

Election Observation: Rules and Laws

October 9, 2020

As states prepare for Election Day, many jurisdictions have paid considerable attention to poll workers. However, another group of people spend a considerable amount of time in polling places and have significant roles and responsibilities while working in precincts: Election observers. “Election observers,” sometimes called “poll watchers,” are a cohort of people who watch over the voting process and report on inconsistencies and election violations, and challenge the authenticity of voters. This memorandum details the requirements for election observation in battleground states, analyzes national patterns, examines the types of oversight election observers conduct, and surveys the type of processes states have created for electoral oversight.

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Summary

Election observers, also known as poll watchers, play an important role on Election Day. Many states allow poll watchers to observe the entire voting process, from voters casting ballots to election officials counting those ballots. And, poll watchers can report discrepancies in procedure or rule violations to their respective board of elections. These reports of rule violations can include accusations of on-site electioneering or voter identification issues. In some states, poll watchers also can challenge the authenticity of any voter and seek verification before that voter casts their ballot.

The responsibilities of election observers and the manner in which they are selected varies across states. In some states, the political parties appoint people to observe the process on their behalf. In others, any member of the public, regardless of party, may observe the way ballots are cast and counted. The rules that govern election observation are created at the state level. However, some counties have power over how these rules will be implemented, with some states allowing for county committees or county political parties to nominate poll watchers.

Rules for Observers in Battleground States

States have different rules for observing in-person voting, signature matching and mail ballot verification, and ballot counting. The eight battleground states, loosely defined, that are covered in this memo are Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

In-person voting election observers generally fall into one of two categories: party-appointed or public. The majority (Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) of the battleground states require poll observers to be appointed or nominated by a county or state party chair. One battleground state (Wisconsin) permits any member of the public to observe elections. A couple of battleground states (Michigan and Ohio) have both party-appointed observers and nonpartisan observers. Michigan, for example, has party-appointed poll challengers but poll watchers can be any member of the public. Ohio, on the other hand, has poll watchers that are appointed by a political party and appointed by ballot initiative committees, which are committees that are formed to put an initiative on the ballot and then make it law. No matter the process, whether party-appointed or public, election observers cannot promote candidates on the ballots, as that would violate state electioneering laws.

States also have differing requirements for observation of the signature matching and ballot verification processes. Some states appoint observers for these processes through political parties, others allow any member of the public to observe the process, and a few allow both public and party

oversight. Regardless of the appointment process, the power of observers in each state varies greatly, from being able to challenge individual ballots to being permitted only to observe signature and mail ballot verification.

Likewise, the battleground states have different policies governing oversight of the ballot counting process. Some states employ an oversight process by which poll watchers nominated by political parties can see the tabulation of ballots (Arizona and Georgia). One state (Ohio) appoints canvass observers by political party, but also employs ballot initiative committees whose members are not always formed via the parties. The majority of battleground states (Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) use a public oversight process, in which any person can witness the tabulation of the ballots. Overall, states do not allow for poll watchers to interfere with the process; they can only observe.

A. Arizona

In [Arizona](#), political party observers are nominated by the county chair of each party and are approved by the County Recorder to [observe](#) (1) specific voting locations on election day, (2) a central counting place, or (3) multiple voting locations. Parties may stipulate to the same number of observers at each voting place; if an agreement cannot be reached, the parties are limited to one observer at each location.

Political party observers may observe (1) the opening of polling places, (2) voting at polling places (although to uphold the integrity of the secret ballot, observers must maintain distance between themselves and the voter), (3) the closing of polling places, (4) the transport of ballots from polling places to a specified receiving site, and/or (5) any other significant voting or processing activity, including vote counting.

Counties are charged with signature matching under the supervision of the County Recorder. During the signature verification process, the County Recorder, or other election officer, will compare the signatures on the affidavit with the voter's voter registration form. Up to two party observers, one from each party, may watch over "any significant voting or processing activities," including the signature verification process. In addition, counties, like [Maricopa County](#), have discretion to allow up to two members of the public to observe the process. During ballot counting, poll watchers can observe every stage of the ballot counting process, from inspecting ballots to tabulating ballots to reviewing ballots.

B. Florida

In [Florida](#), both the political parties and candidates are each entitled to have one poll watcher in each precinct on Election Day. Additionally, political committees formed for the purpose of advocating for an issue on the ballot may have a poll watcher in each polling room. Poll watchers may not be a member of law enforcement or a candidate on the ballot.

Poll watchers may observe the process, but are prohibited from “[obstructing the orderly conduct of the election](#).” They must pose any questions of procedure at the polling place to the clerk for resolution. If poll watchers seek to challenge the process, they must submit the charge in writing to the clerk; the submission must include a completed “Oath of Person Entering Challenge” form.

Florida also provides for the appointment of deputies to the election board, composed of all the poll workers in a precinct. The election board observes [election integrity](#) by the Department of State, “at any time it deems fit; upon the petition of 5 percent of the registered electors; or upon the petition of any candidate, county executive committee chair, state committeeman or committeewoman, or state executive committee chair.” The deputies have greater observing rights than party-appointed poll observers including “. . . access to all registration books and records as well as any other records or procedures relating to the voting process.” In addition, by law, “[t]he deputy may supervise preparation of the voting equipment and procedures for election, and it shall be unlawful for any person to obstruct the deputy in the performance of his or her duty.”

The public is allowed to [inspect](#) ballots and to be [present](#) for the canvass of mail-in votes. If any eligible voter observing the process believes “that any ballot is illegal due to any defect,” that observer may file a protest with the canvassing board. Additionally, candidates and their representatives are allowed to be present during this mail-in ballot inspection process, and candidates and their representatives may file protests with the canvassing board, challenging the validity of any ballot. Both the candidate and their representatives may only challenge ballots they believe to be defective before the ballot has been removed from the mailing envelope.

[Florida](#) also allows any member of the public to watch the ballot tabulation process. Essentially any person with a desire to oversee this process can do so, including party-appointed poll watchers.

C. Georgia

In [Georgia](#), each political party may appoint two poll watchers per precinct. Each independent or nonpartisan candidate may also appoint one poll watcher. All poll watchers must be nominated at least seven days prior to the election and will be appointed to serve in the locations designated by the

superintendent within the tabulating center. Designated locations where watchers can legally observe include the check-in area, computer room, duplication area, and other areas as the superintendent may deem necessary to the assurance of fair and honest procedures in the tabulating center, which includes the counting and recording of votes. Similarly, at least seven days prior to the start of early voting, political parties or candidates must nominate poll watchers for early voting sites.

At least fourteen days prior to the election, parties, political bodies, and independent candidates may designate up to 25 statewide poll watchers submitted to the State Election Board. Statewide observers may observe in any precinct, and can move around to other precincts throughout election day, but are otherwise subject to all limitations on precinct-nominated poll watchers. Further, no more than two poll watchers from each political party, political body, or independent candidate may be at the same precinct at the same time.

Poll watchers may also observe “the counting and recording of votes.” They may not directly challenge observed irregularities or infractions or file complaints with the poll managers. However, they may report any observed issues to the election superintendent. Further, poll watchers are allowed to access the area where the ballots are counted and can observe both the counting and recording of these ballots.

D. Michigan

Michigan designates [two entirely different positions](#), poll watchers and poll challengers, with different rights and responsibilities. Poll challengers have more rights than poll watchers. These challengers are appointed by state-recognized political parties, incorporated organizations, and political committees formed for the purpose of advocating for a particular ballot measure. Poll challengers, however, cannot be appointed by a candidate or group affiliated with a candidate. There can be no more than two challengers per precinct. Poll challengers must be registered voters in the state of Michigan and carry identification cards.

As noted, these challengers have significant latitude in their operation. They may observe the voting precincts and absentee voter counting board precincts and also examine voting equipment before and after polls are open. They may also observe the processing of voters; inspect the pollbook, registration list, or other materials; and remain in the precinct until the precinct board completes its work. Poll challengers may challenge, with good reason, any person’s right to vote in the precinct, and they may also challenge the actions of election inspectors serving in the precinct. They may also report the improper handling of a ballot by a voter or precinct official, and they may challenge any voter that was issued an absentee ballot who appears to vote in person on election day. That said, challengers are

prohibited from “[disorderly conduct](#),” including drinking alcohol, in the precinct, and may not speak to voters or use recording devices or in any way touch the voting equipment.

Poll watchers comprise a different group of poll observers. These watchers can be any interested non-candidate person who wishes to observe the integrity of the election. Distinctions between poll watchers and challengers include the provision that watchers do not need to be registered to vote in Michigan, are not permitted to challenge a person’s right to vote or the actions of the board, and are only permitted to observe until the polls close at 8PM.

Michigan also provides for the observation of mail-in ballot counting. One appointed election challenger per eligible group may observe the conduct of the “absent voter counting board.” If a challenger believes an absentee ballot was submitted by a person unqualified to vote in their precinct, they may challenge that ballot. Additionally, members of the public may also observe the conduct of the board. However, unlike election challengers, who may come and go as they please, if a member of the public wishes to observe, that person must remain in the room in which the board is working until close of the polls.

[Michigan](#) also allows any member of the public to watch the ballot tabulation process. Essentially, any person with a desire to oversee this process can do so, and that includes any party-appointed poll watchers.

E. North Carolina

In North Carolina, county political party chairs can appoint [two election observers](#) per precinct. The observers are required to be registered to vote in that county and have “good moral character.” County party chairs are also permitted to appoint 10 at-large election observers to go to any precinct in that county to observe the election process. Poll observers are required to be [unpaid](#), and no candidate for office can serve in the position. Poll observers in North Carolina are appointed by [county political party chairs](#), unless open observing positions remain and no party fills them.

Under North Carolina law, any registered voter in a particular county can [challenge](#) another person’s right to vote in that county. Therefore, any poll observer can challenge a voter’s right to vote because poll observers must be registered to vote in the county in which they are observing.

Party-appointed poll observers are [barred](#) from involvement in the signature verification process. However, [North Carolina](#) also allows any member of the public to watch the ballot tabulation process. Essentially any person, including party-appointed poll watchers, with a desire to oversee this process can do so.

F. Ohio

In [Ohio](#), three groups, (1) a county or state political party, (2) a group of five or more candidates, or (3) a ballot issue committee, may appoint poll observers to one or more of the six categories of observers permitted to observe various components of the election. Observers must be qualified to vote in the state, but need not be registered in the county in which they observe. They are prohibited from wearing any type of law enforcement or campaign uniform.

Observers are limited to viewing the proceedings of the election and may not handle any election material. They may observe all proceedings in the election, including the casting, processing, [counting](#), and recounting of ballots. Observers must report concerns to the board of elections so as not to interfere with election officials administering the election.

In addition to party-appointed poll watchers, [Ohio](#) allows for poll watchers nominated by nonpartisan committees to watch the ballot counting process as well. For example, committees that represent the proponents or opponents of a ballot initiative may appoint poll watchers to observe the ballot counting process. Committees nominating a nonpartisan candidate as an official may also designate poll watchers. And under [Ohio law](#), all poll watchers have equal access to areas where ballots are counted.

There are other restrictions specific to the six appointment categories a poll observer occupies. Observers at an in-person absentee voting location are limited to one appointment per appointing group, while observers at precincts on Election Day are limited to one appointment per appointing group in each precinct who may observe from beginning to end. Observers at the Board of Elections office prior to the official canvass are permitted to observe the casting of provisional ballots after close of registration, the casting and counting of ballots on election day, and the processing of absentee and provisional ballots. Official canvass observers may only be appointed by the county executive committee of each political party or independent or nonpartisan candidate, or a committee representing or opposing a ballot issue, but recount observers may be the candidate in addition to one other person to freely observe the recount. Finally, post-election audit observers may be appointed by a political party, a group of candidates, or a ballot issue committee, to observe the audit.

G. Pennsylvania

In [Pennsylvania](#), each candidate for office is entitled to two poll watchers in each precinct in which the candidate is on the ballot. Political parties are also entitled to three additional poll watchers in each precinct. Poll watchers must be registered to vote in the county in which they serve and can serve in only one precinct in that county. As made clear in a [lawsuit](#), Board of Elections offices, where

voters can request and submit ballots, do not constitute precincts, and so poll watchers are not allowed in these areas.

Poll watchers can challenge the authenticity of any voter and request the voter produce the proper documentation before they cast their ballot. Watchers can be paid only by the party or candidate that appointed them to the position, not in excess of \$120 for the entire day. [Nonpartisan](#) election observers are not permitted in the state.

Poll watchers from both parties are on boards which conduct mail-in ballot verification. However, as of September 15, 2020, signature mismatch [is no longer a reason](#) to reject ballots in Pennsylvania, limiting the power of the poll watchers on those boards to challenge mail-in ballots. [Pennsylvania](#) allows any member of the public to watch the ballot tabulation process, including any party-appointed poll watchers.

H. Wisconsin

In [Wisconsin](#), any member of the public may be present at any polling place for the purpose of observation of an election, with the exception of a candidate who appears on the ballot. Election observers must sign a log at the polling place and must remain in the clearly-marked, designated observation area between 3-8 feet from the voter check-in table and position themselves so the observer can readily observe all public aspects of the voting process. The chief inspector or municipal clerk may reasonably limit the number of persons representing the same organization who are permitted to observe at the same time.

The public may [observe all aspects](#) of the election process, including the counting of mail-in ballots and signature verification. Further, [Wisconsin](#) allows any member of the public to watch the ballot tabulation process. Essentially any person with a desire to oversee this process can do so.

Conclusion

Typically, poll watchers oversee much of the electoral process. Poll watchers can observe voters in the polling place, watch the ballot tabulation process, and oversee election audits. In addition, poll watchers have the ability to report suspicious behavior or rule violations to election officials. Many poll watchers also have the power to challenge voters, in order to seek identification or voter registration information. Further, there are many different ways a state can bring poll watchers into the electoral process. Arizona, for example, relies exclusively on party-appointed poll watchers, but uses some members of the public when verifying mail-in ballots. Pennsylvania uses party-appointed poll watchers

for mail-in ballot verification, but uses public observers to oversee its ballot tabulation. On the other hand, Wisconsin uses only public participation during every step of its voting process.

Appendix

For information on non-battleground states, check out the National Conference of State Legislatures:

STATE	QUALIFICATIONS
Alabama Ala. Code §17-8-7	Must be a registered voter (resident and qualified elector), one per party per polling place. Prohibits election officials, including returning officials, from serving as poll watchers.
Alaska AS §15.10.170	Must be a U.S. citizen; one or more watchers may be present per party, ballot committee, candidate, etc. No more than one watcher on duty at a time.
Arizona A.R.S. §16-590	The county party chairman may appoint one person per precinct; the parties must agree on the total number of people allowed per polling place. If they cannot agree, the rule is one person per party per polling place at a given time.
Arkansas A.C.A. §7-5-312 and §7-5-904	Requires a "poll watcher authorization form" to be filed with the county clerk; "Only one authorized poll watcher per candidate, group, or party at any one given time may be officially recognized as a poll watcher at each location within a polling site where voters identify themselves to election officials" Allows candidates to be poll watchers with some form of identification. Prohibits a member of the State Board of Election Commissioners or a county board of election commissioners from serving as a poll watcher.
Colorado C.R.S. §1-7-106 and §1-7-108	Must be eligible electors; prohibits candidates or family members of candidates; one per party per polling place.
Florida F.S. §101.131	A "qualified and registered elector" in the county in which he/she will serve; one per party and one per candidate, cannot be candidate or law enforcement officer. Must wear a badge identifying them by name.
Georgia Ga. Code Ann. §21-2-408	Prohibits candidates from serving as poll watchers; two per precinct in the general election and one per precinct per candidate in the primary election. Must wear a badge saying "Official Poll Watcher."
Hawaii HRS §11-77 and §11-72 (b)(3)	Each qualified political party shall be entitled to appoint no more than one watcher who may be present at any time at a voter service center. Names must be submitted twenty days prior to the election. Prohibits parents, spouses, siblings, children or the candidates themselves. Also prohibits candidates from the primary who failed to receive a nomination from being a poll watcher in the general election.
Illinois 10 ILCS 5/17-23	Registered to vote in the state; must be affiliated with the political party or organization that appoints him or her; the parties and candidates can each appoint two per precinct; organizations that are concerned with the election and nonpartisan civic organizations can appoint one per precinct provided they register with the elections authority 40 days before the election; there can be no more than two people from nonpartisan civic organizations at a polling place at a given time.
Indiana Burns Ind. Code Ann. § 3-6-8-1	Must be a registered voter of the county. The state chairman and county chairman of each political party or an independent candidate for a federal or a state office are entitled to appoint watchers at each precinct in which the political party or independent candidate is on the ballot. Each political party, independent candidate, and media may have only one watcher at each precinct at any time during Election Day.
Iowa I.C.A. §49.104	No more than three at a time per political party. No more than one at a time per nonparty political organizations, candidates nominated by petition, and any other nonpartisan candidate in a school or city election. People with an interest in a ballot issue who file in advance an intent to be an observer. No candidates; no elected officials whose names appear on the ballot; no precinct workers; to challenge a voter, must be a registered voter.
Kansas K.S.A. 25-3005a	Must be either a member of a candidate's family, a registered voter, or at least 14 years of age but satisfy all of the other requirements for being a voter other than age; candidates, precinct committee members, write-in candidates, and issue campaign committees are each limited to one representative per polling place. Must wear badge identifying person as "Observer."
Kentucky KRS §117.315	No more than two people appointed by each party per precinct to be submitted to the county clerk in advance of the election; must be a registered voter in the county.
Louisiana LSA-R.S. 18:427; LSA-R.S. 18:435	Must submit names to the local officials ten days prior to the election; Must be a qualified voter in the state; must not be qualified for assistance; must not be a candidate or a law enforcement officer. One person per precinct per candidate, but each candidate may designate one person to be a "super watcher" who can be a watcher in any precinct in which the candidate is on the ballot; the list of watchers must be submitted to the county clerk ten days prior to the election.
Maine 21-AM.R.S.A. §627	Municipalities must allow at least one person per party to be a poll watcher.
Maryland MD Code, Election Law, §10-311	A state or local board of elections, a candidate, political party, or any other group of voters supporting a candidate or issue can appoint an accredited poll challenger or watcher. Must be a registered voter. Election judges may allow non-accredited challengers or watchers to enter the polling place to challenge a person's vote.
Massachusetts 950 C.M.R. § 54.04(22a)	Poll watchers are allowed at polling sites as long as they are not disorderly and do not disrupt voter access to the polls.
Michigan M.C.L.A. 168.733; M.C.L.A. 168.730 SOS Guidance	Anyone who wishes to observe the election process (and who is not a qualified election challenger) may serve as a poll watcher. A challenger must be a registered voter in the state, not a candidate or election inspector and must carry an identification card. A political party, organization or organized entity of interested citizens may designate no more than two challengers per precinct at any one time.
Minnesota M.S.A. §204C.07	Minnesota does not allow poll watchers, only challengers. One challenger is permitted per each political party per precinct; ballot issue committees must get signatures from 25 voters to be able to appoint one challenger per precinct, and that person must be a registered voter. Must be residents of the state. Prohibits election judges.
Mississippi Miss. Code Ann. §23-15-571 and §23-15-577	Poll watchers may be designated by political parties and candidates whose name appears on the ballot in the precinct. Each political party that has a candidate on the ballot shall have the right to be represented by two credentialed poll watchers. Challenges may also be made by candidates, qualified electors, managers, clerks, and poll workers.
Missouri Mo. Rev. Stat. § 15-115.105.1	Must be a registered voter in the jurisdiction. The chair of the county committee of each political party named on the ballot shall have the right to designate a challenger for each polling place, who may be present during the hours of voting, and a challenger for each location at which absentee ballots are counted, who may be present while the ballots are being prepared for counting and counted.
Montana MCA 13-13-120	One poll watcher per party per polling place; can't be a candidate whose name is on the ballot.

Nevada N.R.S. 293.274	Members of the general public may be poll watchers, but this does not include members of the media or people who are observing the polls solely within a professional capacity.
New Hampshire N.H. Rev. Stat. §666:4	State and municipal party committees can appoint challengers.
New Jersey N.J.S.A. 19:7-1	County committee chairs for political parties may appoint two challengers per election district.
New Mexico N.M.S.A. §1-2-21-27	The county chair of each political party and any election-related organization may appoint watchers in writing for each polling location. Any group of three candidates for elected office may appoint watchers in a county if the candidates provide a written notice to the secretary of state. No more than one watcher at a time in a polling location. Must wear identification. Candidates, family members of candidates, and law enforcement officers may not serve. An election related organization or a group of three candidates may appoint poll watchers by providing the Secretary of State's office with notice at least ten days prior to the election.
New York McKinney's Election Law §8-500	Must be a registered voter in the county or city holding the election; can't be a candidate in that district; an organization, a party committee, or a group of two or more candidates can appoint poll watchers but none of them can have more than three poll watchers in one location at one time and no more than one poll watcher at a time beyond the guardrail.
North Carolina N.C.G.S.A. §163-45	County party chairs can designate two observers per polling place and 10 at-large observers who are residents of the county and can observe at any polling place in the county; county party chairs can also appoint a runner to receive voting lists. Observers must be registered voters of the county in which they are appointed and must have "good moral character." Prohibits candidates from serving as observers or runners.
North Dakota NDCC, 16.1-05-09	Election observers must wear a badge with the name of the observer and the name of the organization that observer is representing.
Ohio R.C. §3505.21	Must be a registered voter in the precinct; can't be a candidate; can be appointed by a political party or a group of five or more candidates; one person per precinct; can't be a uniformed peace officer, state patrolman, member of an organized militia or any other person in uniform; can't be carrying a firearm or deadly weapon.
Oklahoma 26 Okl. St. Ann. §7-130	Any candidate or recognized political party is entitled to have a poll watcher; must file with the Secretary of State or County Election Board by 5 p.m. the Wednesday before the election.
Oregon O.R.S. §254.482	Observers may watch the county clerk receive and count mail-in ballots if authorized by a candidate, political party, or the county clerk. Only so many watchers allowed as will not interfere with orderly procedure.
Pennsylvania 25 P.S. §2687	Must be a registered voter in the county; can only be a poll watcher in one district; candidates can appoint two watchers per district and political parties can appoint three watchers per district.

Rhode Island Gen. Laws §17-19-22	Political parties may appoint "checkers" to see who has voted, "runners" to deliver lists of people who have voted, and "watchers" to challenge the eligibility of voters
South Carolina S.C. Code §7-13-860	"Must be a qualified voter" in the county where he/she will serve and certified in writing to the managers of the precinct; two per party per 1,000 registered voters per polling place; poll watchers must also wear a badge indicating the candidate or party they represent.
South Dakota SDCL §12-15-2.1 and §12-18-8.1	Prohibits precinct superintendents, precinct deputies, candidates, or election board workers from serving as poll watchers; one watcher per polling place per each party, independent candidate, slate of presidential electors and each side of a ballot issue.
Tennessee T.C.A. §2-7-104	Must be 17 years old by Election Day, and appointed by the party in writing; each candidate can have one and each party or citizens' organization can have two. The state also prohibits spouses of candidates from serving.
Texas V.T.C.A., Election Code §33.031	Poll watchers can be acting on behalf of a candidate, political party, or opponent or proponent of a ballot measure; must be a qualified elector from the jurisdiction; can't be a felon, candidate, public official or related within the second degree of consanguinity to an election judge/clerk at the site; maximum of seven per early voting site and two per Election Day voting site.
Utah U.C.A. §20A-3-201	Any individual may become a watcher in an election at any time by registering as a watcher with the administering election officer. A candidate whose name will appear on the ballot, a qualified write in candidate for the election, political party, or a political issues committee may certify an individual as an official watcher. Designated by the parties or persons interested in a ballot issue by affidavit; one to watch counting ballots; one to inspect the ballot packages.
Vermont 17 V.S.A. §2564	Candidates, political parties, and ballot initiative committees can't have more than two representatives outside the guardrail.
Virginia Va. Code Ann. §24.2-604	Must be a registered voter; one person per party per polling place at a given time but no more than three total for any organization; independent candidates can also appoint a poll watcher. Prohibits candidates from serving as poll watchers.
Washington RCV 29A.40.100	County auditors must request that observers appointed by the political parties be present during the processing of ballots; auditors can also request that observers from campaigns and organizations be present
West Virginia W.VA. Code §3-1-37; W.VA. Code §3-1-41	Poll watchers are not permitted in the polling places; it is the responsibility of the election officials to challenge voters.
Wisconsin W.S.A. 7.41	Any member of the public may be an observer except for a candidate on the ballot; observers must be in a designated location and they have to sign a log maintained by an official at the polling place.
Wyoming W.S. §22-15-109	Must be certified by the county chairman of a political party; one per party unless election judge decides one additional watcher may be accommodated without disrupting polling process. Must be registered voter in the county and "belong" to the party they represent.