

Campaign Legal Center, July 2026

U.S. Department of Justice Election Monitors

Election monitors are deployed to monitor polling places on election day to help assess compliance with federal voting and civil rights laws.

In July 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced it would send DOJ attorneys to monitor upcoming primary elections in certain localities in Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Virginia. While community members may be apprehensive about these efforts, the election monitor program is a long-running effort by DOJ to monitor compliance with federal civil and voting rights laws that generally proceeds without incident.

HOW DOES THE ELECTION MONITOR PROGRAM WORK?

DOJ MONITORS:

- Must comply with state laws regulating private election observers.
- Typically remain *outside* a polling place, unless a state or local election official allows them inside.
- Are tasked with observing, documenting, and reporting on compliance with federal voting and civil rights laws.
- Should notify local officials before appearing at a polling location and identify themselves as DOJ employees engaged in election monitoring once on-site.
- May talk with voters who are leaving the polling place after they have voted.

DOJ MONITORS MUST NOT:

- Behave in a way that intimidates voters, anyone assisting a voter, or election officials.
- Stop a voter heading into a polling place or at a check-in table to attempt to verify their identity or that they are a registered voter or a U.S. citizen.
- Engage in political activity—including wearing campaign attire or displaying campaign signage—or attempt to persuade voters to vote for or against a particular candidate.
- Attempt to enforce federal or state law or intervene to stop perceived violations.
- Remain inside a polling place after election officials/poll workers ask them to leave.
- Direct or order election officials/poll workers to take any action.
- Attempt to interfere with the administration, operations, or activities of a polling place or tabulation or certification facility due to perceived noncompliance with federal law.
- Appear at a polling place or other election administration facility without notice.

If you see DOJ monitors engaging in any of the prohibited behavior described above, you should immediately report that activity to the Election Protection Hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) or online at 866OurVote.org.