

Poll Watchers

Each candidate may name a watcher for every polling place. A polling place is defined as a location for ballot boxes or voting machines, regardless of the number thereof. Section 11-46-35(a), Code of Alabama 1975.

The watcher must present their appointment in writing and be sworn faithfully to observe the rule of law prescribed for the conduct of elections. After being sworn, watchers shall be permitted to be present at the place where ballots are cast from the time the polls are opened until the ballots are counted and certificates of the result of the election are duly signed by the proper election officers. The watcher's function is to observe the activities at the polling place. Watchers may not disturb voters, attempt to influence voters, campaign, or display or wear any campaign material or buttons while inside any polling place. Section 11-46-35(b), Code of Alabama 1975.

When paper ballots are used at the election, the watcher shall be permitted to see the ballots as they are called during the count. Section 11-46-35(c), Code of Alabama 1975.

Section 11-46-35 Watchers.



(a) Each candidate may name a watcher for every polling place. As used in this subsection, a polling place shall mean a location for ballot boxes or voting machines, regardless of the number thereof.

(b) The watcher, upon presentation of his or her appointment in writing and being sworn faithfully to observe the rule of law prescribed for the conduct of elections, shall be permitted to be present at the place where ballots are cast from the time the polls are opened until the ballots are counted and certificates of the result of the election are duly signed by the proper election officers. The function of the watcher is to observe activities at the polling place. The watcher may not disturb voters, attempt to influence voters, campaign, or display or wear any campaign material or buttons while inside any polling place.

(c) When paper ballots are used at the election, the watcher shall be permitted to see the ballots as they are called during the count.

(d) When voting machines are used, the watchers shall, upon presentation of their appointment in writing, be permitted to be present when the machines are being prepared and sealed for use at the election. On election morning the watcher may witness the breaking of the seal on the envelope containing the key or keys to the voting machines, and, when the machine has been unlocked and the counters exposed, he or she shall carefully examine each and every counter to see that it registers zero, and he or she shall also examine the ballots and satisfy himself or herself that they are in their proper places on the machine and that the machine is properly placed. The watcher must also sign a certificate setting out the above facts, as required by subsection (c) of Section 11-46-47. He or she may also be present and witness the opening of the machine after the polls have closed, the reading and tabulating of the result of the election as recorded on the voting machine and the resealing of the machine.

(Acts 1961, No. 663, p. 827, §15; Acts 1976, No. 358, p. 403, §9; Act 2003-400, §1.)