



COUNTY OF LAKE
Registrar of Voters Office

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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: May 6, 2022

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.
3. 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 (see sample attached) 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 (see sample attached) 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

Provided rules that observers must be aware of and follow:

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.
- 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.
- 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 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 Tabulation Locations:

- Make allowances for the space and personal disinfection needs of the observers as you build out these work areas.
- Given that vote-by-mail ballots will make up a greater percentage of the results than in past years, anticipate and plan for a greater number of requests to observe the mail process, whether by video or in-person.

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

Lake County Registrar of Voters office welcomes feedback from observers. Please contact us directly during your observation period if you see an activity or action that is concerning. Following the Election, we welcome your feedback, send a letter to the Registrar of Voters, 325 N Forbes St, Lakeport CA 95453 or an email to elections@lakecountyca.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.

"Electioneering" is defined in Elections Code section 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 either of the following:

- the entrance to a building that contains a polling place as defined by Section 338.5, an elections official's office, or a satellite location specified in Section 3018, or
- an outdoor site, including a curbside voting area, at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot.

Prohibited materials, information, or activity includes, but is not limited to:

- 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 information about a candidate or measure on the ballot.
- any audible broadcasting of information about a candidate or measure on the ballot.
- obstructing access to, loitering near, or disseminating visible or audible electioneering information at vote-by-mail ballot drop boxes.

It should be noted that a campaign slogan or a political movement slogan (or the initials representing the campaign or political movement) does not constitute electioneering under the legal definition of electioneering as stated above. Accordingly, the display of slogans on clothing, face coverings, and/or buttons is not prohibited. Examples of campaign slogans or political movement slogans include but are not limited to: Make America Great Again (MAGA), Black Lives Matter (BLM), Keep America Great (KAG), Vote for Science, and Build Back Better.

The Elections Code also provides penal provisions for anyone who engages in electioneering or activities related to the corruption of the voting process.

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

Elections Code section 18370 provides:

A person shall not, on Election Day, or at any time that a voter may be casting a ballot, do any of the following:

- circulate an initiative, referendum, recall, or nomination petition or any other petition
- solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking the voter's ballot
- place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of the voter's qualifications except as provided in Section 14240
- do any electioneering as defined by Section 319.5 within

100 feet of either of the following:

- the entrance to a building that contains a polling place as defined by Section 338.5, an elections official's office, or a satellite location specified in Section 3018, or
- an outdoor site, including a curbside voting area, at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot.

A person shall not, on Election Day, or at any time that a voter may be casting a ballot, do any of the following within the immediate vicinity of a voter in line to cast a ballot or drop off a ballot:

- solicit a vote.
- speak to a voter about marking the voter's ballot.
- disseminate visible or audible electioneering information.

Any person who violates any of the provisions of Section 18370 is guilty of a misdemeanor.

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

Additionally, Elections Code section 18541 provides:

A person shall not, with the intent of dissuading another person from voting, do any of the following:

- solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking his or her ballot
- place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of the voter's qualifications except as provided in Section 14240
- photograph, video record, or otherwise record a voter entering or exiting a polling place
- obstruct ingress, egress, or parking within

100 feet of either of the following:

- the entrance to a building that contains a polling place as defined by Section 338.5, an elections official's office, or a satellite location specified in Section 3018, or
- an outdoor site, including a curbside voting area, at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot.

A person shall not, with the intent of dissuading another person from voting, do any of the following within the immediate vicinity of a voter in line to cast a ballot or drop off a ballot:

- solicit a vote.
- speak to a voter about marking the voter's ballot.
- disseminate visible or audible electioneering information.

Any violation of Section 18541 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.