

# WATCHER CERTIFICATE

FOR USE ON ELECTION DAY

Section 8-500, Election Law

I/We, the undersigned, being

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair or Secretary of the Political Party  
Independent Candidate)

Of the

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Political party/independent body)

party, do hereby appoint

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Watcher's Name)

County of \_\_\_\_\_, to be a watcher for the  
election to be held on

\_\_\_\_\_ in the  
(Date of election)

\_\_\_\_\_ Election district, in the ward (if applicable)

town, city, or village of \_\_\_\_\_ with  
in Tioga County, New York.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title



*"Democracy is the government of the  
people, by the people, for the people"*

*~Abraham Lincoln*

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TIOGA COUNTY

## POLL WATCHER'S GUIDE



Tioga County Board of Elections  
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(607) 687-8261

[www.tiogacountyny.com](http://www.tiogacountyny.com)  
[www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov)

# POLL WATCHER'S GUIDE

## OVERVIEW

To ensure fair and honest elections, New York State law provides for appointing Poll Watchers to observe voting at the polls.

Poll Watchers are designated by candidates, the chair of any party committee, or independent organizations which have candidates on the ballot and/or political committees.

## THE ROLE OF THE POLL WATCHER

- ✓ To observe elections at the polling sites on behalf of a particular candidate, political party or organization
- ✓ If/when they observe irregularities, they are to report these observation to either the Elections Inspector, the Police Officer and/or the Board of Elections.

## POLL WATCHER QUALIFICATIONS

- ✓ Each watcher must be a qualified voter of the city or county in which he/she is to serve
- ✓ Poll Watchers must present a certificate for each election district they observe to an Elections Inspector of that election district

\*Note: A Poll Watcher's Certificate appears on the reverse side of this guide.



## POLL WATCHER LIMITATIONS

The Poll Watcher *may not*:

- ✓ Electioneer in any manner.  
**Electioneering includes soliciting votes or distributing, wearing or carrying political literature, posters, banners or buttons or displaying refreshments showing a candidate or party's name.**
- ✓ Tamper with election materials
- ✓ Interfere with the election process
- ✓ Protest a vote ruling
- ✓ Accompany a voter to the booth
- ✓ Candidate for Elective Office

## POLL WATCHER RIGHTS

The Poll Watchers *may*:

- ✓ Arrive 15 min. before opening to observe the opening of the polls to verify that no votes have been cast
- ✓ Examine poll books as long as they don't interfere with inspectors or election proceedings
- ✓ Observe the closing of the polls and the final canvasses
- ✓ Challenge individual voters on the basis of :
  - ◆ Signature authenticity
  - ◆ Residence
  - ◆ Multiple voting
  - ◆ Qualification to vote
  - ◆ Electioneering



## NUMBER OF POLL WATCHERS

- ✓ NYS provides for (3) Poll Watchers per election district at any one time from each candidate, political committee, or independent body
- ✓ Only one of these watchers may be within the "guardrail" –The phrase refers to the area of the table used by election inspectors, the voting booths, the ballot boxes and/or Board of Elections equipment.

## IF YOU SEE A VIOLATION

Poll Watchers are not law enforcement officers, however, they may and can attempt to enforce their candidate's rights by reporting a violation to any of the following:

- ✓ Election Inspectors
- ✓ Police Officer on duty
- ✓ Board of Elections - **687-8261**