

Preparing to Vote in an Election

Voting is a key right and responsibility of every citizen. However, voting from an informed stance is even more important. From family discussions to community round tables, it is useful to hear and discuss different viewpoints based on evidence and potential versus simply party lines.

The Bureau of Elections and Michigan Secretary of State have created useful websites to help voters be as comfortable and knowledgeable as possible with the voting process in the next upcoming weeks.

What is on the ballot?

To prepare for what is on your specific ballot, there are a few options. Log in to the Michigan Voter Information Center (MVIC) at mVIC.sos.state.mi.us/Voter/Index and it will provide you with a link to your specific ballot. Otherwise, you can request a paper sample ballot at your local clerk's office. (Note, clerks usually only order a few hard copies to have on hand.)

Though you may share the same precinct with other friends, based on your address, you may be in different school districts. This will affect the ballot style items. For instance, one township may have residents in three different geographical school districts, but your ballot will only reflect the issues related to your specific residential geography.

Understanding Proposal language

Perusing the media and the mailed propaganda brochures, there is not shortage of summaries and interpretations of the proposals on the ballot. However, few sites are posting the original proposals with the full suggested changes. Do sponsors believe voters don't have the time, interest, or possible ability to read the full documents in advanced writing voice and style? Regardless of the reason, voters need to know that there are often more parts to a proposal than what is included in the summary that shows up on the ballot. Unless you read the fine print, the full language, and decipher its meaning and potential loop holes (for good and troublesome interpretations) voters may vote for something they do not intend.

Visit www.michigan.gov/sos/elections/bsc to read both the ballot proposal summaries as well as the full proposals found on the original petitions. Be aware, there are additional proposals and other items on the page so be sure to select the relevant items for this election as listed below:

- [Proposal 22-1 Ballot Language summary](#)
- [Proposal 22-2 Ballot Language summary](#)
- [Proposal 22-3 Ballot Language summary](#)

Read the full proposals (which highlight the details and additional suggestions not covered in the proposal summaries) by clicking on the following named links below at the same page.

- 22-1: [“Voters for Transparency and Term Limits Petition”](#): 12 year term limit on any combination of senate/house position (minus filling vacancy appointments) and annual state government position financial disclosures
- 22-2: [“Promote the Vote 2022 Petition”](#): [personal or organizational right](#) to sue for voting intimidation or unreasonable burdening in voting, nine days of early voting, county-wide site for early voting, post-election day acceptance for military/overseas absentee ballots, voter verification via photo ID/affidavit, voter notification of verification issues, state-funded postage for absentee apps/ballots and drop-boxes; acceptance of charitable donations to election organizers; sole authority of State Board of Canvassers to certify election results; in case of ties for an office, decision made by drawing lots.
- 22-3: [“Reproductive Freedom for All Petitions”](#): Regardless of age, individual autonomy: no limit abortion, no fault abortion process, state promotion of public health education, state-regulated abortion at 6+months (not denials); no change in current limitations on human cloning

Ballotpedia may be another helpful website for understanding the proposals. As a nonprofit and nonpartisan entity, they offer a “digital encyclopedia of American politics” and strive for total neutrality.

For each proposal, they clarify what a yes or no vote will mean (as sometimes legal language uses double negatives), an overview of the topic, relative history, financial support, arguments for and against, as well as any polls. Additionally, for Proposal 2 which would be a Constitutional Amendment, a yellow box shows clearly what is proposed to be added as

well as deleted. Visit ballotpedia.org/Michigan_2022_ballot_measures to reap the benefits of their research.

Absentee Voter application or ballot status?

If you are choosing to vote by absentee ballot preceding November 8 polls option, you can easily check whether your application has been received, a ballot issued, and if/when your ballot has arrived back to your clerk by logging in to the MVIC. (See website given above.) It will also tell you if you are registered to be on the Permanent Absentee Voter list.

Using this resource instead of calling your local clerk, allows you to check as often as you would like to track in real time your ballot process. It also will free up time for your local clerk to continue registering voters, cleaning up voter files, and assisting walk in requests for absentee ballots.

Absentee ballots need to be received by your city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election day regardless if it is mailed, put in a drop box, or hand delivered to your clerk's office. However, most clerks would appreciate it dropped off sooner to complete the paperwork processing before they are inundated with election day duties.

Made a mistake on the absentee ballot?

It is always a good idea to review the direction page before starting to fill in your absentee ballot. If, however, you do make a mistake by cross-over voting after having filled in the straight ticket option or accidentally crossed out unintended votes, or even voted for more than one in a "vote for one only" selection, you can take your ballot into your local clerk's office to spoil that ballot and receive a new one.

You can also request your ballot be spoiled and a new one issued to you, if you have learned more about a proposal or candidate and wish to change your vote before election day. However, once election day arrives and your ballot has been turned over to the Absentee Counting board, the vote cannot be changed.

Lost, pitched or dog ate it?

Every effort is made to ensure a registered voter can vote in each election despite mishaps. If there is an issue with your ballot being lost or destroyed, and you cannot return it to the clerk's office, you can fill out an affidavit swearing the ballot was lost/destroyed. With this, your clerk can then spoil your old ballot and issue you a new one.