

# POLL WATCHER'S CERTIFICATE

To the Board of Elections in the County of Dutchess:

Pursuant to the provisions of §8-500 of the Election Law of the State of New York, the undersigned hereby appoints:

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Name of Individual  
(Print)

To act as a Watcher on their behalf, at the Primary, General or Special Election to be held on \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ Election District, \_\_\_\_\_ Ward in the Town \_\_\_\_\_ or City of \_\_\_\_\_, County of Dutchess, New York.

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Signature of Candidate, or  
Chairperson of Political Committee, or  
Independent Body

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Name of Candidate (Print)  
Chairperson of Political Committee, or  
Independent Body



# POLL WATCHER'S GUIDE

DUTCHESS COUNTY  
BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
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Erik J. Haight  
Republican  
Commissioner

Hannah Black  
Democratic  
Commissioner

## OVERVIEW

To ensure fair and honest elections, New York State law provides for appointing poll watchers to observe voting at the polls. Poll watchers are designated by candidates, political parties, independent organizations which have candidates on the ballot and/or political committees.

## THE ROLE OF THE POLL WATCHER

The role of the poll watcher is to observe elections at the polling sites on behalf of a particular candidate, political party or organization and where they observe irregularities, report these observations to either the Elections Inspector and/or the Board of Elections.

## POLL WATCHER QUALIFICATIONS

Poll watchers must be qualified voters in Dutchess County. Poll watchers must be certified in writing by a candidate, or a chairperson of a political committee or independent body and must present a certificate for each election district to the Elections Inspector for that election district. A facsimile of a Poll Watcher's Certificate appears on the reverse side of this guide.

## NUMBER OF POLL WATCHERS

New York State law allows three Poll Watchers per election district for each Party Committee, or independent body.

## POLL WATCHER RIGHTS

The Poll Watcher *may*:

- Arrive 15 minutes before opening to observe the opening of the polls.
- Compare the ballot on the voting machine with paper ballots to see that they match.
- Observe the closing of the polls and the final canvasses. Challenge individual voters on the basis of:

- Signature Authenticity
- Residence
- Multiple Voting
- Qualification to Vote
- Electioneering

## POLL WATCHER LIMITATIONS

The Poll Watcher *may not*:

- Be a candidate appearing on a ballot being voted on in the poll site.
- Electioneer in any manner.
  - Electioneering includes soliciting votes or distributing, wearing or carrying political literature, posters, banners or buttons or displaying refreshments showing a candidate or party's name.
- Tamper with election materials.
- Interfere with the election process.
- Protest a vote ruling.
- Accompany a voter to the booth.

## IF YOU SEE A VIOLATION

Poll watchers are not law enforcement officers; however, they may attempt to enforce their candidate's rights by reporting a violation to any of the following:

- Election Inspectors
- The Sheriff's Department
- The Dutchess County Board of Elections

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

The Board of Elections wishes to help bring about greater understanding and participation in the elections process. For more information on election laws and procedures, please write or call the Board of Elections.