



COUNTY OF LAKE
Registrar of Voters Office
Courthouse – 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
Telephone 707-263-2372
FAX 707-263-2742
elections@lakecountyca.gov

MARIA VALADEZ
Registrar of Voters

LOURDES PANTALEON
Deputy Registrar of Voters

ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL PLAN

I. County and System Information

1. Name of County: County of Lake
2. Name of Contact: Maria Valadez, Registrar of Voters
3. Contact's Phone #: 707/263-2372
4. Vendor and Voting Systems Used by County:
Hart InterCivic Verity Paper Ballots (main voting system) and
Hart InterCivic/Verity ADA Voting Units (HAVA compliant)
5. Date: August 27, 2021

II. Purpose

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

1. Provide the public with the opportunity to observe and make suggestions on ways to improve the election process.
2. Help ensure the integrity of the election process.
4. Remove some of the mystery associated with the election process in an effort to build voter confidence and encourage more voter and public participation.

III. Invite

Between E-60 and E-30, prepare letters of invitation to the following:

1. County Grand Jury
2. Political Party Central Committee Members
3. Local Clubs
4. Media
5. Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing Election Day activities.

IV. Appointment Letters (for introduction to precinct workers)

After the groups have provided the names of interested panelists, this office will prepare letters of introduction for the panelist to use when visiting polling places on Election Day. Materials to be prepared for each panelist will include a listing of all polling places within Lake County for that specific election as well as the central counting site location and hours of operation.

Prior to Election Day, either the Registrar of Voters or a member of the Registrar of Voter's staff may meet with individuals and/or groups to provide an opportunity for the individuals and/or group members to ask questions about the process.

V. Rules for Observers

COVID-19 Rules:

- Observers, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask.
- The number of observers may be limited depending on the space available.
- Observers must maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet and may be asked to remain in a designated area.
- Observers may be asked to take other safety measures such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette and general respect for cleanliness and sanitation.
- Observers are required to follow both state and local COVID-19 protocols, while visiting polling places and/or the Registrar of Voters office.

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election process.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the election process.
- Following established county observation rules/policies.
- Being courteous to poll workers and election officials. Speak to them only when it is convenient and does not interfere with the conduct of the election.

Observers may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch election procedures.
- View election-related activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of poll workers or voters at the polls as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of any part of the voting process.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of the election procedures.

Observers may not:

- Interfere, in the judgment of the elections official, with the conduct of the election.
- Physically handle any voting materials or equipment without the express permission of the elections official.
- Move or rearrange tables, chairs, or voting booths at the polling place or central counting facility.
- Sit at the official worktables or view confidential voter information on any computer terminal or document.
- Communicate with voters within 100 feet of the entrance to, or inside of, a polling place or the elections official's office, regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Talk to or attempt to stop the central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Make physical contact with election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place or the central counting site.
- Prevent other observers from observing materials or a process.
- Enter secure areas without the express permission of the elections official.

Observers at Voting Locations:

- Provide poll workers detailed guidance ahead of time on how they should manage observations at their site.
- Assess how many observers can be safely accommodated at each site.
- Prepare and provide simple messages for poll workers to use if more observers seek entry than permitted or refuse to comply with health guidelines.

VI. Mechanism for Feedback

Send a letter to Registrar of Voters, 255 N Forbes St, Lakeport CA 95453 or an email at elections@lakecountycalifornia.gov with any observations and/or suggestions.

Inspector's Instructions for Poll Watchers/Observers

Any person present at a polling place as a "Poll Watcher" should declare himself or herself to represent a political party, media, candidate, ballot measure, interested person, or a member of Lake County's Election Observer Panel. Please make sure all Poll Watchers/Observers check in with the precinct inspector and have been provided or are given an "Election Day – Poll Watcher/Observer Guidelines" information sheet, so they are aware of what they CAN DO and what they ARE NOT ALLOWED to do.

Poll Watchers/Observers must be positioned in a location where they can plainly see and hear what is done within the polling place but may not be in the area of the voting booths or the ballot box. Only Poll Workers and persons signing the Roster of Voters may sit at or near the table used by the Board.

Poll Watchers/Observers may speak with the precinct board and look at the Roster of Voters only when it doesn't interfere with the voting process. They may not at any time handle voted or unvoted ballots.

Only voters engaged in receiving, preparing, or depositing their ballots may be within the voting booth/voting box area before the closing of the polls. However, a voter may be accompanied by a child or children under the age of 18 years while the voter is within the voting booth if the child is, or children are, under the voter's care.

Elections Code section 18541 states:

- (a) No person shall, with the intent of dissuading another person from voting, within 100 feet of a polling place, do any of the following:
 - (1) Solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking his or her ballot.
 - (2) Place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of his or her qualifications except as provided in Section 14240.
 - (3) Photograph, video record, or otherwise record a voter entering or exiting a polling place.
- (b) Any violation of this section is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than 12 months, or in the state prison. Any person who conspires to violate this section is guilty of a felony.
- (c) For purposes of this section, 100 feet means a distance of 100 feet from the room or rooms in which voters are signing the roster and casting ballots.

Elections Code section 18370 states:

No person, on election day, or at any time that a voter may be casting a ballot, shall, within 100 feet of a polling place, a satellite location under Section 3018, or an elections official's office:

- (a) Circulate an initiative, referendum, recall, or nomination petition or any other petition.
- (b) Solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking his or her ballot.
- (c) Place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of his or her qualifications except as provided in Section 14240.
- (d) Do any electioneering as defined by Section 319.5.

As used in this section, "100 feet of a polling place, a satellite location under Section 3018, or an elections official's office" means a distance 100 feet from the room or rooms in which voters are signing the roster and casting ballots.

Any person who violates any of the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor

Inspector's Instructions for Poll Watchers/Observers **(continued)**

"Electioneering" is defined in the California Elections Code 319.5 as "the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any candidate or measure on the ballot within 100 feet of a polling place or an election's official's office under Section 3018."

Prohibited electioneering information includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- A display of a candidate's name, likeness, or logo.
- A display of a ballot measure's number, title, subject, or logo.
- Buttons, hats, pencils, pens, shirts, signs, or stickers containing electioneering information.
- Dissemination of audible electioneering information.

★For example, if a voter enters the polling place wearing a t-shirt or conspicuous button promoting a candidate or ballot measure the voter shall be asked to turn his/her shirt inside out or remove the button.★

Rights of Election Poll Watchers/Observers:

Anyone may observe the electoral process at polling places even if they are not voting.

Poll Watchers/Observers may be at the polls before they are open to the public, during polling hours, and after the polls close.

Poll Watchers/Observers may be in the polling place observing the process as long as they do not interfere with any voter's right to cast a secret ball or a poll worker's ability to work.

Observers and people working for campaigns have the right to visit polling places on Election Day to check the voter list to determine which voters have cast their ballots.

Poll Watchers/Observers may look at the Roster of Voters as long as the voting process is not delayed. They **may not** at any time handle voted or unvoted ballots.

The telephone at the polling place is for the use of the precinct board. Poll Watchers/Observers **MAY NOT** use the polling place telephone designated for the precinct board.

Poll Watchers/Observers have the right to ask poll workers questions about election procedures and receive an answer or be directed to the appropriate official for an answer. If a poll watcher has a concern or question about any action occurring in the polling place, that person should bring his or her concern or question to the attention of the Precinct Inspector.

Poll watchers **MAY NOT** take any unilateral steps to change any action, inaction or activity occurring at the polling place. If the Precinct Inspector fails to correct the questioned activity, the poll watcher should contact the Registrar of Voters office. If persistent questioning disrupts the poll workers' duties, the poll worker can stop responding and direct the Poll Watchers/Observers to the Registrar of Voters office for further answers.