

“Elections belong to the people.”

—Abraham Lincoln
16th President of the United States of America

The Unsung Heroes of Elections: Connecticut’s Poll Workers

Every election, a group of people in Connecticut rise before dawn to report to polling locations throughout the state. They are the stagehands to democracy’s most important performance. Their presence is known. They are seen. Their responsibility is great. But yet, their efforts are often invisible. They are Connecticut’s poll workers.

Each town in Connecticut has teams of workers who help Registrars of Voters execute each election, no matter the size—from referenda to the General Election. Poll workers are the boots on the ground that help ensure our elections are free and fair. They are the people who welcome you at the polls, confirm your voter registration, go over the voting process, hand you a ballot and ensure you have privacy in casting your vote.

They are often your neighbors seeking to support their community; veterans continuing their service to our country; high school and college students seeking an intimate understanding of how democracy works; retirees who want to give back.

Poll workers prepare for their responsibilities by going to trainings and reading election materials in anticipation of enabling and empowering Connecticut voters to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

By law, nothing can postpone or stop elections from happening. No matter what, the show must go on and poll workers are required to show up, even if there’s a blizzard or pandemic.

The grit, determination and resiliency of Connecticut poll workers are legendary. Throughout the years, they have shown their dedication to the citizens of Connecticut from arranging snowplows to pick them up at their homes when snowstorms challenged their ability to open the polls for 6 AM to working 17 budget referendums over just a few months to donning personal protective equipment to work in the polls during the pandemic.

Even more, the work of poll workers sometimes does not end on Election Day. When there is a recount, poll workers have to return soon after working their 15-hour shift to do a hand count of ballots cast to confirm the election’s outcome.

There are many who are rightfully applauded for their work as public servants and contributions to the public good: nurses, police officers, fire-fighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT). Poll workers should be considered and elevated in the same way.

The next time you go to vote, remember to thank the poll workers for their service. This small act can make a big impact. By recognizing their efforts, we can help build a stronger sense of community around our elections, illustrate what pride in our state and country looks like, as well as acknowledge the hard work that goes into making sure our votes count.

It is an honor to dedicate the 2023 Register and Manual to these unsung heroes of Connecticut's elections. I hope you will consider joining their ranks for the 2024 election.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Stephanie Thomas
Secretary of the State



Secretary Stephanie Thomas (front-center) poses with poll workers at a Poll Worker Appreciation Day in Hamden.



Secretary Stephanie Thomas (center, with arm raised) and Deputy Secretary Jacqueline Kozin (standing at far left) pose with poll workers at a Poll Worker Appreciation Day in Bethany.



Secretary Stephanie Thomas poses with a poll worker at a Poll Worker Appreciation Day in Windham.



Secretary Stephanie Thomas poses with a poll worker and his child at a Poll Worker Appreciation Day in Newington.