

Date Printed: 06/16/2009

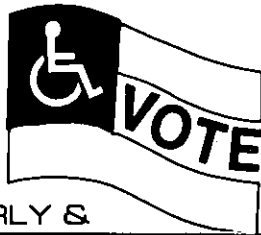
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JTS Box Number: IFES\_77  
Tab Number: 32  
Document Title: DC Elections Board Publishes Information  
Brochure Outlining Services for Senior  
Document Date: 1986  
Document Country: United States --  
District of Columbia  
Document Language: English  
IFES ID: CE02613



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# VOTING ACCESS SERVICES



FOR THE ELDERLY &

HANDICAPPED COMMUNITY

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D.C. Board of Elections  
Bulletin #3

August 7, 1986

## D.C. ELECTIONS BOARD PUBLISHES INFORMATION BROCHURE OUTLINING SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS

D.C. Board of Elections Director Emmett H. Fremaux, Jr. recently announced the publication of **Voting Access Services**, a six page information brochure outlining special provisions for senior citizens and handicapped persons.

Printed in large type to accommodate vision impaired readers, the brochure outlines services recently introduced by the Board to implement Public Law 98-435, "Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act", as well as other provisions available for senior citizens and handicapped persons. Topics include services in the areas of registration, public information, polling place accessibility, absentee voting, and voting on Election Day.

In an effort to reach all voters who might benefit from the information, the Board is distributing copies of **Voting Access Services** to more than 300 nursing homes and service organizations throughout the Washington metropolitan area, as well as public libraries and Advisory Neighborhood Commission offices. Additional copies are available from Leona Agouridis, Public Affairs Specialist, at 727-2525.

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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS



FOR THE ELDERLY &  
HANDICAPPED COMMUNITY

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## **INFORMATION SERVICES**

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### **Voter Information Office**

To make information on voting and voting services readily accessible to the public, the Board operates a voter Information Office in Room 7 of the District Building. By contacting this office, the public may request such items as ward and precinct maps, monthly voting statistics, pamphlets on voting procedures in the District, calendars of important election deadline dates, and past election returns. Voters can reach the Information Office by calling 727-2525.

### **TDD Service for the Hearing Impaired**

A Telecommunications Device (TDD) has been installed in the Voter Information Office to answer queries of any voter who has a hearing impairment. The TDD service number is 639-8916.

### **Voting Access Services Bulletins**

The Board issues Voting Access Services Bulletins—an information series that targets voters in the elderly and handicapped community, and reports on the agency's progress in implementing Public Law 98-435, "Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984". Topics range from the efforts to remove architectural barriers in the District's 137 polling locations to updates on new voter services and voting aids provided at each polling site.

Individuals who would like to receive the bulletins should call 727-2525.

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## **REGISTRATION SERVICES**

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### **Registration Requirements**

To vote in the District of Columbia, an individual must: (1) be a U.S. citizen, (2) be a District resident, and (3) be 18 years old on or before the next election.

### **Voter Registration By Mail**

Postage-free Mail Registration Applications (MRA's) are available at all D.C. public libraries, fire houses, and police stations—as well as many D.C. government offices. Senior citizens and handicapped persons may request that an MRA be sent to them by calling 727-2525.

Applicants unable to see, read, or write may receive assistance in completing the form. Where an applicant unable to sign the MRA makes a mark in the space for “signature”, the person witnessing the “marking” must also sign the application.

### **Registering with a Party Affiliation**

Voting in party primary elections in the District is limited to persons who register as affiliated with one of the parties qualified to hold a primary election in D.C. (Democratic, Republican, and D.C. Statehood).

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## **POLLING PLACE ACCESS SERVICES**

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### **Guidelines for Polling Place Accessibility**

In 1985, the Board established guidelines for accessibility to District polling sites based on input from several service organizations throughout the metropolitan area. These guidelines implement requirements established in Public Law 98-435, "Polling Place Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act", and provide for a barrier-free path from a designated parking space to the voting room.

### **Barrier Removal Construction Program**

Since establishing accessibility guidelines, the Board has surveyed each of the District's 137 polling places and, with the assistance of the D.C. Department of Public Works, has implemented the Barrier Removal Construction Program, aimed at increasing accessibility at designated polling sites. This program, with major funding under the District's capital budget, includes the following:

- Installation of curb cuts to assist voters with wheelchairs in gaining access from street level.
- Construction of building ramps for voters with canes or wheelchairs, or senior citizens who have problems with stairs.

- Miscellaneous repairs to doors, handrails, light fixtures, and walkways at polling site facilities.

## **Other Actions to Improve Polling Place Accessibility**

In addition to construction efforts, the Board has made a number of other changes directed at eliminating physical barriers at polling sites. These changes include:

- Moving the voting room within some poll locations to a more accessible room in the same building.
- Designating alternative entrances that are more accessible than the main entrance to the facility.
- Relocating some polling places to other, more accessible buildings within the same precincts. All voters affected by a change of polling place will be notified individually by mail.

## **Handicapped Parking**

Parking spaces have been designated at all 137 poll locations for use by senior citizens and handicapped voters. Special signage to mark parking spaces reserved for these voters is posted near the most accessible building entrance on Election Day.

## **For Further Information**

Because of the number of ongoing modifications at D.C. polling sites, the Board recommends that senior citizens and handicapped persons with questions about accessibility at their particular polling place call

727-2525 (TDD Service: 639-8916) for the most up-to-date information.

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## **VOTING ACCESS SERVICES**

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### **Curbside Voting**

Any voter who is brought to the polls and cannot reach the voting room because of architectural barriers or physical limitations may request to vote "curbside". When notified that an individual requests curbside voting, a pollworker will bring the ballot and punching device to the voter's car, assist the voter if necessary, and cast the voter's sealed ballot in the ballot box.

### **Absentee Voting**

Any voter who cannot get to the polls on Election Day because of illness, physical disability, advanced age, or infirmity may vote by absentee ballot. These voters may either cast their ballots in person at the Board's office or request (in writing) that a mail absentee ballot be sent to their home. Absentee voting must occur prior to Election Day. For absentee deadlines, voters may call the Information Office at 727-2525.

### **Services for Voters with Vision Impairments**

Each polling location in the District now displays voting instructions in large type. Magnifying glasses are also available for voters who have difficulty reading the ballot.



## **Services for Voters with Wheelchairs**

Each polling site in the District now has designated wheelchair accessible voting booths in the voting room.

## **Assistance in Voting**

Under Federal and District law, any voter who needs help in casting a ballot is entitled to assistance in voting. The Board provides a trained voter assistance clerk at each polling place. The voter may also select a person of his or her own choice to provide assistance.

## **Alternative Voting Locations**

Senior citizens or handicapped persons whose polling place is inaccessible may vote by Special Ballot at an alternative voting precinct accessible to the voter.

In cases where the vote is cast outside the voter's ward or single member district, however, written notice must be received by the Board prior to Election Day, to ensure that a ballot with all the contests in which the voter is eligible can be provided at the alternative location.

## **For More Information**

The Board of Elections and Ethics will gladly answer questions about registration and voting procedures in the District of Columbia. For more information, call 727-2525.