



**94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**State of Illinois**  
**2005 and 2006**  
**HB2532**

Introduced 2/18/2005, by Rep. Elizabeth Coulson

**SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:**

10 ILCS 5/7-34  
10 ILCS 5/17-23

from Ch. 46, par. 7-34  
from Ch. 46, par. 17-23

Amends the Election Code. Permits precinct pollwatchers appointed by State civic organizations based upon guidelines set by rule of the State Board of Elections. Requires that the organizations must be certified bona fide by rule of the State Board of Elections. Effective immediately.

LRB094 09351 JAM 39593 b

1 AN ACT concerning elections.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Election Code is amended by changing  
5 Sections 7-34 and 17-23 as follows:

6 (10 ILCS 5/7-34) (from Ch. 46, par. 7-34)

7 Sec. 7-34. Pollwatchers in a primary election shall be  
8 authorized in the following manner:

9 (1) Each established political party shall be entitled to  
10 appoint one pollwatcher per precinct. Such pollwatchers must be  
11 affiliated with the political party for which they are  
12 pollwatching and must be a registered voter in Illinois.

13 (2) Each candidate shall be entitled to appoint two  
14 pollwatchers per precinct. For Federal, State, and county  
15 primary elections, the pollwatchers must be registered to vote  
16 in Illinois.

17 (3) Each organization of citizens within the county or  
18 political subdivision, which has among its purposes or  
19 interests the investigation or prosecution of election frauds,  
20 and which shall have registered its name and address and the  
21 names and addresses of its principal officers with the proper  
22 election authority at least 40 days before the primary  
23 election, shall be entitled to appoint one pollwatcher per  
24 precinct. For all primary elections, the pollwatcher must be  
25 registered to vote in Illinois.

26 (3.5) Each State civic organization, certified as bona fide  
27 by the State Board, is entitled to appoint precinct  
28 pollwatchers based upon guidelines set by the State Board by  
29 rule. The State Board shall define and determine bona fide  
30 State civic organizations by rule.

31 (4) Each organized group of proponents or opponents of a  
32 ballot proposition, which shall have registered the name and

1 address of its organization or committee and the name and  
2 address of its chairman with the proper election authority at  
3 least 40 days before the primary election, shall be entitled to  
4 appoint one pollwatcher per precinct. The pollwatcher must be  
5 registered to vote in Illinois.

6 (5) In any primary election held to nominate candidates for  
7 the offices of a municipality of less than 3,000,000 population  
8 that is situated in 2 or more counties, a pollwatcher who is a  
9 resident of a county in which any part of the municipality is  
10 situated shall be eligible to serve as a pollwatcher in any  
11 polling place located within such municipality, provided that  
12 such pollwatcher otherwise complies with the respective  
13 requirements of subsections (1) through (4) of this Section and  
14 is a registered voter whose residence is within Illinois.

15 All pollwatchers shall be required to have proper  
16 credentials. Such credentials shall be printed in sufficient  
17 quantities, shall be issued by and under the facsimile  
18 signature(s) of the election authority and shall be available  
19 for distribution at least 2 weeks prior to the election. Such  
20 credentials shall be authorized by the real or facsimile  
21 signature of the State or local party official or the candidate  
22 or the presiding officer of the civic organization or the  
23 chairman of the proponent or opponent group, as the case may  
24 be.

25 Pollwatcher credentials shall be in substantially the  
26 following form:

27 POLLWATCHER CREDENTIALS

28 TO THE JUDGES OF ELECTION:

29 In accordance with the provisions of the Election Code, the  
30 undersigned hereby appoints ..... (name of pollwatcher)  
31 at ..... (address) in the county of .....,  
32 ..... (township or municipality) of ..... (name),  
33 State of Illinois and who is duly registered to vote from this  
34 address, to act as a pollwatcher in the ..... precinct of  
35 the ..... ward (if applicable) of the .....

1 (township or municipality) of ..... at the .....  
2 election to be held on (insert date).

3 ..... (Signature of Appointing Authority)  
4 ..... TITLE (party official, candidate,  
5 civic organization president,  
6 proponent or opponent group chairman)

7 Under penalties provided by law pursuant to Section 29-10  
8 of the Election Code, the undersigned pollwatcher certifies  
9 that he or she resides at ..... (address) in the  
10 county of ....., ..... (township or municipality) of  
11 ..... (name), State of Illinois, and is duly registered to  
12 vote in Illinois.

13 .....  
14 (Precinct and/or Ward in ..... (Signature of Pollwatcher)  
15 Which Pollwatcher Resides)

16 Pollwatchers must present their credentials to the Judges  
17 of Election upon entering the polling place. Pollwatcher  
18 credentials properly executed and signed shall be proof of the  
19 qualifications of the pollwatcher authorized thereby. Such  
20 credentials are retained by the Judges and returned to the  
21 Election Authority at the end of the day of election with the  
22 other election materials. Once a pollwatcher has surrendered a  
23 valid credential, he may leave and reenter the polling place  
24 provided that such continuing action does not disrupt the  
25 conduct of the election. Pollwatchers may be substituted during  
26 the course of the day, but established political parties,  
27 candidates, qualified civic organizations and proponents and  
28 opponents of a ballot proposition can have only as many  
29 pollwatchers at any given time as are authorized in this  
30 Article. A substitute must present his signed credential to the  
31 judges of election upon entering the polling place. Election  
32 authorities must provide a sufficient number of credentials to  
33 allow for substitution of pollwatchers. After the polls have  
34 closed, pollwatchers shall be allowed to remain until the  
35 canvass of votes is completed; but may leave and reenter only

1 in cases of necessity, provided that such action is not so  
2 continuous as to disrupt the canvass of votes.

3 Candidates seeking office in a district or municipality  
4 encompassing 2 or more counties shall be admitted to any and  
5 all polling places throughout such district or municipality  
6 without regard to the counties in which such candidates are  
7 registered to vote. Actions of such candidates shall be  
8 governed in each polling place by the same privileges and  
9 limitations that apply to pollwatchers as provided in this  
10 Section. Any such candidate who engages in an activity in a  
11 polling place which could reasonably be construed by a majority  
12 of the judges of election as campaign activity shall be removed  
13 forthwith from such polling place.

14 Candidates seeking office in a district or municipality  
15 encompassing 2 or more counties who desire to be admitted to  
16 polling places on election day in such district or municipality  
17 shall be required to have proper credentials. Such credentials  
18 shall be printed in sufficient quantities, shall be issued by  
19 and under the facsimile signature of the election authority of  
20 the election jurisdiction where the polling place in which the  
21 candidate seeks admittance is located, and shall be available  
22 for distribution at least 2 weeks prior to the election. Such  
23 credentials shall be signed by the candidate.

24 Candidate credentials shall be in substantially the  
25 following form:

26 CANDIDATE CREDENTIALS

27 TO THE JUDGES OF ELECTION:

28 In accordance with the provisions of the Election Code, I  
29 ..... (name of candidate) hereby certify that I am a candidate  
30 for ..... (name of office) and seek admittance to .....  
31 precinct of the ..... ward (if applicable) of the .....  
32 (township or municipality) of ..... at the ..... election  
33 to be held on (insert date).

34 .....  
35 (Signature of Candidate) OFFICE FOR WHICH

1 CANDIDATE SEEKS  
2 NOMINATION OR  
3 ELECTION

4 Pollwatchers shall be permitted to observe all proceedings  
5 relating to the conduct of the election and to station  
6 themselves in a position in the voting room as will enable them  
7 to observe the judges making the signature comparison between  
8 the voter application and the voter registration record card;  
9 provided, however, that such pollwatchers shall not be  
10 permitted to station themselves in such close proximity to the  
11 judges of election so as to interfere with the orderly conduct  
12 of the election and shall not, in any event, be permitted to  
13 handle election materials. Pollwatchers may challenge for  
14 cause the voting qualifications of a person offering to vote  
15 and may call to the attention of the judges of election any  
16 incorrect procedure or apparent violations of this Code.

17 If a majority of the judges of election determine that the  
18 polling place has become too overcrowded with pollwatchers so  
19 as to interfere with the orderly conduct of the election, the  
20 judges shall, by lot, limit such pollwatchers to a reasonable  
21 number, except that each candidate and each established or new  
22 political party shall be permitted to have at least one  
23 pollwatcher present.

24 Representatives of an election authority, with regard to an  
25 election under its jurisdiction, the State Board of Elections,  
26 and law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to a  
27 United States Attorney, a State's attorney, the Attorney  
28 General, and a State, county, or local police department, in  
29 the performance of their official election duties, shall be  
30 permitted at all times to enter and remain in the polling  
31 place. Upon entering the polling place, such representatives  
32 shall display their official credentials or other  
33 identification to the judges of election.

34 Uniformed police officers assigned to polling place duty  
35 shall follow all lawful instructions of the judges of election.

1           The provisions of this Section shall also apply to  
2 supervised casting of absentee ballots as provided in Section  
3 19-12.2 of this Act.

4           (Source: P.A. 93-574, eff. 8-21-03.)

5           (10 ILCS 5/17-23) (from Ch. 46, par. 17-23)

6           Sec. 17-23. Pollwatchers in a general election shall be  
7 authorized in the following manner:

8           (1) Each established political party shall be entitled to  
9 appoint two pollwatchers per precinct. Such pollwatchers must  
10 be affiliated with the political party for which they are  
11 pollwatching. For all elections, the pollwatchers must be  
12 registered to vote in Illinois.

13           (2) Each candidate shall be entitled to appoint two  
14 pollwatchers per precinct. For all elections, the pollwatchers  
15 must be registered to vote in Illinois.

16           (3) Each organization of citizens within the county or  
17 political subdivision, which has among its purposes or  
18 interests the investigation or prosecution of election frauds,  
19 and which shall have registered its name and address and the  
20 name and addresses of its principal officers with the proper  
21 election authority at least 40 days before the election, shall  
22 be entitled to appoint one pollwatcher per precinct. For all  
23 elections, the pollwatcher must be registered to vote in  
24 Illinois.

25           (3.5) Each State civic organization, certified as bona fide  
26 by the State Board, is entitled to appoint precinct  
27 pollwatchers based upon guidelines set by the State Board by  
28 rule. The State Board shall define and determine bona fide  
29 State civic organizations by rule.

30           (4) In any general election held to elect candidates for  
31 the offices of a municipality of less than 3,000,000 population  
32 that is situated in 2 or more counties, a pollwatcher who is a  
33 resident of Illinois shall be eligible to serve as a  
34 pollwatcher in any poll located within such municipality,  
35 provided that such pollwatcher otherwise complies with the

1 respective requirements of subsections (1) through (3) of this  
 2 Section and is a registered voter in Illinois.

3 (5) Each organized group of proponents or opponents of a  
 4 ballot proposition, which shall have registered the name and  
 5 address of its organization or committee and the name and  
 6 address of its chairman with the proper election authority at  
 7 least 40 days before the election, shall be entitled to appoint  
 8 one pollwatcher per precinct. The pollwatcher must be  
 9 registered to vote in Illinois.

10 All pollwatchers shall be required to have proper  
 11 credentials. Such credentials shall be printed in sufficient  
 12 quantities, shall be issued by and under the facsimile  
 13 signature(s) of the election authority and shall be available  
 14 for distribution at least 2 weeks prior to the election. Such  
 15 credentials shall be authorized by the real or facsimile  
 16 signature of the State or local party official or the candidate  
 17 or the presiding officer of the civic organization or the  
 18 chairman of the proponent or opponent group, as the case may  
 19 be.

20 Pollwatcher credentials shall be in substantially the  
 21 following form:

POLLWATCHER CREDENTIALS

22  
 23 TO THE JUDGES OF ELECTION:

24 In accordance with the provisions of the Election Code, the  
 25 undersigned hereby appoints ..... (name of pollwatcher)  
 26 who resides at ..... (address) in the county of  
 27 ....., ..... (township or municipality) of  
 28 ..... (name), State of Illinois and who is duly  
 29 registered to vote from this address, to act as a pollwatcher  
 30 in the ..... precinct of the ..... ward (if  
 31 applicable) of the ..... (township or municipality) of  
 32 ..... at the ..... election to be held on (insert  
 33 date).

34 ..... (Signature of Appointing Authority)  
 35 ..... TITLE (party official, candidate,



1 civic organization president,  
2 proponent or opponent group chairman)

3 Under penalties provided by law pursuant to Section 29-10  
4 of the Election Code, the undersigned pollwatcher certifies  
5 that he or she resides at ..... (address) in the  
6 county of ....., ..... (township or municipality)  
7 of ..... (name), State of Illinois, and is duly  
8 registered to vote in Illinois.

9 .....  
10 (Precinct and/or Ward in (Signature of Pollwatcher)  
11 Which Pollwatcher Resides)

12 Pollwatchers must present their credentials to the Judges  
13 of Election upon entering the polling place. Pollwatcher  
14 credentials properly executed and signed shall be proof of the  
15 qualifications of the pollwatcher authorized thereby. Such  
16 credentials are retained by the Judges and returned to the  
17 Election Authority at the end of the day of election with the  
18 other election materials. Once a pollwatcher has surrendered a  
19 valid credential, he may leave and reenter the polling place  
20 provided that such continuing action does not disrupt the  
21 conduct of the election. Pollwatchers may be substituted during  
22 the course of the day, but established political parties,  
23 candidates and qualified civic organizations can have only as  
24 many pollwatchers at any given time as are authorized in this  
25 Article. A substitute must present his signed credential to the  
26 judges of election upon entering the polling place. Election  
27 authorities must provide a sufficient number of credentials to  
28 allow for substitution of pollwatchers. After the polls have  
29 closed pollwatchers shall be allowed to remain until the  
30 canvass of votes is completed; but may leave and reenter only  
31 in cases of necessity, provided that such action is not so  
32 continuous as to disrupt the canvass of votes.

33 Candidates seeking office in a district or municipality  
34 encompassing 2 or more counties shall be admitted to any and

1 all polling places throughout such district or municipality  
 2 without regard to the counties in which such candidates are  
 3 registered to vote. Actions of such candidates shall be  
 4 governed in each polling place by the same privileges and  
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 7 polling place which could reasonably be construed by a majority  
 8 of the judges of election as campaign activity shall be removed  
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10 Candidates seeking office in a district or municipality  
 11 encompassing 2 or more counties who desire to be admitted to  
 12 polling places on election day in such district or municipality  
 13 shall be required to have proper credentials. Such credentials  
 14 shall be printed in sufficient quantities, shall be issued by  
 15 and under the facsimile signature of the election authority of  
 16 the election jurisdiction where the polling place in which the  
 17 candidate seeks admittance is located, and shall be available  
 18 for distribution at least 2 weeks prior to the election. Such  
 19 credentials shall be signed by the candidate.

20 Candidate credentials shall be in substantially the  
 21 following form:

22 CANDIDATE CREDENTIALS

23 TO THE JUDGES OF ELECTION:

24 In accordance with the provisions of the Election Code, I  
 25 ..... (name of candidate) hereby certify that I am a candidate  
 26 for ..... (name of office) and seek admittance to .....  
 27 precinct of the ..... ward (if applicable) of the .....  
 28 (township or municipality) of ..... at the ..... election  
 29 to be held on (insert date).

30 ..... ..

31 (Signature of Candidate)

OFFICE FOR WHICH

32 CANDIDATE SEEKS

33 NOMINATION OR

34 ELECTION

1 Pollwatchers shall be permitted to observe all proceedings  
2 relating to the conduct of the election and to station  
3 themselves in a position in the voting room as will enable them  
4 to observe the judges making the signature comparison between  
5 the voter application and the voter registration record card;  
6 provided, however, that such pollwatchers shall not be  
7 permitted to station themselves in such close proximity to the  
8 judges of election so as to interfere with the orderly conduct  
9 of the election and shall not, in any event, be permitted to  
10 handle election materials. Pollwatchers may challenge for  
11 cause the voting qualifications of a person offering to vote  
12 and may call to the attention of the judges of election any  
13 incorrect procedure or apparent violations of this Code.

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15 polling place has become too overcrowded with pollwatchers so  
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17 judges shall, by lot, limit such pollwatchers to a reasonable  
18 number, except that each established or new political party  
19 shall be permitted to have at least one pollwatcher present.

20 Representatives of an election authority, with regard to an  
21 election under its jurisdiction, the State Board of Elections,  
22 and law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to a  
23 United States Attorney, a State's attorney, the Attorney  
24 General, and a State, county, or local police department, in  
25 the performance of their official election duties, shall be  
26 permitted at all times to enter and remain in the polling  
27 place. Upon entering the polling place, such representatives  
28 shall display their official credentials or other  
29 identification to the judges of election.

30 Uniformed police officers assigned to polling place duty  
31 shall follow all lawful instructions of the judges of election.

32 The provisions of this Section shall also apply to  
33 supervised casting of absentee ballots as provided in Section  
34 19-12.2 of this Act.

35 (Source: P.A. 93-574, eff. 8-21-03.)

1           Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
2    becoming law.