



OCTOBER 20, 2009 - AUSTIN, TEXAS

CONTACT: florence.shapiro@senate.state.tx.us or 512/463-0108

EARLY VOTING HAS BEGUN!

Early voting for the November 3 Constitutional Amendment election began yesterday and runs through Friday, October 30. Although no state offices will be filled during this election, many areas of the state will decide city council, school board and special district elections. Registered voters will also have the opportunity to vote on 11 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution. These measures were approved by a two-thirds vote in the Texas House and Senate earlier this year, but must have the consent of the people of Texas to become effective.

There are two ways to early vote - in person, or by mail. Early voting in person may be easier than you think. You don't have to stand in long lines on Election Day. You can vote at any polling place within your political subdivision. To find a polling place near you, visit the Secretary of State's "Find My Polling Place" website at <https://team.sos.state.tx.us/voterws/viw/faces/SearchSelectionPolling.jsp>.

If you can drive or if you have a friend or relative who can drive you, you don't even have to get out of the car. Call ahead to notify the early voting clerk that you want to vote from your car. This procedure is called "curbside voting" and is available to any voter who has difficulty walking or standing for long periods. The election official will bring your ballot to your car outside the polling place. Curbside voting is available during early voting and on Election Day. State and Federal law requires all early and Election Day polling locations to be physically accessible to voters with disabilities.

To vote early by mail, you must submit an application to the early voting clerk in your county before the 7th day preceding the election - by Tuesday, October 27 for the upcoming election. You may vote early by mail if you are going to be away from your county on Election Day and during early voting; sick or disabled; 65 years of age or older on Election Day; or confined in jail, but eligible to vote. If you are voting early by mail, you must send your application by regular mail; common or contract carrier; or FAX (if a FAX machine is available to the early voting clerk and if you are submitting your application from outside the county). If you are voting early because of expected absence, you may apply in person for a ballot by mail before the first day of early voting in person.

You may obtain a formal application from the early voting clerk in your county or from the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.state.tx.us, or toll-free at 1-800-252-VOTE (8683). You do not have to use a formal application; however, an informal application must be in writing and include:

1. your signature (or a witness' signature if you cannot sign);
2. your name and the address at which you are registered to vote;
3. the address to which the ballot is to be mailed;
4. the election date and for which election you are requesting a ballot (for a primary election, you must state the political party's primary in which you wish to vote); and,
5. a reason why you are eligible to vote early by mail (to be eligible to vote early due to expected absence from the county, your application must state an address out-of-county to have your ballot mailed).

The early voting clerk must receive your marked ballot by 7 p.m. on Election Day.

For more information, visit the Collin County Elections Division at www.co.collin.tx.us/elections; or in Dallas County go to www.dalcoelections.org.

###

If you do not wish to receive Direct from Shapiro, please reply to this email with "REMOVE" in the subject line. Thank you!