



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCES FEDERAL OBSERVERS TO MONITOR GENERAL ELECTION IN STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Justice Department has regularly sent observers and monitors around the country to protect election-related civil rights. In addition, the Department has routinely deployed its own civil rights personnel to serve as civil rights monitors in jurisdictions not covered by the Voting Rights Act. Today, the Justice Department announced it will again send approximately 840 federal observers and more than 250 Civil Rights Division personnel to 86 jurisdictions in 25 states to monitor the general election on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. This list is not exhaustive, and other jurisdictions may be designated by election day.

Under the Voting Rights Act, which protects the rights of Americans to participate in the electoral process without discrimination, the Department of Justice is authorized to ask the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to send federal observers to areas that are specially covered in the Act itself or by a federal court order under the Act.

Federal observers will monitor polling place activities in 27 jurisdictions:

- Apache, Navajo and Yuma Counties, Arizona;
- San Benito, San Diego, and Ventura Counties, California;
- Cook County (Cicero), Illinois;
- Lake County (East Chicago), Indiana;
- Wayne County (Hamtramck), Michigan;
- Jones, Kemper, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, and Winston Counties, Mississippi;
- Passaic County, New Jersey;

- Bernalillo, Cibola, Sandoval, and Socorro Counties, New Mexico;
- Kings County (Brooklyn), New York County (Manhattan), and Suffolk County, New York;
- Berks County (Reading), Pennsylvania;
- Buffalo County, South Dakota;
- Dallas County, Texas; and,
- Yakima County, Washington.

The observers will watch and record activities during voting hours at select polling locations in the counties. Civil Rights Division personnel will coordinate the federal activities and maintain contact with local election officials.

In addition, Justice Department personnel, all of whom are Civil Rights Division attorneys and staff, will monitor the election in an additional 58 jurisdictions:

- Kodiak Island, Alaska;
- Pulaski County, Arkansas;
- Cochise, Gila, Graham, Maricopa, Pima, and Santa Cruz Counties, Arizona;
- Imperial and Orange Counties, California;
- Broward, Duval, Gadsden, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Orange, Osceola, and Palm Beach Counties, Florida;
- Atkinson, Henry and Long Counties, Georgia;
- Polk County, Iowa;
- Jefferson County, Kentucky;
- Wayne County (Detroit) and Oakland County (Pontiac), Michigan;
- Hennepin County, Minnesota;

- City of St. Louis, Missouri;
- Alamance, Scotland and Wake Counties, North Carolina;
- Chaves, Rio Arriba and San Juan Counties, New Mexico;
- Clark and Washoe Counties, Nevada;
- Nassau, Queens, Richmond, and Westchester Counties, New York;
- Cuyahoga, Franklin and Hamilton Counties, Ohio;
- Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania;
- Bennett, Corson, Dewey, Jackson, Mellette, Shannon, Todd, Tripp and Ziebach Counties, South Dakota;
- Harris, Hidalgo, Tarrant and Waller Counties, Texas;
- Chesterfield County, Virginia; and,
- Franklin County, Washington.

The OPM observers and Department personnel will monitor whether certain counties and localities are complying with federal voting laws, for example: determining whether any voters are challenged improperly on the basis of their race, color, or membership in a language minority group; complying with the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act; permitting voters who are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write assistance by a person of their choice; and permitting all eligible voters to cast a ballot.

At all times, complaints about discriminatory voting practices may be called in to the Voting Section of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division at 800-253-3931.

Voters in the counties in which federal observers serve in Arizona, California, Illinois, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington may also file complaints about discriminatory voting practices in this election by calling the federal examiner at 866-885-4122. Voters in such counties in Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York may call the federal examiner at 888-496-9455.

More information about the Voting Rights Act and other federal voting laws is available

on the Department of Justice's website site at www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting
<<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting>>.

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REMINDER: In the foregoing, the Justice Department's Criminal Division and 93 United States Attorneys will also be working on November 2 to fulfill their responsibility to enforce federal voter fraud laws. The Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section in Washington will have senior prosecutors available to handle complaints from the public and to provide guidance to 93 United States Attorneys' Offices concerning allegations of election fraud and other election abuses. Each United States Attorney's Office will have a District Election Officer on duty while the polls are open in their State to receive complaints from the public, and to coordinate the handling of these matters with the Public Integrity Section. Public Integrity lawyers will be on duty from the time polls first open on the East Coast until they close on the West Coast. The Public Integrity Section can be reached at (202) 514-1412.

The FBI will also have Special Agents available at Headquarters in Washington and in each field office and resident agency to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses. The FBI can be contacted either through one of its local field officers or through each United States Attorney's Office's District Election Officer.

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