

## **Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies United States Citizenship and Immigration Services**

**Where: 3701 Koppers Street, Baltimore, MD 21227**

### Directions:

From I-95, take EXIT 50 (first exit inside beltway), **CATON AVENUE SOUTH**

Turn **RIGHT** at first traffic signal, **JOH AVENUE**

Turn **RIGHT** onto **KOPPERS STREET** (second street after you turn)

Turn **RIGHT** into parking lot -

US Citizenship and Immigration Service office is on the corner.

Main entrance is on your right as you turn into the parking lot.

**Cancellations:** To check for weather-related closings: **(410) 779-2931** - at the prompt, **press 8**. The Lead volunteer should have phone numbers for all volunteers to notify them of changes.

### **What to do in preparation and for set up:**

#### **Basics:**

Each registration group will have one lead volunteer and one or more additional volunteers.

Lead Volunteer will get supplies from Barbara Crain or Phyllis Lansing, bring supplies to USCIS, and get them back to Barbara or Phyllis.

Lead Volunteer will either turn in registration forms to a local Board of Elections office or arrange for another volunteer to do so.

#### **Supplies:**

LWV or voter registrar pin (brought by individuals if they have them)

League banner and two "Register to Vote" signs

Plenty of black pens

Voter registration forms: Forms are in the new citizens' packets, but a few extras are sometimes needed.

"Welcome new citizen" letters from LWVMD

Large envelopes to hold the completed forms

Tally sheets to record how many new voters came from each county, the total number of newly naturalized citizens (announced during the ceremony, and how many volunteers are from each county League. The info on the tally sheet should be e-mailed to Ralph Watkins and Barbara Crain (addresses on the tally sheets and also listed below).

#### **Arrival and Setting Up:**

**Security:** Allow a few extra minutes to pass through security. Once you go through security, you need to sign in at the desk. Their policy varies as to whether you need a numbered visitor's badge.

**Inside:** A table and chairs should be set up next to the waiting room. If they are not there, ask the employee at the desk or a security guard. You will have a clear view of the ceremony room from your table

Notify staff in the ceremony room that LWV volunteers will be registering voters immediately following the ceremony.

## How: Naturalization ceremony and registration of new voters

You are welcome to sit in on the ceremony. If you do, please listen for the announcement of how many new citizens are being naturalized.

Two doors lead into and out of the ceremony room. If possible, station someone at each door with a “Register to Vote” sign and at least 6-8 pens, while the third volunteer works the table. (The door closer to the table is the busiest door, so if there are only 2 volunteers, that is the door that should be covered.) Each new citizen receives a USCIS packet containing a Voter Registration Form. Greet them as they exit the naturalization ceremony, and let them know you can answer questions. Invite them to “register to vote right over here.” As the crowd moves out of the ceremony room, door ushers can return to the table to help voters.

NOTE: If the area around the table begins to be crowded, encourage the citizens to move into the waiting room to complete their forms.

Check forms for completeness.

Lines 1 and 2: Make sure all boxes at top are checked.

Lines 6a and 6b: Only one ID number is needed, either a MD driver’s license # or the last four digits of the Social Security #. This is a privacy issue. See new additional note below.

Line 7: Maryland residence address – check that the County is given, e.g., Montgomery County, or that the box is checked for Baltimore City. Many people mistakenly write MD or USA in the small space for county.

Line 9: Answer questions about party affiliation. Explain the Maryland primary system, if necessary.

Line 10: A phone number is helpful if the Board of Elections has questions.

When the form is complete, congratulate the new voters and give each one a “Welcome new citizen” packet. Emphasize that they should receive a vote registration card within a few weeks. If it does not arrive, they should call their Board of Elections. Phone numbers are in the “welcome” packet.

**NEW:** Special Instructions Concerning Driver’s License and Social Security Number:

The Baltimore Sun had a story about a report accusing the State Board of Elections of jeopardizing the privacy of voters by sharing data that included voters' full Social Security numbers.

Protecting voters' personal information is important.

- If the voter has already provided their Maryland driver's license number, let them know that they do NOT need to add their Social Security number and should **black it out** if they wrote it in.
- If the voter did not write down their driver's license number and entered their full Social Security number, urge the voter to **black out** all but the last 4 digits. The voter registration database only takes the last 4 digits anyway.
- The voter should be the one to black out extra numbers. Crossing out these extra numbers may also help them to be more aware of the risks of providing a full Social Security number.

## FAQs

**Name and Address Changes:** People may report that they have changed their name or address. The name and address on the voter registration form should appear exactly as they appear on their driver’s license. That is the database the Board of Elections will be checking first. When they change their name and/or

address at the MVA, they can update their voter registration at the same time. Alternatively, they may choose to do their voter registration at the MVA.

**Party affiliation:** Many new citizens are hesitant to choose a party. They can remain affiliated, but that means they cannot vote in primary elections.

## **Wrap Up (lead volunteer)**

Complete the tally sheet. Email the information to Barbara Crain and Ralph Watkins.

Take the forms to your Board of Elections as soon as possible (within 24-48 hours), even though the forms will be from multiple counties. Every Board of Elections so far has been happy to take the forms and transfer the data to the appropriate county.

## **Restrictions**

**Photos:** Photos are NOT permitted in the lobby area, but you may take pictures of you group inside the ceremony room. If you take a photo of you team, be sure to post it on your League's website and/or Facebook page and also send it to Ralph Watkins or Barbara Crain for posting on the LWWVMD Facebook page ad website.

**No membership solicitation:** USCIS prohibits us from soliciting memberships. People are invited to request the Voters' Guide, and that has been given the OK by USCIS.

**THANK YOU!**

### **Contacts:**

Barbara Crain – (410) 299-0157; (410) 785-0410 – [barbara.crain.10@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.crain.10@gmail.com)

Ralph Watkins (LWV) - (301) 787-7170 – [ralph.watkins1@verizon.net](mailto:ralph.watkins1@verizon.net)