

Message from Clerk Aten

Lansing Township Voters:

In an effort to clear up some misconceptions and make sure you have accurate information, I offer the following:

1. In a **Primary Election** (example: August 4th) you must vote in one party only, it's the law. When you cross vote (vote in more than one party) you negate all partisan votes.
2. In a **General Election** (example: November 3rd) you have more options:
 - You may vote a straight party ticket.
 - You may vote a straight party ticket and in offices where you want to make a different choice, you may vote for an individual from another party.
 - You don't have to use the straight party option at all, you may vote each individual office in whatever party you choose.
3. There is a difference between **mail-in voting** and **absentee voting**. Before November 2018, Michigan voters needed a "reason" to receive an absentee ballot (age, disability, out-of-town, etc). Proposal 18-3, which was passed by the voters, changed that. You no longer need a reason to request an absentee ballot. There are only a few states that allow mail-in voting and Michigan is **not** one of them. In a mail-in State, once a person registers to vote they are automatically sent a ballot for every election.
4. In Michigan you **must** complete a ballot **application** in order to receive a ballot. **NO ONE** in the State of Michigan was automatically sent a ballot without requesting one.
5. Every jurisdiction in Michigan has the ability to maintain a permanent absentee voter (AV) list. This list is made up of voters who have indicated that they want to automatically receive a ballot APPLICATION for every election. My office sends out applications to voters who are on that list. ANYONE can be on the list and if you don't want to be on the list, you may request an application for any election you wish to vote from home. We are adding to our list every day at the voter's request.
6. You are receiving MANY applications in the mail from organizations/groups that look like they came from the Clerk's office. I know this is confusing, but there is nothing I can do to control what others send. If you think you already sent in an application you can call my office (517-485-4063) or go to www.michigan.gov/vote to check. If you send in a duplicate application, we will catch it and you will only get ONE ballot. No worries.
7. Is it safe to mail your ballot? YES. I work directly with the local post offices at the Lansing and Delta branches and make sure that when we mail ballots to you, they don't get sent on to Grand Rapids. They are processed and delivered from the local branches, unless they are being sent to an address outside of the Township. Our partners at the USPS are working very diligently to make sure every ballot gets delivered.
8. You may return your ballot in person during regular business hours or deposit it into the drop box in front of Township Hall at 3209 W. Michigan Ave.

9. We verify your signature on the application with your voter file. It is illegal for anyone to sign for another person (people have been prosecuted for doing this in Michigan). If your signature doesn't match, we are required to reject your application. If you have provided contact information, we will attempt to contact you. Sometimes you need to update your signature over the years. Once a ballot is issued, we will verify the signature on the returned ballot envelope with the signature on the application to make sure that no one else voted your ballot.
10. Absentee ballots are kept under lock and seal until Election Day. Processing cannot begin until 7:00 a.m. on Election Day. Inspectors who work in the Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB) are sequestered for the entire time they are working. They cannot have their cell phones turned on and don't have any communication with the outside world until after the polls close at 8:00 p.m. They verify that the ballot that is returned in the envelope is the same ballot that was issued to the voter by comparing the number on the ballot stub. Once that is confirmed, the stub is removed and the ballot is passed on to another inspector who removes it from the secrecy sleeve. That way, no one knows whose ballot they are working with.
11. In order for a Write-In vote to count, a person needs to fill out a Declaration of Intent to be a write-in candidate. There is a process and timeline for this. In my 22 years of being your Clerk, Mickey Mouse has never filled out that paperwork and yet he receives votes in every election. You only get one vote, use it wisely.
12. For your vote to be tabulated, you need to completely fill in the oval next to the candidate of your choice. If you make a mistake, you can receive a new ballot whether you are in the polls or voting absentee. If you are voting absentee and make a mistake, bring it back to my office in the envelope and we will issue you a new ballot. If you are out of town and can't make it back to the office, call my office and we will walk you through your options.
13. **Ballots must be returned by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.** End of story.