
With a straight ticket vote no longer a choice, clerk urges election day preparations

Ottawa County Clerk and Register of Deeds Justin Roebuck says that his office is preparing for longer wait times on Election Day, due to a federal court ruling on September 5 that removed the “straight ticket voting” option from the November General Election ballot.

Straight ticket voting has been used in Michigan and in some other states to allow voters to mark one office for the party of their choice and automatically select each candidate in that party. Voters have always had the option to vote for whomever they prefer. However, straight ticket voting gave voters the option to mark a ballot more quickly by making one mark, rather than for each candidate in that party.

Without straight ticket voting, elections officials are expecting that time in the voting booth may increase by up to several minutes per voter. “We are already preparing for higher than normal turnout for the November Election, and the removal of the straight ticket option will likely further increase the amount of time it takes to vote,” he said.

Local election officials will have more voting booths available to accommodate the additional time needed to cast a ballot. “There are several additional things that voters can do to ease the voting process,” Roebuck said. These include:

- **Make a plan.** Voters can find their polling location and a copy of their sample ballot online at Michigan.gov/vote. Researching [candidates and proposals](#) prior to Election Day can help reduce the amount of time voters need in the voting booth.
- **Vote during slower times.** There are usually shorter wait times between 9am and 12pm and again between 1pm and 4pm.
- **Vote absentee (if eligible).** Michigan voters may be eligible to vote by absentee ballot. If you meet any of the following criteria, you may be able to cast a ballot by mail: You expect to be absent from the community in which you live during voting hours; You are over the age of 60; You are physically unable to attend the polls; You cannot attend the polls due to the tenets of your religion.

Voters who qualify to vote absentee may pick up an absentee ballot at their local clerk’s office, or a ballot may be mailed to them. Voters can find their local clerk’s information [online at Michigan.gov/vote](#).

Absentee ballots will be available at local clerk's offices beginning in late September. Voters may pick up an absentee ballot in person at their local clerk's office until 4pm on Monday, November 5th. Local clerks are also required to hold office hours on Saturday, November 3 to accommodate absentee ballots on the weekend prior to the election.