

Centering Disabled Voices: Strategies for Successful Advocacy



www.disabilityrightsohio.org

Our Vision

**VOICES ELEVATED.
PEOPLE EMPOWERED.
EQUITY ACHIEVED.**

Relationship Building

Goal: to empower and assist advocates to tell their stories, civic engagement, and work on systemic change

- Attending grassroots groups
- Lean on the established network
- Connect with local Centers for Independent Living
- Connect with statewide groups like Breaking Silences, The Ohio Olmstead Task Force, and Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council

Strategies

How to Advocate Successfully

- What is the common goal or issue?
- Brainstorm the steps needed for change
- What are the top 3 asks?
- Develop unified messaging
 - Draft talking points and one-pagers
- Develop distribution plan

Advocacy Tools

- Action Alert
 - Ability to input specific language to help advocates send letters to identified persons
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- Creating listservs to send information quickly
- Following various statewide groups and their alerts
- [Build a Relationship With Your Legislator](#)

Successful Advocacy

FY24/25 Budget Advocacy

- Unified message: Direct Care Workers deserve a livable wage
- Hundreds of people with disabilities were empowered to tell their story
- Various groups repeated similar messaging
- DRO created a story map:
<https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/3f2ab559631544e2c0c9cbe88fe4b23e/direct-care-workforce-crisis-story-map/index.html>

Federal Law	Description
Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires election officials to allow a voter who is blind or has another disability to receive assistance from a person of the voter's choice (other than the voter's employer or its agent or an officer or agent of the voter's union) <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibits election officials from conditioning the right to vote on being able to read or write, attaining a particular level of education, or passing an interpretation "test."
Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 (VAEHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires election officials to provide either an accessible polling place in federal elections or an alternate means of voting.
National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires all offices that provide public assistance or state-funded programs that primarily serve persons with disabilities to provide an opportunity to register to vote in federal elections.
Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires election officials responsible for conducting federal elections to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide at least one accessible voting system for persons with disabilities at each polling place; and ▪ ensure that the accessible voting system provides the same privacy and independence that other voters receive.

Accessible Absentee Voting

Steps to Vote Using the Remote Ballot Marking System

1. Emailed a Ballot
2. Complete online
3. Print Ballot
4. Mail using special envelope

Remote ballot marking system

[11-G: Application for Absent Voter's Ballot by a Voter With a Disability & Request to Use Remote Ballot Marking System \(Online\)](#)

Recent Voting Law Changes 2023 – HB458

- Must present a valid, non-expired Picture ID
 - Ohio driver license
 - Ohio state ID card
 - U.S. passport or passport card
- Drop Box can only be located on Board of Elections property, and only one Drop Box is permitted per county

Lawsuits and Latest Updates

- Person with a disability can choose anyone to help them vote by absentee or in-person
- When dropping off absentee ballot at board of elections, must go inside and fill out an attestation form
- **Mailing the ballot is the ideal situation**
- [Voting Rights Groups File Federal Lawsuit Challenging Ohio HB458 for Violating Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

Accessible Voting for All

Ensuring access to all parts of the voting process for everyone

Claire Gaglione, Attorney at Disability Rights Ohio

- Practical steps for voters with disabilities and advocates
- Reasonable accommodations at the polling place and beyond
- Know your rights and resources!



Accessible Voting for All: DRO's Efforts

Disability Rights Ohio's efforts to improve voter accessibility and inform voters of their rights

- Election Day hotline, staffed by attorneys
 - Operating during polling hours (6:30am -7:30pm)
 - Call 800-282-9181
- Direct Advocacy/Service – disabled individuals and supporters can call anytime
 - Working alongside BOEs to increase access to polling places and find workable accommodations
 - Providing information to disabled voters – questions about accommodations at the polling place, planning your vote, etc.
 - Outreach (webinars, visits)
 - Individual assistance, resources and information, etc.

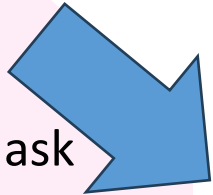
Accommodations Available to Voters

Preparing to vote

- Disabled individuals must have equal access to all parts of the voting process
 - See section 208 of the Voting Rights Act
- Accessible voting materials/information on voting
 - Vote411.org – League of Women Voters
- Absentee voting – anyone can vote by absentee ballot aka “no excuse” absentee voting

Absentee Ballot Application

- Form 11-G - accessible absentee ballot/remote ballot marking device
- Voter's SSN as ID
 - Good option if other acceptable forms of ID aren't available
- You can call the BOE and ask them to send you an application if you don't have access to a printer
- Accommodations and "Attorney in Fact" options for voter's signature



Form 11-A Prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State (10/2024)



Absentee Ballot Application

R.C. 3509.03

please print clearly (highlighted fields are required)

1) Your name

First: _____ Middle: _____
Last: _____ Suffix: _____

2) Your contact information *(recommended)*

Contact information will be used by the board of elections to contact you in a timely manner if your application is incomplete.

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

3) Your home address at which you are registered to vote *(no P.O. Boxes or polling place addresses)*

Street Address: _____
City: _____ County: _____ State: OH ZIP: _____

4) The address where you receive mail *(if different than above)*

Street Address *(or P.O. Box)*: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

5) Your date of birth: _____

6) Your identification

Provide **ONE** of the following:

A. Write in the last four digits of your Social Security number: _____
B. Write in your Ohio driver's license number or state ID card number: _____

C. A **COPY** of a different form of current photo identification (a driver's license, state ID card, or interim ID form issued by the Ohio BMV; a US passport or passport card; or a US military ID card, Ohio National Guard ID card, or US Department of Veterans Affairs ID card). The copy of the photo ID must include images of the front and back, except for a passport which must include the passport's identification page.

7) Election in which you would like to vote *(you must complete a separate application for each election)*

November General Election **Special Election** Date: _____
 Primary Election Date: _____

If a primary election is selected, indicate the type of ballot you would like to receive by selecting **ONE** of the following:

Democratic Republican Issues Only

Important: *If selecting a partisan ballot in a primary election, the ballot will include all questions and issues which the voter is eligible to vote.*

8) Affirmation

- I understand that, per Ohio law, the board of elections must receive this request no later than the close of business seven days before Election Day.
- I understand that if an absentee ballot is mailed to me and I change my mind and go to my polling place to vote on

Attestation Form

Returning Absentee Ballots at Drop Boxes

- Currently in Ohio, you must sign an attestation before returning someone else's absentee ballot to a **drop box**
 - For non-disabled voters: only defined family members can assist them
 - For disabled voters: anyone can assist
- If you return your absentee ballot via **mail**, no need for an attestation
- Upheld by Ohio Supreme Court :(

Family Member Absentee Ballot Delivery Attestation

R.C. 3509.05, R.C. 3599.21(A)(9)

I, _____, hereby attest that I

full name of assistor

am returning a ballot for _____

full name of voter

a family member defined under R.C. 3509.05 and that I am one of the following: spouse of the voter, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the voter.

Signature X _____

Today's Date: _____

WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE.

Disabled Voter Absentee Ballot Delivery Attestation

VRA Section 208

I, _____, hereby attest that I

full name of assistor

am returning a ballot for _____

full name of voter

who has designated me to assist them. The person I am assisting is a disabled voter, as defined by state or federal law, and I am not the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union under Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. §10508.

Signature X _____

Today's Date: _____

WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE.

Accommodations Available to Voters

At the Polls (Early Voting/Election Day Voting):

- Curbside voting – Poll workers bring a ballot out to the voter if they are unable to enter the building
 - NOT a substitute for accessible polling locations, but a good option.
 - Best practices – polling places have clear signage with a phone number
 - IF NOT, you can call Disability Rights Ohio and let us know!
 - Call your local board of elections and tell them you need assistance voting – they will contact the polling location
- Early voting – can reduce the risk of long lines/wait times
- Screen Readers/Accessible Voting Machines

Is your polling place accessible?

POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST



INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: This form is being used to evaluate Ohio polling places for access by voters with disabilities. The accessibility standards used in this survey are established using the 2010 and 1991 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and relevant provisions of the Ohio Revised Code.

How to use this form: This checklist is to be completed for each polling place. Follow the route a voter would take on Election Day approaching the building from the parking area, entering the building and reaching the voting room. You will notice that some portions of this form reflect different standards based on the construction date of the polling place and the date of any alterations that may have been made to the relevant portions of the polling place. In using this list, it will be helpful to be aware of the date that the building was constructed as well as the date of any relevant alterations.

County:

Political Subdivision:

Ward:

Precinct(s):

Name and Address of Polling Place:

Inspected By:

Date Inspected:

Brett Harbage – ADA Coordinator
 22 North Fourth Street
 Columbus, Ohio 43215
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506 0561 Revised 03/2023



BALLOT DROP BOX

N/A · [Skip to DRAWINGS - DIAGRAMS - NOTES - COMMENTS on page 38](#)

People with disabilities should be able to approach, access and insert their ballot into the ballot drop box independently, just as any other voter. The scope and requirements for an accessible ballot drop are explained below.

7.8 – Is the clear floor or ground space in front of the ballot drop box 30 inches minimum by 48 inches minimum?

Yes No Measurements:

Note: The clear space can be positioned for a forward or parallel approach to the ballot drop box.

Notes/Comments:



7.9 – Is the ground surface of the clear floor or ground space stable, firm, and slip-resistant?

Yes No

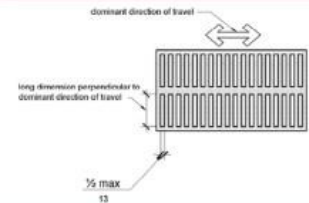
Notes/Comments:



7.10 – Is the clear floor or ground space free of surface openings greater than 1/2 inch, such as holes in the pavement or grate openings?

Yes No N/A Surface opening:

Notes/Comments:



7.11 – Is the slope of the clear floor or ground space within the required maneuvering clearances not steeper than 1:48 (2.08 percent) in any direction?

Yes No Slope Left/Right: Slope Front/Back:

Notes/Comments:



Accessible Voting Machines



eSlate - Hart Intercivic
Recommended by the American Federation of
the Blind

How to Use an Accessible Voting Machine – eSlate



Know Your Rights and Resources

Know Your Rights

- In Ohio, people with guardians can vote!
 - You do NOT need your guardian's permission to vote
- Some incarcerated people can vote!
 - You can vote if you were convicted of misdemeanor OR in jail awaiting trial for a felony charge
 - If you have been released from prison after a felony conviction you can reinstate your right to vote

Know Your Rights and Resources

Know Your Rights

- Section 208 of Voting Rights Act:
 - “Any voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by **a person of the voter’s choice**[...]”
 - Definitions: voting = all parts of the voting process
 - “Disability” may be more narrow than the ADA; however, Title II of the ADA applies to voting as well (Government Entities)

Know Your Rights and Resources

Know Your Resources and Plan Your Vote!

- The Secretary of State's website has breakdowns of accommodations available to voters with disabilities, or any voters who need assistance
- Check your voter registration! View your ballot!
 - Vote411.org - League of Women Voters
- The board of elections is a great resource
 - If you need accommodations or have questions, call your county's BOE and start the conversation - you can find their contact info on the SOS's website

Know Your Rights and Resources

Know Your Rights and Resources

- Plan your Vote - absentee, early, or on election day?
 - Where will you vote? How will you get there? What accommodations are needed?
 - If possible, find out where your polling place is located ahead of time and go there before election day
- Know your deadlines
 - Request absentee ballot by COB **October 29th**
 - Return absentee ballot by mail - postmarked by **November 4th**
 - Return absentee ballot in person - before polls close on **November 5th**

Questions?

Contact Us!

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