Members Brief

An informational brief prepared by the LSC staff for members and staff of the Ohio General Assembly

Author: Emily Wendel, Attorney
Reviewer: Amber Hardesty, Division Chief

Volume 136
November 5, 2026

Voter Identification

This brief explains the forms of voter identification that are acceptable in Ohio.

Overview

The table below shows the forms of voter identification (ID) that are acceptable to register to vote or to vote by various methods. In each case, a person needs to present one form of ID, except that registering to vote online requires both an Ohio driver's license or state ID card number (Ohio DL/ID) and the last four digits of the person's Social Security number (SSN-4).

Acceptable ID to register to vote and to vote

Form of voter ID	Register to vote on paper	Register to vote online (2 forms of ID needed)	Election Day voting	In-person absent voting	Absent voting by mail	Provisional ballot
Ohio DL/ID	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Military ID	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
U.S. passport or passport card	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ohio DL/ID number	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
SSN-4	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Affidavit of religious objection to being photographed, including SSN-4	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

Voter ID under the Ohio Constitution

A constitutional amendment adopted November 3, 2026, requires an in-person voter to show photo identification, meaning an Ohio driver's license or state ID card, a U.S. passport or passport card, or a military ID. See below for further explanation of these types of ID. If an in-person voter does not have a photo ID because the voter has a sincere religious objection to being photographed, the Constitution specifies that the law may provide an alternative method of verifying the voter's identity. The Revised Code allows such a voter to cast a provisional ballot, sign an affidavit, and provide the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number.

When a person votes by mail, the Constitution requires the voter to provide (1) photo ID or, if authorized by law, (2) a signature and at least one other unique identifier, meaning a unique numeric or alphanumeric descriptor assigned to the voter by the state or federal government or a shortened version of such a descriptor. The current statute allows a voter to provide a copy of the voter's photo ID, the voter's Ohio DL/ID number, or the voter's SSN-4, plus a required signature.

The Constitution does not specify what ID, if any, is required to register to vote. As is noted in the table above, the Revised Code permits an applicant to register on paper by providing either an Ohio DL/ID number or SSN-4. An online applicant must provide both of those forms of ID.

The adoption of the constitutional amendment did not require the legislature to make any changes to Ohio's current voter ID laws. However, any future changes to those laws must be in accordance with the new constitutional restrictions.[1]

Types of voter ID

Ohio driver's license or state ID card

An Ohio DL/ID issued by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) is a valid form of photo ID for voting as long as it is not expired and it shows the person's name and photograph. An Ohio DL/ID is not required to show the person's current address.

In addition to a regular driver's license or nondriver state ID card, all of the following documents issued by the BMV are considered an Ohio DL/ID for voting purposes:

- An interim identification form, which is a paper document the BMV issues to a person to use until the person's new permanent card arrives in the mail;
- A commercial driver's license or motorcycle operator's license;
- A probationary or restricted license;
- A temporary instruction permit.

[1] Ohio Constitution, Article V, Section 5 and R.C. 3501.01, 3503.14, 3503.20, 3505.18, 3505.181, 3505.182, 3505.183, 3509.03, 3509.05, 3511.02, and 3511.05.

An Ohio DL/ID can be used to vote by any method and to register to vote. For purposes of registering or voting absentee by mail, a person may provide the person's Ohio DL/ID number instead of the card itself.

Initial and renewed state ID cards are available to any person 17 or older at no cost. If a person's state ID card is lost or destroyed before it expires, the person must pay a fee to replace it. But, if a person has a change of name, a replacement card is free.

To receive an Ohio DL/ID, the BMV requires an applicant to present proof of the person's legal name, date of birth, legal presence in the U.S., Social Security number, and Ohio street address. For example, an applicant might provide a birth certificate, a Social Security card, and a utility bill.

A non-U.S. citizen who is legally present in the U.S. can receive an Ohio DL/ID, but it will include a "noncitizen" notation on the back. If the person later becomes a U.S. citizen, the person may apply for a free replacement card without the notation. If a person attempts to vote using an Ohio DL/ID that has a noncitizen notation, the election officials must challenge the person's right to vote and provide the person with a provisional ballot.[2]

Military ID

For voter ID purposes, a military ID includes an ID card issued by the U.S. military, the Ohio National Guard, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A military ID must not be expired and must show the person's name and photograph. Because the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs currently issues veteran ID cards in a digital format only, the Secretary of State instructs the boards of elections to accept those digital cards. Other types of military ID must be a physical card.[3] A veteran ID card issued by a county recorder or county veterans service office is not acceptable as voter ID.

A military ID is valid for voting by any method, but not for registering to vote. A copy of a military ID that is submitted for the purpose of voting absentee by mail must show the front and back of the card.

U.S. passport or passport card

To be used as voter ID, a U.S. passport or passport card must not be expired and must include the person's name and photograph. (A U.S. passport card is similar to a passport book but can only be used to cross the border by land or sea from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.)[4]

A U.S. passport or passport card is acceptable ID to vote by any method, but not to register to vote. A copy of a passport card that is submitted for the purpose of voting absentee by mail

[2] R.C. 3505.18, 4507.233, 4507.50, 4507.51, and 4507.52 and Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Acceptable Documents.

[3] U.S. Department of Defense, Common Access Card and Next Generation Uniformed Services ID Card; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Types of Veteran ID cards; and Ohio Secretary of State, Election Official Manual (PDF), ch. 8, p. 306.

[4] U.S. Department of State, Compare a Passport Card and Book.

must show the front and back of the card. A copy of a U.S. passport submitted for that purpose must show the ID page of the passport that shows the person's name, photograph, and other identifying information and the passport's expiration date.

Last four digits of Social Security number

A person may provide the person's SSN-4 to register to vote and to vote absentee by mail. A different form of ID is required to vote in person or by provisional ballot.

Affidavit of religious objection to being photographed

A person who does not have a photo ID because the person has a sincere religious objection to being photographed may vote in person by casting a provisional ballot at the person's polling place or at the board of elections during in-person absent voting. The person must sign an affidavit stating that the person does not have photo ID because the person has a sincere religious objection to being photographed. The form must include the person's SSN-4 and date of birth. When a person submits an affidavit, the board of elections must check the BMV's records, and the affidavit is not valid if the BMV database indicates that the person has been issued a currently unexpired Ohio DL/ID.

A religious objector cannot submit an affidavit for purposes of registering to vote but still may register on a paper form using the person's SSN-4. Such a person also may vote by mail by providing an SSN-4.[5]

[5] Ohio Secretary of State, Form 12-O (PDF).