



POLLWORKER POST

Department of Elections Newsletter, Summer 2009

Greetings, Pollworkers.

We hope you're enjoying this summer season and are taking part in the many summer activities San Francisco has to offer! Although autumn seems far away, the next municipal election that will be held on Tuesday, November 3 will be here before we know it!

If you're interested in working as a pollworker in the upcoming election, please complete the enclosed Official Pollworker Agreement and return it in the enclosed (postage paid) envelope as soon as possible, but no later than Monday, August 24. We're looking forward to having you on our team!

For now, enjoy our newsletter! In this issue we'll review the history and importance of protecting voter privacy. We've also included a puzzle so you can test your expertise. Happy reading!

Background of the Ballot

The term *ballot* is derived from the Italian *ballotta*, meaning "little ball."

So-called "ballots" have been used since Ancient Greece and Rome, when voters placed a white pebble in a candidate's box to vote "yes" or a black pebble to vote "no." However, it took a long time to develop a system that safeguarded voter's privacy and the integrity of the election.

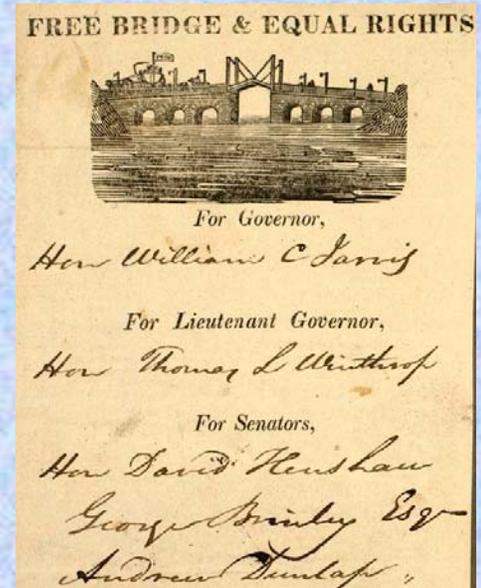
Early elections in the United States were held *viva voce*: by counting voters' verbal "yeas" or "nays" or a show of hands. In some cases, a voter would stand before the elections board, state which candidate he supported, and "the representative of the candidate for whom he voted arose, bowed, and thanked him" (J. S. Wise). Obviously, this method left the door wide open for bribery and intimidation.

As the electoral population grew, voters hand-wrote a symbol on a slip of paper to vote "yes" or left it blank to vote "no" and dropped it in a hat. Unfortunately, this made stuffing the ballot box very easy.

Political parties printed and distributed their own ballots listing only their candidates (and sometimes also printed counterfeit versions of their opponents' ballots with names changed or omitted). From the ballot color, it was easy to see how a vote was being cast. Party "ticket peddlers" stationed at the polls would rip opponents' ballots from voters' hands and force them to take their own party's ballot instead. Harvard professor Jill Lepore writes, "well into the mid-19th century... there was a lot of debating at the polls. There was music, and there would be parades. And there could be riots."

In the late 19th century, the United States adopted the "Australian" ballot (so called because it was first introduced there in the 1850s) or the blanket ballot. The blanket ballots listing all candidates for office regardless of party were required to be printed by the government. Blanket ballots and voting booths made voting more private because observers could not see which party a voter was supporting.

Over the course of two hundred years the ballot design has changed, new voting methods and voting systems have been introduced but the voters' privacy has remained the fundamental requirement to conduct free and fair elections.

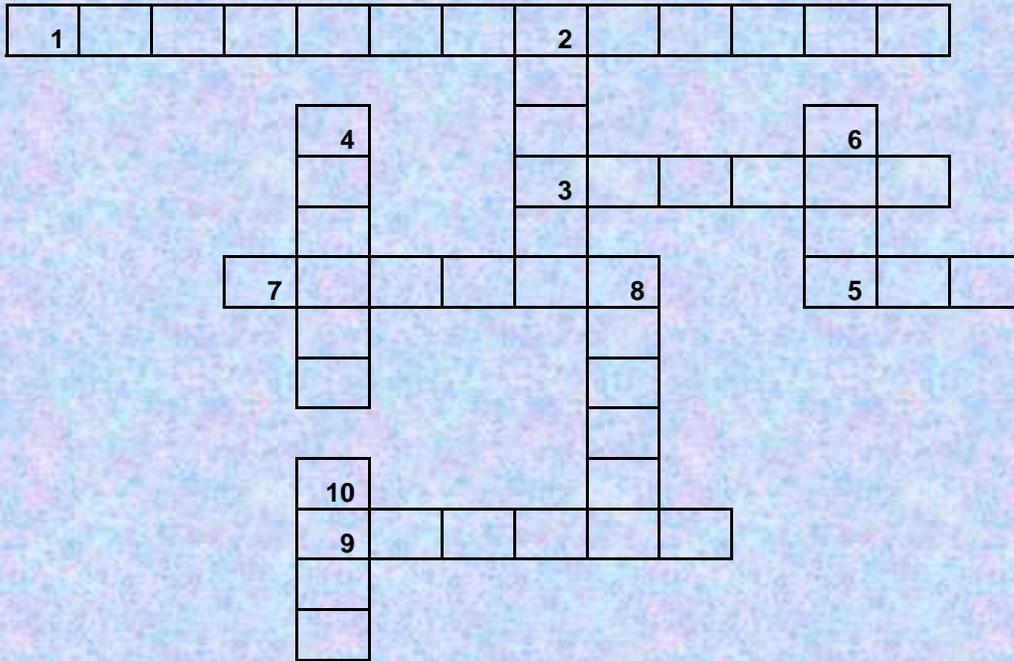


A party ballot from 1827



A party ballot from 1867

"Privacy at the Polls" Puzzle



Across

- Tools such as pen grip, magnifying glass, seated booth, etc. that allow voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently are called _____ tools.
- To keep voted ballots private and secure, the bins of the Insight voting machine remain _____ at all times during voting hours.
- If a pollworker, per voter's request, assists him or her with marking their ballot, the pollworker must never _____ anyone know how the voter voted.
- The Voter Bill of _____ must be posted inside and outside the polling place room to inform voters how the law protects their privacy.
- If a pollworker, per voter's request, assists him or her with marking their ballot, the pollworker must write both his name and the voter's name on the Assisted Voters List located in the front of the _____ of Voters.

Down

- Once marked, it's private! Only the voter may touch or look at his or her _____.
- Pollworkers must sit _____ the Insight voting machine to allow voters to privately insert their ballot.
- After placing voted ballot inside the vote-by-mail or provisional envelope, the voter should sign and _____ the envelope to protect privacy and ensure the vote can be counted.
- To protect secrecy and privacy of the vote, the pollworkers must give a blue secrecy _____ to voters when issuing them a ballot.
- All voters have the right to cast a secret ballot _____ from intimidation.

Steps to Ensure Voter Privacy and Right to Receive a Ballot Free From Intimidation

- When setting up a polling place, the pollworkers must ensure the voting booths and voting machines (Insight and Edge) are positioned to maximize privacy. The booths must be turned to the side so anyone walking by cannot see into the booth. The voting machines must be positioned within reach of pollworkers but so they and other voters cannot see how the ballots are marked when inserted into the voting machine.
- Every voter who is issued a regular ballot **MUST** be issued a blue secrecy sleeve to place their ballot in.
- Every voter who is issued a provisional ballot **MUST** be issued a pink provisional envelope to seal their ballot in.
- Pollworkers **MUST NEVER** touch or look at the voted ballot or ask voters about how they marked their ballot.
- Pollworkers, at the voter's request, may assist the voter with marking his or her ballot. However, the pollworkers **MUST NEVER** discuss the voter's selections.
- Pollworkers **MUST NOT** allow electioneering, invasion of privacy or voter intimidation at the polls. Any of these issues **MUST** be reported to the Department immediately.