

How to Vote an Optical Scan Ballot

You must be a registered voter

Step 1. Obtain a ballot.

- **Find the location of your polling place.** Polling place locations will be published in the Quincy Herald Whig, as well as in the County newspapers. Your **current** voter registration card (blue card) will also provide you with your polling place. If you do not see the publication, do not have a current voter registration, and do not know the location, call the County Clerk's office at 277-2157.
- **At the polling place, sign an application for ballot.** The General Election ballot lists candidates of all parties. A Primary Election ballot lists only the candidates of your chosen party. In a Primary Election you will be required to call for the ballot of the party for which you wish to vote. You may call for the ballot of any party conducting a primary and may change party from one primary to the next. **Note:** Any time a public question is submitted to the voters in a primary, the question will appear on the party primary ballots; however, you may vote the public question without declaring a party affiliation by requesting a **Non-partisan** ballot containing the question only.
- **An election judge will determine the ballot on which you are qualified to vote and, after initialing it, will give it to you and direct you to the voting booths.** In addition to the traditional pull curtain booths, your polling place may have several non-traditional booths set-up. The non-traditional booths are small, three-sided partitions placed on tables with chairs for the voter's convenience. No longer does the voter have to match their "ballot style" with a ballot booth. Voters may select any booth in the polling place to complete their ballot. Secrecy sleeves will also be available to the voters. If there is not a secrecy sleeve at the booth, you may obtain one from an election judge.

Step 2. Marking the ballot.

- **An optical scan ballot consists of columns of names of offices and candidates with an unfilled oval adjacent to the name.** (See illustrations below) To select the candidate of your choice, fill in the oval staying within the lines as nearly as possible next to the candidate's name, using **only** the black pen provided in the booth.



- **Read the instructions and be especially mindful of the number of candidates to vote for in each office.** Be aware that if you vote for more candidates than the number to be elected, it is considered an over-vote and none of the candidates for that office will receive a vote.
- **You are not required to cast a vote in all offices.** If you skip an office, an under-vote will be registered for that office; however, an under-vote cannot be traced to any individual voter. Over-voting or under-voting an office does not affect the rest of your ballot.
- **You may cast a write-in vote for a candidate whose name is not on the ballot.** Write the name of your candidate on the blank line provided directly at the end of the list of candidates for that office. Fill in the oval next to the name of your write-in candidate. A write-in vote will not be counted for any candidate who has failed to file an **Intent to be a Write-in Candidate** as prescribed by law.

Step 3. Check your ballot.

- **Look at the positions you have marked.** Double-check that you have made the choices you intended and that your marks are within the guidelines as nearly as possible.
- **Be careful to make marks only in voting positions.** Stray marks, initials, symbols or other marks may be construed as identifying marks and will disqualify your ballot.

Step 4. Preserve the secrecy of your ballot.

- **Place your voted ballot in the security sleeve provided to preserve the secrecy of your ballot.**

Step 5. Cast your ballot.

- **Take your ballot to the judge of election in charge of the ballot box for help with casting your ballot.** The in-precinct optical scan voting systems have a feature referred to as "Error Notification." When your ballot is inserted in the precinct ballot tabulator, you will be notified of over-votes. You will then have the option of correcting the over-vote or casting the ballot "as is". The in-precinct optical scan voting system also has a feature to increase the number of votes cast after your ballot has been inserted and accepted. Watch to see your vote count.
- **If you have any questions concerning the ballot be sure to ask those questions before your ballot is cast.** If you make an error you may request a new ballot. If you didn't see a public question for which you should have been able to vote, or you believe you should have been able to vote for a candidate whose name you did not see on the ballot, ask those questions **before** your ballot is inserted in the ballot box. Once your ballot is cast nothing can be done to retrieve it. **Note: There may be candidates on both sides of your ballot.**