



ARIZONA: PROTECTIONS AGAINST INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS AND ELECTION WORKERS

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This resource details state and federal laws protecting against the intimidation of voters and election workers and the disruption of the voting process.

Voters in Arizona have the right to vote free from intimidation under federal and state law.¹

The federal protections that apply to all states are explained [here](#). The following actions are specifically prohibited by Arizona law:

- Hindering the voting of others.²
- Removing or destroying materials that help a voter cast their ballot.³
- Attempting to convince a voter to vote for or against anything on the ballot within 75 feet of a polling place.⁴
- Bringing deadly weapons into a polling place or within 75 feet of a polling place entrance, even if the voter is licensed to carry such weapons.⁵

The following addresses the laws that serve as guardrails against specific threats of intimidation.

Voter Challenges

Although Arizona law permits any properly registered voter to challenge another voter's eligibility,⁶ state law also provides for some guardrails:

- Arizona law requires that a challenger must prove that a voter is not eligible by clear and convincing evidence.⁷
- Challenges at a polling place must be directed only to poll workers. No challenger may confront or question a voter directly.⁸

1 See, e.g., 18 U.S.C. §§ 241, 594; 52 U.S.C. § 10101(b); Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1013.

2 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1017(6).

3 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1017(5).

4 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1017(3).

5 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 13-1302(A)(11); Arizona Secretary of State, "Guidance on Voting Location Conduct, Activities Prohibited Inside the 75-foot-limit," accessed September 8, 2026, <https://azsos.gov/elections/about-elections/guidance-voting-location-conduct>.

6 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-591.

7 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, December 22, 2025, 86, 88, 218-220, <https://perma.cc/EEZ8-7VML>.

8 Arizona Secretary of State, *Guidance on Polling Place Conduct and Prevention of Voter Intimidation*, October 2024, 3, <https://perma.cc/5YAS-U94J>.



- Any challenges based at all on race, national origin, disability, language, or religion may constitute voter intimidation.⁹
- Repeated frivolous challenges, or those that are made to harass and intimidate voters, may amount to prohibited voter intimidation, and the challenger may be removed from the polling place.¹⁰

Arizona law requires a high burden of proof for challenges to be sustained:

- Challengers must have clear and convincing evidence that the challenged voter is ineligible to vote.¹¹ The challenge is assessed promptly at the voting location by a board made up of one election inspector and two election judges.¹²
- Challenged voters may vote a regular ballot if they appear to be registered and take an oath and if the majority of the board finds the challenge to be invalid.¹³
- If the majority of the board finds the challenge to be valid or if a challenged voter does not wish to take the prescribed oath or answer the inspector's questions, the voter may still cast a provisional ballot.¹⁴

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) provides additional safeguards to protect voters from mass challenges before an election:

- The NVRA expressly recognizes that National Change of Address information is not sufficient on its own to serve as the basis for canceling a voter's registration.¹⁵
- The NVRA prohibits the systematic removal of voters from the rolls within 90 days of a federal election.¹⁶

More information about the limitations and process for voter challenges in Arizona can be found [here](#).

Intimidation of Poll Workers and Election Officials

In addition to federal protections against the intimidation of election workers, interfering with the work of an election worker in any manner is a felony in Arizona.¹⁷ It is also a misdemeanor to use or threaten to use violence or physical force to obstruct any public servant in performing a governmental function.¹⁸

9 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 219.

10 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 204-205.

11 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-121.01(B); Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 218-220.

12 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 219.

13 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-592(A)-(B).

14 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-592(C).

15 52 U.S.C. § 20507(c)(1)(B).

16 52 U.S.C. § 20507(c)(2)(A).

17 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1004(A).

18 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 13-2402(A)(1).



Voter Intimidation by Poll Workers

Information about the rules and constraints on poll workers in Arizona can be found [here](#).

Intimidation by Election Observers

In addition to Arizona's voter intimidation laws detailed above, the state places limits on who may serve as observers¹⁹ and what they may do:

- Observers must be appointed by the county chairman of each political party, and each political party represented on the ballot may only appoint one representative unless the number of representatives is otherwise mutually agreed upon by the parties.²⁰
- All observers must obtain credentials.²¹
- No observer may enter a voting booth except to mark their own ballot.²²
- Observers at a central counting place are given identifying badges.²³
- Observers may not wear, carry, or display any materials that express support for or opposition to any political entity.²⁴

Election officials may remove from a polling place any observer who interferes with the election process.²⁵

More information on the rules and constraints on election observers in Arizona can be found [here](#).

19 Note that observers in Arizona are referred to as “challengers” in state statute, and “observers” in Department of State guidance.

20 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-590(A), (C).

21 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 156, 158.

22 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-590(B).

23 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 158.

24 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-515(F).

25 See, e.g., Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 204 (“The inspector must utilize the marshal to preserve order and remove persons engaging in voter intimidation . . . The inspector and/or marshal must use sound judgment to decide whether to contact law enforcement, and any higher-level decisions should be raised through the officer in charge of elections.”).



Guns, Law Enforcement, and Federal Agents at Polling Places

Private citizens are prohibited from bringing weapons into polling places or within 75 feet of a polling place, even if the voter is licensed to carry such weapons.²⁶

Even at locations where firearms are not expressly prohibited, carrying a firearm may constitute unlawful intimidation.²⁷ Such conduct may consist of:

- Carrying a visible firearm at a drop box or vote-counting site,
- Carrying a visible firearm outside the 75-foot buffer zone of a polling place,
- Displaying a concealed firearm during a discussion or argument with a voter or election worker, or
- Approaching a voter or election worker while displaying a firearm.

Polling inspectors or marshals may contact local law enforcement to preserve order or remove disruptive persons from polling places; however, they must use sound judgment before doing so.²⁸

Although Arizona law exempts military and on-duty peace officers acting in performance of their official duties from the prohibition on firearms at polling places,²⁹ it is illegal under federal law for members of the military and other armed federal agents to be deployed to or stationed at the polls:

- It is a felony to deploy federal troops or other armed federal agents to a polling place, unless such force is “necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States.”³⁰
- It is a felony for a member of the military to intimidate voters or interfere with elections.³¹

Door-to-Door Intimidation

Arizona and federal law prohibit canvassing efforts that are used to intimidate voters.³² Moreover, in response to a 2021 proposal in Arizona to conduct a door-to-door canvass of voters to investigate voter eligibility, the Department of Justice sent a [letter](#) to the Arizona Senate specifically warning that such a system may constitute unlawful voter intimidation under federal law. Any voter who receives a visit from a privately organized canvassing group does not have to answer any questions and should report any incidents of intimidation to their local officials.

26 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 13-3102(A)(11); Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 204.

27 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, p. 80, fn. 11. See also *Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans v. Clean Elections USA*, No. CV-22-01823-PHX-MTL (D. Ariz. November 1, 2022), <https://perma.cc/6JZY-RSNJ> (temporary restraining order issued prohibiting defendants from openly carrying firearms within 250 feet of a ballot drop box); *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, 142 S. Ct. 2111, 2133 (2022) (prohibitions on firearms in “sensitive places,” specifically “polling places,” are “presumptively lawful.”)

28 Arizona Secretary of State, *Election Procedures Manual*, 156, 158.

29 Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 13-3102(C).

30 18 U.S.C. § 592.

31 18 U.S.C. § 593. See also 52 U.S.C. § 10102.

32 18 U.S.C. §§ 241, 594; Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1013.