Assistance for Pennsylvania Voters with Disabilities:

Requesting, Obtaining and Returning a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot

Voters with disabilities who need assistance applying for, picking up, and/or delivering their mail-in or absentee ballot may use a "designated agent" as a reasonable accommodation. The Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS), which oversees elections, has a form on its website to "Authorize a Designated Agent to Help You Obtain and/or Return Your Mail-In or Absentee Ballot." The form can be found at https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/Authorize-Designated-Agent-for-Mail-in-or-Absentee-Ballot.pdf . The discussion below summarizes how a voter with a disability may request and receive assistance picking up and returning an absentee or mail-in ballot.

Q1: Who can get assistance with pickup or delivery of a mail-in or absentee ballot?

The DOS Authorization Form is intended only for voters with disabilities who need assistance picking up or delivering their ballot by reason of their disability.

Q2: How can an eligible voter with a disability authorize someone else to apply for, pick up or return their mail-in or absentee ballot?

Once you have selected another person to assist you with voting through the mail, your designated agent can:

- Pick up and return your application for a mail-in or absentee ballot.
- Pick up and return your mail-in or absentee ballot.
- Provide other help you need with voting, such as assistance picking up a new ballot to enable you to cure defective ballot.

More information can be found at https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot.html#agent, or by calling 1-877-868-3772.

The voter with a disability should complete page 2 of the DOS Authorization Form together with the person the voter intends to designate as their agent, and **the designee should keep a copy** of the completed authorization form. More information is included in the instructions on page 1 of the DOS Authorization Form.

IMPORTANT:

- Voters **should not** have to renew or redo their voter registration in order to authorize a third person as their designated agent to apply for, pick up or deliver a mail-in ballot.
- Voters **do not** need to have the DOS Authorization Form notarized.

Q3: Who can be authorized to assist a voter with a disability in applying for, picking up or delivering their mail-in or absentee ballot?

You can choose anyone to be your designated agent except your employer or an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union

Q4: Can multiple voters use the same person as their authorized agent to apply for, pick up or deliver their mail-in or absentee ballots?

Yes. As explained above in the answer to Q3, the only restriction on who can serve as your designated agent is that they cannot be someone affiliated with your employer or union. Please call our intake line if your county says you cannot use the same agent as someone else, as we can help to ensure your vote gets counted.

Q5: How does a designated agent submit the voter's application for, or pick up or return, the voter's mail-in or absentee ballot?

Voters and designated agents should **contact county election officials with any questions** about submitting the DOS Authorization Form, application and/or ballot.

If the voter seeks assistance from a designated agent before the voter has applied for a mail-in or absentee ballot, the voter should return the completed DOS Authorization Form to their county board of elections with and at the same time as their application for a mail-in or absentee ballot. The voter may submit the completed DOS Authorization Form with the application for mail-in or absentee ballot to the county board of elections either in-person (through the agent) or by mail.

If, after applying for or receiving their mail-in or absentee ballot, a voter with a disability wants to designate an agent to pick-up and/or return the voter's ballot, the designated agent should keep a copy of the completed DOS Authorization Form, and the agent should be able to present the completed DOS Authorization Form as required by county officials when the agent picks up and/or returns the voter's ballot. **NEVER enclose the DOS Authorization Form in the inner "secrecy" envelope that contains the voted ballot.**

Stay Connected

If you need more information or need help, please contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD). Our email address is: intake@disabilityrightspa.org. DRP's live intake line is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The mission of Disability Rights Pennsylvania is to advance, protect, and advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Due to our limited resources, Disability Rights Pennsylvania cannot provide individual services to every person with advocacy and legal issues. Disability Rights Pennsylvania prioritizes cases that have the potential to result in widespread, systemic changes to everyone, but we do seek to provide every individual with information and referral options.

IMPORTANT: This publication is for general informational purposes only. This publication is not intended, nor should be construed, to create an attorney-client relationship between Disability Rights Pennsylvania and any person. Nothing in this publication should be considered legal advice.

PLEASE NOTE: For information in alternative formats or a language other than English, contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD). Our email is: intake@disabilityrightspa.org.

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