

ABSENTEE VOTING

In Iowa, there are special procedures for individuals residing in hospitals or health care facilities who would like to vote using an absentee ballot.

Request an absentee ballot. The form to request the ballot is available on the Secretary of State’s website (www.sos.iowa.gov) or by calling (515) 281-5204 to request that the form to be sent via U.S. Mail.

The request must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. If an individual is admitted to a facility or hospital between Friday and election day, she/he may contact the county auditor to request an absentee ballot.

Voting. A bipartisan team of election officials must deliver the absentee ballot. The voter will be notified when the team will be delivering the ballot. If the voter will not be available, she/he may arrange for another time that will be more convenient.

The team members will deliver the absentee ballot and wait while it is marked. They will return the ballot to the county auditor.

Every citizen has the right to vote.

Under both the United States and Iowa Constitutions, every adult citizen may vote unless that person has been either (1) declared mentally incompetent to vote; or (2) convicted of an infamous crime.

What does it mean to be “mentally incompetent”?

A person is mentally incompetent to vote if he or she *lacks sufficient capacity to comprehend and exercise the right to vote.*

Who determines competency?

The court will usually make this determination during a commitment hearing or at the time of granting guardianship.

EVERY CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES... SHALL BE ENTITLED TO VOTE AT ALL ELECTIONS... IOWA CONST., ART. II, SEC. 1

Once a guardian is appointed, is the ward automatically presumed to be mentally incompetent to vote?

NO! Just because an individual has a guardian does NOT mean he or she is unable to vote.

Rather, the judge is required to make a separate determination regarding competency to vote at the time of granting guardianship.

How does someone register to vote?

Complete a voter registration form. The form is available on the Secretary of State’s website, or by calling (515) 281-5204 to request that the form be sent via U.S. Mail.

Sign the completed form. If a voter is not physically able to sign, she/he may use a mark or stamp she/he regularly uses or may ask someone to sign for her/him. A person including a guardian or agent may only sign for the voter at the request of and in the presence of the voter.

If this form is sent at least 10 days before a primary or general election or 11 days before any other election, the county auditor will send a voter registration card within two weeks

Same-Day Voter Registration

Voters may also register on Election Day. The voter will need to show proof of residency and proof of identity. A current driver’s license is the best method. If the voter does not have a current driver’s license, she/he may provide a photo ID and one of the following: utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check,

Suspected Voter Fraud

Should you suspect that someone has completed a voter registration form or an absentee ballot on behalf of a voter and without the voter’s request or outside of the presence of the voter, you should immediately contact the Secretary of State’s Voter Fraud Hotline and report your concerns.

1-866-505-VOTE or 1-866-767-8683