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A CITIZEN'S GUIDE

to

SECRETARY OF STATE  
Bob Taft's Office



30 E. Broad St, 14th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0418

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday

**W**elcome to the office of  
**Secretary of State Bob Taft.**  
This brochure is designed to inform  
you about our duties and  
responsibilities.

## **C**hief Elections Officer

As Ohio's *chief election officer*, Secretary of State Bob Taft oversees the elections process and appoints the members of boards of elections in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

He supervises the administration of election laws; approves ballot language; reviews statewide initiative and referendum petitions; chairs the Ohio Ballot Board, which approves ballot language for statewide issues; canvasses votes for all elective state offices and issues; investigates election frauds and irregularities; trains election officials and reimburses counties for pollworker training costs.

The *Elections division* compiles and maintains election statistics, political party records and other election-related records. Statewide candidates' campaign finance reports are filed with the office, together with the reports for state political action committees (PACs), state political parties and legislative caucus campaign committees.

The Secretary of State's office provides administrative staff to the Ohio Elections Commission, a five-member appointed panel, which hears charges regarding election law violations. The commission meets monthly. Four of its members are appointed by the Secretary of State upon the recommendation of the two state political parties.

The Secretary of State's office also licenses ministers to perform marriage; registers travel agencies and tour promoters; registers alien land; and issues apostilles, which are certifications verifying signatures on documents going out of the country.

All laws passed by the Ohio General Assembly, municipal charters, administrative rules adopted by agencies, and all executive orders issued by the Governor are filed with this office, as well.

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## *Granting Authority to Do Business in Ohio*

The *Business Services division* receives and approves articles of incorporation for Ohio corporations and grants licenses to out-of-state corporations seeking to do business in Ohio. Limited partnerships and limited liability companies also file with our office.

The *Corporations* section of the Business Services division also approves amendments to filed documents; mergers; consolidations and dissolutions; and registers trade marks, trade names and fictitious names.

The section approves and keeps a register of business names, names and addresses of statutory agents, incorporators' names, the corporation's charter number, the date of incorporation, and the number of shares authorized.

You may purchase copies of corporate documents for existing businesses by calling  
(614) 466-1776.

A free publication, the *Guide to Organizing a Business in Ohio*, provides step-by-step procedures for incorporating a business.

If you are organizing or operating a non-profit entity, the *Legal Handbook for Non-profit Organizations* provides information about incorporation and legal and tax considerations.

For a free copy of the  
*Guide to Organizing a Business in Ohio*  
or the  
*Legal Handbook for Non-profit Organizations*  
call (614) 466-3910.

## *D*ocumenting Secured Commercial Transactions

Secured parties file financing statements in the *Uniform Commercial Code* section of the Business Services division to claim an interest in collateral used for a loan and to have the claim indexed for public notice.

Copies of information on file are available for purchase, including names and addresses of the debtors and the secured parties and a general description of the property being used for collateral.

For a free publication that outlines statutory filing requirements, the  
*Ohio Uniform Commercial Code Checklist*,  
or for filing information, call (614) 466-3623.

## *A*pportionment Board

The Secretary of State is a member of the Apportionment Board, which meets every 10 years following the decennial census. The five-member board redraws boundaries for each of the 99 Ohio House and 33 Ohio Senate districts to reflect population changes. Other members of the Apportionment Board are the Governor, the Auditor of State and two members, one Republican and one Democrat, appointed by state legislative leaders.

## *P*ublic Access to Documents

The Secretary of State's office provides public access to a wide variety of corporations, uniform commercial code, election and campaign finance records and documents.

Computer terminals and microfiche viewers are provided for public access to the records. The office is located on the 14th floor of the Rhodes State Office Tower, across from the state capitol, and is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Corporation and uniform commercial code information can be purchased in the form of magnetic computer tapes, computer-printed lists and gummed labels.

Lists of registered voters, historical and current candidate elections results, and campaign finance records are available for purchase on computer print-outs or magnetic computer tapes. Some of this information is also available on diskette.

**Call (614) 466-8895 for information about what's available and how to obtain it.**

# *P*ublications

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In addition to those publications already mentioned, you may receive the following free publications by calling (614) 466-5347:

***Official Roster of Federal, State and County Officers***

— a biennial compilation of information regarding state, local and federal governments; state boards and commissions; state universities and colleges; symbols and mottoes of the states; and a history of Ohio's statewide officeholders.

***The Ohio Municipal, Township and School Board Roster***

— a biennial compilation of Ohio municipal, township and school board officers and county and municipal judges.

***Ohio Election Statistics***

— a biennial compilation of general, primary, special and historical election statistics.

***The Ohio Citizen's Digest***

— a brochure about Ohio statehood, government, presidents, state symbols, voting and trivia. This brochure is especially popular with schoolchildren.

***Voter Information Guide***

— a complete guide to voter eligibility, voter registration, absentee voting, and election dates. It is also available in Spanish and in large print.

***Candidate's Guide***

— a brochure of basic filing information for Ohio political candidates.

***Campaign Finance Facts***

— a biennial publication that shows campaign spending and contributions in total and by each contest for the most recent statewide and legislative elections.

***Election Calendar***

— a listing of every election-related date for the current year.



**Bob Taft**  
**Ohio's Secretary of State**

Bob Taft was elected Ohio's 50th Secretary of State in November 1990 and sworn into office on January 14, 1991.

Previously, he served as: Hamilton County Commissioner (1981-1990); a member of the Ohio House of Representatives (1976-1980); Budget Officer and Assistant Director of the Bureau of the Budget, State of Illinois (1969-1973); in Vietnam with the State Department (1967-1969); a teacher in the Peace Corps in Tanzania, East Africa (1963-1965).

He currently serves on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Secretaries of State and is a member of the Ohio Public Service Commission. He is on the board of The Children's Home of Cincinnati.

Taft has a bachelor of arts degree from Yale University, a master's degree in government from Princeton University and a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati Law School.

His father and grandfather were U.S. Senators, and his great-grandfather, William Howard Taft, was a president of the United States and Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Taft's wife, Hope, co-founded and serves on the Board of Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth. They have a daughter, Anna.



# Voting

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## *Who Can Vote?*

You are qualified to vote if:

- \* You are a citizen of the United States
- \* You are a resident of Ohio.
- \* You are at least 18. If you will be 18 on or before Nov. 7, you may vote in the primary election for candidates only, but not on issues.
- \* You have been registered to vote in the precinct in which you reside at least 30 days before the election.

## *Where do I register?*

- \* At your county board of elections office or with the Secretary of State.
- \* At branch registration offices or locations established by the board.
- \* At many public high schools or vocational schools.
- \* At the office of a motor vehicle registrar.
- \* At many state agencies that deal with the public.

You may also register by mail. You may request registration forms by mail, by telephone, or in person. The registration form may be mailed back to the elections board.

*Remember, though: Registration forms must be received by the board of elections or the Secretary of State 30 days before an election.*

## *Where do I vote?*

You cast your ballot at the polling place designed to serve the precinct in which you reside. If you don't know the location of your polling place, contact your county board of elections.