



**Jon Husted**  
Ohio Secretary of State

180 East Broad Street, 16th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Tel: (877) 767-6446 Fax: (614) 644-0649  
[www.OhioSecretaryofState.gov](http://www.OhioSecretaryofState.gov)

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**ADVISORY 2012-02**

October 29, 2012

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members

Re: International Observers

**BACKGROUND**

Periodically, elected officials and government administrators from other countries come to the United States to learn more about our democratic processes and public institutions, usually under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, an academic institution, or other similar organizations. In certain cases, such visits are obligations of international treaties entered into by the federal executive branch and ratified by the United States Senate. My office has participated in such exchanges whenever we have been requested and are available to do so.

However, state law limits the individuals who are permitted to be present in a polling place on Election Day. Only an election official,<sup>1</sup> an observer, a police officer, a person reviewing the 11 a.m. or 4 p.m. list of registered electors, a voter (including the voter's children who are of non-voting age when accompanied by the voter), or a person assisting another person to vote shall be allowed to enter the polling place during the election.<sup>2</sup> By not including "international observers" and others not specifically listed in state law, the Ohio General Assembly has prohibited their presence in a polling place on Election Day.

If you have any questions regarding this Advisory, please contact the Secretary of State's elections attorney assigned to your county at (614) 466-2585.

Sincerely,

  
Jon Husted

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<sup>1</sup> RC 3501.01(U)

<sup>2</sup> R.C.3501.35(B); R.C.3503.23(C)