

FACT SHEET: THE TRUTH ABOUT ELECTION OBSERVER AND VOTER INTIMIDATION LAWS IN NORTH CAROLINA



Eligible voters in North Carolina should know that no person can stop them from legally voting.

Voter intimidation by any person is illegal. North Carolina law allows for official election observers to help maintain the integrity of our elections. But a political candidate's supporters cannot show up unofficially at polling places to watch voters cast their ballots. **If you feel your right to vote is being threatened by anyone, notify the precinct chief judge. If you are concerned about your personal safety, contact local law enforcement.**

THE FACTS:

Official election observers must be designated in advance by the county party chair. County party chairs may designate two observers for each polling place and 10 additional county-wide observers to enter polling places. These designations must be made to the chief judge at the precinct at least five days prior the day they are designated to observe.

Election observers may not interfere with voters casting ballots. An election observer may not engage in any electioneering in the voting place, and they cannot communicate with or observe any voter while the voter is casting a ballot.

A political candidate's supporters who aren't official election observers can't simply "go into the polls and watch." If a supporter has not previously been designated as an official election observer, they must stand outside of the 50-foot electioneering area/buffer zone around the polling place. They can hand out literature and hold signs but cannot interfere with or intimidate any voter. A supporter who is not an official election observer is not a "poll watcher" and has no legal authority.

People may not block voters from entering the polling place. Any unauthorized attempt to stop an eligible, registered person from voting is illegal.

Election observers and private citizens cannot question voters on their qualifications to vote. Precinct workers will verify people's voter registration status before they hand them a ballot.

Chief judges of polling places maintain order in our elections. They are tasked to stop any attempt to obstruct or interfere with any person in registering or voting. The chief judge may call upon the sheriff, the police, or other officers to aid them in maintaining order. They may order the arrest of any person violating any provision of the election laws, but such arrest shall not prevent the person from registering or voting if they are entitled to do so.



AT A POLLING PLACE, YOU MAY NOT:

- Go to the polls and watch, unless you are an official election observer designated by the county party chair.
- Observe, interfere, or communicate with voters when they are casting ballots.
- Block voters from entering the polling place.
- Question voters on their qualifications to vote.
- Disrupt voters or election officials.



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