

To the Editor

The League of Women Voters is being asked if elections can be rigged. The answer is NO!
There are many checks and balances within the voting process to make sure our elections are safe.

The registration process ensures that only citizens are able to vote. The checks are based on your driver's license and social security number. If you are changing your voter registration, a key component is the old and new address linking you to your previous voter record. All registration and voter information is stored in the PA Dept. of State SURE database in Harrisburg and a county wide list of voters can be purchased from the Dept. of State.

On Election Day, there are many built in safeguards. The machines are prepared for the election at a County storage area. They are delivered locked with seals that are publicly broken by the Judge of Elections and the opening count is recorded. Election materials, including a list of all who submitted an absentee ballot are posted for all voters to see. As a voter you declare your name and if a first time voter show some form of identification which includes a current address. The Clerks write down your name in a booklet that is given to both parties at the end of the day. The voter signs the SURE database copy of the voter list which is compared to the signature used to register. The voter is directed to a voting machine where they press on a button to select a candidate and press the VOTE button on the bottom right hand side to record the vote which increases the number voting by one on the back of the machine.

Provisional paper ballots are given to anyone who believes they should be allowed to vote but whose name is not listed on the voter list. These votes are not counted with absentee ballots and the validity of each provisional ballot is decided on by the Election Bureau in the week after the election.

Poll workers and poll watchers are the only ones allowed inside the polls. No one can electioneer, solicit votes or intimidate voters inside the polling place location. All others must be at least 10 feet from the poll location. Each candidate can appoint two poll watchers for each election district and each party can appoint three watchers if they have a candidate on the ballot. Election Observers can be outside the polls as well as those handing out candidate information. Peace officers can come inside the polls if needed.

The polls must remain open until all waiting in line at 8 PM have had the opportunity to vote. Once all have voted, the machines are shut down and sealed to make sure nothing can be changed on each machine. Reports are filled out and signed by the Judge of Elections and someone from the minority party. Absentee ballots are counted once the last person has voted. Any person who sent in an absentee ballot and then come to the polls had their absentee ballot voided before they voted and stored to be returned to the County Election Bureau. Copies of all results are hand delivered to the County Election Bureau and given to each party.

All Poll Workers are offered paid training. On Election Day they sign documents testifying to what they did and a form to receive payment for working at the polls. The League of Women Voters is grateful to the citizens who spend their day making sure our elections go smoothly. You can vote knowing that your vote is important and will count.

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