



# **Proposal:** **Vote Anywhere in Manitoba on Election Day** **at any Returning Office**

October 2024

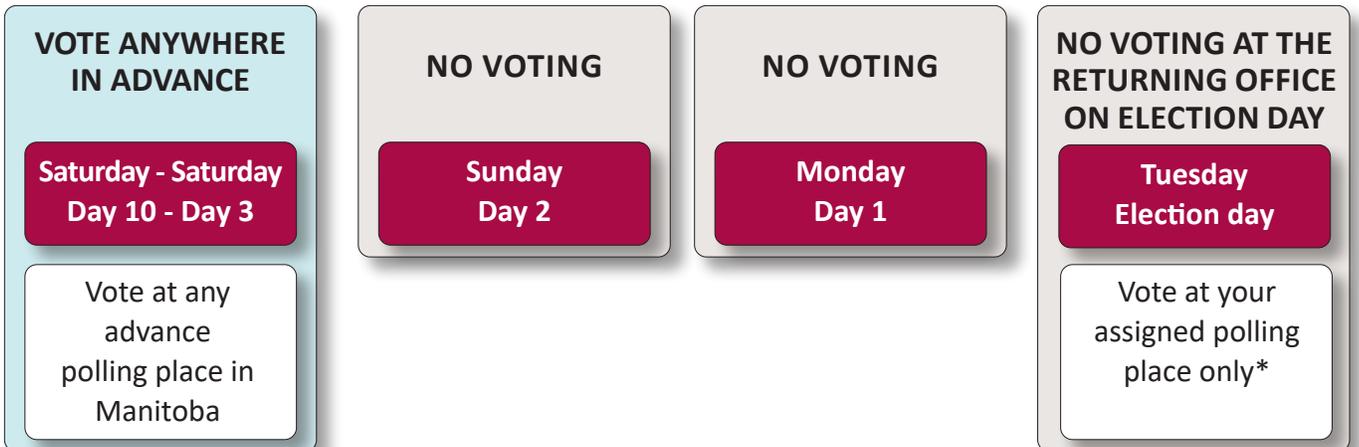
## Vote Anywhere in Manitoba on Election Day at any Returning Office

Elections Manitoba (EM) is proposing an additional three days of voting, including election day, at any returning office in Manitoba, from the end of advance voting to election day for the next general election.

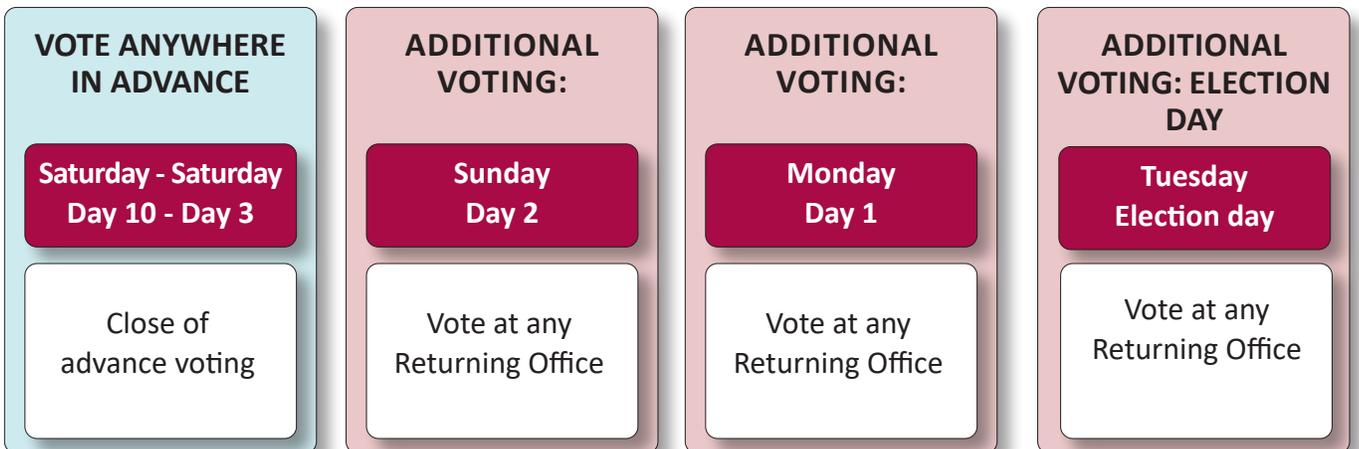
Vote Anywhere in the Province is similar to the advance voting model currently in place and extends voting opportunities for three additional days at the returning office. This model would make efficient use of existing infrastructure, while ensuring the integrity of the vote.

Under this model, voting opportunities at the returning office would expand from eight to eleven days.

### CURRENT: Vote at Assigned Polling Place on Election Day\*



### PROPOSED: Vote Anywhere in Manitoba on Election Day at any Returning Office



\*Modification used for the 43rd general election to allow vote anywhere in your ED on election day.

## The process would work as follows:

- During all eleven days, a voter can go to any returning office, regardless of electoral division, and be eligible to vote
- Currently, advance voting occurs at every returning office for eight days, ending the Saturday before election day. Under this model, voting would be extended for an additional three days, including election day.
- Voting would proceed in a way similar to advance voting:
  - A voting officer would access the voters list on a secure laptop, check the voter's ID, look up the voter electronically, print a label for insertion in the voting book, issue a ballot and strike the voter off the electronic voters list in real time.
  - For voters voting outside of their home, an on-demand ballot would be printed with the names of the candidates from their electoral division.
  - The voter would mark their paper ballot behind a privacy screen.
  - The paper ballot would be inserted into a vote counting machine.
  - The vote counting machine would be used to securely record the ballot and count the vote for the candidate of choice.
- Results of extended voting at the returning office would be counted and reported on election night in the same manner as advance voting.

The proposed approach reflects EM's strategic priorities of leveraging technology to improve services to voters and registered parties.

This would be a modification of the voting process as per s. 28.1 of *The Elections Act*. It builds on recent amendments to legislation.

This proposal would also require approval of the Standing Committee. EM believes this modification meets the three objectives spelled out in the section.

## MEETING OBJECTIVES OF EA SECTION 28.1

<b>Improve the voting process for voters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convenience of voting out of electoral division on election day</li><li>• Three extra days of voting at the returning office</li><li>• Standardizes advance and election day voting experiences</li></ul>
<b>Achieve administrative efficiencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency between advance and election day processes facilitates training</li><li>• Voting infrastructure in place for advance voting to be used in extended voting, including on election day</li><li>• Use of vote counting machines speed up vote counting and reporting</li></ul>
<b>Preserve integrity of the vote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voters still confirm identity with ID</li><li>• Voters still cast ballot by hand</li><li>• Secrecy is preserved</li><li>• Paper ballots are available for recount</li></ul>

## Scope of Implementation

This proposal would allow voters to cast a ballot at any returning office or satellite returning office in the province for a total of 11 days. This would add three extra days of voting, including election day voting, at the returning office. Under this proposal, an additional 57 – 60 polling places would be added where voters could vote outside of their electoral division.

## Vote Counting and Reporting

Votes would be counted in the electoral division where they are cast, as was the case for advance voting in the 2023 general election. Votes would be counted by vote counting machines and results generated would be entered into the results reporting system.

## Training and Staffing

This model would require three additional days to be staffed and will impact space requirements for the returning office. As this model is similar to advance voting, staff hired for advance voting could be retained for the additional extra days of voting at the returning office.

## Recommendations

The proposed modification to the voting process meets the requirements of s. 28.1 of *The Elections Act*, as outlined in the chart above. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. That EM proceed with a Vote Anywhere in Manitoba at the Returning Office model for three additional days for the next general election.
2. That EM report back to the Standing Committee on the results of the modified process.