



## Know your rights to vote safely and without intimidation

*Minnesota has a history of running the best, highest-turnout elections in America. Minnesotans have every reason to expect that the November 3 elections in our state will run as safely, smoothly, and securely as always.*

*Minnesotans can also expect that they will be able to vote without intimidation or interference. Minnesota and federal law are clear: it is strictly illegal to intimidate or interfere with voters. Here is a selection of state and federal laws that protect you as a voter from intimidation.*

*As Attorney General, I do not expect to have to enforce these laws. But I will not hesitate to enforce them to the fullest extent if necessary to protect your right to vote. If you experience any kind of interference or intimidation in voting or attempting to vote, call 877-600-VOTE.*

— Keith Ellison

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### No one may prevent you from voting or registering to vote.

- Under federal law, it is illegal to “knowingly and willfully intimidate[], threaten[], or coerce[], or attempt[] to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, any person for registering to vote, or voting, or attempting to register or vote.” [52 U.S.C. § 20511\(1\)\(A\)](#)
- “Abduction, duress, or fraud may not be used to obstruct or prevent the free exercise of the right to vote of a voter at a primary or election, or compel a voter to vote at a primary or election.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.07](#)

### **No one may force you to vote for or against someone.**

- Under federal law, it is illegal to “intimidate[], threaten[], coerce[], or attempt[] to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of such other person to vote or to vote as he may choose, or of causing such other person to vote for, or not to vote for, any candidate” for federal office. [18 U.S.C. § 594](#)
- “A person may not directly or indirectly use or threaten force, coercion, violence, restraint, damage, harm, loss, including loss of employment or economic reprisal, undue influence, or temporal or spiritual injury against an individual to compel the individual to vote for or against a candidate or ballot question.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.07](#)

### **No one may interfere with you when you go to vote.**

- Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone “whether or not acting under color of law” to “by force or threat of force willfully injure[], intimidate[] or interfere[] with, or attempt[] to injure, intimidate or interfere with any person...voting or qualifying to vote.” [18 U.S.C. § 245\(b\)\(1\)\(A\)](#)
- “An individual shall be allowed to go to and from the polling place for the purpose of voting without unlawful interference.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 1](#)

### **Only voters are allowed within 100 feet of polling places, with limited exceptions. So-called “poll watchers” are not allowed within 100 feet of polling places.**

- “No one except an election official or an individual who is waiting to register or to vote or an individual who is conducting exit polling shall stand within 100 feet of the building in which a polling place is located.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 1](#)
- You are also protected from harassment or intimidation by Minnesota state laws against disorderly conduct ([Minn. Stat. § 609.72, subd. 1](#)) and threats of violence ([Minn. Stat. § 609.713, subd. 1](#)), among others.

### **No one may harass or intimidate you more than 100 feet from a polling place.**

- The same Minnesota state laws against disorderly conduct ([Minn. Stat. § 609.72, subd. 1](#)) and threats of violence ([Minn. Stat. § 609.713, subd. 1](#)), among others, protect you from harassment or intimidation more than 100 feet from a polling place.

### **Other than designated officials, people are allowed in polling places only if they are:**

- “...voting or registering to vote, providing proof of residence for an individual who is registering to vote, or assisting a disabled voter or a voter who is unable to read English.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

## **No one may interfere with you while you cast your ballot.**

- “During voting hours no one except individuals receiving, marking, or depositing ballots shall approach within six feet of a voting booth, ballot counter, or electronic voting equipment, unless lawfully authorized to do so by an election judge or the individual is an election judge monitoring the operation of the ballot counter or electronic voting equipment.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

## **Challengers designated by political parties are allowed in polling places; however, they are subject to restrictions, and may not harass or intimidate you or attempt to influence voting in any manner.**

- “At an election to fill partisan offices, the chair of an authorized committee of each major political party may appoint by written certificate voters from that political party to act as challengers of voters at the polling place for each precinct. Only one challenger from each major political party for each precinct shall be allowed to remain in the polling place at one time.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 1](#)
- “A challenger must be a resident of this state. Appointed challengers seeking admission to a polling place to serve in that capacity must prove their status as a resident of this state.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 3a](#)
- “An election judge may not be appointed as a challenger.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 4](#)
- “No challenger shall handle or inspect registration cards, files, or lists. Challengers shall not prepare in any manner any list of individuals who have or have not voted. They shall not attempt to influence voting in any manner. They shall not converse with a voter except to determine, in the presence of an election judge, whether the voter is eligible to vote in the precinct.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 4](#)
- “Challengers and the political parties that appointed them must not compile lists of voters to challenge on the basis of mail sent by a political party that was returned as undeliverable or if receipt by the intended recipient was not acknowledged in the case of registered mail.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 5](#)

## **Law enforcement may not interfere with your right to vote.**

- “An election judge may request a sergeant-at-arms or a peace officer to arrest or remove from the polling place any individual who, despite a warning to desist, engages in disorderly conduct. A sergeant-at-arms or a peace officer shall not otherwise interfere in any manner with voters.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 5](#)
- “Except when summoned by an election judge to restore the peace or when voting or registering to vote, no peace officer shall enter or remain in a polling place or stand within 50 feet of the entrance of a polling place.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 6](#)

**The President may not order agents of the federal government to polling places. Agents of the federal government may not interfere with your right to vote.**

- Under federal law, it is illegal for an employee of the United States to use “official authority for the purpose of interfering with, or affecting, the nomination or the election of any candidate” for federal office. [18 U.S.C. § 595](#)

**The President may not order military to polling places. Military may not interfere with your right to vote.**

- Under federal law, it is illegal for any “officer of the Army or Navy, or other person in the civil, military, or naval service of the United States” to order or control “any troops or armed men at any place where a general or special election is held, unless such force be necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States.” [18 U.S.C. § 592](#)

**Private armed forces are illegal in Minnesota and may not interfere with your right to vote.**

- “It shall not be lawful for any body of persons, other than the National Guard, troops of the United States and, with the consent of the governor, sons and daughters of veterans and cadets of educational institutions where military science is taught, to associate themselves together as a military company with arms.” [Minn. Stat. § 624.61](#)
- Under Minnesota state law, it is illegal to “assemble[] with one or more persons for the purpose of training with, practicing with, or being instructed in the use of any firearm, or explosive or incendiary device capable of causing injury or death, with the intent that it be unlawfully employed for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder.” [Minn. Stat. § 609.669, subd. 1\(2\)](#)

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