


Election Safety Campaign update, Sept. 30, 2020



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Our election must be

Safe!
Accessible!
Secure!

- ★ Expanded absentee voting
- ★ Additional days for counting ballots
- ★ Venues & staff for all local polling places
- ★ PPE and safety measures for staff & voters

Absentee by Mail and Witness Signatures

As of September 28, SEC reports that 469,471 applications have been received for mail ballots. 321,557 of those applications have been returned. This number is massive!

The 4th Circuit has granted *en banc* review in the Middleton et al v Andino et al case, and have vacated the previous order from a three-judge panel that court to stay Judge Child's decision to remove the witness signature requirement. Does everyone have whiplash at this point? But it is worth it.

The League believes that we should continue to tell voters that if it is possible for them to do safely, they should obtain a witness signature for absentee-by-mail ballots. The 4th Circuit Court has upheld Judge Child's decision to remove the requirement, but the case may still be appealed to the SC Supreme Court. Although this changing legal landscape is frustrating, we strongly believe that a final decision to remove the signature requirement would protect valid ballots by legitimate electors whose voice in the democratic process would otherwise be stilled in this time of our modern plague.

Many thanks to ACLU and others involved in this important effort!

Poll Workers

Most counties are reporting a full complement of poll workers signed up. Only Charleston, Berkeley, and Anderson still need more recruitment effort.

Poll Protection

ACLU is expanding their excellent election protection program this year in partnership with Root and Rebound and Progressive Network. This is a signup link to volunteer at the polls on Nov. 3: https://secure.everyaction.com/DAMJP_WoT0CFQnTD3JF3tw2.

This year, things will be done a bit differently in light of COVID-19. Volunteers will not be asked to go inside but instead will be stationed outside the polls to hand out literature directing folks to the national election protection hotline (1-866-OUR-VOTE). They will also be on hand to answer any basic questions and to report any issues that come up.

Voter Outreach

We are pleased to say that there is a great deal of voter outreach underway leading up to the upcoming voter registration deadlines. The LWVSC radio spots are running in broadband-deficient parts of South Carolina, urging citizens to use their power to influence the direction of our state and country by registering to vote. We are very impressed by the number of local in-person events being held by your local Leagues and by many other organizations. There are so many organizations and individuals doing their best for our democracy, it is wonderful to see!

In Person Absentee Voting

In person absentee voting begins statewide by October 5. Voting will occur at all county election offices and at extension locations established by those county offices. A complete list of those locations is available at SCVotes.gov.

ePoll Books

As we all know, recently SEC told county election offices that the electronic poll books that they expected to receive would not be available because there was a lack of funds to fulfill the procurement process. Now, funds have been found by the General Assembly but county offices have not yet received their full complement of the devices, nor is there adequate time for training poll workers in their use. Why does this matter? County officials are in the process of figuring out how to deal with this extremely unfortunate situation. The devices were expected to streamline voter check-in by automatically selecting the appropriate ballot format for each voter. As you know, ballot format varies even within precincts, depending on the myriad differing boundaries for different elements of our government — school boards, state legislature, Congress, and more. We will continue to monitor this important issue.