



# Monroe County Board of Elections

## Press Access Policy

The Monroe County Board of Elections has a mandate to ensure that elections within Monroe County are administered lawfully, transparently, and efficiently for the benefit of all Monroe County voters. To fulfill its mandate, the Board must manage its operations, including poll sites on Election Day, in a safe manner consistent with public order and it must secure its records and resources against fraud and waste.

However, as a government body, the Board recognizes that the voting rights of citizens and the public's interest in a well-functioning electoral system must be balanced against other fundamental rights, including the freedom of the press as embodied in the federal and New York State constitutions.

Accordingly, to maintain that balance, the Board asks that members of the press abide by the following guidelines when covering election activity when the polls are open.

### Poll Workers' Authority

Election inspectors, clerks, and other poll workers are charged by law with maintaining order at poll sites. They are employees and representatives of the Board of Elections and have the authority to control access and conduct at poll sites. In addition, our poll workers are dedicated public servants with very important jobs to do. Please obey the election inspectors' instructions and show them appropriate respect.

### Entering Poll Sites

The Board of Elections generally welcomes members of the press at poll sites while the polls are open. However, as the interior of poll sites are non-public forums, members of the press must have the express permission of the Board of Elections administration before entering any poll site. Note that poll workers and other staff do not have the authority to admit the press. Please contact the Board in advance to arrange access to the interior of poll sites.

### Photo- and Videography in Poll Sites

Voters have an absolute right to cast their ballots in secret and it is essential to the functioning of our electoral system that this right is protected at all times. For these reasons, under New York State Law it is a crime for anyone to display a marked ballot to another person or to request that a person do so.

Accordingly, under no circumstances are members of the press to take photographs or record video that shows the face of a marked ballot. You may take photographs or video of voters marking ballots so long as the ballot does not appear in the image and you remain a respectful distance from voters at all times.

LISA POLITO NICOLAY  
Commissioner

PETER D ELDER  
Deputy



JACKIE ORTIZ  
Commissioner

NATALIE SHEPPARD  
Deputy

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## Outside Poll Sites

Members of the press have a right to be present outside poll sites. However, under New York law it is a crime to hinder a voter on the way to cast a ballot or otherwise interfere with the act of voting.

Accordingly, please maintain a distance of one hundred feet from any entrance of any poll site and remain well clear of entryways, walkways, and driveways near poll sites.

You may of course interview anyone you wish, but please do not attempt to interview a voter who is on the way to cast a ballot. Additionally, under New York law it is a crime to “electioneer,” i.e., to advocate for any candidate, party, or ballot question, within 100 feet of the entrance of any polling site.

Accordingly, please do not pose questions to voters about their voting choices within that distance.