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STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Elections
Office of the Lieutenant Governor

June 12, 2023

It is the policy of the Division of Elections that visually impaired voters have equal access to voting as required by state and federal law. The Division is committed to upholding the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and equal participation in the electoral system. This policy aims to eliminate any barriers that may impede the exercise of voting rights for individuals with visual impairments while promoting accessibility and accommodating their needs. This includes the ability to vote privately, secretly, and independently.

Policy Statement:

Equal Treatment

- a. All blind and visually impaired voters shall be treated with equality and respect, regardless of their disability, and shall receive equal opportunities to participate in the electoral process.
- b. No voter shall be subjected to discrimination, exclusion, or disparate treatment based on their visual impairment.
- c. The Division is committed to providing accessible voting options that enable blind and visually impaired voters to cast their ballots independently and privately.
- d. The Division shall make reasonable accommodations to ensure blind and visually impaired voters have an equal opportunity to exercise their voting rights, including but not limited to:
 - a. Accessible voting machines equipped with tactile interfaces, large print options, and audio instructions, placed at all polling places and early vote locations.
 - b. Absentee ballots by electronic transmission, with directions intended for a visually impaired audience.
 - c. Accessible formats of election materials, such as voter guides, sample ballots, and informational brochures, including digital formats compatible with assistive technologies.
 - d. Allowing in-person voting with the assistance of a sighted personal representative of the voter's choosing.

- e. Election personnel available to assist blind and visually impaired voters, if requested, while ensuring the confidentiality of their votes.
- f. Provision of magnification devices, assistive technology, or other necessary tools at polling places to aid in reading and marking ballots.

Outreach and Education

- a. The Division shall implement a targeted outreach and educational campaign to raise awareness about voting rights and available accommodations for blind and visually impaired voters.
- b. Efforts shall be made to collaborate with relevant organizations, advocacy groups, and disability service providers to ensure comprehensive dissemination of information and to promote inclusivity.

Complaints

- a. Any blind or visually impaired voter shall have the right to file a complaint with the Division as required by the Help America Vote Act, 52 U.S.C. § 20901 *et seq.*, in addition to all other remedies available at law.
- b. The Division agrees to maintain clear and accessible procedures per 6 AAC 25.400 *et seq.* for receiving and addressing complaints under the preceding paragraph.

Training and Sensitization

- a. Elections officials, poll workers, and other relevant personnel shall receive comprehensive training on accessible voting technologies for serving blind and visually impaired voters.
- b. Poll workers and other relevant personnel shall receive instruction on effective communication techniques, and sensitivity toward the needs and rights of blind and visually impaired individuals.

Compliance and Monitoring

- a. The Division shall regularly monitor compliance with this non-discrimination policy and take necessary steps to ensure its effective implementation.
- b. Feedback from blind and visually impaired voters, advocacy groups, and relevant stakeholders shall be considered for ongoing improvement.

Public Awareness

- a. To raise awareness among voters, poll workers, and the general public, the Division shall publicize this non-discrimination policy by posting the policy on its official website, including an internet link to this policy in poll worker training materials, and including an internet link to this policy in the Official Election Pamphlet.

June 1, 2023

Implementation:

The Division shall implement this policy by adopting appropriate procedures. This policy and the associated procedures shall be updated within a reasonable amount of time, as needed, based on changes in the law and technological advancements.

This non-discrimination policy for blind and visually impaired voters is a commitment by the Division of Elections to safeguard the voting rights of all citizens, regardless of their visual abilities. By fostering inclusivity, accessibility, and equal treatment, the Division aims to strengthen the democratic process and ensure that every eligible voter can exercise their right to vote privately and independently.



Carol Beecher
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