

## **INFORMATION ABOUT VOTING RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND INDIVIDUALS 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**

Federal and State law include provisions that make accommodations to voters who have disabilities and certain voters who are at least 65 years of age.

*Assistance in voting at the polling place.* Under Federal and Pennsylvania law, a voter with a disability that prevents the voter from entering the voting booth or using the election system used by the county, or that prevents the voter from being able to read or understand the ballot and election instructions and explanations, has the right to select a person of the voter's choice (except the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, an officer or agent of the voter's union, and the judge of elections) to enter the voting booth or voting compartment with the voter to assist him in voting. Before doing so, the voter whose voter registration record does not include notation of the voter's need for assistance will have to complete and sign a form provided for the voter by the elections officials at the polling place.

*Absentee voting.* Any registered voter who, because of illness or physical disability, is unable to attend his or her polling place, or to operate the voting system in use at the voter's polling place, is entitled to apply for and vote by Absentee Ballot. Except in the event of unexpected disability or illness, the county Board of Elections must receive an application for absentee ballot no later than 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, October 26, 2004. An Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot must be submitted no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 29, 2004. The county Board of Elections must receive all completed absentee ballots no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 29, 2004, except that absentee ballots received by 8:00 P.M. on Election Day, November 2, 2004, will be counted for the office of Presidential Elector only. Subject to submission of information required by law, an absentee voter may receive necessary assistance in completing the absentee ballot from a person of the voter's choosing, except the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union.

*Voting by Alternative Ballot.* A voter with a disability or who is at least 65 years of age, and who is assigned to vote at a polling place that has been deemed by the county Board of Elections to be inaccessible, has the right under Federal law to apply and vote by Alternative Ballot. An Alternative Ballot is a paper ballot that resembles an Absentee Ballot and may be delivered to the county Board of Elections in person, by an authorized representative, or through the U.S. Mail. Except in case of an emergency, a voter who qualifies for an Alternative Ballot must submit an application to the county Board of Elections no later than 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, October 26, 2004. However, an Emergency Application for Alternative Ballot may be submitted until 8:00 P.M. on Election Day, November 2, 2004. The county Board of Elections must receive all completed Alternative Ballots no later than 8:00 P.M. on Tuesday, November 2, 2004 – the time for the closing of the polls. A voter completing an Alternative Ballot may receive necessary assistance in completing the ballot from a person of the voter's

choosing, except the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union.

*Assistance for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired.* For persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, users may call TTY: 800-654-5984 or VOICE: 800-654-5988. They should ask to speak to the Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation at (717) 787-5280.