



J. KENNETH BLACKWELL
Ohio Secretary of State

180 E. Broad Street, 16th Floor, Columbus OH 43215
614.466.2655 / Toll Free: 877.767.6446 / Fax: 614.644.0649
e-mail: blackwell@sos.state.oh.us

Directive 2006-39
March 13, 2006

To: ALL COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS
Re: 17-year-old Voters in the May 2 Primary Election

This Directive addresses the voting eligibility of 17-year-old electors, and the ballot that 17-year old electors are to use, in the May 2 primary election.

I. Voting Eligibility

Ohio law allows 17-year-old electors to vote **solely** on the **nomination** of candidates; they are **not** allowed to vote on the election of any member of a political party's state or county central committee, nor on any question or issue on the ballot. Every board must train its pollworkers on this point.

II. Form of the Ballot

Please review the following options and select one that fits your county's voting system:

A. Optical Scan:

1. Provide an optical scan ballot that contains only the offices for which the 17-year elector is eligible to vote, or
2. Provide the 17-year-old elector with a regular optical scan ballot, along with the instructions provided as a separate attachment to this Directive. Under this option, the voter will place his or her voted ballot in a sealed envelope, which must be set aside with all other ballots cast by 17-year-old electors. Those sealed envelopes must be returned to the board of elections on election night. Before counting a ballot cast by a 17-year old, board officials must determine if the ballot was properly cast for only eligible offices. If the ballot contained marks for central committee members or questions or issues, the team designated by the board must remake the ballot to reflect votes cast only for those eligible offices.

Election officials may **not** give to a 17-year old elector any ballot that has been tampered with; for example, by marking or overvoting offices, questions or issues for which the 17-year old is ineligible to vote.

B. DRE Voting Systems:

Boards that use DRE voting systems may allow 17-year-old electors to vote on a DRE using one of the following options:

1. Provide a ballot that contains only the eligible offices, or
2. Provide an optic scan ballot and follow the number 2 instructions above.

Any board of elections that has questions about 17-year-old electors voting in the May 2 election should contact the Elections Division at telephone number (614) 466-2585.

Sincerely,

J. Kenneth Blackwell

17-YEAR OLD VOTER:

How to Vote Using an Optic Scan Ballot

As a 17-year-old voter, you may vote **only** on the nominations of candidates.

You may **NOT** vote on the election of any member of a political party's state or county central committee, nor on any question or issue on the ballot.

Please read the following instructions on how to mark your ballot:

1. Before marking your ballot, make sure that there are not any marks already on it.
2. Read the directions on the ballot carefully:
 - o If the ballot allows you to cast **one** vote for an office, you may fill in only **one** oval or box on your ballot.
 - o If the ballot allows you to cast **multiple** votes for the same office, you may fill in the maximum amount of ovals or boxes allowed by the directions.
3. Use the marking pen or pencil provided to vote on the optical scan ballot.
4. Completely fill in the oval or box to the left of the candidate position you want to vote for.
5. To cast a vote for an eligible **write-in** candidate:
 - a. Find the blank line provided on the ballot under the list of candidates for an office.
 - b. Fill in the oval or box to the left of that blank line.
 - c. Clearly write the name of the write-in candidate on the blank line.
6. If you have questions or make a mistake, ask the election officials for assistance.
7. If you make an error while marking your ballot, take your ballot to the election officials. The election officials will void that ballot and give you a new one. You may request new ballots up to three times.
8. Once you have completed voting and thoroughly reviewed your ballot to ensure you have marked your ballot as intended and that you have not marked an office or issue for which you are ineligible to vote, place your ballot in the envelope provided and return the envelope containing your ballot to the election officials. You may request a new ballot if you determine you have made an error or want to change your vote.
9. If you request a new ballot, the election officials must cancel your first ballot and issue you a new ballot to vote. Once you place your ballot in the envelope provided and return to the election officials, you may not request another ballot.