

# Trouble at the Polls? Here's What to Do.

Voters want to feel comfortable when they vote – not confused, embarrassed, or intimidated.

If you see a voter feeling harassed or experiencing some other difficulty, you can help!

## WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

The dictionary says it's "aggressive pressure, intimidation, unwanted physical or verbal abusive behavior." U.S. and N.C. law prohibit harassment that interferes with a person voting.

## EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT AT THE POLLS

- Voters being pressured while in line to vote or inside the "buffer zone," the area generally 50 feet from poll's entrance where electioneering is prohibited.
- Voters being approached in their cars while curbside voting.
- Individuals yelling at or cajoling voters (not "Free Speech"), brandishing weapons, acting in a threatening manner or blocking the voter's path.
- Simply playing music loud, waving a flag or speaking to voters outside the buffer zone is likely not harassment unless it involves threatening words, symbols or action.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Begin by documenting:** Write down what's happening, the time, place, people involved, name and contact info of voter harassed. Then . . .

**Call the Election Protection Hotline: 888-OUR-VOTE.** Experts will help assess the situation and appropriate action; e.g., talk with the poll's head election worker ("chief judge"). It's best (but not necessary) to have the voter who experienced harassment call the Hotline with you.

**Don't escalate tensions** by arguing, becoming aggressive or intervening if the voter is taking constructive action. Stay calm. General rule: Don't try to fix things yourself. Call the Hotline.

**Ask the voter if they need assistance voting.** NC law says any voter may receive help inside the polling place from a "near relative" (not a cousin); the voter needs to ask for the assistant.

**Also:** A voter with a disability, including language or reading difficulty, may request assistance from anyone, except their employer or union agent. You can go inside the polling place to help the person with a disability, but don't tell them who to vote for.

**Call 911** if someone is injured or the use of weapons requires an immediate response.

**ELECTION PROTECTION HOTLINE - 888-OUR-VOTE (888-687-8683)**