

## WHEN CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

The 2010 Illinois primary election will be held on Feb. 2 – the earliest date in Illinois history – but eligible voters can cast a ballot in person at the office of an election authority or at an Early Voting Center from Monday, January 11, through Thursday, January 28.

## WHERE CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

Election authorities in each county in the state will announce the locations of Early Voting Centers. People will be able to vote at certain locations on the weekend prior to the election and on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

In the less populous counties, the County Clerk's office often is the early voting location.

There will be approximately 200 Early Voting Centers throughout Chicago, suburban Cook County and populous counties in the metropolitan-Chicago area.

## DO MANY PEOPLE VOTE EARLY?

The percentage of voters who cast ballots at an Early Voting Center has increased with every election. In the 2008 general election, 16% of the votes were cast an Early Voting Center. Counting absentee voting and Grace Period voting, approximately 20% of the votes were cast before the polls opened on Election Day.

## WHY DO PEOPLE VOTE EARLY?

Many people say they simply think voting early is more convenient. Others suggest they want to avoid risks on Election Day such as long lines at the polling place or bad weather.

## IS ABSENTEE VOTING STILL ALLOWED?

Yes, and it has been made even easier. A new state law, Public Act 96-0533, permits a person to request and vote an absentee ballot without specifying a reason for being absent from the polling place on Election Day. It's known as no-excuse absentee voting.

Persons who desire an absentee ballot should contact their election authority for an application or more information.

## WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING TO VOTE?

The traditional deadline for registering to vote is Jan. 5.

However, Grace Period Registration is an extension of the deadline for registration. State law allows for the registration of voters and for a change of address at the office of an election authority, but it requires that a person participating in Grace Period Registration who wants to cast a ballot in the upcoming election to vote at that same office or by mail at the discretion of the election authority.

People who register during the Grace Period are not eligible to vote at an Early Voting Center or at a polling place on Election Day. Grace Period Registration runs from January 6 to January 26, 2010.

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## IN A PRIMARY, WHY MUST A VOTER CHOOSE A POLITICAL PARTY?

The primary election system is established by state law. A voter can vote for candidates of one party only.

In some cases, nonpartisan candidates or referenda may be voted on in a primary, and if a voter does not want to declare a party affiliation, he or she may request a nonpartisan ballot only.

A primary goal of the State Board of Elections is to help bring about greater understanding and participation in the electoral process.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the State.

The State Board works closely with election authorities in all regions of the State.

Elections are administered locally by the State's 110 election authorities. These are the county clerks in 101 counties, one county election commission and eight municipal election commissions.

As part of their many responsibilities, election authorities conduct local voter registration programs, train election judges, find polling places, prepare ballots, oversee Election Day activities and supervise the vote count at the local level.

For more information on early voting or other election laws and procedures, contact your election authority or visit the Board's website: [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)

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contains information  
that affects you