

# Your Voice: Your Vote



Kentucky Protection & Advocacy

September 2004

# Your right to vote

- The United States Constitution gives almost everyone over age 18 the right to vote
- Your gender, race, religion or disability doesn't matter



# Your right to vote

- You have a right to vote unless
  - ✓ a court has said that you can't
  - ✓ you've been convicted of a felony



# Your right to vote

- If you have a legal guardian, you may want to check with the guardian about your right to vote

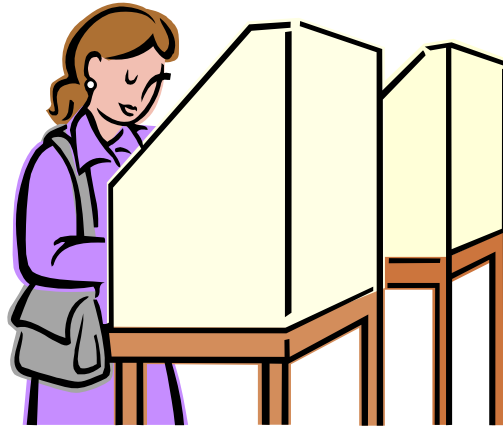


# What is voting for?

- To elect people, such as the mayor or the governor or the president
- To make or change laws



# Why should I vote?



- To change things
- To keep things from changing
- To set an example to others

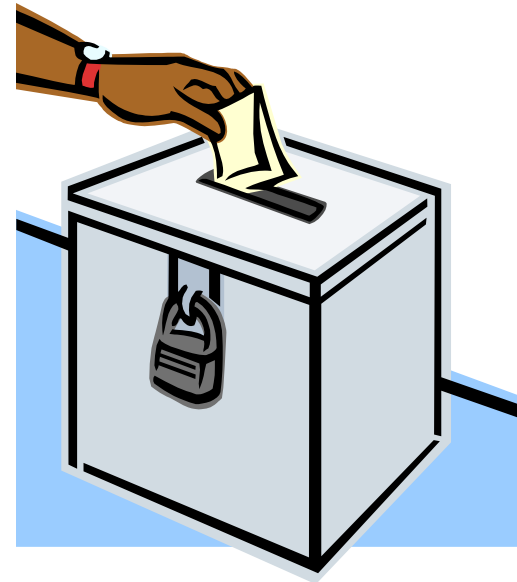
# Why should I vote?



- Because you care about what happens in Kentucky and the United States
- To let your voice be heard

# Voting is easy!

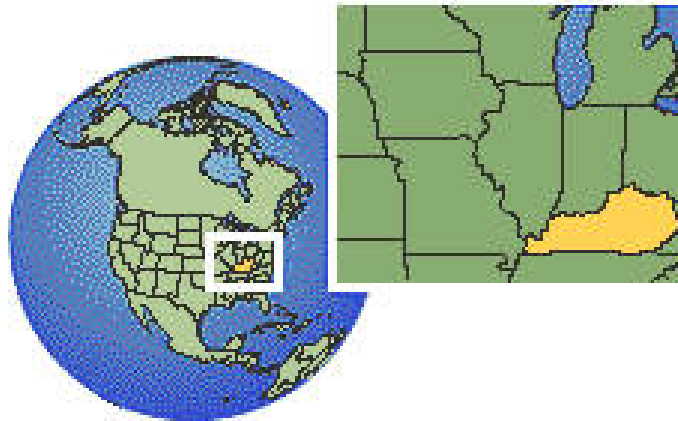
- You can't complain about changes if you didn't vote
- Your vote counts!
- One person can make the difference





# Voting eligibility

- To register to vote you must
  - Be 18 years old by the next regular election
  - Be a United States citizen
  - Be a Kentucky resident for at least 28 days



# Voting eligibility

- You can't register to vote if
  - You claim the right to vote outside Kentucky
  - You are a convicted felon (unless a judge restored your civil rights)
  - A judge took away your voting rights when appointing a legal guardian



# How to register



- You can register to vote by filling out a voter registration card
- There are many places where you can register to vote

# Where to register

- The Kentucky Board of Elections web site
- The county clerk's office
- The circuit clerk's office
- Any local agency where you sign up for food stamps, WIC checks, or Medicaid
- Any armed forces recruitment office
- Your local high school, if you are a student
- Protection and Advocacy



# Registering to vote

The last day that you can register to vote is  
29 days before the election



# Registering to vote



- If you want to change your address or your political party, you should call the county clerk to find out what to do
- Time deadlines may apply

# Political parties in Kentucky



- When you register, you must choose a political party
- This will show which primary elections that you can vote in

# You can choose to be

- ◆ Democrat
- ◆ Republican
- ◆ Independent
- ◆ Other



Different political parties usually have different beliefs about issues.



# Political parties in Kentucky

- Some of the other parties are the
  - Libertarians
  - Green Party
  - Natural Law Party



# You can choose to be

- If you register as "Independent" or "Other," you will not be able to vote in primary elections for the Democrat or Republican parties
- You still will be able to vote in regular elections

# After you register to vote



- You will receive a note in the mail saying you are registered
- It will tell you the place where you go to vote (polling place) on Election Day

# What will I vote on?

Now that you know how to register to vote, you can think about how you will decide to vote on Election Day.



# What will I vote on?

- During an election, the people who are running for office will say how they feel about different issues
- They will say what they will do if you elect them



# What will I vote on?



Issues that concern your community may be placed on a ballot for people to say whether they agree with a proposed change.

# What's important to me?

- Before you go to vote, you may want to think about what is important to you.
- What would you like to change?
- What do you want to stay the same?



# Some things people vote on

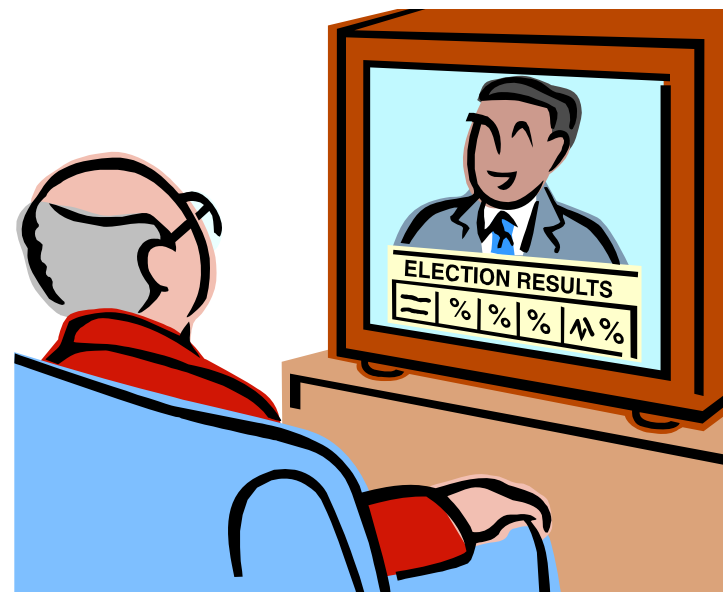


- Low-income housing
- Transportation
- Jobs
- Help for people with disabilities
- Other things that are important



# How do I find out about issues?

- Information is given to voters in two different ways
  - Non-partisan
  - Partisan



# Non-partisan information

- Non-partisan information just gives facts about a candidate or issue and doesn't take sides
- Examples of this would be a candidate's voting record or ideas that are written down

# Partisan information

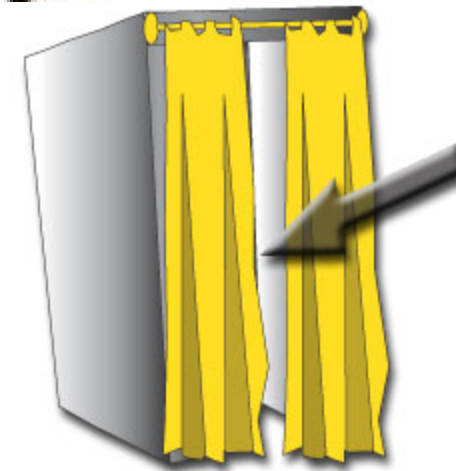
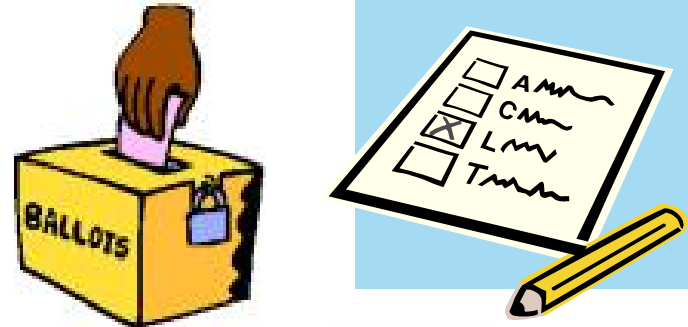
- Partisan information tries to convince you how to vote
- Examples of this would be TV advertisements and newspaper editorials



# How do I vote?

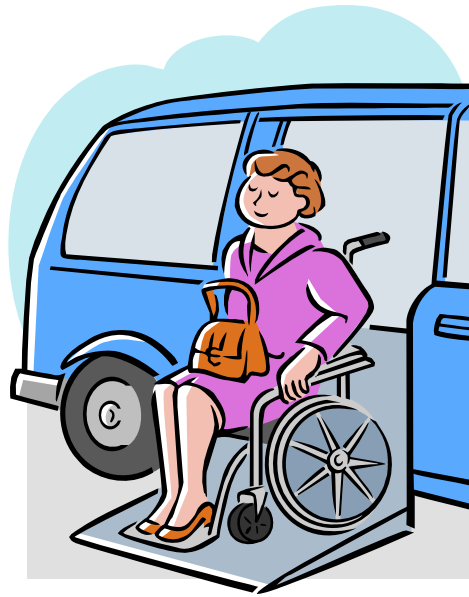
People who live in Kentucky can vote in one of three ways

- At your polling place
- By paper absentee ballot
- By absentee machine



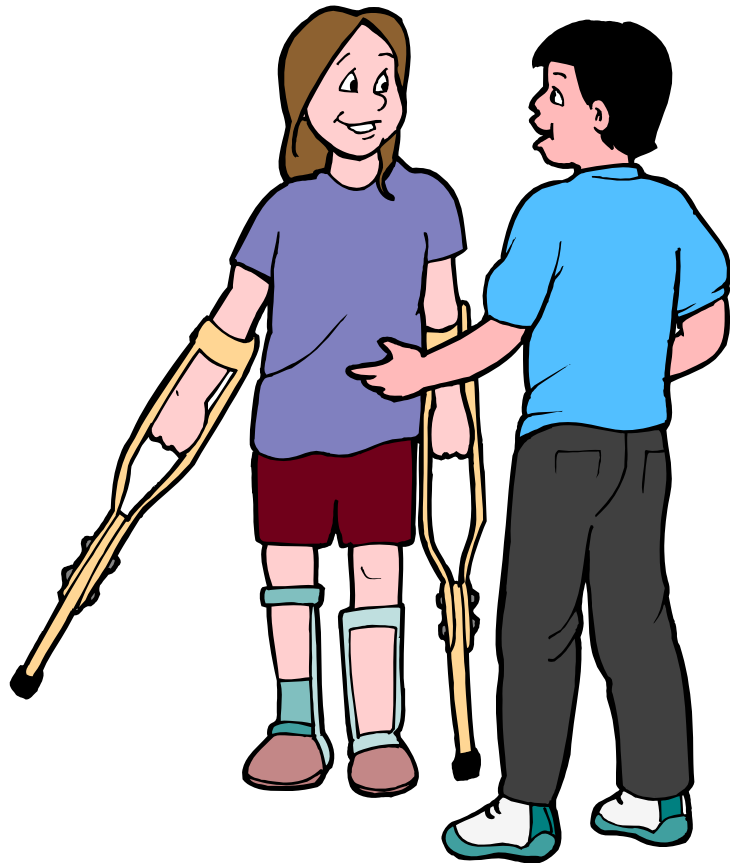
**STEP INTO THE BOOTH!**

# All polling places must be accessible



- Everyone should be able to get into their polling place
- The doors should be wide enough for a wheelchair to go through

# All polling places must be accessible



- There should be ramps or elevators if there are steps up or down
- Even the parking lot and the walkway must be accessible

## Not all voting machines are accessible

- Unfortunately, not all voting machines are accessible.
- You may have to ask someone for help.
- But by January 1, 2006, the Help America Vote Act says that at least one voting machine in each polling place must be accessible to everyone who has a disability.

# When you go in to vote

- First, you will be asked to tell the poll worker your name
- The poll worker will ask you to show some identification

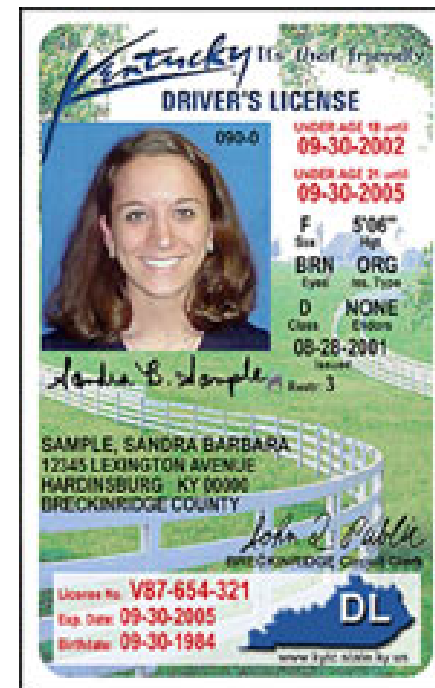






# If you have voted before

- You can show a
  - Driver's license
  - Credit card
  - Social security card
  - Picture ID that is signed
- If a precinct officer knows you personally, you don't have to show ID



# If you have voted before

- Next, the poll worker will find your name in a big book of voters
- You will sign or make your mark next to your name



# What is it like in the voting booth?



- When it's your turn, you will go into the voting booth
- To vote you will touch the screen, mark the ballot, pull the lever or hit the buttons

# Casting your vote

- You will vote for the people you want to elect into office.
- You will vote yes or no on any issues that may be on the ballot.
- Next, you should check to see that you voted for everyone and everything you wanted to.
- Then you press the “vote” button or turn in your ballot. Your vote will be added in with the other votes.

# What happens if I need help?

There are two kinds of help that you can ask for.



# What happens if I need help?

- First, anyone can ask one of the elections officers at the polling place to show them how to operate the voting equipment or mark the ballot.



# What happens if I need help?



- Second, if you have certain kinds of disabilities you can ask one of the elections officers to help you read the ballot, mark it or push buttons in the voting booth



# What happens if I need help?



- You can also bring along someone of your choice to help you, but it can't be your boss or an agent of your union

# To qualify for help

- To qualify for help because of a disability, you must be blind or have a physical disability
- You can also get this kind of help if you can't read English



# To qualify for help

- You will have to sign a voting assistance form saying that you need help because of the disability or because you can't read English
- If you bring a friend to help you, that person will have to sign a form, too



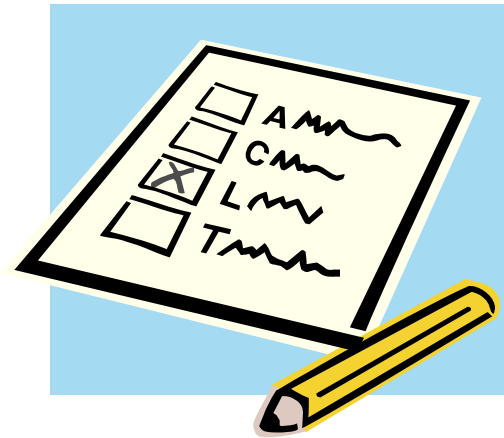
# What happens if they say I can't vote?

- First, ask why
- Then contact Protection and Advocacy right away



# What happens if they say I can't vote?

- President
- Vice-President
- U.S. Senator
- U.S. Congressman



- If you are voting in a United States election, ask for a provisional ballot
- You should not leave the polling place without voting on one

# Provisional ballots

- In a federal election, you can ask for a provisional ballot
  - If your name doesn't appear in the big book of voters
  - If you don't have proper ID with you, or
  - If all four elections officers challenge your right to vote

# Provisional ballots



- You will turn in the provisional ballot at the polling place.
- You will need to call the local county clerk or check the State Board of Elections' web site at [www.elect.ky.gov](http://www.elect.ky.gov) to find out if your vote was counted.

# What happens if I make a mistake?

- If you make a mistake on a ballot card, you must return it to one of the elections officers and get a new ballot.
- You can have up to three ballot cards.
- You can also get up to three provisional ballot cards if you make a mistake.





# What happens if I make a mistake?

- Unfortunately, if you are using a voting machine instead of a paper ballot, and you realize you have made a mistake after you've pushed the vote button, you cannot change your vote.



## After January 1, 2006

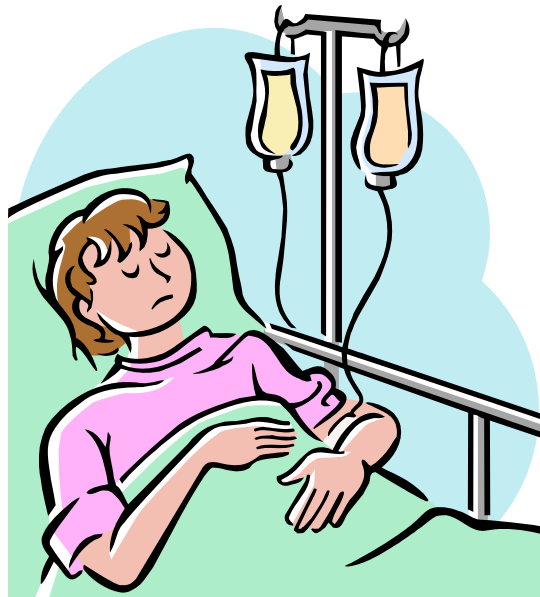
- The Help America Vote Act says anyone who makes a mistake in voting must be given a second chance.
- This means that before your ballot can be officially cast, you must have a chance to review it, change it, or request a new ballot.

## After January 1, 2006

- The voting system also must tell you if you overvote, so that you can correct your ballot.
- An overvote is when you accidentally vote for two candidates at the same time, such as voting for two candidates for President.

# Absentee voting

You can vote by absentee paper ballot if you can't go to the polling place.



# You can vote an absentee ballot if

- You are elderly
- You have a disability, illness, or a medical emergency
- You are in the armed services
- You live with your family member who is in the armed services
- You are a student outside of your home county
- You are temporarily outside of Kentucky but are still eligible to vote in Kentucky
- You are in jail but haven't yet been convicted of a crime

# Absentee ballots



- You can get an application for the paper ballot by contacting your county clerk's office
- It must be returned at least one week before the election

# Voting by absentee machine

- If you aren't going to be home on Election Day, and you don't meet the requirements for paper ballot voting, you may vote on an absentee machine.
- You must vote in your county clerk's office about 12 days before the Election Day. To find out more, contact your local court clerk's office.

# Important things to remember

- People with disabilities have the right to vote.
- Voting is your decision.
- You have the right to vote unless a court has said that you can't.





# Important things to remember

- No one can tell you what party to join
- No one can tell you how to vote
- Your vote is private—you don't have to tell anyone how you voted



# Important things to remember

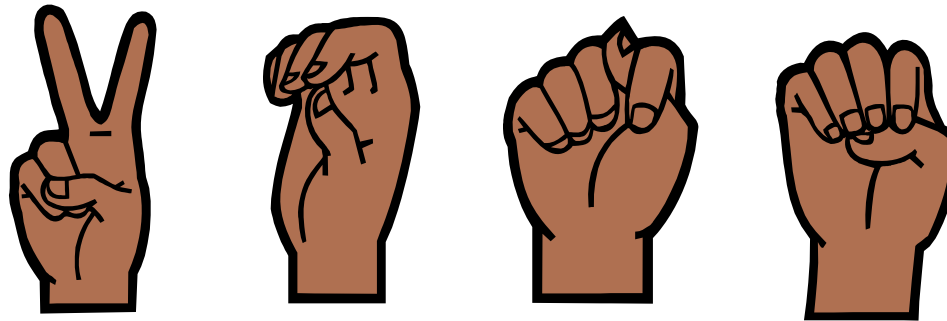
- The polling place must be accessible to you
- You can ask for help to read the ballot or push buttons in the voting booth



Voting is easy!

So, why not do it?

***Vote!***



# If you have problems voting

**Please tell the county clerk or  
Protection and Advocacy as soon as  
possible!**

Protection and Advocacy  
100 Fair Oaks Lane, Third Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
(502) 564-2967  
(800) 372-2988  
<http://www.kypa.net>

Protection and Advocacy produced *Your Voice: Your Vote* with a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The Help America Vote Act directs P&As to "ensure the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote and accessing polling places." This includes election access for a wide range of people with disabilities, including people with cognitive, sensory and physical disabilities.

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