

**RECORDER'S NOTES**  
**By Delisa Weeks**  
**Kiowa County Clerk and Recorder**

**ELECTION HISTORY INFORMATION:**

Voting rights in the United States have been contentious over the country's history. Eligibility to vote in the U.S. is determined by both Federal and State law. Currently, only citizens can vote in U.S. elections. Absent of federal law or constitutional amendment, each State is given considerable discretion to establish qualifications within their own jurisdiction. Federal role in elections has increased through amendments and enacted legislation, such as the Voting Rights Act. The following gives background on the struggle we as Americans have endured to get this privilege:

- 1776 When this country announced its independence from Britain, voting rights were based on property ownership. This typically meant that those voting were white males over the age of 21.
- 1787 In the newly drafted constitution, states were given the power to set voting mandates and most were still favorable to white males who owned property.
- 1830 Many states had dropped religion and property ownership as requirements for voting with a large percentage of the population voting at the polls.
- 1868 The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment recognizes African Americans as citizens, giving them the right to vote. However, state officials continue attempts to deny this right.
- 1870 African Americans were given the right to vote in the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It prohibited any state or local government from denying that right.
- 1890 Wyoming becomes the first state to recognize women's right to vote and provide for it in a state constitution.
- 1920 The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was added to the constitution, giving women across the nation the right to vote.
- 1940 Congress recognizes Native Americans as Citizens. However it wasn't until 1947 that all states granted them the right to vote.
- 1964 The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment declares that no person should be denied the right to vote because they cannot pay a "poll tax".
- 1965 An Amendment to the Voting Rights Act bans the use of literacy tests, poll taxes and other obstacles designed to keep people from voting.
- 1971 The voting age is lowered to 18.

Voting is a privilege and should be taken very seriously. There have been many steps taken to ensure that everyone who is eligible to vote has the right to exercise their freedom to do so. To provide fair and open elections is the very basis to making sure that we honor the ideal of "one-person-one-vote". It is about defending a right that is at the very foundation of democracy. Listed above are some very good examples of why we should exercise our voting privilege and vote in every election that we are eligible to do so because every election is important or else we would not have one.

**Please exercise your right to vote in every election. Let your opinion be heard and what you stand for be voiced by your vote!**

**The Primary Election will be held June 28, 2016 and the General Election will be held November 8, 2016.**

**REMINDER:** County Offices will be closed February 15, 2016 in observance of President's Day.

The Kiowa County Clerk and Recorder can be reached at 719-438-5421 for voter and election questions, recording information and motor vehicle questions.