

EARLY VOTING

WHAT IS EARLY VOTING?

Early voting allows Illinois voters to cast a ballot prior to Election Day, without having to provide a reason or an excuse for wanting to vote early.

HOW EARLY CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

Registered voters can vote early during the 22nd day through the 5th day preceding an election.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

Election authorities across the state identify convenient locations where registered voters can vote early. In almost all cases, the sites will be different from the voters' regular polling place. In McHenry County we currently have ten (10) different Early Voting Sites. These sites and their hours are posted on the County Clerk's web page prior to each election.

WHO AUTHORIZED EARLY VOTING?

The Illinois General Assembly approved House Bill 1968 in 2005, and it was signed into law as Public Act 94-0645.

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE LAW?

The major reason for the law is to encourage greater participation in the election. People who travel for business, work long hours or are otherwise inconvenienced by the hours the polls are open find it easier to vote early. Others find they want to avoid risks on Election Day such as long lines at the polling place or bad weather.

WHAT ARE THE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST VOTER FRAUD?

Voters casting an early ballot must display valid identification such as a current driver's license, a state-issued ID card or another government-issued photo ID.

The requirement of photo identification for an early voter is stricter than any identification requirement for a person casting a ballot at their polling place on Election Day.

The law prohibits a person who voted during the early voting period from voting at the polls on Election Day. In McHenry County, to ensure that a voter is unable to vote at the polls on Election Day; as each voter makes application to "Early Vote", said information is immediately entered into the voter registration data base. These electronic files and paper listings are provided to each precinct, for use at the polling site on Election Day.

Votes cast during the early voting period are not tabulated until after the polls close on Election Day.

ARE POLLWATCHERS ALLOWED AT EARLY VOTING SITES?

Yes. Like at a regular polling place on Election Day, pollwatchers may be appointed to observe early voting.

IS ELECTIONEERING ALLOWED AT EARLY VOTING SITES?

No. Electioneering is prohibited at the early voting sites, like it is at the polling place on Election Day.