-boxes.

Limitations on the distribution of mail-in ballot applications.

And the needless creation of barriers for individuals with disabilities and others who have limited English proficiency, to exercise their right to vote, which goes against the principle of equitability.



Involvement of REV UP in New Texas Voting Law

- ☐ This law violates the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act by imposing voting barriers that discriminate against voters with disabilities and deny people with disabilities full and equal opportunities to participate in our state's voting and elections.
- ☐ As such, a lawsuit was filed by many organizations including Rev Up Texas focused on overturning the suppression of the DISABILITY VOTE! in SB1.
- ☐ Learn more! Get involved and fight voter suppression!





Texans with disabilities CAN influence the outcome of the Presidential Primaries and General Election

'More than any time in memory:

- ☐ Elected leaders and political candidates are recognizing the MILLIONS of Americans with disabilities—from birth to advanced age—as a powerful, important constituency
- Issues important to people with disabilities, including voter suppression, voting access issues and barriers, must be part of the platform for any candidate running for public office.

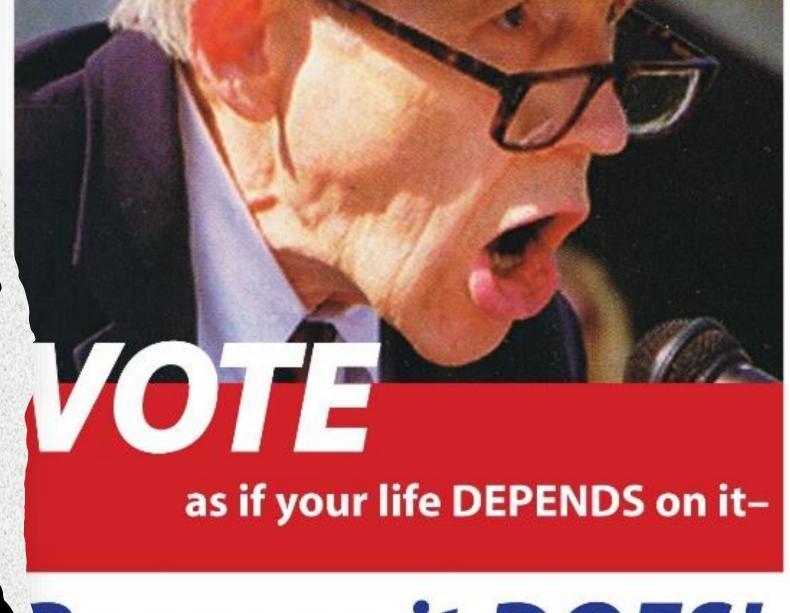
Join thousands of Americans with disabilities in this important and historic effort!

Don't Mourn...Organize, Register, and VOTE!

Make the DISABILITY VOTE Count!

Justin Dart, Jr., Texan, Patriot, Father of the ADA

Thank you!



Because it DOES!

Service Providers and Assistance

Jeff Miller & Molly Broadway



Receiving **Assistance** with a Vote by Mail **Ballot**

Persons who assist voters filling out a VBM Ballot must:

Provide their relationship to the voter, address,

NEW! sign an (new) oath,

NEW! Indicate that they didn't receive compensation.

Receiving Assistance with the Application to Vote by Mail

Assistant – If a person (other than a close relative or person registered to vote at the same address) assists you in completing the application; or mails, faxes or emails this application on your behalf, the assistant must complete Box 6. The assistant must sign and provide his or her printed name and residence address. An assistant commits a Class A Misdemeanor if he or she provides assistance without providing the information required in Box 6.

Instructions for Witnesses and Assistants: See back of this form for the definitions of Witness ar Check one or both boxes below if you served as a Witness, an Assistant or both. All informatic			
If the applicant is unable to make a mark, you must check this box and complete all information. Witness—If you are acting as a Witness to the applicant's signature or mark or signing on the applicant.	on below. Do not sign for the voter in Box 5.	p to the applicant here:	
☐ Assistant — If you assisted the applicant in completing this application in the applicant's present Failure to complete this section is a Class A Misdemeanor if applicant's signature was witnesse	18 785 D	45 0.00	(Indicate Relationship)
Y			
Signature of Witness/Assistant	Printed Name of Witness/Assistant		

Este formulario está disponible en Español. Para conseguir la versión en Español favor llamar sin cargo al 1-800-252-8683 a la oficina del Secretario de Estado o la Secretaria de Votación Adelantada.

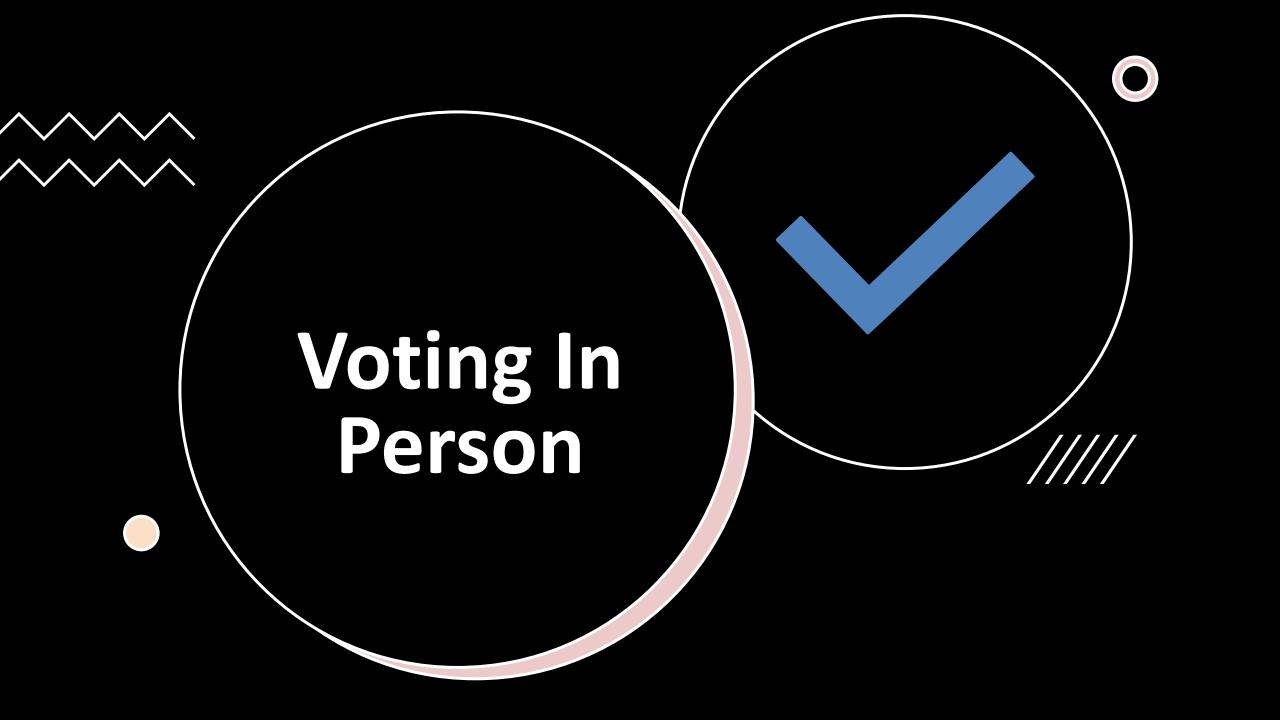
Receiving Assistance with a Vote by Mail Ballot

☐ If you are assisting a voter by depositing the Carrier Envelope in the mail or with a common or contract carrier, you must complete the assistant section below.

Oath of Person Assisting Voter: "I swear (or affirm) under penalty of perjury that the voter I am assisting represented to me they are eligible to receive assistance; I will not suggest, by word, sign, or gesture, how the voter should vote; I will confine my assistance to reading the ballot to the voter, directing the voter to read the ballot, marking the voter's ballot, or directing the voter to mark the ballot; I will prepare the voter's ballot as the voter directs; I did not pressure or coerce the voter into choosing me to provide assistance; I am not the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of a labor union to which the voter belongs; I will not communicate information about how the voter has voted to another person; and I understand that if assistance is provided to a voter who is not eligible for assistance, the voter's ballot may not be counted." Juramento de la Persona Asistiendo al Votante: "Yo juro (o afirmo) bajo pena de perjurio que el votante al que estoy asistiendo me representó que es elegible para recibir asistencia; no sugeriré, con palabra, señal, o gesto, como debe votar el votante; limitaré mi asistencia a leer la boleta al votante, dirigiendo al votante a que lea la boleta, marcando la boleta del votante o dirigiendo al votante a que marque la boleta; prepararé la boleta del votante según lo indique el votante; no presioné ni coaccioné al votante para que me eligiera como asistente; no soy el empleador del votante, un agente del empleador del votante, o un oficial o agente de un sindicato al cual el votante pertenece; no comunicaré información sobre cómo el votante ha votado a otra persona; y entiendo que si se proporciona asistencia a un votante que no es elegible para recibir asistencia, la boleta del votante podría no ser contada." If you are an assistant, provide information below: (Si usted es un asistente o testigo, marque la casilla correcta y proporcione su información):		SIGNATURE OR MARK OF VOTER (FIRMA O MARCA DEL VOTANTE) Completed by Early Voting Clerk: Name of Election (Nombre de Elección): Name of Voter (Nombre del votante): Date of Election (Fecha de Elección): Instructions to Witness: You are serving as a witness for of voter). You must complete the section below if you witness the mark of the voter, or if the voter cannot make a mark. If the voter cannot make a mark, check here	
Did you receive compensation or other benefit from a candida assistance? Circle one: Yes No 2 Recibió compensación u oro beneficio de un candidato, cam Marque con un Círculo: Si No	te, campaign or political committee in exchange for providing	(Instrucciones al Testigo: Usted está fungiendo (nombre del votante). Usted debe llenar la sigu	como testigo paraiente sección abajo si usted fue testigo de que el mar. Si el votante no puede firmar, marque sus iniciales
Printed Name (Nombre en letra de molde)	Signature (Firma)	Signature (Firma)	Printed Name (Nombre en letra de molde)
Relationship to Voter (relacion al votate)	Street Address (Domicilio residencial)	Street Address (Domicilio residencial)	

SERVICE PROVIDERS / CAREGIVERS

- A person commits a <u>state jail</u> felony if the person compensates or offers to compensate another person for assisting voters
- ☐ This does **NOT** apply to:
 - Attendants; or
 - Caregivers previously known to the voter



Right to Assistance

- A person who cannot cast a ballot independently because they cannot read or write or have a disability that prevents them from reading or marking the ballot can get assistance from the person of their choice or an election worker
- If the voter does not have someone they trust to assist them, two election workers can assist
- Person of choice cannot be voter's employer or agent of voter's labor union
- Assistant must take oath

Receiving Assistance at the Polls

NEW! Persons who assist voters with an in-person ballot must provide their relationship to the voter, address, and mark that they didn't receive compensation.

NEW Oath! Persons who assist a voter (language or disability) at the polls must sign an oath:

"I swear (or affirm) under penalty of perjury that the voter I am assisting represented to me they are eligible to receive assistance; I will not suggest, by word, sign, or gesture, how the voter should vote; I will confine my assistance to reading the ballot to the voter, directing the voter to read the ballot, marking the voter's ballot, or directing the voter to mark the ballot; I will prepare the voter's ballot as the voter directs; I did not pressure or coerce the voter into choosing me to provide assistance; I am not the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of a labor union to which the voter belongs; I will not communicate information about how the voter has voted to another person; and I understand that if assistance is provided to a voter who is not eligible for assistance, the voter's ballot may not be counted."

Resources

DRTx Voter Rights Hotline, 1-888-796-VOTE (8683) www.disabilityrightstx.org/en/home/ **Election Protection**, 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683); ASL video 301-818-8683 https://866ourvote.org/ **REV UP Texas** https://www.revuptexas.org/ **League of Women Voters**, **Houston**, 713-784-2923 www.lwvhouston.org **Harris County Elections Office**, 713-755-6965 https://www.harrisvotes.com/VotingInfo?lang=en-US#VoterswithDisabilities **Houston Mayor's Commission on Disabilities**, 832-394-0814 http://www.houstontx.gov/disabilities/commission.html Secretary of State's Office, 1-800-252-VOTE (8683)

www.votetexas.gov

Your Vote is Your Voice

OFFICE OF ISABEL LONGORIA
HARRIS COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR
FEBRUARY 9, 2022



Harris County and the Primaries



- 2.5 million registered voters are eligible to cast a ballot
- The positions on the ballots are Federal, State, and County.
- You must choose one of the political parties to vote, and you must vote in the same party for the remainder of the year's elections.
- Your vote determines who and what will be on the final ballot in November.





Early Voting Hours

February 14 - 19	7 a.m 7 p.m.
February 20	12 p.m 7 p.m.
February 21	Closed for Presidents Day
February 22-23	7 a.m 7 p.m.
February 24	7 a.m 10 p.m.
February 25	7 a.m 7 p.m.

Election Day Voting Hours

March 1, 2022, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.



Ways to Vote



- If you're a registered Harris County voter, then you can go to any polling location in the county to vote!
- Curbside voting is still available at every voting location, but keep in mind that this one lane can only process one voter at a time.
 Note: New law requires anyone providing transport to groups of 7 or more people to fill out a form and sign an oath.
- Deadline to apply for a mail ballot for the Primary is February 18.

Voter Services





General (713) 274-8200

Spanish (713) 274-8201

Vietnamese (713) 274-8202

Chinese (713) 274-8203

www.HarrisVotes.com