

SheilaABanks

From: Julia Freeman-Woolpert [JuliaF@drcnh.org]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 1:19 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Cc: Cindy Robertson; James Ziegra
Subject: testimony
Attachments: Data_All_160420.pdf; Presidential Primary feedback 2016.pdf

Dear Mr. Leahy,

Attached please find two documents concerning voter experiences during the NH Presidential Primary held on February 9, 2016.

The first document contains the results of a post-election SurveyMonkey survey, with 54 responses.

The second document contains individual comments DRC received by telephone or email.

Thank you for including these in the written testimony.

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Presidential Primary February 9, 2016
Voter input on election accessibility
(Some may duplicate SurveyMonkey responses)

The following comments were received by the Disability Rights Center – NH by email and telephone from individuals with disabilities who had voted in the 2016 NH Presidential primary. These comments reflect their experiences with the NH All4One voting system, pollworker training, and other issues with access and the ability to vote privately and independently.

I did vote using the machine. I had no trouble with the machine but issues with the poll workers. Nothing to big though.

Some were not sure what to do with me and others were too clingy giving me no privacy.

The machine worked like a dream. It was quick and easy. It would be good for anyone who forgot to bring their reading glasses.

I would still prefer to have a ballot that looks like everyone else's and that I could put in the same slot. Having to put it in a different slot makes me wonder how private my vote really is. So I asked the poll worker how many people used this machine today and he told me that they had the poll workers use the machine to vote. So mine was not the only vote in the slot.

I did my voting. I attempted to use the machine, however they were not possible to do independently on my own. They wanted you to touch a screen or a keyboard which I cannot do either, so I had to have assistance could not vote privately, so wanted to let you know that it didn't work in my case. I couldn't independently vote on my own.

I did get to vote but it took 3 of us to figure it out and I could have never done it privately. It included a keyboard I could not see, a touch screen that didn't work and a paper ballot that I had to put into a machine I couldn't figure out. We knew the moderator in Pembroke and he tried his best but even he said he didn't understand how it worked.

There was a headset but it was telling me to hit the enter key on a keyboard I couldn't see. It told me to touch the screen which wouldn't work and it said nothing about the blue paper that needed to be used instead of the normal ballot. Even the person checking me in knew I needed the accessible voting and still gave me the wrong ballot.

I would suggest better directions in the head set and the voting booth be set up before you enter. The moderator had to go in first and key in some information like polling number and get the system started.

Machine voice didn't work, keyboard wasn't out, machine couldn't find a printer, had to have moderator help

I did not have any trouble and the poll worker did great actually! Other than that.. yes, the voice is as horrible as it probably gets and does leave it open to possible errors. In fact, I had to sit and go through the names twice to make absolutely sure I understood each one before I dared to hit the enter key on a choice. I guess I will take it a step further to say that I truly find it insulting that after the last 18 years or so that some of our groups have tryed to assist in developing a system, that it is still in the stage where we not only can not, vote on a universal style ballot, but that the input from the blind community is undoubtedly always overlooked and.. this is still the "status quo" in 2016!

I just voted in xxx and had a good experience. The poll worker was great and entered the necessary information and then I was on my own. I had no trouble voting and my ballot was printed successfully. I do admit the speech could be better and I was disappointed that my ballot was different than the regular ones.

I checked in at my polling booth using my passport as my photo ID. This was not fully valid as it does not show an address. I had to have a polling worker , who knows me, verify my address. I than proceeded to the tent enclosure where the new "ONE in ALL" tablet was set up. A sheet of pink paper was placed in the printer for a Republican ballot to be completed. It took (4) attempts for the polling booth worker to enter the republican ballot and polling booth number. The were (30) names on the ballot. I had great difficulty understanding the names. The quality of the headphones and speech was terrible. Knowing that at least 50% of seniors have a hearing limitation this makes the system open to a person voting for someone in error. The quality of the tablet system was not up to the telephone/fax system, when working, and both systems fail to produce a secret ballot. Fourteen years after the Help America Vote Act we are still waiting to have equal access to voting. In my opinion the new system has many barriers and should not be recommended to municipalities. Here is a novel idea, empower persons who are blind and organizations for the blind to resolve the problems. Of course we should be reimbursed and recognized as a partner.

I voted today and had a mixed experience. The speed of the speech was very slow. Not real slow but too slow for me. I could not get it to go faster even with help. Lots of the

names on the democratic ballot were missed pronounced. Even the familiar ones. If one does not know how to listen to computer speech it is very hard and listening should not be a chore. We should have this figured out or someone should let the blind community figure it out by now. A secret ballot is not an option. It is our right.

Xxx also expressed his anger at the SOS office rolling out a "half assed" system rather than delaying the roll out until it was working right. He said, "we had a half-assed system for all of the those years and now, instead of waiting until they had it right, they decided to roll out another half-assed system".

My experience with primary 2016 voting was unbelievable! I live in Northern NH and am no stranger to lack of accessibility, whether it be transportation, public knowledge, assistant programs etc. While I was hoping to avoid any surprises or confusion at the voting booths, I phoned the City Clerks office on Thurs. Feb. 4th to be sure this system was in place and ready for use. She assured me it was to be in place, and also stated they had only themselves received the tablets three days prior to my inquiry. Staff members at city hall had a crash test on Wed. and found them to be visually impaired non-friendly. Let's face it has anyone ever had a tablet with tactile prompts? I made a totally blind member aware of the likelihood of needing assistance in casting their vote, (again). After quite a lengthy conversation with the City Clerk, whom was very concerned and understanding of my concerns. She stated "Well at least they are trying to make it accessible". As I think of this statement I can't help but wonder what if the government handed out faulty ballots and wrote the instructions in chinese, would anyone still state well at least they are trying to make voting private and independent in the US?

Now for the actual primary voting process. Arriving at a late afternoon hour so as to avoid lunch hour rush and by City Clerks advice not in early am as the moderator would need time to set up and acquaint themselves with the system. (Excuse me the day of training?) Announcement you are voting what affiliation? Ok not so private affiliation, not really a problem I am not ashamed. Step into the booth, ok, first we'll place this ballot in the printer tray, now here is the tablet, oh yes there is a yellow large print keyboard sitting next to tablet and connected. Moderator with written instructions in hand attempts first connect. Not a go, let's shut off (reboot) and attempt again. Hmm, can you hear anything? No where are the headphones? Oh yes right here, ok here on the touch screen do you want to use headphones? Yes, after several attempts to access, and my inquiry as to can't we use the key pad on keyboard such as arrows and enter key? Oh well, let's call City Clerk. Hallelujah she's here. Now the three of us in booth eventually have it accessed. Moderator continues to be apologetic and eventually leaves the booth. Now the speech having gone through several names on the ballot continues. Why, the system does not have a auditory introduction to the system is one I don't understand. Apparently there is no way to skip to next candidate. Once the trying process was complete, printed ballot arrives quite quickly. Then to the drop box, odd ballot out, it needs to be slid into side slot to be counted later. Private

ballot indeed, as my husband was told only I have accessed the assistive voting system.

The telephone and fax system was easily utilized by me in the past. I have been told though that the connecting process for moderators has been a challenge and time consuming. Personally I believe there are several bus that need to be addressed if this system is to become common and truly functional. Come on America, do you have voting ballots available in Spanish? Can't we be treated as equal citizens as we do pay taxes, contribute to the communities whether it be through our employment, and or volunteerism.

Yes, this voting process could have been so simplified had I only requested my husbands assistance. But, then I would never have had first hand opportunity in having my American right to voice my opinion. Sorry this is so negative but, it was a fiasco! Very poorly planned out.

Maybe one or more of our candidates will get word of this and voice their position!!!

After all they will be very interested in how the polls went for their placements....

Very disappointed.

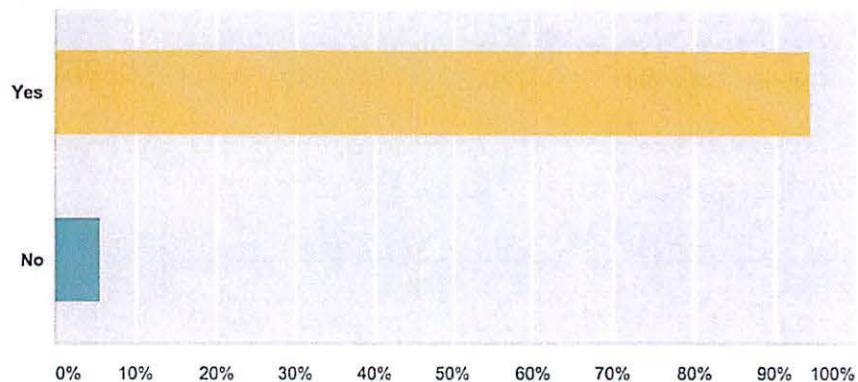
Voted this morning, here's the feedback.

- Checked in. Was handed a ballot. asked to use accessible booth. was told I could not do that since I already had a ballot. Understandable, but wouldn't it have been better to ask me, rather than putting the burden on the voter? Not everyone has a visible disability...
 - Did get feedback from town clerk in Campton. She likes it for the following reasons.
 - Set up time prior to voting is much quicker.
 - Device is volume adjustable, making it easier for the hard of hearing.
 - Ballot prints immediately, no waiting.
-

(phone call) He used to use the telephone system and it worked nicely. With the All4One It took him several tries to hit the little blue dot, but he could do it with the headphones and keypad. He had to listen carefully, the voice was not good. The ballot spit back with only one name on it. He couldn't read it to see if was correct. The ballot went in a separate slot and was counted by hand, unlike the other ballots. While he didn't have a problem with the keypad, he knows some people who are completely blind did have problems, their spouses had to vote for them. As nice as the pollworker was, she freely admitted she had only been trained the morning of the primary.

Q1 Did you vote in the 2016 Presidential primary on February 9?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	94.34%	50
No	5.66%	3
Total		53

Q2 What town or ward did you vote in?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	lancaster	4/1/2016 6:46 AM
2	Ward #3 Rochester, NH	3/24/2016 12:34 PM
3	Berlin	3/3/2016 3:45 PM
4	Manchester	3/3/2016 12:55 PM
5	Sugar Hill	3/1/2016 1:43 PM
6	Hooksett	2/29/2016 8:38 AM
7	Concord, Ward 7	2/26/2016 12:54 PM
8	derry	2/25/2016 1:38 AM
9	Manchester	2/24/2016 3:33 PM
10	Concord, Ward 1	2/23/2016 8:42 PM
11	Londonderry.nh	2/23/2016 4:55 AM
12	Newton	2/22/2016 9:52 AM
13	menimack	2/21/2016 2:49 PM
14	Would've been Loudon	2/18/2016 10:30 PM
15	Weare	2/18/2016 6:47 PM
16	Manchester ward 1	2/18/2016 6:25 PM
17	Salem North Salem grammar school	2/18/2016 2:57 PM
18	Franklin, Ward 3	2/18/2016 1:46 PM
19	Lee	2/18/2016 1:22 PM
20	Keene Ward 5	2/18/2016 12:23 PM
21	Ward 5 Manchester, NH	2/18/2016 8:55 AM
22	8	2/17/2016 6:43 PM
23	Hudson	2/17/2016 6:36 PM
24	keene	2/17/2016 5:06 PM
25	Concord ward 7	2/17/2016 3:36 PM
26	Derry ward 4	2/17/2016 1:51 PM
27	hooksett	2/14/2016 7:12 AM
28	Portsmouth	2/13/2016 12:42 PM
29	Dover, Ward 1	2/12/2016 8:24 PM
30	Concord	2/12/2016 2:29 PM
31	Derry	2/12/2016 2:29 PM
32	Bow	2/12/2016 9:28 AM
33	Hampton	2/12/2016 9:24 AM
34	Concord Ward 10	2/12/2016 8:12 AM
35	Canterb	2/11/2016 8:26 PM

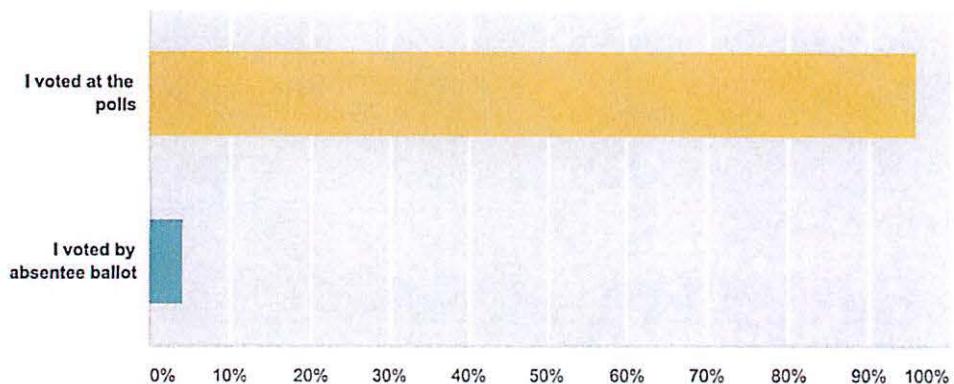
2016 Presidential Primary Voting

SurveyMonkey

36	Exeter	2/11/2016 7:37 PM
37	Concord	2/11/2016 5:05 PM
38	Goffstown	2/11/2016 3:52 PM
39	Hooksett	2/11/2016 2:10 PM
40	Berlin District 2-3	2/11/2016 12:24 PM
41	Dover	2/11/2016 7:44 AM
42	Hooksett	2/11/2016 6:56 AM
43	Epping	2/11/2016 3:15 AM
44	Prefer not to say	2/10/2016 4:42 PM
45	Exeter	2/10/2016 4:41 PM
46	Concord Ward 7	2/10/2016 1:21 PM
47	Portsmouth	2/10/2016 1:02 PM
48	Pembroke	2/10/2016 10:15 AM
49	Concord Ward 5	2/10/2016 9:36 AM
50	Ward 7 concord	2/10/2016 12:31 AM
51	Plaistow	2/9/2016 7:26 PM

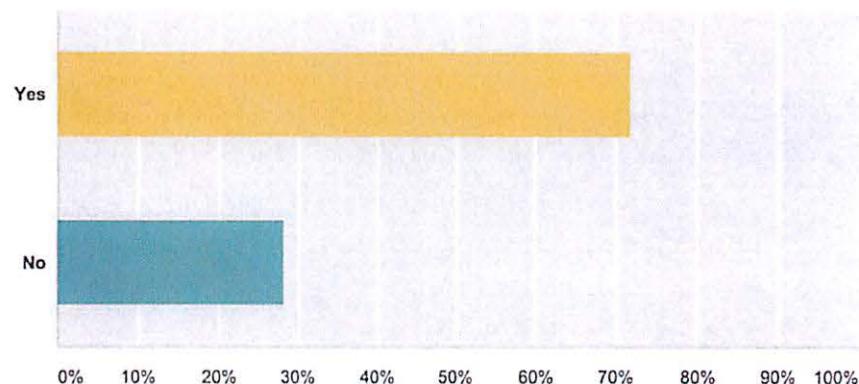
Q3 Did you vote at the polls or by absentee ballot in the primary?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 5



Q4 Were you able to vote privately and independently?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8



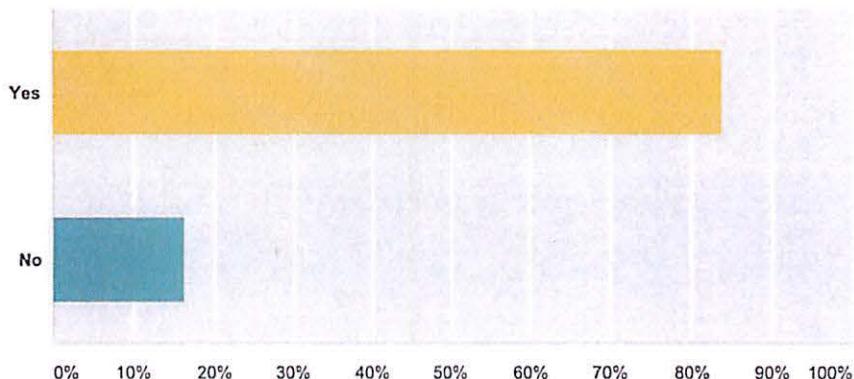
Answer Choices		Responses	
Yes		71.74%	33
No		28.26%	13
Total			46

#	If you were not able to vote privately and independently, tell us what the problems were:	Date
1	could not read the ballot when it came out to verify it recorded the right candidate. Had to put ballot in a side slot, so not as private. That doesn't bother me a much but it does bother other people.	3/3/2016 4:01 PM
2	My husband needed to go in with our son to vote because he has cognitive disabilities and needs help with finding the place to put his check mark with accuracy. When he tried to go in with our son, someone working at the polls called out angrily, even though she knows our son and situation from the neighborhood, and was quite rude to my husband. Finally, he was able to go in with our son so he could vote properly.	3/1/2016 1:46 PM
3	poll worker said all4one was not working so it takes longer with magnifier to read and find circle to black in	2/25/2016 1:43 AM
4	I have a difficulty filling in the dots with the tiny pen	2/18/2016 3:00 PM
5	My mom have to help me set up with a pen and move chairs to get in a booth.	2/18/2016 12:27 PM
6	I can't write	2/17/2016 6:43 PM
7	The device did not work.	2/12/2016 8:28 PM
8	I had my support person with me to help me fill out the ballot.	2/12/2016 9:28 AM
9	I did vote independently but question how private it was. The polling assistant stood right behind me and did not draw the curtain. When I asked if he was going to stay standing there he said he would turn around. As a blind person I was not sure of my privacy.	2/12/2016 8:17 AM
10	1.) Odd ballot 2.) Moderators not fully familiar with tablets 3.) No auditory instructions on voting system 4.) Synthesized voice very distorted	2/11/2016 12:30 PM
11	The new accessible set up was very difficult to manage. The microphone headset did not work, the system was incredibly slow when I had to page back, and it just seems astounding that in this era the whole thing was not much more intuitive, eg. I could not figure out how to have the system read the name of a candidate to me.	2/10/2016 4:45 PM

12	POLLING STAFF REQUIRE TRAINING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: ORIENTATION TO BLINDNESS AND SIGHTED GUIDE. POLLING STAFF REQUIRE TRAINING ON THE NEW VOTING TABLET FOR PRINT HANDICAPPED PERSONS. THE AUDIO SPEECH WAS EXTREMELY POOR AND NAMES NAMES WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND. THE PRINTED BALLOT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE PUBLIC BALLOT THE NEW TABLET SYSTEM WAS OF POOR QUALITY	2/10/2016 3:20 PM
13	the head set didn't work and they didn't call the number for tech support provided by the state. The city thought the head set wasn't going to be working, when in fact the boom mic on the head set was what would not be working. Communication and follow up errors	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
14	I was going to use the devices for the visually impaired, however, it included a keyboard I can not see, a touch screen that didn't work correctly and a voting sheet that was difficult to understand where it was to go before I made my selection. Even the personnel at the poles didn't quite understand what to do but was doing his best.	2/10/2016 10:20 AM
15	I did notice my paper was all blue copy paper , unlike everyone's white, I am not sure if I chose a different party if the color would have been different	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q5 Was the polling site fully accessible?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 11

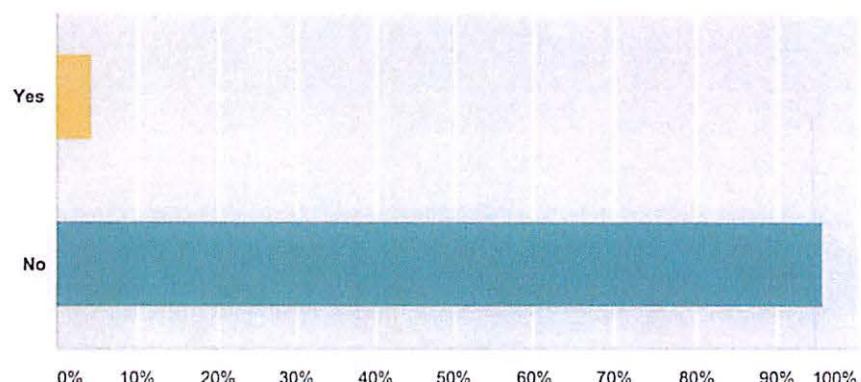


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	83.72%	36
No	16.28%	7
Total		43

#	If the polling place was not fully accessible, tell us what the problems were.	Date
1	had to go through office area to get to polling place. Long w/c ride	4/1/2016 6:47 AM
2	I can't comment on the tablet voting system since I didn't ask to use it because I was in a hurry.	2/18/2016 1:49 PM
3	The exit doorway was very narrow. Thresholds were difficult and none of the multiple volunteers helped open doors. They just stared at me.	2/18/2016 12:27 PM
4	At the Beech St. School there is no real accessibility to female bathroom. Only one Male bathroom accessible.	2/18/2016 8:58 AM
5	I say no, because even though they had the One for All system in the larger booth, it didn't work. So that is not accessible.	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
6	The voices quality was very poor. If I was hard of hearing I would have been difficult.	2/10/2016 12:33 AM
7	The voice was poor quality and very difficult to understand	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q6 Did anyone challenge your right to vote?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8

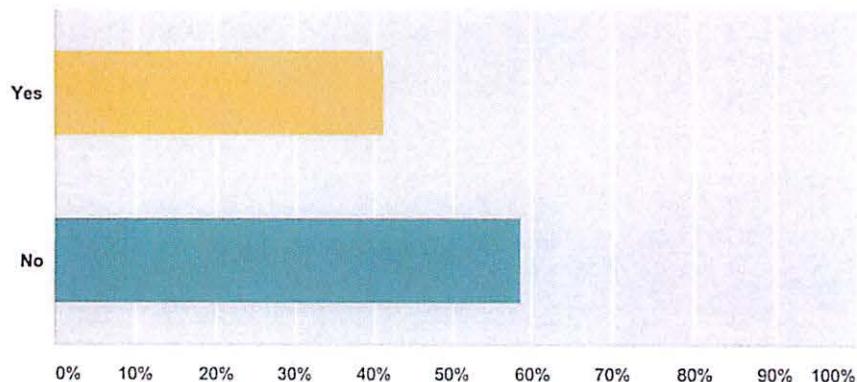


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	4.35%	2
No	95.65%	44
Total		46

#	If your right to vote was challenged, tell us what happened	Date
1	Again, I was delayed for a while because the women would not give me a ballot because I did not say my name. I am deaf. I had to stand there while they checked the rules and showed me the rules. It was crowded and I was embarrassed. Eventually I showed them my hearing aids and started signing at them. This is the second time it's happened...	2/18/2016 6:51 PM
2	I had to sign an affidavit and multiple forms	2/18/2016 1:23 PM
3	MY PHOTO ID DID NOT HAVE AN ADDRESS	2/10/2016 3:20 PM

Q7 Did you ask a poll worker for assistance related to a disability?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8



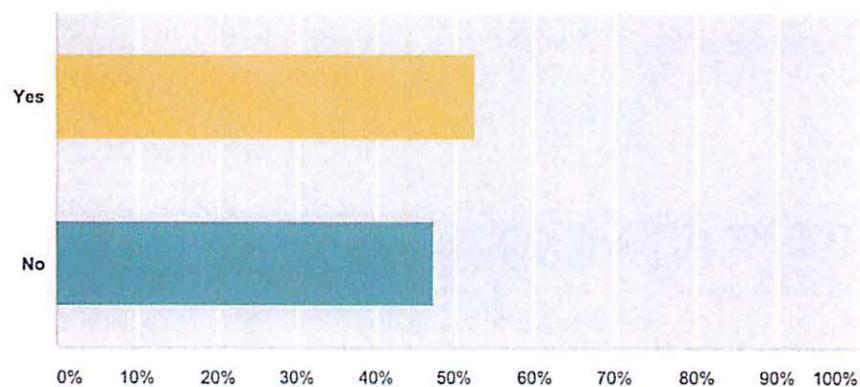
Answer Choices		Responses	
Yes		41.30%	19
No		58.70%	27
Total			46

#	What help did you ask for, and did you get the help you needed?	Date
1	I let them know I'm visually impaired and ask someone to help me out.	3/3/2016 4:01 PM
2	My husband didn't know that he needed to alert someone about our unique situation.	3/1/2016 1:46 PM
3	asked for all 4 one voting tablet and told it was not working	2/25/2016 1:43 AM
4	I needed help filling in the ballot	2/18/2016 3:00 PM
5	I asked for her to speak more slowly and loudly because I am hard of hearing. She was very nice but I did feel uncomfortable having to ask since my vote was challenged.	2/18/2016 1:23 PM
6	Directed to only true accessible "Male" bathroom	2/18/2016 8:58 AM
7	I asked for help to move a chair in the accessible voting booth and to remove the cap from the pen to mark my ballot.	2/17/2016 6:37 PM
8	When I got there I had to ask for an accessible voting machine.	2/17/2016 3:36 PM
9	When I went in and registered I said I wanted to use the accessible voting, they sent me over to a person who came in with me, added the info and then left and I was on my own.	2/17/2016 1:55 PM
10	I asked about new machine for blind, was told they had it, but no one seemed able or willing to show me how to use it.	2/13/2016 12:46 PM
11	The moderator helped me do my ballot.	2/12/2016 8:28 PM
12	Where the booth was for the disabled. I got the typical "it's over there," which does not work for the blind.	2/12/2016 8:17 AM
13	I did not ask, but a poll worker volunteered to enter the necessary code for Exeter. The poll worker also loaded paper for the necessary party onto the printer for my ballot to be printed.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
14	I asked to use the new tablet and keyboard and the poll worker set it up perfectly, he pressed the keys to start it and left me to vote in private.	2/11/2016 5:10 PM
15	Assistance to have tablet for visually impaired started. They truly tried, and eventually my vote was cast.	2/11/2016 12:30 PM
16	I needed help accessing the ballot. I needed to get started with the speech and the city clerk was very helpful.	2/10/2016 4:45 PM

17	I REQUESTED ASSISTANCE TO USE THE NEW TABLET TO ASSIST IN VOTING. AFTER FOUR TRYS BY THE POLL WORKER I WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS AND PRINT A BALLOT	2/10/2016 3:20 PM
18	I asked to use the One for All accessible voting. They attempted to help me, but as I mentioned the head set didn't work, which they didn't know how to fix, nor did they call the number provided by the state I found out about after the fact. It is their responsibility to make sure it is all set up and working properly.	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
19	As described earlier, I did seek help but the helper didn't quite understand what to do and couldn't do anything to make the experience private or independent. He had to do most of it for me.	2/10/2016 10:20 AM
20	Guidance from the sign in table to the voting booth, assistance with the preliminary steps of using the accessible voting machine (choosing the ballot and entering the code), and guidance from the voting booth to the ballot box, and assistance undeclaring myself after I voted. I received all assistance.	2/10/2016 9:39 AM
21	I asked how to enlarge the screen which I new could be done from watching the video on social media. I was told however that they didn't think that you could enlarge the print which told me they did not have proper training. I did eventually figure it out but would not have if I didn't watch the video	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q8 Did you know about the one4all accessible system before you arrived at your polling place?

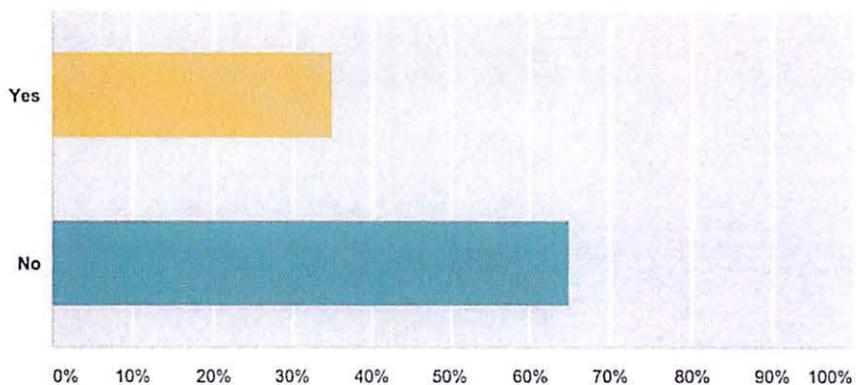
Answered: 38 Skipped: 16



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	52.63%	20
No	47.37%	18
Total		38

Q9 Did you receive training on the one4all accessible system before you arrived at your polling place?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	35.14%	13
No	64.86%	24
Total		37

#	Who provided the training? When and where was it? Please tell us more!	Date
1	NH Association for the Blind 25 walker street concord,nh	2/25/2016 1:47 AM
2	Tom Manning came into the tech users group. Did a demonstration. People do need to be trained in advance - every blind person who tried it crashed it during the demo - If you picked "average speed" it crashed and had to be rebooted because it was already set on average.	2/17/2016 3:39 PM
3	NHAB with Nancy Druke	2/17/2016 1:56 PM
4	New Hampshire Association for the Blind.	2/12/2016 8:32 PM
5	Nancy Druke at the NH Assoc for the Blind	2/12/2016 2:49 PM
6	Nancy Druke, NHAB	2/12/2016 2:45 PM
7	we had a quick demo at the advocacy committee meeting at the NH Association for the Blind	2/12/2016 8:20 AM
8	NHAB invited a trainer to a regularly scheduled peer support meeting in Portsmouth at the Community Campus on 1/26/16. As a member of the NHAB peer technology group, I was invited one day prior to join the peer support group and attend the demonstration/training.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
9	Disability Rights Center	2/11/2016 6:58 AM
10	The New Hampshire Assoc. For The blind along with Tom Manning gave us the training at Community Campus, Portsmouth.	2/10/2016 4:50 PM
11	TRAINING PROVIDED BY NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND. THIS WAS LAST MINUTE PRIOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION. THE SYSTEM WAS NOT VOICE ATTIVITATED, HAD A VERY QUALITY SPEECH AND PRODUCED A BALLOT THAT WAS NOT UNIVERSAL. APRODUCT THAT REQUIRED MORE TESTING	2/10/2016 3:30 PM
12	Tom Manning demonstrated it and let us try it at a peer support group meeting on the Seacoast of the NH Assoc. for the Blind. It was great. I then saw it again at the NHAB Advocacy committee I am on. I also watched Nancy Druke's You tube video from our staff that she put out how to use it.	2/10/2016 1:12 PM
13	New Hampshire Association for the Blind, Monday February 8	2/10/2016 9:41 AM

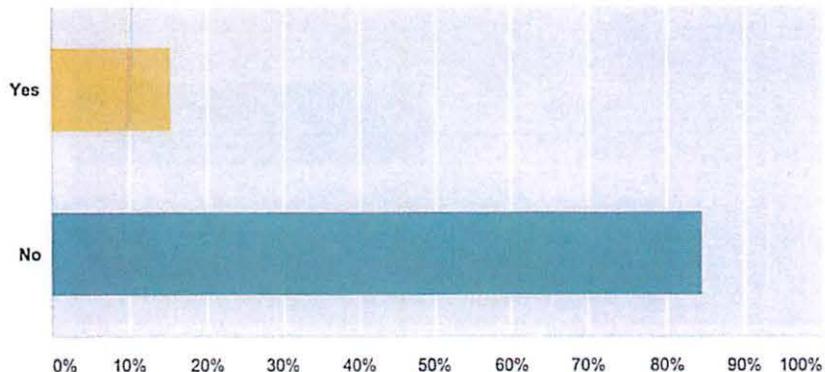
14

Facebook post from NHAB

2/9/2016 7:38 PM

Q10 If you are blind or visually impaired, when you got to the polls, did a pollworker tell you that an accessible voting system was available?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 28

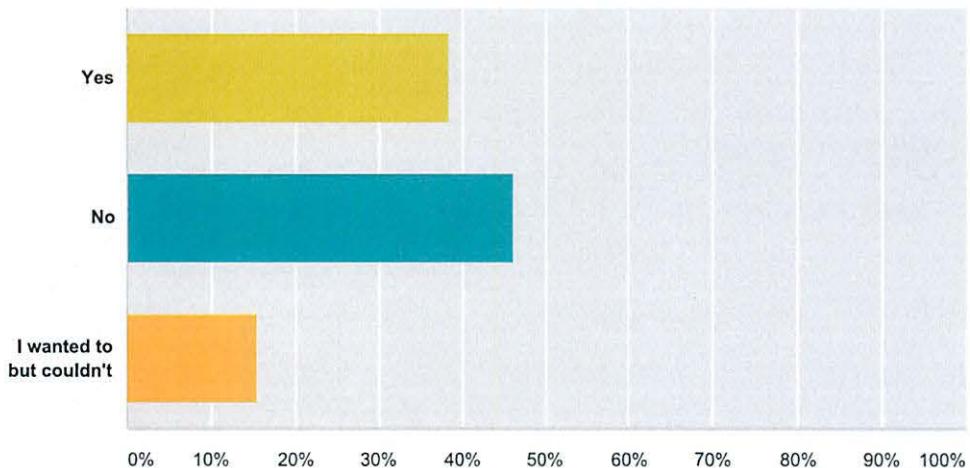


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	15.38%	4
No	84.62%	22
Total		26

#	Tell us more!	Date
1	I am not blind; I have a physical disability	2/18/2016 1:50 PM
2	It was because it was so crowded, I made them aware.	2/17/2016 3:39 PM
3	...because I knew it was	2/17/2016 1:56 PM
4	When they realized I was with my husband, they said he should fill out a form and it should sign it allowing him to complete my paper ballot	2/13/2016 12:49 PM
5	I had to ask for the system and it did not work.	2/12/2016 8:32 PM
6	I had to ask where it was.	2/12/2016 8:20 AM
7	As with other times that I have voted, when I have arrived either with my guide dog or white cane, poll workers checking voters in attempted to hand me a regular ballot. They did not even recognize that they should ask me if I am aware of an accessible machine as an option.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
8	I am a regular voter at the polls and they are familiar with me requiring whatever assistive voting system they have available. I had even phoned City Clerks office prior to make sure system was in place.	2/11/2016 12:33 PM
9	I knew about it; and I mentioned it. It seemed the person at the check list really did not know what to do so I asked to be taken to the accessible booth. I am known so I was helped. If I was not known I am not sure of the assistance I would have been given. Pole workers need more training.	2/10/2016 4:50 PM
10	THE POLLING BOOTH WORKER WAS A NEIGHBOR AND BROUGHT THIS TO MY ATTENTION. HOWEVER IT WAS EVIDENT THAT HE HAD NOT HAD ANY TRAINING.	2/10/2016 3:30 PM
11	I already knew to ask for it, so they didn't need to bring it up as I did.	2/10/2016 1:12 PM
12	I asked for, I am sure they didn't know of my VI	2/9/2016 7:38 PM

Q11 Did you use the new one4all system system to vote?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 15



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	38.46%
No	46.15%
I wanted to but couldn't	15.38%
Total	39

#	If you couldn't use it, why not?	Date
	There are no responses.	

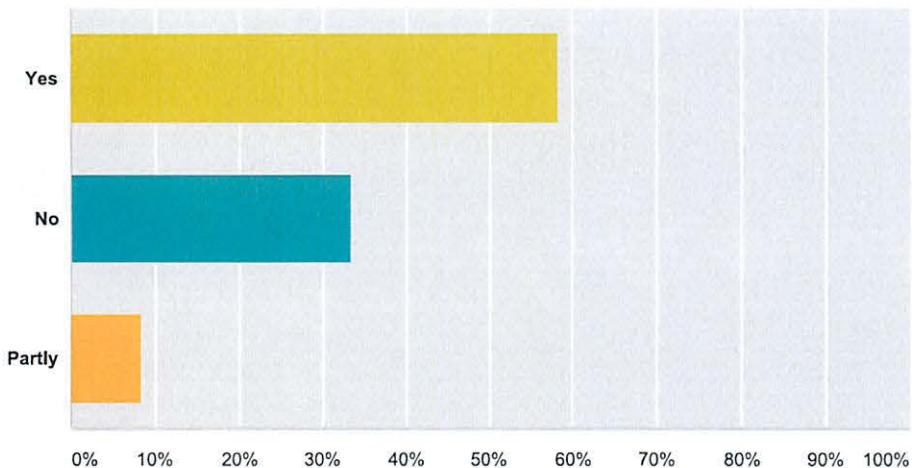
**Q12 If you wanted to use
the accessible system but couldn't, tell us
why?**

Answered: 6 Skipped: 48

#	Responses	Date
1	poll worker said it was not working	2/25/2016 1:47 AM
2	No one seemed able to show me how to use it, which was very disappointing as I thought I was going to vote independently for the first time in my life.	2/13/2016 12:49 PM
3	It didn't work.	2/12/2016 8:32 PM
4	Headphones didn't work properly. Took several hours for Secretary of State's office to show up to fix the problem. There were still problems, though.	2/11/2016 6:58 AM
5	I could not use the voice feature	2/10/2016 4:46 PM
6	I attempted to use it, but the head phones didn't work. The poll worker said they wouldn't and tried to make them work but couldn't. So she ended up reading it to me. I found out after the fact there was a number the poll worker could have called to work through it. A definite communication gap between poll workers, the city, and the state.	2/10/2016 1:12 PM

Q13 Did the system work correctly?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 42

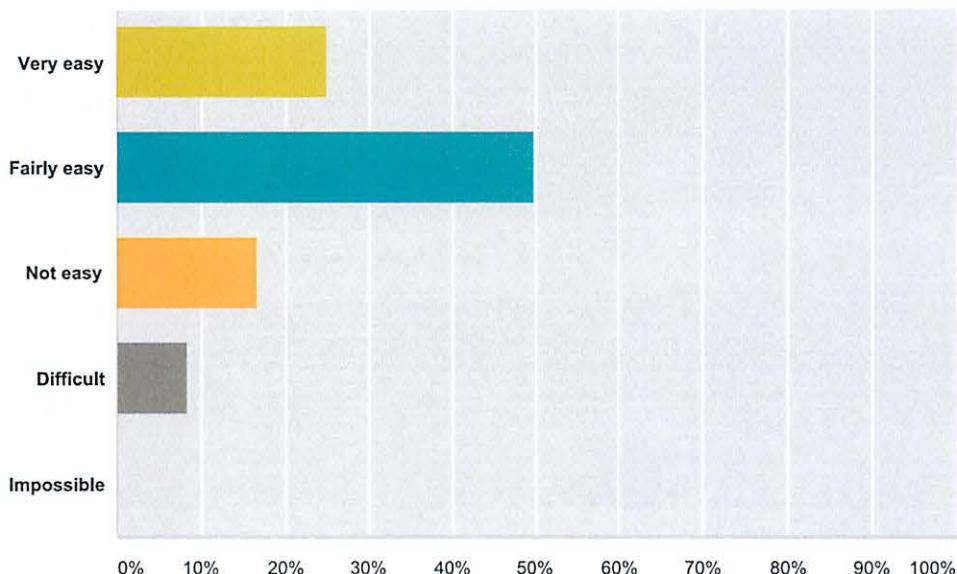


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	58.33%	7
No	33.33%	4
Partly	8.33%	1
Total		12

#	Please tell us more!	Date
1	It was quick and easy to use.	2/12/2016 8:22 AM
2	Moderator repeatedly shut system down and rebooted. I was not aware of any auditory commands, system was not clear on instruction of use. At first there seemed to be no compatibility with the keyboard supplied...	2/11/2016 12:39 PM
3	The headphones didn't work. Then, when they did work, the audio was horrible. I couldn't understand the names. The "back" button didn't work at all. The "next" button didn't work at all. My voting ballot was different than everyone else's.	2/11/2016 7:01 AM
4	When I arrived at the polling place, the audio on the system was not working. However the supervisor of the checklist called the secretary of state's office and they came and fixed it, so I was able to use it.	2/10/2016 9:44 AM
5	The poll worker didn't understand the system at all. Took 5 attempts to sign in. There was no paper and it had to be loaded in after I voted.	2/10/2016 12:38 AM
6	At first it didn't seem to enlarge the print but then it started working.	2/9/2016 7:42 PM

Q14 How easy was the system to use?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 42



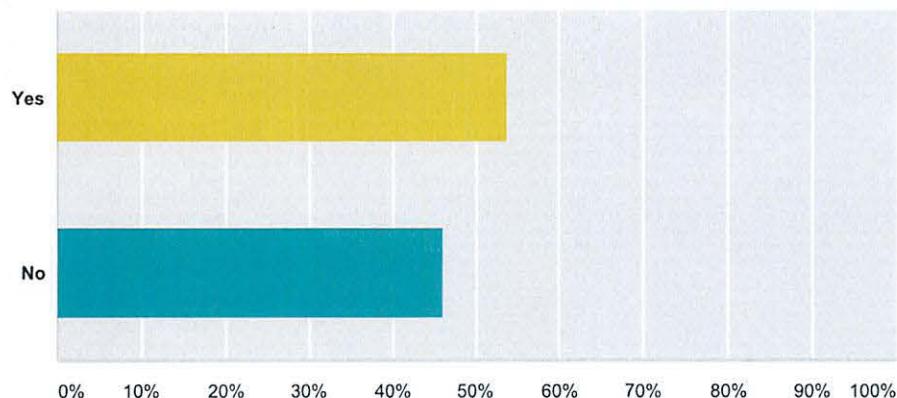
Answer Choices	Responses	
Very easy	25.00%	3
Fairly easy	50.00%	6
Not easy	16.67%	2
Difficult	8.33%	1
Impossible	0.00%	0
Total		12

#	Tell us more:	Date
1	touch screen was not easy, keypad was easy. Headphones were easy, but the voice was hard to understand.	3/3/2016 4:03 PM
2	But only because I had seen it ahead of time. People didn't get a chance to use it ahead of time, You have to get used to it.	2/17/2016 1:57 PM
3	It was nice to vote a fast as others. I also used the enlargement feature over the head phones as I have a little vision left. This would also be could for anyone over 40 who forgot their reading glasses.	2/12/2016 8:22 AM
4	The digital voice was difficult to understand. Not only were names mispronounced, but some names were even truncated. Also, I confused the shift key with the enter/return key and my vote was not registered with my first try as I pressed shift rather than enter/return. It would have been nice if the enter /return key was marked tactiley.	2/11/2016 7:39 PM
5	Didn't have any auditory instruction prior to start of voting process. No instruction as to any commands or controls available.	2/11/2016 12:39 PM
6	The whole experience was very frustrating/aggravating and took way too long.	2/11/2016 7:01 AM
7	Already spelled out why it was not easy	2/10/2016 10:25 AM
8	At one point I accidentally hit the wrong button and had to go back and listen to the entire ballot again. I wish there was a way to use the keyboard to navigate the touch screen instead of solely using the voice. For example, use the arrow keys or the tab keys to navigate yourself to the candidate you want to vote for. Also, the voice is the worst I've ever heard. It cut off a lot of the ends of the words, so it was very difficult to understand.	2/10/2016 9:44 AM

9	I am a sighted person using it and I found the voices hard to understand. I felt better being able to look at the screen to know what was really said. It had very simple directions so that was good.	2/10/2016 12:38 AM
10	Because I am not completely blind it was fairly easy, if I was completely blind I would have had a lot of difficulty related to the poor quality of the voice.	2/9/2016 7:42 PM

Q15 Did you have any other problems with the system?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 41

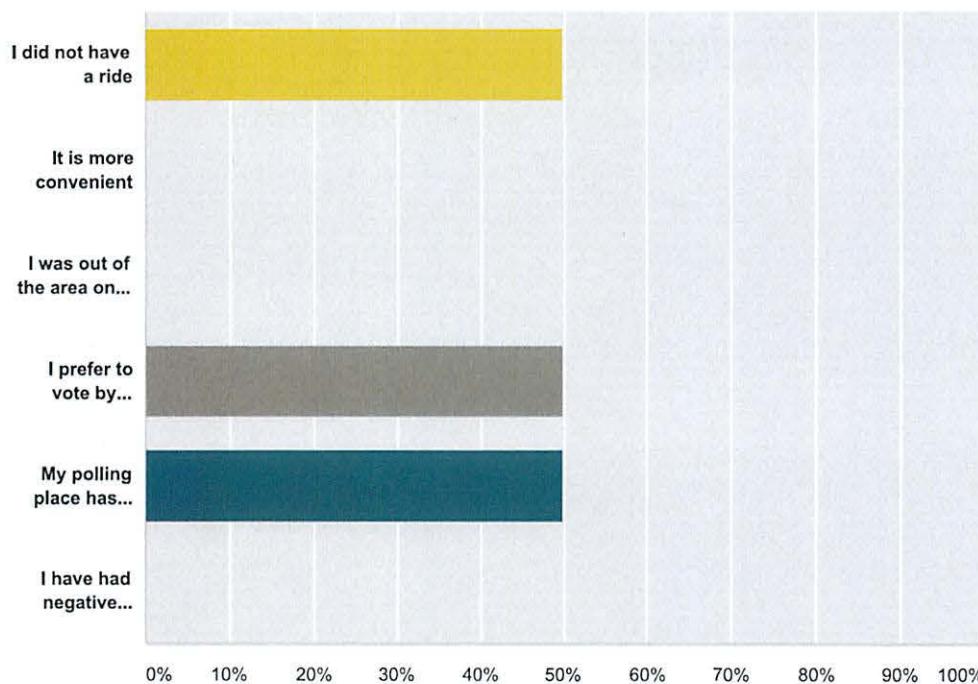


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.85%	7
No	46.15%	6
Total		13

#	What were the problems?	Date
1	It took me several times to hit the little blue dot. The voice was terrible. The ballot looked different from the other ballots. Some friends who are completely blind couldn't use the system, their wives had to vote for them. The keypad is not brailled. The pollworker freely admitted she had only been trained on the machine that morning.	3/3/2016 4:03 PM
2	Just at the end. My ballot shot out of the machine and I wasn't sure where it was. A pollworker had to find it for me. The voice is so bad. It's easy to make a mistake.	2/17/2016 3:39 PM
3	I was able to check with a hand-held magnifier that my ballot printed correctly. If the paper ballot was loaded into the printer incorrectly (upside down or backwards or even slightly misaligned), it could have printed an incorrect ballot...and I would have never known. Also, I was not definitively clear that my ballot had printed and my screen was reset for the next voter and I could then leave. A voice prompt letting me know that would have been helpful. When I thought I was done, I needed to exit the voting booth and wait for someone to realize that I needed assistance bringing my ballot to the ballot box. At the ballot box, poll workers were not clear that my ballot was not to be fed into the box as the regular ballots were. After several unsuccessful attempts, they realized that a key needed to be used to open the side of the ballot box to insert my ballot differently.	2/11/2016 7:39 PM
4	When I attempted to enter election choice, it was incorrect. New ballot was needed and eventually I with frustration made a compromising decision.	2/11/2016 12:39 PM
5	In addition to the headphones not working, the "back" button didn't work, the "next" button didn't work, there were no instructions so I really didn't understand how to complete the voting.	2/11/2016 7:01 AM
6	Speech was slower than I wanted and it wasn't easy to adjust it so I didn't. Names were not fully announced. Quality of speech was computerized and hard to understand. To someone not used to it, it would have been impossible. A state rep with me tried it and could not understand the speech. The enter button should be tactually marked to ensure the use of the correct button. Were blind people involved with selecting this voting tool?	2/10/2016 4:53 PM
7	It would be better with a bigger screen to accommodate enlarging the print.	2/9/2016 7:42 PM

Q16 Tell us why you decided to vote by absentee ballot?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 52

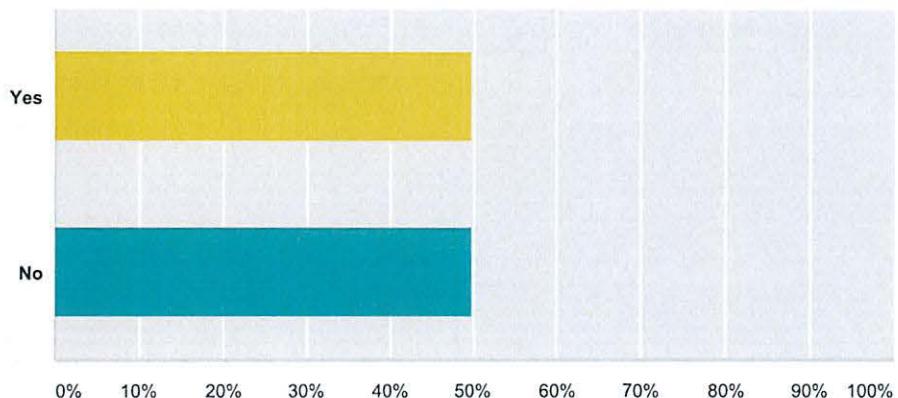


Answer Choices	Responses	
I did not have a ride	50.00%	1
It is more convenient	0.00%	0
I was out of the area on voting day	0.00%	0
I prefer to vote by absentee ballot	50.00%	1
My polling place has problems with accessibility	50.00%	1
I have had negative experiences with voting at the polls	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 2		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Anxiety around many people.	3/24/2016 12:34 PM

Q17 Are there other obstacles that prevent you from voting at the polls?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 52

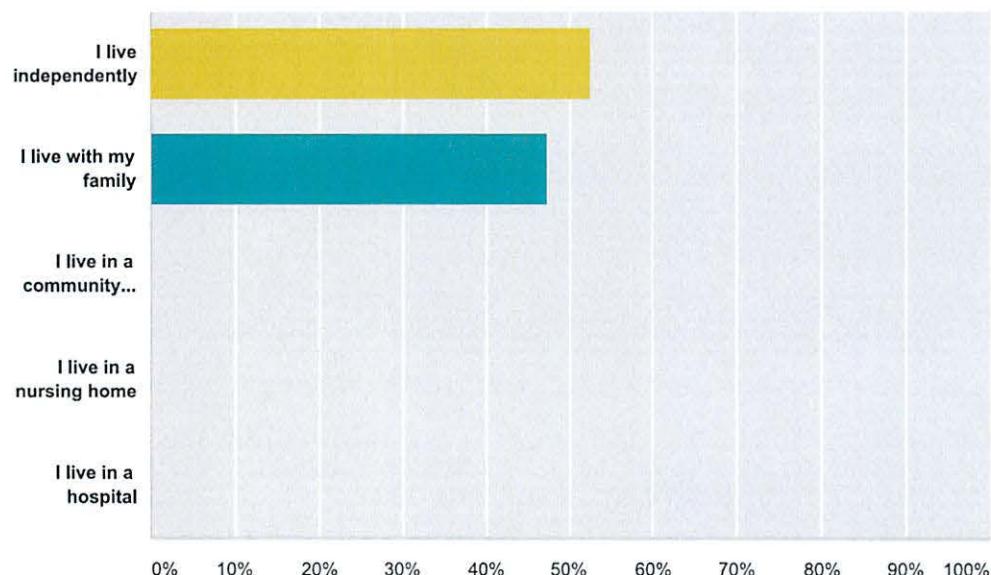


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	50.00%	1
No	50.00%	1
Total		2

#	Please tell us about those obstacles.	Date
1	There is a ramp into the building but no parking near the ramp.	3/3/2016 12:57 PM

Q18 My living arrangement is: choose one)

Answered: 38 Skipped: 16

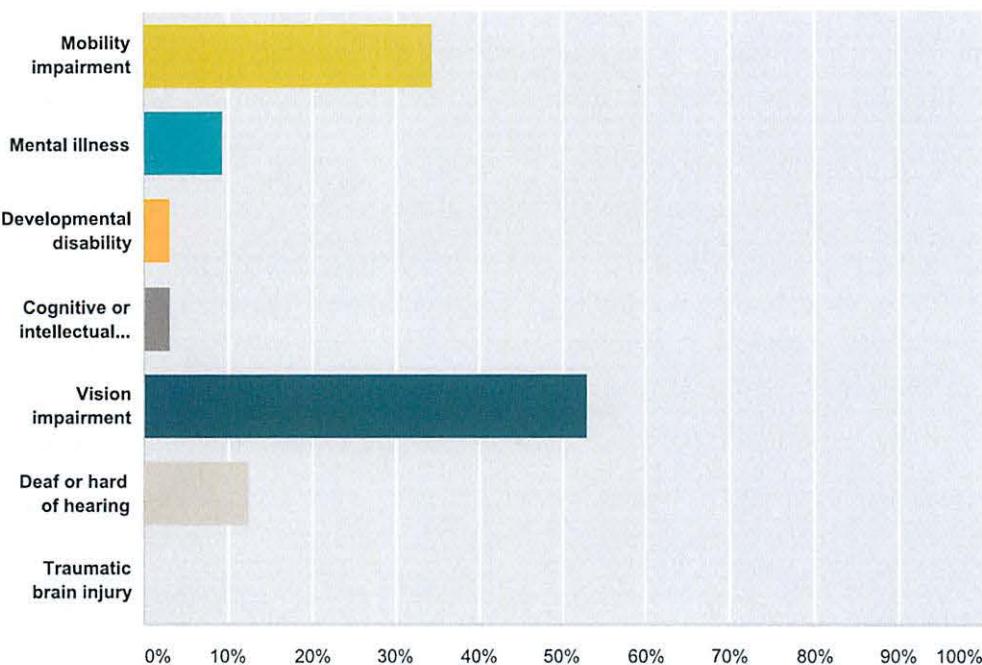


Answer Choices	Responses	
I live independently	52.63%	20
I live with my family	47.37%	18
I live in a community residence	0.00%	0
I live in a nursing home	0.00%	0
I live in a hospital	0.00%	0
Total		38

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	not sure why you need to know this regarding a voting survey.	2/10/2016 1:13 PM

Q19 I have a (choose as many as are applicable)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 22



Answer Choices	Responses
Mobility impairment	34.38% 11
Mental illness	9.38% 3
Developmental disability	3.13% 1
Cognitive or intellectual impairment	3.13% 1
Vision impairment	53.13% 17
Deaf or hard of hearing	12.50% 4
Traumatic brain injury	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 32	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Koolen deVries Syndrome	3/1/2016 1:47 PM
2	asthma	2/23/2016 4:58 AM
3	Primary progressive multiple sclerosis, Paralyzed	2/18/2016 3:02 PM
4	Spinal injury	2/18/2016 12:28 PM
5	Cerebral Palsy,	2/12/2016 9:32 AM
6	PTSD	2/12/2016 9:26 AM
7	None of the above	2/10/2016 4:46 PM

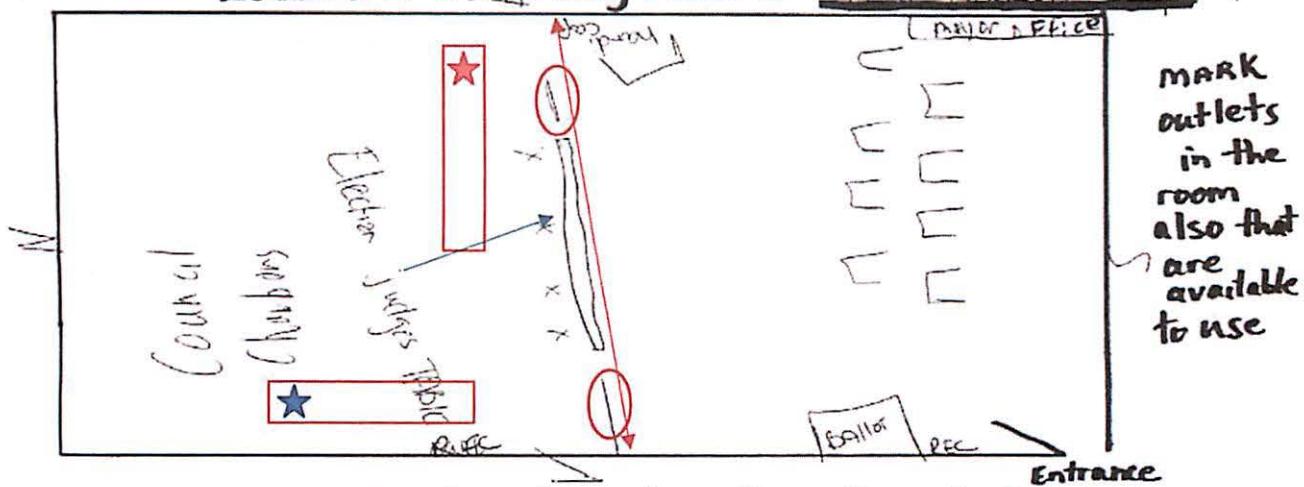
Report on Marla's experience during the Primary March 15, 2016

I have been working with Equip for Equality on Accessibility at my polling station. We got an agreement with our County Clerk to fix certain things. The County Clerk did some things, but things were still not good at my polling station. When I got to my polling station, I checked the room against what I saw on the map we received prior to the election for accessibility. I noticed that there was not an accessible voting booth set up at all in the location they had on the map. I asked to use the electronic voting machine and was told it was sitting at the end of a table through the gate into the area where the election judges were sitting in the City Hall Council Chamber. I asked about the accessible voting booth and she said they just use one of the voter's booths and lower it. I explained that there is supposed to be an accessible voter's booth that is lower and wider to accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair. She said they didn't have one. She showed me to the electronic voting machine which was positioned at the end of the table away from people, but didn't have a privacy barrier. When I finished voting, that same election judge came back to me and reported to me that she found out the voter's booths do not lower and she looked but they didn't have an accessible voting booth. She told me that they would have those that need one vote at a table through the gate and asked me if that was okay. I asked about privacy and she said they would just take one of the privacy barriers off of one of the voting booths and set it up. I said that would work. I then asked who the judge was that is in charge of accessibility and she said they all were. I explained that there should be one person and she again said they all were. I said "Okay, thank you" and left.

On the map below, I added the red tables and the stars. The blue star is where the electronic voting machine was located that I voted at, and the red star is where they proposed to have folks needing an accessible voting booth vote. I circled the gates with red. The election judges table is behind the railing which I have marked with a red line with arrows that the gates are attached to. The railing is wall to wall. There are other tables in the council chamber and it is generally crowded feeling.

Marla Michalak, IVCIL Youth Advocate

115
07/11/16
DRAW A MAP of the Voting Room
Location of Polling Place is Hall 1, 2, 8, 10 City Hall



Please mark on the above box where the voters check-in at the judges table and mark where voting booths are positioned. Also mark where the black voting box is for the ballots to be put in. If you can remember the usual spot for a touch screen - please mark that also. Thank you!

Computer > Fac_shared_files\$ (\\159.142.141.150) (T) > OHR SHARE > OHR > Boston Meeting_Aug 27 > Meeting Materials > Testimonies > PW Voting experience_files >				
File	Edit	View	Tools	Help
Organize Burn New folder				
Favorites	Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Desktop	\ Palmer_Files	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	5.29
Downloads	\ AWest	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Recent Places	\ BrianKCFD	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Documents	\ CGillson-Graves	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Libraries	\ Paroch	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Documents	\ Deborah.Bailey	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Music	\ DHall	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Pictures	\ DMorega	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Videos	\ DRose	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Computer	\ Erika.morris	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Windows (C)	\ Frank.Welte	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
SheilaBanks\$ (Met)	\ Guy.Woodland	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Fac_shared_files\$ (N)	\ Itesner-Burton	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
Network	\ JZak	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ KSchneider	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ LJohnson	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ LGongam	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ Palmer	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ LSchremmer	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ MBum	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ RRego	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86
	\ SCark	4/29/2015 11:56:48	Folder	1.86

23 items Offline status: Online
Online availability: Not available

B Colfer

L Johnson

M Blum

J Legner

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2016 5:34 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Testimony

Hi this is Brian Colfer from Sterling Heights Michigan. I'm a totally blind voter. I wish to have my comments submitted in to the public record. There are two issues that we as blind voters face. First, the voting machines need to be accessible for blind voters to use to vote secretly and independently. Second, absentee voters who are blind or disabled in some way need to vote secretly on line without having to rely on assistance from anybody. Please read these comments at the hearing next wednesday. I won't be able to attend, but I hope I can listen to the hearing at a later date. Thank you.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Hi this is Brian Colfer from Sterling Heights Michigan. I'm a totally blind voter. I wish to have my comments submitted in to the public record. There are two issues that we as blind voters face. First, the voting machines need to be accessible for blind voters to use to vote secretly and independently. Second, absentee voters who are blind or disabled in some way need to vote secretly on line without having to rely on assistance from anybody. Please read these comments at the hearing next wednesday. I won't be able to attend, but I hope I can listen to the hearing at a later date. Thank you.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Friday, April 22, 2016 10:27 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Testimony

Hello!

I'm sending this a second time from a different email account because I got a message that said my original email delivery was delayed. Hopefully this time you will receive this message.

Anyhow; it's my understanding that you are seeking testimony from disabled voters with regards to improving voting accessibility for differently abled people. Having the Black Lab Golden Cross Registered Seeing Eye Dog shown in a training video put together by the Sussex County Board of Elections for its volunteer poll workers here in Newton New Jersey; I figured I just might be able to provide you with the kind of input you are looking for. So, "Here we go!"

In a nut shell; having the talking voting machines has been a huge improvement. When voting using one of these devices; it's rather nice to know that I can vote without any chance of other folks listening in. In years past, before the existence of talking voting machines, I would usually end up having to bring someone along with me just so I could vote.

Now, since I'm able to listen to the voting machine read it out for me, the voting process is a bit more simplified. I can visit my designated polling site at a time of my choosing, which is usually at an off peak period; doing my thing without having to worry about my schedule lining up with someone else's just so I could vote. Obviously, too, if I want to keep my voting choices to myself; talking machines equipped with headphones make it possible.

It would be nice if a blind person like myself could use the write in part of the ballot like everyone else. However, if I could I'd probably be voting for Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse rather than some of the other politicians out there during election time. So maybe the lack of write in functionality is a good thing; keeping me in line.

"True!" In places like Sussex County NJ a bit more public education with regard to disabilities would go a long way towards making the voting process go more smoothly for everyone.

My biggest difficulty when voting is other people's reaction to my Registered Seeing Eye Dog. "However," I'm hoping that the training video I helped Marge McCabe and her staff put together makes things easier on everyone going forward.

Over all though; devices I can independently use certainly do make it a lot easier and more comfortable for me to vote. "And," for that alone I am grateful.

"Thank you!"

Hope this helps.

In God we can always trust,
Brian, KC2KFD

Testimony for Inclusion in the record
of the Public Hearing on Accessible Voting -
The United States Election Assistance Commission

Suffolk University Law School
120 Tremont Street
Sergeant Function Hall 1st Floor;
Boston, MA 02108

Testimony submitted to listen@eac.gov
April 27, 2016

Dear fellow EAC members, staff, and voting advocates:

On behalf of the Florida Council of the Blind (FCB) and thousands of citizens of Florida who have print impairments, we wish to enter into the record the following testimony and information for your consideration. We thank you for this opportunity to participate.

By "print-impaired", we are referring to people who are blind or visually impaired, those who are unable or have difficulty voting in a conventional manner for physical reasons, or those who have learning disabilities, all of whom wish to vote independently and in secret.

When many of us first began voting, we were forced to rely on a sighted person to cast our ballots for us. However, here in Florida, after the 2000 elections controversy, the state quickly responded and mandated certification and use of electronic voting equipment which enabled those of us who are print-impaired to finally exercise our rights and responsibilities as citizens and vote independently and in secret.

Unfortunately, a group of pro-paper advocates quickly lobbied the Legislature to require an auditable paper trail and forbid the use of the previously certified direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting machine. In response, a decision was made to make the use of paperless electronic voting machines illegal — the use of which was thereby legislatively forbidden by the vast majority of Florida's voters — except, that people who were print-impaired would have to continue using these inappropriate and illegal voting systems for a few additional years. In 2007, when the legislature outlawed the use of electronic DRE equipment, it set 2012, five years later, as the deadline for certifying and converting to the use of non-DRE, paper trail and auditable equipment for its voters who

were print impaired. Notwithstanding the mandates of the ADA, HAVA and Florida's earlier legislation, the state thereby sanctioned Florida's print-impaired population to vote on separate and unequal equipment — equipment that in fact had been deemed unworthy and illegal for the vast majority of Florida's voters. In 2010 the Legislature delayed the deadline for change until 2016. In 2013 it again postponed the deadline until 2020. Thus, for as long as thirteen years, Florida voters who are print-impaired may have been forced to vote on electronic DRE voting machines which were deemed illegal and inappropriate for the rest of Florida's voters.

Each county in the state of Florida has separate and somewhat independent departments of election, but state law mandates that all counties must abide by minimum standards that are set by the state's Division of Elections. For several years, members of FCB and other voters with disabilities have repeatedly complained about separate and unequal standards, especially since the old equipment was poorly maintained and often inoperable. An unacceptable response to complaints was to say that a sighted person could cast the vote for the person with a disability.

In 2014 the Florida Council of the Blind developed a fairly brief survey to measure the experiences of voters with disabilities. Results from that survey, which was posted on the FCB web page, indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the machines being used, as well as the inability of poll workers to properly serve voters with disabilities. During the 2014 elections print-impaired voters from multiple counties, including Palm Beach and Volusia were disenfranchised as a result of machine failures and/or insufficient poll worker training. Complaints were filed at the state and local levels. These complaints eventually led to investigations by the Department of Justice.

In May 2015, responding to continued pressure from leaders of the Florida Council of the Blind and other advocates in the state, the Florida Division of Elections finally certified two accessible units, the ExpressVote® UVS from Election Systems and Software (ES&S) and the ImageCast Evolution (ICE) from Dominion Systems. Additionally, in August of 2015, after more than three years of complaints, the owner of the Dominion Edge was finally forced to bring about a fix to their Edge system, which addressed repeated failures and voter disenfranchisement in Palm Beach County.

At this point, nine years following the Florida Legislature's decision to outlaw DRE equipment, Florida's voters who are print-impaired encounter vast differences in the availability of independent and secret use of voting equipment. Some counties have chosen to purchase the recently certified voting equipment. Some have chosen to continue use of the Automark machines. The majority of counties indicate that they will

continue with their existing “illegal” and less-accessible systems until the 2020 deadline. In all cases, accessible voting choices in Florida remain segregated.

FCB leaders continue to advocate for more accessible paper-based electronic voting systems throughout Florida and have revised the previously mentioned voting survey, so that up-to-date feedback can be obtained from voters who are print-impaired. The revised survey is found on fcb.org, the organization's website. Preliminary results, which are taken from Florida's closed presidential primary in March 2016, indicate that the people who voted generally liked the new equipment, but were quite unhappy at the continued lack of awareness and training of poll workers in various counties. It appeared that poll workers were not familiar with the machines and did not receive adequate training about how to interact with people with disabilities. Further, it seemed that poll workers were told to not tell people about the availability of the new machines. Even though both ES&S and Dominion salespeople clearly indicated that the machines could be used by all voters, it is our understanding that county and state officials generally believe and indicate that these newly certified optical scan machines are only for use by people with disabilities. Therefore, the legislature and state election officials must be forced to require county officials to mandate that optical scan machines, including the ExpressVote and ICE are to be available for use by all voters and that poll workers should be directed to explain that the machines are available for use by any voter.

As strongly urged at our Secretary of State's Task Force on voter accessibility in the early 2000's and at the HAVA Working Group public hearings, training of poll workers must include hands-on instruction about the use of the equipment and sensitivity training for interacting with people with disabilities. It is unconscionable that for up to thirteen years, Florida's voters who are print-impaired have been forced to vote on equipment that was declared to be illegal for the rest of Florida's voters, to say nothing of the fact that it is old, failing, and in many instances, not properly maintained or operable. Florida's legislature must be compelled to rectify a behavior of discriminatory treatment of voters who are print impaired. Following nine years of an unacceptable delay, the 2020 deadline for compliance should be rolled backed to 2018. The State of Florida and its counties should be compelled to buy and use the newly certified equipment by 2018. Given that appropriate equipment is now certified and available, there is simply no justifiable reason to delay any further. It is time that all voters in this state be placed on an even playing field! The State of Florida should immediately direct all counties to comply with accessibility requirements, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Respectfully Submitted
by Florida Council of the Blind

James Kracht, President

Doug Hall, 2nd Vice-President

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2016 12:36 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

Hello,

I don't know if this is useful or not, but I am currently in the middle of a needs assessment for a grant that I'm working on , the intent of which is to improve access to services for individuals with disabilities who are experiencing domestic violence. During the course of this assessment, two people with disabilities brought up the polling place in the village of Mohawk, NY as being difficult to access. One said they know people other than themselves who do not vote because of the difficulty in accessing the building. I am familiar with this building, because it is also my polling place. There are several steps to get into the building from the front entrance. There is an accessible entrance in the back, but you would never know it from the street. This is not something that I've experienced personally, but has indirectly come my way, so I thought I'd pass it along. Lisa

Lisa Mastracco, OVW Project Coordinator
Resource Center for Independent Living
409 Columbia St. C144
Utica, NY 13502
(315) 797-4642 ext. 2906
[**lmastracco@rcil.com**](mailto:lmastracco@rcil.com)
[**www.rcil.com**](http://www.rcil.com)



SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Privacy

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2016 5:26 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Privacy

Hello;

At the recent Wisconsin primary in Sturtevant (Racine County), I observed a table set up in the middle of the room with some seats. This was for people who have difficulty standing for long, as well as wheelchair users. There were chairs clustered around the table. Other voters were walking past this table.

There was a total lack of privacy for those voters, with no screening. At the time I was there, I observed two older people sitting at the table and voting.

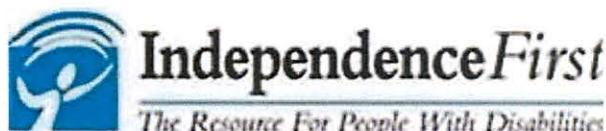
The location did have an accessible electronic voting machine, but it was placed well away from the other booths and was not readily apparent when people walk into the room (it was to their back as they enter).

[Brian Peters • Community Access and Policy Specialist](#)

IndependenceFirst • 540 S 1st Street • Milwaukee, Wisconsin • 53204

Direct VP 414-937-5912 • Office 414-291-7520 TTY/Relay • Fax 414-291-7525

bpeters@independencefirst.org • www.independencefirst.org



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SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Disability voting

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2016 4:57 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Disability voting

I need access to the literature on tape some legally blind. And transportation to about what.
Sent from my iPhone

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voting experience

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2016 9:08 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voting experience

Hello, My name is Mary Pendleton. I voted in the primary here in Excelsior Springs, Mo. I called the Clay county election board ahead of time to make sure they had anaccessible voting machine. When I got there they had a difficult time in getting the machine to work. I wished they had tested it prior to my coming in but it finally worked and I voted. Since that was the only electronic machine at the poling place, they knew exactly who I voted for. To my dismay, the poling judge went to her job at Taco Bell that evening and since my grandson worked there she announced to him and everyone in ear shot who I voted for.If I had wanted him to know, I would have told him but it really made me angry that our vote is no longer private. I lived in Blue Springs Mo prior to this year and for the most part, the voting machines worked after sitting there for a couple of hours and waiting for someone to come and fix it. Their excuse was that the machines were outdated by the time they got them.

Mary Pendleton

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2016 9:48 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

My name is John Diakogeorgiou.

I have been using voice enabled voting machines for several years. I know that you will or have received a lot of negative response to your requests for feedback so I decided to comment. Every time I have requested to use the voice enabled machines I've had a good experience. There is plenty of parking at Annehurst Elementary where I vote and the people are very pleasant and helpful. The machines are also very user friendly and easy to use.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 10:07 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

Hello

I voted in the NY Presidential Primary on Tuesday, April 19 at my local polling place located at 3700 Henry Hudson Parkway, Bronx NY (Riverdale). I was accompanied by my husband, who was providing sighted guide to me; I was also using my white cane for additional guidance. When I approached the appropriate desk, the Board of Elections rep handed me a paper ballot and told me to fill it out, and when I requested the use of the accessible voting machine she advised me they didn't have one. I stated that that was impossible since each station was supposed to have an accessible machine in accordance to HAVA; another worker came over and restated that I had to fill out the ballot or have my husband fill it out for me. I again stated that they must be mistaken since I was under the belief that each polling station was required to have an accessible voting machine, and then a third worker came over and told me that my husband was to fill out the ballot for me. I told him that this was not affording me equal access and that my vote was no longer private; I then asked him if there was in fact no accessible voting machine. He then told me that they did have one, but it wasn't working and besides they did not know how to use it. So, I asked him to show me to the machine, and he plugged in the headset and stated that it was broken. When I told him to turn up the volume, he then said that it was now working and maybe I should show him how to use it. When I inserted my ballot and the screen went blank, he then exclaimed that the machine was indeed broken because now the screen was not on; I advised him that the screen was dimmed to ensure that nobody could see who I was voting for.

As I completed the process, the third worker told me that he was about to tell the Board of Elections to remove the accessible machine because nobody ever uses it.

I did get to cast my ballot on my own, but am wondering how many people they've turned away or forced to cast their ballot with the aide of others? I believe that the training of polling station workers is insufficient and detrimental to those of us who need to use the accessible voting machines.

Thank you,
Christina Buckley

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 11:05 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

Hello,

I voted in the Village of Newark Valley, and both my husband and I had the same experience. When we were directed to go to the table our district was, and sign the book, the volunteer asked us if we were Republican. Instead of being neutral and asking which party, she assumed we were Republican and huffed when we said, "No, we are Democrats."

I had actually thought of reporting this to advocate for sensitivity training, and actually forgot to follow-up.

Dacia Legge' LMSW

Open Doors Regional Lead Coordinator

Southern Tier Independence Center



Election Assistance Commission Public Hearing on Accessible Voting

April 27, 2016

Statement of the National Federation of the Blind

Commissioners, my name is Lou Ann Blake and I am the deputy executive director of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Jernigan Institute, and I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind. I have managed the NFB's Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Training/Technical Assistance Grant for the past eight years. My address is 200 East Wells Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, and my telephone number is (410) 659-9314, extension 2221.

Founded in 1940 by Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is the only organization that believes in the full capacity of blind people, and has the power, influence, diversity, and determination to help transform our dreams into reality. We believe in blind people because we are blind people. Our democratically elected leaders and our diverse nationwide membership are made up of blind people, our families, and our friends.

The NFB is committed to ensuring that our federal, state, and local elections are accessible to all citizens. Under our grant provided by HAVA and funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, the NFB has conducted projects to assist blind voters in exercising their right to cast a private and independent ballot. Surveys were conducted under our HAVA grants to evaluate the voting experience of blind voters during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, and the 2014 midterm election.

Data from the 2008, 2012, and 2014 surveys show an increase in the number of blind and low vision voters who voted at the polls, as well as an increase in the number of voters who cast their ballot on an accessible voting machine. In 2008, 62 percent of the blind voters surveyed who voted in the November election did so at the polls. The 2012 and 2014 election saw an increase in the number of blind voters who voted at the polls to 84 and 83 percent, respectively. In 2014, 88 percent of the blind voters who voted at the polls requested, or were offered, an accessible voting machine, as compared to 79 percent in 2012 and 63 percent in 2008. The percentage of blind voters surveyed who reported they were able to cast a private and independent vote increased from 51 percent in 2008 to 74 percent in 2014, and the percentage of voters who cast their ballot with assistance decreased from 37 percent to 21 percent.

For blind and low vision voters who cast their ballot on an accessible voting machine, the majority of the variables surveyed indicate that they had a better experience voting in 2014 than in 2012, but it was not as good as their experience in 2008. Seventy-four percent of the blind voters

surveyed in 2014 who used an accessible voting machine said that the machine was up and running when they arrived at their polling place, as compared to 63 percent in 2012 and 87 percent in 2008. The percentage of voters who used an accessible voting machine and said that the poll workers had problems setting up or activating the machine remained high in 2014 at 29 percent as compared to 19 percent in 2008. In 2014, 10 percent of the blind voters who cast their ballot on an accessible machine said that the poll workers did not provide them clear instructions on how to use the machine, a significant improvement when compared to 21 percent in 2012, and 16 percent in 2008. The percentage of blind voters who were able to cast their vote on an accessible machine with no problems decreased from 87 percent in 2008 to 62 percent in 2012, and 60 percent in 2014. The percentage of blind voters who were able to cast their ballot privately and independently with an accessible machine decreased from 86 percent in 2008 to 75 percent in 2012, and 83 percent in 2014.

Blind and low vision voters who participated in the 2014 survey were also asked what would improve their voting experience. Of the 261 voters who responded to this question, 58 (22 percent) said that their voting experience did not need to be improved. Thirteen percent of the responses said that poll workers needed better training on the operation of the accessible voting machine, while 5 percent of the responses said that poll workers needed better training on how to properly interact with a blind voter. The ability to speed up the audio or better audio quality was mentioned in 6 percent of the responses. Five percent of the responses noted having an accessible voting machine that worked as a needed improvement. Placing the accessible voting machine in a more private location, or in a quiet location was mentioned in 4 percent of the responses. Finally, "having the accessible machine set up and running when I arrived at the polling place," and "having an accessible machine at my polling place or as an option" were each mentioned in 3 percent of the responses.

All three surveys also included questions to measure how blind and low vision voters felt they were treated by poll workers. These results indicate that blind voters in 2014 were more satisfied with the way they were treated by poll workers than the blind voters surveyed in 2012, but less satisfied than the voters surveyed in 2008.

Data from the 2008, 2012, and 2014 blind and low vision voter surveys indicate a positive trend in the number of blind voters who cast their ballot at the polls and who did so with an accessible voting machine. However, the results of these surveys also indicate an overall decrease in poll workers' knowledge of how to operate the accessible voting machine, an overall decline in poll workers' treatment of blind voters, and an overall decline in blind voters' satisfaction with their voting experience. While the experience of blind and low vision voters seems to have improved in 2014 over 2012, the 2014 data still represents a decline from the experience of blind voters in 2008. These declines in the experience of blind and low vision voters who cast their ballot at the polls may negatively impact the participation of these voters in future elections. The report *The Blind Voter Experience: A Comparison of the 2008, 2012, and 2014 Elections*, with a complete analysis of the survey data from all three elections, may be found at: <https://nfb.org/hava-legislation>.

In addition to the problems that have been revealed by our surveys, other issues are preventing the full and equal participation of blind and low vision voters in the election process. The current state-of-the-art in voting technology found at the polling place does not enable some populations,

such as the deaf-blind, to exercise their right to cast a private and independent ballot. Jurisdictions that use vote-by-mail and only provide an accessible voting system in a central location, such as a board of elections office, do not fulfill the intent of HAVA and are in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Most states do not provide an accessible method for blind, low vision, and other print disabled voters to mark an absentee ballot. Finally, the use of online voter registration is rapidly increasing. However, many of these systems are not being designed in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA and are inaccessible.

The National Federation of the Blind advocated for the inclusion of nonvisual access in HAVA and we continue to work to ensure the right of all citizens to exercise their right to cast a private and independent ballot. We are eager to be an integral part of the continued dialogue about improving accessibility of the elections process. I thank you for allowing the National Federation of the Blind to submit this written testimony.

National Federation of the Blind

Mark Riccobono, President | 200 East Wells Street at Jemigan Place Baltimore, MD 21230 | 410 659 9314 | www.nfb.org

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 12:16 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

I have had numerous issues voting since becoming legally blind October 12, 2004. I haven't been able to cast a private ballot in local (Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska) elections since then because neither accessible voting machines nor electronic methods are available; however, I have had access to accessible voting machines and electronic voting methods for the majority of federal and state of Alaska elections since 2008. The times I didn't have access in those elections were transportation based after my area was redistricted, and my polling place was moved from down the road which was reachable on my ATV to a location in another precinct in the city 10+ miles away.

The new polling place requires a \$35 cab ride each way which I can't afford on my limited fixed income, or someone I know to take me which requires them to drive from town to my house after work, take me to vote, and return me to my house before going home for dinner which people aren't willing to do very often because of the time required. The retired people I know all work the polling stations so aren't available. Riding my ATV to my old polling station and voting a questioned ballot would allow me to vote for elected representation on the federal level, not state level since it is a different precinct which I've done once to weigh in on those decisions. In 2014 I was made aware of the new electronic method over the Internet. I used it with some difficulty which required my screen reading software as well as my limited vision and screen magnification. When I got to the point of submitting the ballot, I hit the submit button which seemed to do nothing; therefore, I pressed the submit button numerous times before I finally received a message that my ballot was cast about 20 minutes after I first pressed the submit button, I wasn't sure if I voted once or eighteen times. The electronic voting process wasn't completely accessible to my screen reader software, so a person without some vision wouldn't be successful in casting a ballot using that method.

Thank you for this opportunity,
Rick

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 12:38 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting Access

My polling information: _____

I have lived and voted (I vote in my lobby) at _____ for 20 years. During that time, I have had many problems, preventing me from voting successfully.

I have encountered judges who were not aware of procedures for voters with disabilities (I have a vision impairment).

Before we had accessible voting machines, I had one experience where after I began voting with 2 judges (one republican one democrat) one judge "just walked away". I had to summon the head judge in order to continue voting.

Since the arrival of accessible voting machines, I have experienced many judges who were unaware: that there was an accessible voting machine; they were expected to actually operate it; and how to set it up so I could vote. This resulted in many long delays.

I have diligently reported these problems to the Board of Elections with mixed results. Problems persisted until 2015 when I was finally able, for the first time, to vote without problems. I did however, have a member from the Board of Elections oversee my voting. In March of 2016 (Illinois primary) I encountered a delay of over 20 minutes because no one knew how to start the machine. Several judges had conversations and made phone calls resulting in an eventual successful voting experience.

I take voting seriously and I am offended every time my rights are violated. We thought we had solved the problems in spring of 2015 (mayoral election) however the most recent election has demonstrated there are still problems.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information either via this email or on my cell: 312-320-0832.

Marcia Trawinski

April 27, 2016

Commissioner Thomas Hicks, Chair
Commissioner Matthew Masterson
Commissioner Christy A. McCormick
United States Election Assistance Commission
1335 East West Highway, Suite 4300
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chairman Hicks and Commissioners,

Greetings and my thanks for taking testimony at today's hearing on accessible voting. While I regret that I cannot be there today, please accept this letter as testimony on this subject.

It has recently come to the attention of my Office that there are certain persons with disabilities for whom voting is not yet fully accessible. I refer to sighted persons who are, for whatever reason, unable to read. These adults who are "pre-readers" have partial accessibility to the ballot with current equipment, but there can be gaps in current technology that render it more difficult for them to understand the ballot and cast a meaningful vote.

These gaps are:

- 1) While audio programs designed to communicate the written words on ballots are already in place on assistive voting technology, those audio programs are not required by EAC guidelines to articulate and pronounce each word on the ballot as it appears on that ballot. When confronted with a word on the ballot that has not previously been programmed, the audio programs spell out the word. While this is better than taking no action and while this may be sufficient for voters with certain disabilities, this is unhelpful to pre-readers, as their disability is such that they cannot spell, so spelling out the word does not convey the needed information. It would be useful if the next iteration of the VVSG or similar regulations would require that the machine read all ballot language instead of accepting an audio program that spells out any word.
- 2) Similarly, audio programs are not required to read punctuation marks on the ballot. Pre-readers have indicated to us that reading those marks would be desirable. Thus, the name of candidate Larry "Bud" Melman, would be read out as Larry Quote Bud End-quote Melman. This could also be addressed in the VVSG process. It should be noted that differently disabled persons appear to have different preferences on whether punctuation should be read and so, while I am not advocating a change on this front, I wanted to relay to you the feedback that was expressed to my Office.
- 3) Finally, pre-readers have indicated to us that it would be useful for the Commission to require that all voting equipment allow for the use of external keyboards, as this is a convenience for persons in this class of voters. Pre-readers are familiar with using keyboards to translate written text into audio through their use of screen readers on computers.

Thank you for your consideration. If your technical staff has or is aware of suggestions or solutions for these issues, I would be glad to hear from them with that information.

Best regards,

**Steve Simon
Secretary of State of Minnesota**

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: My voting experience in Montgomery County, MD.

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 2:36 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: My voting experience in Montgomery County, MD.

I voted early in Montgomery County, MD. I always vote but had never voted early before. This year, I'm traveling on Election Day, so the early vote was an excellent option for me -- much better than having to use an absentee ballot.

My experience at the polling place (in Germantown, MD) was excellent. I felt welcomed and accommodated. The poll workers were unobtrusive but helpful, they were respectful of me and my guide dog, and the accessible voting machine was fully accessible, intuitive, and a pleasure to use.

This was one of my best -- most accessible -- voting experiences in Montgomery County ever!

Sincerely,
Penny Reeder

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

Expires: Thursday, May 26, 2016 12:00 AM

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 2:47 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: testimony

My name is Lauren Tuchman. I am totally blind and successfully cast my vote independently this afternoon in Montgomery County, Maryland with the use of a fully accessible voting machine. I found the machine very easy to use once it was explained to me by an election judge. It felt very gratifying to cast a secret and independent ballot. I have, in previous elections, gotten personal sighted assistance due to technical glitches with accessible voting machines. This was the smoothest voting experience I've ever had.



RESOURCE CENTER FOR ACCESSIBLE LIVING, INC.
Opening the Doors of Opportunity

727 Ulster Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401

TTY: (845) 331-4527
Fax: (845) 331-2076
Main: (845) 331-0541

19 April 2016

United States Election Assistance Commission
1335 East-West Highway
Suite 4300 Silver Springs, MD 20910

Re: April 27 Public Meeting Testimony Accessible Elections

Dear commissioners,

My name is Keith Gurgui and I serve as the Co-Chair of the Election Reform Committee for the New York Association on Independent living (NYAIL), a statewide not-for-profit membership association created by and composed of independent Living Centers across New York State devoted to ensuring the rights and improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. As such NYAIL has several public policy committees focused on a wide array of topics pertinent to our annual disability priorities, including and not limited to the administration of accessible elections the New York State, spearheaded by the Election Reform Committee.

For the purposes of this public meeting and my testimony today, I would like to highlight some activities taken by our committee as well as observations over the past several years regarding the status of election administration throughout New York States, specifically with respect to physical and programmatic access to voting and voter registration for individuals with disabilities.

The proper implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) is one of the committee's top priorities following the requirement that polling places be accessible to individuals with disabilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Beyond architectural accessibility to polling places, the committee has struggled with New York States implementation of accessible voting machines. While lever voting machines were phased out of use in most of the state's elections after the implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) over 10 years ago, the legislature has repeatedly granted extensions for their use in village, school district, and other local elections. It is only since December 2015 that the latest extension expired, that local jurisdictions are now required to phase out the use of their lever machines and switch over to accessible alternatives. In order to do so we have recommended to the state and County Board of Elections that they work with and cooperate in partnership with local jurisdictions in order to coordinate the use of county owned accessible ballot marking devices. After all, these machines were paid for by taxpayer sourced HAVA funds. Unfortunately, no requirements were placed on counties to share their equipment down to the local level in nonfederal elections.

Aside from the issue of federal, state and local jurisdictions, we are however concerned that bureaucratic gridlock over cost-sharing and responsibilities may supersede the need local voters with disabilities have in order to vote independently with their privacy maintained. I personally have continually been disenfranchised during voting for my city school board members and school budget due to the presence of the mechanical lever machine. I am a quadriplegic and therefore cannot (1) physically manipulate the dials and mechanics to operate the machine, (2) wheel close enough in my wheelchair to the machine if I indeed was physically able to operate it, which I am not, and (3) I am unable to have the privacy curtain close during my voting session due to the distance I am from the machine. In order to vote I require an assistant to read the options and physically pull the levers I normally would, voiding all sense of privacy or independence ensured under HAVA. Luckily, during state and federal elections such as the recent primary New York, I am able to use a customized switch with the sole use of my mouth along with a pair of headphones to designate my voting choices displayed on the computer screen. This type of independent and private experience should exist regardless of jurisdiction or governmental level.

Thank you,

Keith Gurgui
Systems Advocate
Resource Center for Accessible Living, Inc.
727 Ulster Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
845-256-8928

Personal Testimony of Colleen Burdiss

Mother, wife, and empowering activist for the DHH community Colleen Burdiss usually votes at her area polling location at a school right alongside neighbors. In terms of accessibility, Colleen noticed that her polling location was not wheelchair accessible due to stairs on both sides of the building. However, at the most recent election she also observed a new sign indicating that there was a braille accommodation available for the first time in the thirteen years that she has been voting at this particular site. Although, she may not use them, Colleen is mindful of some accommodations for other disabilities as she works as an Independent Living Specialist for persons with disabilities of various types. Her awareness is definitely a trait that could improve the voting experience of others with disabilities.

Colleen recalls a time when she went to vote and the poll worker attending to her was shouting her political party aloud to her, as if she would hear her better. Colleen is deaf and found this unsettling, not so much because the person was completely oblivious of how to communicate with a deaf person, but more so because "I like to keep my political views private," she said. She mentioned that people, some neighbors, were staring at her and the poll worker's interaction and it was a bit embarrassing. Colleen knows her alderwoman personally since they live near each other and their son's graded 8th grade together, so she happened to speak to the alderwoman's husband about the incident with poll worker yelling at her. He suggested that she email the board of elections. Colleen says that for herself, she can "advocate very well in the community." Still, some people struggle with speaking up for themselves. One recommendation Colleen gives is for the poll workers to "learn disability etiquette"; that could make her job and life (as well as others') a lot easier.

Colleen Burdiss

Personal Testimony of Dawn Zeterberg

Dawn Zeterberg is a middle-aged woman with a disability rights advocate that says at her regular polling location, "Most of them know I vote regularly." She serves on committees and is very involved in her community. Living independently for over thirty years and in her own house, Dawn gets around in her chair. Her usual polling location is only three blocks away and accessing the building is not an issue at all. It's once she gets inside that the story may change.

Availability of electronic voting stations and customer service is a gamble every time. Dawn mentioned that when there are only a couple issues on which to be voted, there may be one to none of the electronic stations offered for use. On occasion, when there are only one or two electronic stations offered, she has been directed to use a paper ballot. "We don't have any choice," Dawn expressed, "That's THEIR [the poll operators] choice." Even though the voting method options are less accessible, Dawn typically requests and receives assistance for precision with either the paper or electronic option. She says that the attitudes of the poll workers helping her varies. Some "don't mind helping", while others "act like they DO mind", Dawn stated. While there could be some attitudinal improvement of some, Dawn conveyed that her most recent poll and voting experience was good and only had one main recommendation which was to "make sure they have more than one electronic voting station."

Dawn Zeterberg 118 Redwood Road/ DawnZ41875@aol.com



Testimony before the Election Assistance
Commission

April 27, 2016

Submitted by
Cathy Brown
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Paraquad, Inc.
5240 Oakland Ave, Saint Louis, MO 63110
(314) 289-4200
cbrown@paraquad.org

Thank you to the members of the Election Assistance Commission for allowing Paraquad to submit testimony. Paraquad, Inc. is a Center for Independent Living in Saint Louis. We work to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same choices and opportunities that people without disabilities have, so that everyone can be an equal member of society. Our programs and services ensure that people with disabilities will be able to live independent lives in the community of their choice.

One fundamental way that we ensure that people with disabilities are equal members of society is by encouraging everyone to be involved in the political process. Voting and civic participation make up the backbone of our democracy. By voting, all people are given the chance to voice their concerns and have a say as to who will be elected to make major political decisions; decisions that potentially have life-changing consequences for the citizens of our country. This is especially true for people with disabilities who often face barriers and challenges that people without disabilities do not encounter regarding equal education, public accommodations, employment opportunities, access to quality, accessible housing, and necessary healthcare.

On behalf of Paraquad, we appreciate the opportunity to share our collective experience and insight about the voting experience of people with disabilities. Since the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002 there have been significant improvements to the voting process. Much effort has been made to ensure that polling places are accessible and individuals with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations when requested. The St. Louis area held two recent elections on March 15th and April 5th. During the April 5th election, St. Louis County voters experienced a significant ballot shortage, resulting in instructions to voters to come back later, and did not have the option to use electronic voting machines at all. This prompted Paraquad to send out a survey to our participants to gather information about their recent voting experiences. We received twenty-five responses. Approximately 80% of

respondents were highly satisfied with their recent voting experiences. However, the survey also revealed that there is still room for improvement and that some voters with disabilities still encounter barriers when voting.

Based on feedback we have received, Paraquad feels there is a need for increased poll worker training and more attention given to the actual layout and arrangement of the polling place. Paraquad has provided training to poll workers in the St. Louis area in the past, but it is apparent that additional training and refresher training would be beneficial. Several respondents to our survey reported that their interaction with poll workers was poor. Paraquad believes that all poll workers could benefit from disability awareness and etiquette training on a regular basis. This type of training provides the foundation for a smooth and efficient voting experience for everyone.

In addition, there continues to be a need for more training related to accommodations and accessible voting equipment. As stated, while the vast majority of polling places were reported to be physically accessible, individuals still experienced barriers when trying to access accommodations, specifically electronic voting machines. Survey respondents reported several instances where poll workers lacked knowledge of how to operate and use all the accessible features of the electronic voting machines. Several individuals indicated that using electronic voting machines was the only way they could truly vote independently.

Paraquad also received feedback about several accessibility issues related to the layout of the polling place site. Several polling places were arranged in a way that did not provide an accessible path of travel to the electronic voting machines. According to our survey, 75% of respondents preferred to vote using electronic voting equipment. Ensuring that such machines are positioned on an accessible route and have sufficient clear floor space is essential to guaranteeing access for everyone. In situations where electronic voting machines were not available or individuals chose not to use them some people opt to have the ballot read to them and completed by poll workers. Private areas should be available for this type of interaction. It was noted in the survey that an individual was not provided any privacy under these circumstances and therefore did not have an opportunity to cast a ballot in privacy.

Paraquad has also been made aware of concerns with a lack of accessible signage at several polling places. Accessible signage is necessary at all polling places that have more than one entrance including one or more that is not accessible. Signage must be posted at inaccessible entrances indicating the location of the accessible entrance. In addition, signage within the polling place indicating specific lines must be accessible.

Paraquad recommends the following efforts be made to eliminate existing barriers to voting for people with disabilities:

- Incorporate disability awareness and etiquette training in every poll worker training session
- Incorporate reasonable accommodations training, including knowledge of accessibility features of voting equipment, in every poll worker training session
- Ensure layout and set up of polling places comply with all ADA accessibility standards
- Encourage Board of Elections to reach out to the disability community for training and feedback

Paraquad appreciates the Election Assistance Commission's efforts to reach out to and gather information from organizations and individuals about the barriers faced by voters with disabilities. We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with EAC on the issue of voting rights for people with disabilities.

Thank you,

Cathy Brown

Personal Testimony of Colleen Burdiss

Mother, wife, and empowering activist for the DHH community Colleen Burdiss usually votes at her area polling location at a school right alongside neighbors. In terms of accessibility, Colleen noticed that her polling location was not wheelchair accessible due to stairs on both sides of the building. However, at the most recent election she also observed a new sign indicating that there was a braille accommodation available for the first time in the thirteen years that she has been voting at this particular site. Although, she may not use them, Colleen is mindful of some accommodations for other disabilities as she works as an Independent Living Specialist for persons with disabilities of various types. Her awareness is definitely a trait that could improve the voting experience of others with disabilities.

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Colleen Burdiss

Denise Patterson Testimony to EAC

Hello, I'm Denise Patterson a retired government employee, dog rescue volunteer, and an active Missouri Voter. In fact, I've only missed three elections since I was eligible to vote! I'm sharing my testimony with you today because I want to see more people with disabilities get out and vote so it's important to me that it's accessible for them to get out and use that right. In my area I've only seen unregistered voters turn away in St. Louis County, where I live. I think that one of the main barriers that still exist for individuals with disabilities is knowing how they can become a registered voter and utilize their rights. I recommend that the EAC consider making recommendations for a portion of federal funds to be put into voter registration advertising and to encourage election commissions to work with the parties to encourage more voter registration.

Thank you,

Denise Patterson

My voting experience.

My name is Christopher Worth I am a person with a disability, I have cerebral palsy. My cerebral palsy affects my fine motor skills. This means that sometimes it takes me a little bit longer to complete tasks that are fine motor based, it can also take a lot more brainpower to read when I also have to worry about filling in bubbles etc. because as a part of my cerebral palsy I have a generalized learning disability. Which makes it difficult to read at a fast pace. So April 4th I brought all this to bear on my voting experience.

Here's a picture of what I experienced...

I went to the polls with some coworkers/friends because we live in the same neighborhood.

As we came into the polling place and move towards the check in table, one of the poll officers gestured strongly with two fingers towards her eye sockets and then at one of my coworkers who uses a vision cane, this was that workers way of indicating that my coworker would need help. She, the poll worker did not ask my coworker any questions. When my coworker asked for help the poll workers took her over to the voting table at the other end of the room. They proceeded to talk very loudly about my coworkers choices presented on the ballot.

My other coworker who does not use a vision cane, but has a vision impairment was to my estimation than "overly helped" or at least the poll workers began to try to overly help. When she clarified with them that she didn't need help they back down but it took a minute....

As for me, probably as for all three of us the fact that they did not use voting machines really stood in the way of independently casting a clear vote. Because my disability is such that it takes me so long, and so much energy to read the ballot and fill in the marks/bubbles that I had to take an extremely long amount of time to cast my vote. I made it clear to the poll officers that I did not need help, the reason being is that if I can do it, I'm going to do it for myself. However that is not to say that a voting machine would not of been helpful. I would've expend way less energy with the help of the machine. Filling in the bubble really does take a lot out of me when combined with reading. With the help of the machine I think I would've had a clear sense of what I was voting for more quickly. This demonstrates a need to always have access to the voting machine, with it in my mind, as a voter I am guaranteed more privacy, more clarity, and true physical independence.

After voting I asked a poll worker to put my ballot in the ballot box. As she was doing that I told her that all the coworkers seem to be approaching us with a lot of fear and awkwardness... She said: "you mean you'd like us to not be so awkward..." And she giggled. I said really all you have to do as a poll worker is ask us [people with disabilities] if we need help. Her reaction demonstrates a need for further "disability etiquette training."

Christopher Worth

Testimony before the Election Assistance Commission

April 27, 2016

**Submitted by
Kimberly Lackey**

Thank you to the members of the Election Assistance Commission for allowing me to submit testimony. I am visually impaired and have encountered barriers while voting in two recent elections in St. Louis City.

I feel there is a need for increased pollworker training. My interactions with poll workers were very awkward. On one occasion I could hear the poll workers talking about me and my need for help as soon as I walked in the polling place. In addition, while I prefer using the electronic voting machines because I can then vote independently, the workers at my polling place did not know how to use the audio features on our machines and in the most recent election, electronic voting machines were not even made available.

As a result, I had to have poll workers read me the ballot and complete it for me. This was done at the same table where others were completing their own ballot and there was no privacy whatsoever. Other individuals in the room could hear me indicate how I wanted to vote and this made me feel like I was not getting an equal opportunity to vote like everyone else.

I appreciate the Election Assistance Commission's efforts to reach out to and gather information from organizations and individuals about the barriers faced by voters with disabilities. I believe that additional poll worker training on disability etiquette and accessible equipment is necessary to ensure that I, and others with disabilities, have an equal opportunity to vote.

Thank you,

Kimberly Lackey

Preferred method to reach Steve Patterson:

Steve Patterson is a person with a disability who blogs on issues concerning disability rights and access for the blog Urban Review. He says of his voting experience on April 4, "I went to the board of elections and vote early via absentee ballot. It's closer and considerably easier to get to than my actual polling place." The workers are helpful, they fill out the absentee form since I can't write legibly. I sign it.

Christy Herzing

Submitted By Christy Herzing

In 15 plus years of voting I've had numerous experiences. My experiences before the passage of the Help America Vote Act and electronic voting machines became common practice were in many ways very different than they are today. While the electronic voting machines streamline my voting experience, the education and awareness of poll workers make my voting experience very frustrating.

As a person with a visual impairment my experience at the polls crosses every end of the spectrum. I voted twice in the last month and the experiences were far too similar. On March 15, 2016, the Presidential Primary, I went to the polls with friends. All three of us have disabilities and upon entering our polling place the poll worker told another poll worker that my friend, who uses a wheelchair, would not be able to use the electronic voting machine because he wouldn't be able access the touch screen. When my friend informed the poll workers that he could in fact use the machine and had in the past they, initially, weren't sure what to do than finally gave him the card to put in the machine. When it was my turn I asked to use the electronic voting machine since the font size can be enlarged. First, one poll worker looked surprised that the machine had the capability and told me that she had a magnifying glass if I wanted to use that instead. I explained that I knew the machines had the capability because I've used one at that polling place before and I did not prefer to use the magnifying glass. The electronic voting machines are much easier for me to use than trying to fill out the circles on the paper ballot. The poll workers were finally able to figure out how to enlarge the font and change the contrast to allow me to vote. It took longer for them to figure out how to work the machine than it did for me to actually cast my ballot.

We voted again on April 5, 2016 in a local election, and the experience didn't change. In fact, our local area did not have the electronic voting machines, which than meant my options were to have someone read the ballot to me or bring my glasses and magnifying glass to fill out the ballot myself. I chose the latter option because I believe everyone is entitled to a secret ballot. Upon arriving at our polling place one of the poll workers pointed at my friend who has a visual impairment and uses a white cane and informed other poll workers, rather loudly, that my friend would need help with her ballot while pointing at her own eyes than pointing at my friend. When it was our turn to vote my friend who uses a wheelchair was told, without asking, that they could help him fill out his ballot. He told them he could do it on his own and was then told that if he couldn't fill it all out by himself that they were available to finish it for him. The poll worker than made an assumption that since my friend who has a visual impairment and was in line in front of my needed help filling out her ballot that I too would need help filling out my ballot. She, at first, insisted that she could help me find my way to a table to wait for someone to assist me. When I told her I wouldn't need any assistance she at first appeared to find that hard to believe until I pulled out my eye glasses and explained that I could in fact fill out my ballot on my own.

My biggest concern however is that my friend who has a visual impairment and was being assisted in filling out her ballot was not offered privacy to fill out the ballot. Everyone in the room could hear what the poll workers were reading to her and her responses. These experiences prove that more disability awareness training and training on the use of the electronic voting machines is needed. I would also recommend ensuring that the option to fill out a ballot in

To the Election Assistance Commission

Hello, I'm Adonis Reddick a father, a grandfather, and I've been living on my own for more than twenty years. I do a lot of advocacy work because I'm a person with a disability, and I think all people should be able to create their own lives and not be held back. I'm writing you today because I believe the EAC should know what is happening locally, if we want things to get better people HAVE to talk about it. I'll start with the positive which is that I live within walking distance from my polling place, and other than the heavy door it's accessible for ambulatory people. Also, I preferred to use the electronic voting machine because it helps get me in and out without any problems, unlike having to fill in the little bubbles on the paper ballot which is less accessible to me. However, for the bad, when I go into my polling place and put the voter ID card on the table the poll worker tells me "You cannot use that!" and make me use my driver's license unfortunately this wasn't the first time this has happened. I really recommend that the committee make recommendations that will increase the poll workers knowledge about acceptable voting IDs and ensures proper oversight of poll workers.

I'd like to thank the Commission for listening to my story!

-Adonis Reddick

Alan Mader's voting experience

I voted at Jamestown Elementary School on Tuesday, April 5th. The Election Official offered me a seat at a table and brought me a paper ballot. I was asked if I needed assistance with filling out the ballot but did not require any.

After completing the ballot, I went and dropped it in the box. The slot was very small but I was finally succeeded.

I believe it was a positive experience.

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 6:39 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Access

I can not attend, but since I vote every election and have a progressive disability, I care about this issue. The voting machines for people with disabilities, while not perfect, are a big improvement. I don't think people realize how mail-in ballots get counted, or not, so going to a polling place matters. Maybe more people with different hurdles would go and be expected and accepted at the polls.

CBenko

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Privacy when entering a ballot

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 8:04 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Privacy when entering a ballot

This happened to me a number of years ago before I became handicapped and I now vote absentee ballot but it has always bothered me.

After I had marked my ballot and needed to put it through the electronic reader/counter whatever it's called there were issues with the machine sort of jamming so the person there to assist did his job by helping but he took my ballot, no covering on it and finally fed it in the machine. I REALLY didn't like the fact he could see my ballot while doing this/his job. I truly felt like I lost my privacy to my ballot. Maybe things have changed, if not those readers need to be changed that you put your ballot in them face DOWN for privacy sake.

I don't know why I should be concerned, I vote absentee, I'm sure a number of people see my ballot.

Thank you for your time.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 9:14 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Testimony

April 26, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony on my voting experiences since the Help America Vote Act was passed.

Until the passage of HAVA, I never had an opportunity to cast an independent and secret ballot as I am blind and cannot read print. Therefore, I had to rely on someone to assist me by marking the ballot. Sometimes, it was necessary to have someone from each party. It was through the use of the accessible voting machines purchased in Missouri through HAVA funding that I cast my first independent and truly secret ballot. Can you imagine not being able to vote privately? I was in my early fifties before I ever had that opportunity. A right and privilege most voters never have to consider.

The office of the Secretary of State in Missouri certified several different voting machines. Using this list, each board of elections was allowed to purchase the machine of their choice. All certified machines provided a paper audit feature. I believe they consider this approach an open state. However, it seems to create more confusion and no one person seems to have a handle on what happens throughout the state. The type of voter equipment can vary from county to county. In the county I live in most voters use a paper ballot but there is at least one touch screen voting machine in each precinct that has a keypad to allow a blind voter to navigate the audio ballot. The machines are used by many voters as you do not have to be disabled to vote using the voting machine. This is important and somehow allows my vote to remain private.

The poll workers in my voting place has always been able to assist in the preparation of the machine; however, it does take some commitment as use of these machines in our area is intermittent. The machines are used in all federal elections. Unfortunately, they remain in storage during elections for which there is no federal races. We have attempted to expand use of the accessible voting machines to every state, county, and local election in Missouri. However, those areas that do not currently use the machines in all elections have been opposed to providing the accessible voting machines for all elections. The board of elections for the county where I live , tells me they do not set up the voting machines when there are no federal races because they barely have enough poll workers to staff the precincts. Election boards that use the machines for all voters instead of relying on paper ballot, seem to be more consistent in providing the accessible features like audio ballots in all elections. AS a blind citizen and tax payer, it is disturbing that my right to cast an independent and secret ballot is less important to these election officials than my neighbors right to cast an independent and secret ballot.

Hava has met a need that has never been met before. It provided non-visual methods and eliminated barriers that prevented disabled citizens, like me, of a fundamental right. As our election procedures change in keeping with technology , accessibility should be factored in when changes are made to how voters register, vote absentee, or vote at the poll.

Sincerely,
Shelia Wright



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Oakland, CA 94612
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TTY: (800) 719-5798
Toll Free: (800) 776-5746
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**"Written Testimony for Election Assistance Commission Public
Hearing to Hear from Voters with Disabilities"**

Fred Nisen, Supervising Attorney for Voting Rights
Disability Rights California
Voting Rights Unit
fred.nisen@disabilityrightsca.org

April 27, 2016
Boston, MA

Introduction

Disability Rights California is an independent, non-profit, statewide organization mandated by the federal government to provide legal services to individuals with disabilities in California regarding their disability, civil, and service rights. Disability Rights California is authorized under various federal statutes and is the protection and advocacy system in California.

Under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), Disability Rights California is charged with ensuring “the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote and accessing polling places.”¹ Many barriers continue to exist that prevent people with disabilities from fully exercising their right to vote. We believe there are ways to reduce and eliminate those barriers so that people with disabilities can have full participation in the electoral process.

California's population is comprised of approximately 20% adults with disabilities. Among this population are individuals with a vast array of disabilities. These include, among others, physical, manual dexterity, neurological, mental health, learning, sensory (vision and hearing) intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We know from our experiences talking to people of all ages and disabilities that exercising their right to vote is of great importance to them. Yet this is not reflected in the percentages of individuals with disabilities that historically vote. Fourteen years have passed since HAVA became law but, HAVA's promise of equal voting opportunities for people with disabilities has not been achieved in California. Barriers continue to exist for people with disabilities.

Barriers to Participation in the Full Electoral Process and Best Practices to Reduce and Eliminate Barriers

Barriers to Voter Education Materials and other Information

a) Barriers to Voter Education Materials

Once registered to vote, it is critical to have accessible information about election dates and deadlines, ballot contents, and where to vote.

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 15461.

In California, voter education materials are provided by the California Secretary of State and county election officials. Formats include print based materials and web-based materials. We know from experience that the information in these materials, especially in regards to proposition and ballot measures, is typically written in a way that is difficult to read for people with certain disabilities, such as learning or intellectual.

b) **Barriers to Information at Polling Places**

The National Center for Health Statistics (NHCS) estimates that 37 million Americans – about 15% of the United States population – experience some degree of hearing loss.² In addition, people with certain intellectual or learning disabilities cannot process verbal instructions. Poll workers sometimes make announcements, such as directing voters to stand in a particular line, announcing the time of poll closing, or providing other important information without including any alternative methods of communication.

Best Practices to Increase Voter Education Opportunities

a. **Develop and Implement Disability Community Outreach Plans**

A fundamental best practice is for election officials to create and implement on a consistent basis an outreach plan for individuals with disabilities who reside in the community or in a facility.

b. **Provide All Information at Polling Places in Alternative Formats**

Poll workers should assume some of the voters coming to the polls are either deaf or hard of hearing since, as the NHCS points out, nearly one in every seven Americans are either deaf or have some form of hearing loss. Therefore, poll workers should ensure that all auditory information is presented in visual format. Whenever verbal announcements are made, the same information should be provided visually. Similarly, all written

² National Center for Health Statistics, *Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2012*, pg. 43 (February 2014), http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_260.pdf.

information should be made available in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, compact disc, etc.

c. Provision of Accessible Voter Education Materials in a Variety of Formats and Beta-Test Before Distribution

One of the best ways to provide accessible materials is to use plain language. Plain language is a way of providing information that focuses on readers. This means taking into account how the information is organized (both sequentially and spatially) and using the most direct way to convey the information. Plain language applies to written text and to web pages. The "[Plain Writing Act of 2010](#)" requires that federal agencies use "clear government communication the public can understand and use." The League of Women Voters in California provides a non-partisan "Easy Voter Guide."

The Easy Voter Guide is invaluable and relied upon by voters with developmental and learning disabilities among others. The Easy Voter Guide can be reviewed at www.easyvoter.org. Additional information about plain language practice can be found at www.plainlanguage.gov and at the Center for Plain Language. In addition, the Center for Civic Design (CCD) www.civicdesign.org has developed excellent field guides on providing voter information in plain language. For the Presidential Primary Election, CCD worked with election officials from three California counties (Santa Cruz, Shasta and Orange) to put their Voter Information Guides into plain language. It is incumbent on election officials to adopt plain language techniques as a best practice.

Another best practice is to provide audio and visual formats such as audio web-based files, adjustable font size on web pages, large type written materials, and ASL videos. Additionally, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 sets forth accessibility standards for electronic information such as web-based content.³

³ Guide to the Section 508 Standards: Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications, available at <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/guide-to-the-section-508-standards/web-based-intranet-and-internet-information-and-applications-1194-22>.

A third best practice is to invite individuals with a variety of types of disabilities to "beta-test" materials and to provide feedback before fiscal resources are spent printing and distributing the materials or launching websites. One example, is working in collaboration with the State and County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAACs) as well as assistive technology experts. VAACs will be discussed further below.

Polling Place Accessibility Barriers

The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California law require polling places to be accessible. Accessibility means that the path of travel to and from the polling place, the path of travel inside the voting area, and the voting area itself are all free of barriers.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) created a comprehensive poll site accessibility checklist for use by county election officials to foster compliance. The DOJ checklist can be found at <http://www.ada.gov/votingck.htm>. In 2010, the California Secretary of State issued comprehensive guidelines and a checklist, which was revised in 2014. These guidelines and checklist can be found at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/additional-elections-information/publications-and-resources/polling-place-accessibility-guidelines/>. The guidelines restate federal and state law. The items were created in partnership with the California Department of Rehabilitation and the disability community, including Disability Rights California.

1. Poll Site Accessibility Varies County by County

There are variances from county to county on implementation of federal and state accessibility requirements. Accessibility compliance varies greatly, with some counties below 50% based on our experiences working at the county level. Although the State guidelines are relatively new, the laws behind them are not. We appreciate the challenges counties face in identifying and securing polling places. However, compliance with accessibility laws should be further along and a greater priority.

2. The Quality of Poll Worker Accessibility Training Varies County by County

Poll worker training is essential to ensuring access at polling places. We know from experience working with county election officials they are pressed for time when they train poll workers. Generally, accessibility is not given nearly enough time in training, sometimes unintentionally giving poll workers the idea that accessibility is not important. More often than not, when we approach a county, our assistance is welcomed in training poll workers and the county staff poll worker trainers about disability etiquette and how to set up an accessible polling place. However, this is not enough.

We know from talking to the community, those who survey polling places on Election Days and from the Election Day Hotline calls we receive, some barriers are pre-existing. But many are not. Barriers can be avoided with training or can be mitigated easily. Common barriers include for example, making sure all doors and gates are unlocked and open, accessible voting systems are plugged in and operational, accessible parking spots are available and not blocked, the designated accessible voting system is placed in a location that does not require the use of stairs. Voters with disabilities can be prevented from voting or voting privately for any of these reasons. The fact that federal and California law provides for curbside voting when a polling place is not accessible does not mean it can be relied upon as the default remedy. Curbside voting should be the exception and by voter choice.

Best Practices to Reduce and Eliminate Poll Site Accessibility Barriers

a. Use of Equipment to Mitigate Barriers

Selection of accessible polling places is key to ensuring accessibility. Accessibility should be one of the top priorities for county election officials when choosing poll sites. We understand that, in some communities, this is not always possible. In such circumstances, counties should be prepared to minimize accessibility barriers, such as through the use of portable ramps and cones to make temporary accessible parking places.

b. Comprehensive Poll Worker Training

Comprehensive poll worker training on access issues must emphasize accessibility. This may mean adding 30-45 minutes to the training to discuss accessibility issues in depth. Another option is to integrate accessibility into every aspect of the training. The importance of accessibility must be stressed. Training should include a detailed explanation about setting up and using the accessible voting system.

c. HAVA Complaint Oversight

The Department of Justice provides enforcement of HAVA and the ADA. However, the complaint process begins with the California Secretary of State. We do not know how many disability related voting complaints California is receiving or how many are investigated. Based on our work in the community, voters do not know about their right to file a complaint or the process for doing so. The requirement that HAVA complaints be notarized is a barrier for voters with disabilities. They must find a Notary Public and arrange transportation to have the complaint notarized. Many voters with disabilities denied the right to a private and independent have told Disability Rights California that filing a HAVA complaint "is not worth it" because of the notarization requirement. A report of how many HAVA accessibility complaints have been filed nationwide could tell us whether there is an issue nationally or only in California.

Comment [MJ1]: My rewrite may have changed what you intended the sentence to mean

d. More Accessible Voting Systems Available to All Voters

So there is a greater likelihood that there will be at least one working accessible voting machine at every polling place, counties should (if not encouraged) have more than one accessible voting machine in a polling place. Counties should offer an accessible voting system to all voters so voters with disabilities will not feel singled out. That way, more people will use the accessible voting machines, inspiring poll workers to pay attention to the trainings many poll workers do not consider accessible voting machines important because "nobody uses it."

e. Voter Accessibility Advisory Committees (VAACs)

There are currently two formal opportunities for Election Officials to work in partnership with the disability community. The Secretary of State hosts a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) comprised of county election officials and disability rights advocates such as Disability Rights California and others. Historically, the VAAC has been used to foster discussion about voting barriers, to identify solutions, and to monitor progress.

In this spirit, the Secretary has encouraged county election officials to host VAACs at the local level. Disability Rights California participates on a number of county VAACs. However, VAACs are not operational in many counties.

We know that VAACs have been mutually beneficial to election officials and to the disability community. Successes include providing technical assistance to the Secretary of State for the 2010 Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines and to county election officials for their poll worker trainings and poll site accessibility compliance.

More can, and should be done by California to monitor county adoption of VAACs, as well as progress achieved to identify and address barriers faced by voters with disabilities. In Marin, Santa Cruz and Los Angeles counties, the county election officials seek the input of the VAAC in selecting accessible polling places. Specifically, the Registrar of Voters in Marin County routinely asks VAAC for ideas of polling places. In addition to asking VAAC members for ideas for accessible polling places, the Registrar of Voters for Santa Cruz County, when there is a doubt as to whether polling is accessible enough given the topography, goes to the VAAC for input.

Through our work on the San Francisco County VAAC, we learned the County was discussing whether or not to get a new voting system, and whether or not to switch to an open source system. Disability Rights California is monitoring these discussions and providing public input. We have stated we do not have an interest as to whether or not San Francisco chooses an open source or proprietary system, as long as it is fully accessible to voters with disabilities. Upon the County's request, we provided a letter outlining what we consider to be a fully accessible voting

system, along with the main problem with the County's strategy, relying on "off the shelf hardware," tablets. See below for further details.

Accessible Voting Systems Barriers

HAVA requires that each polling place have an accessible voting system so that voters with disabilities can vote privately and independently.⁴

California law states that all polling place must have at least one accessible voting system.⁵ The entire process must be accessible, including reading, marking, verifying and casting the ballot, in order to ensure people with different disabilities can vote privately and independently. Historically, many people with disabilities have been unable to vote privately and independently, including people who are blind or visually impaired, have manual dexterity disabilities (for example due to stroke, Cerebral Palsy, or quadriplegia), have intellectual or developmental disabilities, and have learning disabilities.

Under HAVA, accessible voting systems must meet the standards in the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG). Voting systems generally meet HAVA accessibility requirements to the extent they are required to do so. The requirements, however, are based on particular disability groups such as blind and low vision, manual dexterity, intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as other groups and do not take into account combinations of disability. This results in requirements that may work well for people who are blind but not for people who are blind with limited dexterity or limited tactile sensitivity. As might be expected, stand-alone systems designed after implementation of Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG 1.0) have a much greater compliance than those designed prior to VVSG 1.0.

Variances in how counties spent their HAVA funds created a terrain in which where a person lives effects whether they have an opportunity to vote privately and independently. For example, because each county uses different accessible voting systems.

California law allows a voter to seek assistance from a person of their choosing to cast and verify their ballot.⁶ While a voter has the choice to

⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 15481(a)(3).

⁵ Cal. Elections Code § 19242(b).

seek assistance, a voter must not be required to seek assistance because an accessible voting system is not available. It is second class citizenry to have to exchange one's right to privacy in order to fulfill one's right to vote.

From complaints we have received through our Election Day Hotline and from talking to the disability community there are a variety of reasons why people are prevented from using the accessible voting systems, including:

- A lack of knowledge of the availability of an accessible voting system because, in many counties, poll workers are trained to only offer the use of the accessible voting system to voters who the poll workers believe may need to use it.
- Accessible voting systems may not be working.
- Poll workers often do not set up the accessible voting system because they do not remember how to do so or they figure no one will use it.
- Many people with disabilities do not know how to use an accessible voting machine. Many poll workers do not know how to use it and, therefore, cannot tell voters how to use it.

Tablets are being used as accessible voting systems in many jurisdictions across the country, and are being considered by a few California counties. Generally, tablets do not comply with the VVSG requirements and are not currently expected to do so even though they are increasingly used as part of the voting process.⁷ Tablets are not accessible to many people with disabilities. Several disabilities (for example Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Syndrome, paralysis) cause motor control and dexterity limitations such as poor coordination or involuntary movements.

Any of these disabilities can seriously impair a person's ability to accurately touch a small area on a voting system touch screen or accurately activate a key on a keypad. The disability can impact the pressure needed to touch or activate a control. These individuals may need keys requiring less pressure

⁷ The information below, as well as additional information, may be found in a working paper called "Accessible Voting Technology: Analysis and Recommendations" by Deb Cook and Mark Harriss from the University of Washington for the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, Accessible Voting Technology Initiative (December 2012) < <http://elections.itif.org/reports/AVTI-004-Cook-Harriss-2012.pdf>>.

or they may be prone to using too much pressure and activate a repeat function on the key or selection spot.

Some individuals may use adaptive keyboards with a layout of keys that match their range of motion; they may use a head-mouse, mouthstick, or head-pointer, voice-recognition software, an eye-gaze system, or any number of other assistive technologies to efficiently use a computer. They may need longer response times and adjustments in key repeat, requirements for simultaneous key use, etc.

The VVSG requires that controls be operable with one hand, without excessive force, and must not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist. VVSG 1.1 Section 3.2.6.c. The combined impact of these requirements is that controls must be easily operated but not easily activated by accident. VVSG 1.1 Section 3.3.4.b. This benefits all voters but particularly benefits those who lack fine motor control.

Tablets generally do not include safeguards to prevent key repeat or other forms of accidental key activation. This means, for example, that individuals who lack hand coordination can easily enter extra characters when entering a write-in choice. Operating systems on tablets generally include an option to disable key repeat, but it is not easily accessed, is probably not known to most voters, and may not be enabled at a polling place.

Best Practices

a. Desirable Features of an Accessible Voting System

In addition to an audio component and touchscreen, we believe that an accessible voting system should be self-explanatory and have additional accessible features, including, but not limited to, the following.⁸

- Sip and puff - A mouth-controlled input provides users who cannot move their arms with a simple and effective way to use their breath to control a device, such as their power wheelchair or computer.

⁸ The information below, as well as additional information, may be found in the Research Alliance for Accessible Voting (RAAV) Abstract, "Guide to Disabilities and Voting Systems and Access Features: Developed by the Association of Assistive Technology Act Program as a partner of the RAAV Project, <http://xw-w.atap.org/docs/RAAV%206.27.13%20publish.pdf>.

- Keyboard for write-in votes - Many people with disabilities are unable to type in names of write-in candidates using the touchscreen either because they can hit one large button to cast their ballot by using a big part of their hand or even face to choose a candidate on the ballot, but cannot type on a touchscreen keypad. A manual keyboard should be available.
- Voice activated - Voice input for voters who have difficulty using their hands.
- Synchronized audio and visual - When synchronized speech and audio are engaged, a voice reads each word as it is displayed. Adjustments to change the volume and tempo should be available to assist voters, for example, with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with learning disabilities, who had traumatic brain injuries and who had a stroke.
- Joystick - Some voters with disabilities may need a joystick to navigate the touchscreen component if they cannot operate the touchscreen because they cannot raise their hand or accurately hit their selection due to fine motor control limitations or involuntary movements.
- Tecla switch compatibility- The Tecla Switch is a wireless device that lets a person with limited to no hand movement control electronic devices, such as a smartphone, tablet or computer (PC & laptop), and the driving controls of their power wheelchair using external switches.⁹
- Tactile buttons - An access feature provided as an alternative to touchscreen input. It provides keys or controls that can be felt. A touchscreen provides no mechanism to "feel" the difference between selections.

It is incumbent on voting system developers to develop voting software with these features. It is as important, if not more so, for election officials to have the appropriate hardware to use accessible features. For example, the voice-voting option of a system is useless without a headset and microphone. Similarly, keyboard, switches, etc. must be available to use those access features.

⁹ See <http://gettecla.com>

b. Accessible Voting Systems Should Be Offered to All Voters

In order for voters with disabilities to use the accessible voting system, they have to know it exists. In many counties, poll workers are trained not to tell voters about the presence of an accessible voting system unless they ask to use it so few people use it. The Secretary of State has said poll workers must offer the accessible voting system to all voters. It is important that the offer be made universally because not all disabilities are apparent and people can use it without disclosing their disability. It is our experience that poll workers often do not set up the accessible voting system or even pay attention to how to operate it because it is assumed it will not be used. Offering the accessible voting system to everybody will make sure poll workers treat it with as much importance as the rest of the polling place.

It is critical poll workers are trained to offer accessible voting to all voters and not just voters with observable disabilities. Disability Rights California staff regularly attend poll worker trainings and consult with election officials to help implement this policy.

c. Comprehensive Poll Worker Training

Poll workers need more extensive training on the importance of accessible voting systems and how to use it to cast a ballot secretly and independently. We have observed several poll worker trainings. While all counties train poll workers on how to set up an accessible voting machine, some also tell them that they will not be used much, which does not give them incentive to learn how to use the system. They need to understand that they are just as important as a paper ballot.

In some counties, poll workers do not receive training on how to cast a ballot using an accessible voting system. This is problematic because, if a voter with a disability is trying to cast their vote using an accessible voting machine for the first time and has questions about how it works poll workers will not be able to help effectively. The reason often given by counties for the lack of training is that it is too complicated. This is precisely the reason to train poll workers, so they can explain it to voters on Election Day so that voters with disabilities do not end up disenfranchised.

d. Availability of More Than One Accessible Voting System or All Voters

The California Secretary of State has told counties that there must be *one, and only one*, accessible voting system in each polling place.¹⁰ But we think Counties should be required to have more than one accessible voting system per polling place. That way, if one had a malfunction, the voter with a disability could still vote privately and independently on the other one. Having the person return later while the county deploys another accessible voting system is not helpful because the polls may close before another voting system can be obtained or the voter may not be able to return later due to work, family obligations, or transportation. Counties should also be required to test each accessible voting system as close to Election Day as possible, including all accessories (e.g., headsets, external controllers, etc.).

As discussed above, there is a concern that poll workers will continue to not offer an accessible voting machine unless the voter appears to need the machine (e.g. uses a mobility device, service animal or white-tip cane). However, there are many voters with non-visible disabilities who may find an accessible voting machine useful (e.g., a voter who is legally blind). Limiting the use of the accessible voting machines to those voters with visible disability perpetuates the stigma of people with disabilities.

e. Voter input at all stages when choosing a new voting system

Election officials should seek input from voters with disabilities and stakeholder groups like Disability Rights California when choosing a new voting system. Having voter input at all critical stages of the development and the procurement process, either by focus groups, surveys or a task force would be an ideal way for Election Officials to make sure the new voting system is accessible and usable by all voters, especially those with disabilities.

¹⁰ California's Secretary of State's 2010 HAVA State Plan
<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/hava/state-plan/state-plan-final.pdf>, at page 47

Barriers Presented by Voting by Mail (Absentee) Ballots

Over the past few years, we have observed a significant effort by some jurisdictions, including some in California, to move towards vote by mail only elections. For some people with disabilities, vote by mail (aka absentee) ballots allow the voter to vote privately and independently. However, for many people with disabilities, such as voters who are blind or visually impaired, have manual dexterity disabilities or have difficulty reading due to learning, intellectual or developmental disabilities, vote by mail ballots create a barrier to privacy and independence because another person has to read the ballot and/or mark their selections.

Currently, California allows voters to choose to vote by mail. This allows those who find voting by mail to be most accessible - to vote by mail - and those who find voting at a polling place to be most accessible - to vote at a polling place. Maintaining the options is essential to upholding the right to a private vote.

However, California is experimenting with all mailed ballots for some elections and there are many accessibility issues. In 2014 Governor Jerry Brown signed AB 2028 allowing pilot programs for some counties to allow elections to be conducted completely by mail. The implementation in San Mateo County is a harbinger of voting access issues for people with disabilities. Voters who are blind and visually impaired filed a lawsuit because the County failed to provide an alternative to a paper ballot despite the availability of such technology.¹¹ There is pending legislation to expand all mailed ballots to other counties.¹²

Best Practice for Voting By Mail

Vote by mail should remain the choice of the voter

As explained above, all registered voters voting by mail using a paper ballot is, by its very nature, contrary to voting in a private manner for many persons with disabilities. Any efforts to increase the use of vote by mail ballots should include an in depth analysis, before implementation, of the types of mitigating measures needed to ensure voters with a full range of

¹¹ California Council of the Blind, et al v. County of San Mateo, et al (2015); Northern District of Cal., Docket No. 3:15-cv-5784

¹² More information on Senate Bill 450 is available at
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450

disabilities are not disenfranchised or forced to vote in a manner that denies the cornerstone right to a secret and private vote.

Remote accessible vote by mail should be made available to voters with disabilities

Currently, military and overseas voters can use a remote accessible vote by mail system. It allows them to receive a ballot electronically and then submit the filled out ballot via mail or fax to their Elections Official. In the California Legislature there is currently a bill pending that would make remote accessible vote by mail available to voters with disabilities in state. We believe this system if implemented properly would make vote by mail accessible to more voters with disabilities.

Conclusion

It is crucial for individuals with disabilities be allowed to exercise their right to vote privately and independently, just like every other voter. In the pages above, we have outlined progress since the enactment of HAVA and continuing issues. We have set forth best practices going forward to enable people with disabilities to vote privately and independently. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Commission.

Testimony to Election Assistance Commission
Rabia Belt
Stanford Law School
April 17, 2016

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony before you on the subject of voter accessibility. We can consider voters with disabilities as “the canaries in the coal mine,” the people who are an advanced warning of the structural difficulties in voting not just for themselves, but also for the system as a whole. Solving problems in voting for people with disabilities will strengthen the entire system and will help improve the voting process for everyone, especially people from disempowered communities. Furthermore, although election law scholars have largely ignored the unique voting problems confronting voters with disabilities, virtually every major voting controversy in contemporary American electoral politics directly implicates issues of disability.

My testimony examines the state of disability access to voting in the lead-up to the 2016 election, revealing an electoral problem that has been lurking in the background for far too long. Current debates about access to voting and voter restrictions often ignore the current legal landscape’s disparate effect on those with disabilities. I offer another angle of intervention towards ameliorating the problems in the voting process for disempowered individuals. This call for reform is timely in light of the upcoming presidential election. We tend to think of problems of voting and disability, if we think of them at all, as classic issues of physical access. But in fact, the contemporary problems with respect to voting that preoccupy election lawyers are also heavily implicated by disability as well and moreover are central to the inquiry. I reveal those hidden disability implications of our contemporary election law problems.

A. Caucuses

Voters with disabilities face numerous barriers to caucus participation. The obstacles vary depending upon the type of impairment. A deaf voter may be unable to understand fellow voters without captioning or translation. A veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder may find the prospect of standing in a crowded room for hours impossible. Elderly voters and voters with physical impairments may not have the stamina to sustain hours of deliberation.

Accessibility problems built into the caucus process not only disenfranchise voters with disabilities, but also violate the law. Yet, neither national political party offers guidelines on caucusing with a disability. Only three states, Colorado, Minnesota, and Washington, have enacted relevant statutes. No caucus states have adopted any formal administrative rules. A few states and localities have voluntarily adopted policies and resolutions to accommodate prospective voters with disabilities. The lack of broad accessibility regulations by the political parties who govern the caucuses violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specifically Title III, which prohibits discrimination in places of “public accommodation.”

Political parties have responded to such concerns by pointing out that caucuses are not run by the state and that private political parties have a right to organize as they see fit. But the ADA applies to private institutions such as restaurants and hair salons if they are places of public accommodation; that the caucuses are private makes them no less bound by the ADA.

Parties have also touted absentee voting as an alternative system for people with disabilities. But absentee voting is not enough. Because they must vote in advance, absentee voters cannot take advantage of late-breaking news and debates. Moreover, absent accommodations, voters with disabilities can face difficulties with the ballot itself. For example, blind people or people with dexterity issues may find it challenging or impossible to complete and mail a paper ballot. Some voters will make errors that would otherwise be caught and corrected by election officials and voting booth technology.

Shifting people with disabilities into an alternative system also perpetuates stigma. Voters with disabilities want to vote in the same manner as their fellow citizens. People with disabilities watch their friends, neighbors, and family members go off to caucus while they remain at home. They know it is purely because of their disability that they are left behind. Some of the accommodations required for accessible caucusing are quite simple. We could offer sign language translation, handicapped parking spots, and comfortable seating. We might allow people with disabilities to skip long lines into the caucus site. We could make all caucus sites public so that they are already required to fulfill ADA requirements such as providing curb cuts for wheelchair users. If we cannot accommodate everyone, it may instead be time to ask whether the benefits of this system are worth the costs to inclusive participation, or whether caucuses should be abandoned altogether.

B. Voter Fraud

Voter fraud was one of the animating elements for the Supreme Court in upholding the strict Indiana voter identification rules in *Crawford*. Despite allegations of widespread voter fraud, studies have not found it to be a widespread phenomenon. One study found thirty-one cases of voter fraud out of over one billion ballots cast between 2000 and 2014.

Where voter fraud potentially occurs, though, it is in arenas where people with disabilities predominate, such as with absentee voting in long-term care facilities. Long-term care facilities (LTCs) are of particular concern in addressing the problems of voters with disabilities. Over one million people live in nursing homes; this number does not include the people who live in other institutions such as assisted living facilities, retirement communities, and rest homes.

Despite the decided absence of widespread voter fraud, allegations of fraud have occurred with elderly or disabled residents. Political groups may employ “granny farming,” where people with disabilities and the elderly are signed up to vote with pre-marked ballots without their consent. People in LTCs may suffer from voter fraud due to interference by third parties. In LTCs, gatekeeping by administrators can be ad hoc and inconsistent. A minority of states include in their absentee balloting procedures specific provisions for nursing home residents. One study suggests, however, that many facilities are not aware that they could request voting assistance by election officials for their residents. The residents, though, want to vote like their fellow citizens outside institutional walls. Activating their electoral power may spur politicians to pay more attention to these LTC residents, who are comparatively neglected.

C. Voter ID

The League of Women Voters estimates that approximately ten percent of voters with disabilities do not have photo ID. Six million people over the age of sixty-five lack a photo ID. While people with disabilities often have Social Security or Medicaid cards, these pieces of identification do not fulfill the new laws. Rural voters, which are disproportionately people with disabilities, face difficulties obtaining voter identification from often remote government offices. Poor people, who are also disproportionately people with disabilities, are less likely to have identification. Residency requirements also affect people with disabilities, especially the homeless population, which is disproportionately a disabled population. If people with disabilities live with caretakers, it may be difficult for them to have documentation with their name and address. Taking advantage of disability exemptions for identification requires knowledge by either the person with a disability or a state employee, both of which may lack the requisite information. People with disabilities may not be able to drive to a driver’s license facility or public transportation may be absent or inaccessible.

D. Long Lines

President Obama famously decried long lines for voting during his victory speech after the election, “I want to thank every American who participated in this election, whether you voted for the very first

time or waited in line for a very long time. . . . [W]e have to fix that." Long lines are the culmination of a lack of resources allocated to particular voting sites, such as poll workers and voting machines. More than five million voters waited more than an hour to vote in 2012. An estimated 500,000 to 700,000 votes were lost due to long lines in 2012.

While the press and scholars have discussed long lines, they usually focus on race, where people highlight that people of color disproportionately face long lines to vote. Disability is also implicated in long lines, however. Long lines are clustered at the polling places where people with disability also predominate. As people with disabilities often require more time at the polling place itself because of the need for accommodations, long lines add to the "time tax" for voting that disproportionately falls upon people with disabilities. Long lines at the polling place are not just an inconvenience, they may make voting an impossibility for some people with impairments such as physical frailty, or old age. People with PTSD or TBI may find it intolerable to wait in long lines, which may hurt disabled veterans disproportionately. Moreover, many of these impairments are invisible to poorly trained workers, who may not identify the voters in long lines in need of assistance. Because of poor training, poll workers may not know what accommodations they can employ to help people with disabilities. Voters with disabilities may not know to ask for these accommodations either, if there is no signage at the polling place. Long lines make voters less confident in the voting process and that their votes will count.

E. Absentee Ballots

People with disabilities are more likely than those without to vote absentee. Forty percent of voters with disabilities use absentee ballots. The use of absentee ballots in general is on the increase. For example, half of all ballots in California now are absentee, up from 2.6% in 1962. Oregon, Washington, and Colorado use an all-mail system for all voters. States vary in their procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot, from twenty-one states requiring an excuse to twenty having a no-excuse system to seven states with a permanent no-excuse system and two states having mail-only voting. Requiring an excuse may lead to lower turnout among voters with disabilities.

Voting by mail is not a panacea, however, for the problems that voters with disabilities face. Jessica Fay has compiled examples of absentee ballot manipulation. They include: an elderly woman reporting that a man completed her ballot without her consent or participation, telling her "you're voting Democratic"; a man marked the ballots of people with physical disabilities contrary to their wishes; another man punched the ballots of thirty-five seniors at a nursing home. Joan O'Sullivan notes that Chicago has been subject to multiple accusations of voter fraud in nursing homes, where precinct captains were accused of "assisting" nursing residents to fill out absentee ballots.

States may have procedures that make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to vote absentee. Maryland, for instance, was found to violate the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act because voters were expected to mark a hardcopy ballot by hand without assistance. Maryland did have an online ballot-marking tool that was more accessible, but only made it available to overseas and military absentee voters. People with disabilities can also have difficulty with non-accessible pre-voting procedures, even if the ballot itself is accessible. For example, in Ohio, voters must complete an absentee ballot application in writing. Texas may disenfranchise people with disabilities because it limits the number of times a person can witness an application for a ballot if the voter cannot sign his or her ballot because of reason of disability.

Voters in LTCs may face difficulties because they may have moved out of their previous electoral district upon moving to the LTC, thus, they need to register again. It can be difficult for people with disabilities to exercise the practice of a secret and independent vote while voting absentee, as their accommodation is probably a third party, rather than technology. Third parties can act as informal gatekeepers, pressure residents to vote a particular way, or perpetrate fraud. Additionally, they could steal the vote of a resident without her knowledge. Voters with disabilities can face difficulties with the ballot itself if there are no accommodations, such as with filling it out or sending it in. Absentee voters cannot take advantage of late breaking news or information about the election. Additionally, they cannot

participate in the widespread civic ritual of voting in public. Finally, voters may make a mistake in voting that would remain unremedied in the absence of election official assistance or technology developed to notice mistakes.

F. Voting by the Military and Veterans

Veterans are part of this story as well. While there are robust protections in place to protect the right to vote for active duty service members who must vote absentee, these disappear once service members are discharged and become part of the general population. An estimated 2.9 million Americans are veterans with disabilities. Over 180,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans collect disability benefits. Psychological injuries include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injury that can increase the cognitive challenges of voting. It may be difficult for these voters to keep track of a complicated voting process, concentrate, or learn how to use novel voting technology. Compounding these difficulties is the fact that their injuries are not always visible, thus making it more challenging for poll workers. Physical injuries such as spinal cord injuries and amputations can impair mobility and dexterity. Difficulties that veterans face include the fact that their impairments are fairly recent, so they are not used to using assistive technologies. Also, they often are receiving medical care away from their residences and thus have to vote absentee.

G. Voting Technology

The main purpose of HAVA was to update the election technology for voting, from paper ballots to an electronic system. HAVA requires at least one accessible voting machine in each polling place. The demands on accessible voting technology are numerous and encompass a variety of disabilities, from people who have trouble with dexterity and hand-eye coordination, to people who are blind, to elderly voters who have trouble with new electronic technology. Additionally, there is tension between those who emphasize accessibility to all potential voters versus those who prioritize technological security. The accessibility camp would prefer that people use their own technology to access voting, as this would be the most comfortable scenario for the voter and it would encompass various types of disabilities. On the other hand, a system without centralized control would introduce a number of technological headaches, such as the possible introduction of computer vulnerabilities. While disability advocates have praised the possibility of voting technology to become more accessible than paper and allow a secret and independent vote for the first time for some voters, people also criticize current technology for its unwieldiness and lack of user-friendliness. Often people with disabilities are left out of the testing process so they cannot weigh in on the accessibility features that would best suit the disability community. Right now, there is no silver bullet machine that is wholly accessible, comfortable for both voters and poll workers, and technologically secure. In the 2012 election, the National Council on Disability found that forty-five percent of the barriers within the polling place were due to voting machines.

While HAVA addresses user interface with respect to voters, less attention has been paid to interface issues with respect to poll workers. As voting becomes more and more complicated, training issues for poll workers on new technology may become a bottleneck in the system that could lead to fewer workers, long lines, and difficulties in assisting voters with accessibility issues. Additionally, poll workers may segregate the one HAVA-mandated accessible machine in a corner or may not turn it on until requested by a voter; these actions may suggest to the voter that her needs as a voter are not important and stigmatize her in comparison to other voters.

Policy Solutions

While scholars and advocates have produced voluminous amounts of data about voting compiled by states and localities, very little of it addresses voters with disabilities. Innovations by states and localities, though, provide opportunities and new directions for developing best practices for voting. We can sift through the evidence that we do have to see what best practices are so that we improve in the future.

I obtained information from the Secretary of State's election website for each respective state on the following issues: voter identification, the possibility of permanent absentee voter status, curbside assistance availability, line jumping for elderly or disabled voters, provisions for voting while in a LTC, and if a voters with disabilities section was listed on the main voting webpage. I also noted any miscellaneous provisions, such as whether there was a brochure for voters with disabilities. I then called each Secretary of State's election assistance line to fill in the information unavailable on the website.

The goal of this search is twofold: first, to compile and compare services across states; second, to assess how difficult it is for the typical voter with a disability to access pertinent information on voting. While states vary wildly in the types of provisions they offer to their citizens, on the whole, finding this information in a typical state proved a daunting proposition. Exemplar state websites include Connecticut, California, and Oregon. Eight states do not have any information for voters with disabilities anywhere on their website. An additional eight states make you hunt for the information they do provide, as it is not listed on the main voting webpage or on the directory under "voters" on the main page. Most state election divisions cheerfully answered questions over the phone about their accessibility provisions, which is a hopeful indicator for a typical voter who calls for information. Iowa officials not only responded to questions over the phone, but also sent additional information via email. By contrast, Michigan does not provide a mechanism to call the Elections Division for their Secretary of State. Only one state, Florida, refused to answer questions, instead referring to their website and statutory authority.

The most daunting barrier to obtaining information was the locally driven aspect of voting. When speaking to election officials, they deferred most questions to the county level. This makes it even harder to plan in advance on accessibility measures for the typical voter with a disability and difficult for disability advocates to strategize across county lines. States should instead mandate policies that cover all of their citizens, rather than a privileged few.

Furthermore, polling place accessibility and identification requirements may push voters with disabilities towards absentee voting whether they want to or not. Not every state guarantees that their polling place is accessible or has an easy or convenient way to figure out in advance if a particular polling place fits the needs of a particular voter. Moreover, the bypass for identification requirements is to encourage people to vote absentee instead. As a minority of states provide permanent absentee status, people with disabilities may face filling out possibly non-accessible paperwork to vote in isolation from their peers year after year.

Exemplar states include California, which created requirements for physical accessibility. Missouri mails out voter information to people who have registered with the Department of Revenue as drivers with disabilities. States that directly involve disability advocacy groups in creating and testing voting procedures and technology include New York, Virginia, California, Rhode Island, Arizona, Connecticut, Kansas, and Ohio.

Potential remedies to voting barriers include accessible public buildings, leasing private accessible spaces, curbside voting, or absentee voting. In 2001, 67% of the time, the solution for inaccessible polling places was curbside voting. This went down to 45% in 2008. Twenty states still allow curbside voting by state policy; at this point, it may be offered as a courtesy for voters who have difficulty entering the polling place rather than a substitute for an inaccessible polling place.

Allowing possibilities for filing absentee ballot applications via the telephone, fax, or the internet allows more options for people with disabilities, among others. Expanding permanent absentee voter status so that people with disabilities do not have to constantly refile is another solution. Seventeen states allow permanent absentee voting status for people with disabilities, which eases the application and registration process for these voters.

A better solution shifts the burden of casting the ballot from the individual voter onto state and local authorities by bringing the polling place to the voter via mobile polling. That would follow the lead of the twenty-three states that have absentee voter procedures for people who live in institutions. New York, for example, triggers mobile polling if twenty-five or more applications originate from the same location. Puerto Rico and Vermont also have mobile polling programs. Oregon uses tablets and portable printers for supervised voting in LTCs. Lowering the number of votes required for triggering mobile polling, or not

requiring a trigger number at all, will facilitate more voting in LTCs. Some states, such as Illinois and Minnesota, ensure that balloting in LTCs is done by election judges drawn from different political parties, instead of the third parties that might invite fraud. LTCs could facilitate voter registration upon admission for new residents so that they are eligible to vote in their new residence in a timely fashion. Also, states can require local election boards to initiate the voting process with LTCs rather than relying upon LTC residents who may not be aware that they are able to vote absentee or in their residence.

President Obama formed a Presidential Commission on Election Administration that addressed among other things, long lines, and recommended that voters wait no more than a half hour to vote. The National Council on Disability also recommends that voters with disabilities could sit within the polling place if there is a long line, in an attempt to ease their physical strain. Eleven states mandate state-level policies that allow voters with disabilities to skip to the front of the line.

Election officials can collaborate with VA facilities to offer assistance, training, and information. They should be cognizant of the fact that VA institutions have injured veterans from an array of localities, and all need help with absentee ballot preparation. The Department of Veterans Affairs can take affirmative steps to aid veteran registration, voting, and outreach. They can allow registration drives within veterans' facilities under the NVRA and increase voting opportunities for veterans residing in veterans' facilities. California is an example of successful coordination with disabled veterans. Their efforts include adding a voter registration brochure to the welcome package that all veterans who return from a tour of duty receive and providing voter registration forms to Veterans Homes residents. Half of states work directly with VA facilities for voter education or provide election materials and assistance. Indiana works with the U.S. Army's Warrior Transition Units to give information about voting to disabled service members who are transitioning to civilian life. The Paralyzed Veterans of America provides voter assistance for disabled veterans through its offices.

Projects are underway to create more accessible and secure voting machines for all voters. Notable ones include the Prime III project at Clemson and the RAV project.[Los Angeles County has developed its own voting system that began at its foundations with input from voters. Arizona, Alaska, Oregon, and Colorado are leaders in providing electronic balloting and online voting. Additionally, because of the large number of absentee voters, the military has developed technological advances that allow military voters to vote via the internet.

Wisconsin offers a good case study of improvements to the voting process. There are over half a million potential voters with disabilities that live in Wisconsin. The state conducted polling place accessibility audits in nearly every municipality and county in the state. These audits revealed 1,652 findings of high severity, that is, "problems . . . that, in and of itself, would be likely to prevent a voter with a disability from entering a polling place and casting a ballot privately and independently." The average polling place had 4.9 accessibility problems. Most of these problems were within the voting area itself. For example, 105 locations did not have a place where voters using wheelchairs could cast a paper ballot. Other problems included inaccessible entrances, found in fifty-nine percent of the audited locations. These problems have led to solutions that have increased accessibility for people with disabilities overall. For example, a municipality built a new municipal facility as a replacement for its previous inaccessible building.

Absentee voters in LTCs are allowed to bypass voter ID requirements through the use of special voting deputies. Additionally, Wisconsin legislators expanded the number of LTCs served by special voting deputies. Furthermore, voters with disabilities can also receive an exemption from signing poll lists before receiving a ballot. Between 2014 and 2015, the Election Board [Board] conducted a series of training sessions around the state to certify 2,550 election workers; "a significant portion of this training protocol focused on working with and assisting voters with disabilities." The Board worked in collaboration with the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition [WDVC] to develop educational and get-out-the vote materials for voters and groups with disabilities. The WDVC is comprised of representatives from Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities in order to "increase voting turnout and participation in the electoral process among members of Wisconsin's disability community." Additionally, the Board has formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee derived

from advocacy groups to identify and remedy problems with the voting process for voters with disabilities. Through their efforts, Wisconsin has managed to eliminate the participation gap for voters with disabilities.

There are possible roadblocks to implementing solutions for voters with disabilities. Since people with disabilities are a largely untapped electoral bloc, it may be difficult to persuade politicians to turn their attention in their direction. Improvements are also costly. These include one-time costs, such as improving physical access to the polling place and voting machines, and ongoing costs such as training and audits. The most expensive improvements, such as voting machines, though, are covered by HAVA. Moreover, as Wisconsin has concluded, implementing physical changes can improve access to government structures not only at election time, but also in general. Given that new or renewed government structures must be ADA-compliant anyway, these costs may be inevitable.

Conclusion

It is difficult to applaud democratic values when up to one fifth of the electorate has problems voting. This gap is indicative of what we in other arenas have termed “first generation” problems in voting rights – direct restrictions to people’s ability to vote. We expected that these problems were solved with respect to voters of color, with the adoption of the Voting Rights Act, but they are still present if we turn our attention from race to disability. Voters with disabilities not only face harm because they are not able to vote individually, but also because of the blow to their representativeness as a bloc of voters with distinct interests within the political system.

In addition to hurting the system, barriers to voting injure the people who are unable to vote. Potential voters with disabilities want to vote the same way as their fellow citizens – in person at a polling place. Barriers to voting contribute to the low feelings of political efficacy on the part of people with disabilities. Additionally, they send a message that people with disabilities are not wanted as political citizens. This can cause dignitary harm, especially as it is part of a pattern of second-class citizenship. This is particularly injurious as social science research suggests that connections to citizenship and social participation improve health outcomes for people with disabilities. Low political participation continues the system of ableism that has long characterized the second-class citizenship of people with disabilities. Barriers to the political process are longstanding, and historically, people with disabilities faced express prohibitions on the right to vote. Now, what ties together people across various types of impairments is the social stigma they all face as people with disabilities. An absence of people with disabilities at the polling place is a visual reminder that reinforces stigma and reminds people through absence that people with disabilities are not full citizens. Their inclusion in the democratic polity is a foundation for their participation in other arenas of social and civic life and their lack of it is a fundamental marker of their unequal citizenship. Moreover, as people with disabilities may not have the resources to participate in politics in other ways, such as through campaign contributions, it is even more important to emphasize their right to vote for democratic inclusion purposes.

Excluding people with disabilities from the franchise threatens democratic legitimacy and consigns an already disadvantaged population to second-class citizenship. In fact, voters with disabilities also compose a cross-cutting assemblage of people from other disadvantaged groups of concern such as people of color, veterans, poor people, and the elderly. As disability intersects with other categories of identity, election law scholars who care about those other categories must address disability as well.

As the country keys up for a presidential election, a significant part of the electorate is watching and waiting to see if this election aligns with the ethos of full participation in a secret and independent ballot for all voters. While recent history indicates that this ethos has been unfulfilled for people with disabilities, some state evidence shows new possibilities for fixing this problem for the future.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2016 9:47 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Testimony

New Hampshire Constitution, Part First, Article 11: "All elections are to be free, and every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election."

Our Constitution continues by way of a 1984 amendment thereto: Voting registration and polling places shall be easily accessible to all persons including disabled and elderly persons who are otherwise qualified to vote in the choice of any officer or officers to be elected or upon any question submitted at such election. [Emphasis mine.]

NH RSA654:1: "Every inhabitant of the state, having a single established domicile for voting purposes, being a citizen of the United States, of the age provided for in Article 11 of Part First of the Constitution of New Hampshire, shall have a right at any meeting or election to vote in the town, ward, or unincorporated place in which he or she is domiciled. [Emphasis mine.]

The right to vote in New Hampshire is clear: Every person otherwise eligible to vote shall have that right.

Voting in New Hampshire is a fundamental right, as established by the founders of our Constitution. By way of the 1984 amendment, that fundamental right was clarified to include the voting rights of the disabled. When the language in RSA 654:1 says "[E]very inhabitant of the state," it cannot be interpreted to mean the right of the disabled to a secret ballot does not apply to them.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Perry
Strafford, N.H.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Cc: CCrawford@RCN.com; 'Sue Crawford'; 'Sylvia Rosenthal'
Subject: Testimony

Memorandum

To: Election Assistance Commission
From: Charles Crawford
Date: April 27, 2016.
Re: Testimony concerning my experiences with voting as a person with a Disability.

Please allow me to thank the members of the Commission for soliciting and considering the testimony of persons with Disabilities in our attempts to exercise our enfranchisement of voting. I am a blind person, with a good degree of experience as an administrator within State and Federal Government along with a long standing membership in the consumer advocacy community.

I have voted in three elections or election primaries. In two of those events, I used the machine made in Ohio which since has been discontinued in the State of Maryland due to the lack of security of the machine as I understand it. In the most recent election, I used the ES&S voting machine and was very impressed with its ease of use and efficiency. I was able to totally operate the machine independently, listen to my choices, make those choices, and physically have my ballot scanned, printed, and submitted along with the votes of all the other people at the polling place.

My concerns are that elections judges should be better trained so as to not innocently interfere with the voting process of the disabled voter. In my case, the official continued speaking to me as I was trying to hear what was coming over the earphones and I did not know how to increase the volume until another elections official showed me where I could do that. My only other concerns come from my wife who is also blind and used the machine after I did. She noticed that there appeared to be no way to under vote should she have wanted to do that. The machine would tell her that she had under voted and to select the X number of votes that were supposed to be made in that election which I thing was for school board. Lastly, she discovered that the screen of the voting machine was on and everyone could see how she was voting and thus compromising her right to a secret ballot.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify and I whole heartedly endorse the accessible voting systems we have created in the past few years to afford people with disabilities with the right to independently vote in secret.

Mr. Charles Crawford



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
60B WESTON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06120-1551

Testimony for Public Hearing on Accessible Voting
Before the Elections Assistance Commission

By Gretchen Knauff
Assistant Director
April 27, 2016

Chairman Thomas Hicks, Vice Chair Matthew Masterson, and Commissioner Christy McCormick.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the experience of voters with disabilities in Connecticut and systemic issues that continue to create barriers for these voters.

Since 2000, the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, the protection and advocacy system for Connecticut, has sponsored a project called "Every1Counts" that focuses on educating voters with disabilities about their rights and advocated for both individuals and on a systemic basis when those rights are violated. The project also provides technical assistance and training to the Registrars of Voters and other election officials to ensure that voters with physical, visual, and communication disabilities encounter a positive voting experience at the polls. Over the past sixteen years, the Every1Counts staff have developed relationships with the Office of the Secretary of the State and the Registrars of Voters that have improved the experience of voters with disabilities. But much work remains to be done. The following are examples of issues voters with disabilities still encounter in Connecticut.

"Accessible" Voting System and the Current Process to Replace it

Since 2006, the State of Connecticut has used the Inspire Voting System (IVS) to meet its accessibility obligations under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The State also offers an optical scan system where the voter completes a paper ballot. When an optical scan ballot is completed, it is

placed into a tabulator that counts it. The IVS system generates a completed paper ballot after the voter has completed making his or her selections. This ballot, however, is a digital ballot and cannot be counted by the tabulator. It must be placed in an auxiliary bin in the side of the ballot box and is counted later. The unique nature of the IVS ballot, coupled with the relatively low number of people who use it, leads to violations of privacy. In short, the IVS allows people who are not able to fill out a paper ballot to indicate their voting choices independently and privately, but it does not allow them to cast their ballot privately and independently, violating the rights of voters with disabilities under the Connecticut Voter's Bill of Rights, the Connecticut Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act and, during federal elections, the Help America Vote Act. This system was in use during the April 26, 2016 Connecticut primaries. .

During the past several years, Every1Counts staff have heard complaints from many voters about voting on the IVS machine, many of them expressing the same barriers to voting. These complaints include election officials complaining about the cumbersome operation of the IVS system. Voters with disabilities cite a lack of privacy and independence when using the IVS system, the IVS is not set up when the polls open and the IVS system is not working but election officials report that the system worked the day before the election or primary. Voters also refuse to use the system because of the length of time to complete a ballot and the lack of poll worker knowledge about the IVS system. Poll workers often discouraged voters with and without disabilities from using the system. Just as I finished writing this testimony, I received an email from a colleague who had just experienced one of these issues at her polling place.

"Just thought you probably would want to know that once again, I tried to vote with the telephone at the Fair Oaks polling site in Montville and was unsuccessful.

The number the official called was "not available at this time". Another official dialed the number with the same result. They told me the phone had been tested the night before and it worked at that time. But they had not tested it this morning."
(April 26, 2016)

The Office of the Secretary of the State (SOTS) is currently in the process of accepting proposals for new "accessible" voting technology. Every1Counts staff contacted the SOTS Elections Division to inquire about selection of the machine. Specifically, SOTS was asked if people with various disabilities would be given an opportunity to provide input about the machines meeting

the technical requirements of the "Invitation to Bid" and if that input would be considered in the selection process. The Election Division response was that they are required to accept the lowest bid of the machines meeting all the requirements of the Invitation to Bid. People with disabilities were not and will not be consulted in the choice of the new accessible voting equipment. The least expensive choice may not be the best choice for providing accessibility to the voting process for people with disabilities.

Election Day Registration

In 2012, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 12-56, (now codified as Connecticut General Statute § 9-19j), An Act Concerning Voting Rights, which establishes and outlines a process for Election Day Registration (EDR). The legislation requires each municipality to set up a "location" for Election Day Registration that is different from the regular polling places.

Individuals, who are not already registered to vote on Election Day, can go to the location in the municipality and register to vote. The person, once registered, will then vote in this location using a paper based voting system similar to an absentee ballot. The legislation intentionally calls these places "locations" in order to avoid being required to use the IVS Vote by Phone system that was chosen by Connecticut as its voting system that is accessible to persons with disabilities, thus disenfranchising voters with disabilities. On page 2 of an SOTS memo providing guidance on EDR processes, there is language stating that since the Election Day Registration location is not a polling place, it does not need to contain the IVS Vote by Phone system. Because of these instructions, Registrars of Voters have not provided an IVS Vote by Phone system at their EDR location. During the 2014 November Election, only 2 of 53 municipality EDR locations (169 total municipalities) visited had the accessible phone system available for voters.

In addition to a potentially inaccessible voting experience, a voter with disabilities may also experience an inaccessible EDR location. Registrars of Voters and other election officials in Connecticut were not instructed anywhere in the implementation memo that the Election Day Registration locations needed to be accessible to potential voters with disabilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ironically, Public Act 12-56, which was intended to encourage participation in the voting process, disregards and disenfranchises voters with disabilities in Connecticut.

Inaccessible Polling Places

Every November and at some primaries, Every1Counts staff and volunteers evaluate polling places in various regions of the state, visiting as many as possible. For the most part, the larger elements of accessibility have been

addressed but not always. Again, as I write this testimony, I received a call from Jim Quick, a voter who uses a wheelchair.

He can't get into the polling place because there is a step up. He reported that he observed a woman in a wheelchair being carried up the step and sent a picture of another voter sitting in the rain filling out his ballot while two election officials look on. There was no signage and there was no polling official assigned to stay at the door. Jim refused to vote because he did not want to get soaking wet and refused to be carried up the step. He reported that he always votes and despite returning to the polling place later in the day, he still could not vote. He was very upset that his right to vote had been denied by inaccessibility.

Other physical accessibility issues that were reported during recent elections include; ramps that did not meet structural accessibility codes; door pressure was too heavy on many doors or the doors closed too quickly; path of travel was compromised by large cracks in pavement, grates with large openings, and large objects impeding the path. Parking was often non-compliant and internally, there were no lower booths for filling out ballots while seated. During a past election, Melissa reported:

I had an experience in West Harford where they did not know how to lower the booth and asked me if I could "just have my husband go in with me," They figured out how to lower it after when I was about to call the Secretary of the State's Office."

Connecticut has made progress in providing accessibility to voters with disabilities but there is much more that needs to be done. Registrars of Voters and voters with disabilities need to continue to be educated to ensure that barriers to physical access and to the voting process are not created. No citizen should be denied the right to vote because of disability.

Thank you.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2016 11:05 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov; listen@ndrn.org

Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

I reside in the 8th Congressional District and my voting location is Fallsmeade Elementary School in Rockville, MD, where I voted yesterday.

Per the Maryland Disability Law Center, every polling location was supposed to have had an accessible ballot marking device that anyone could ask to use instead of a paper ballot. However, there was no signage at my voting location to indicate that this option was available for people who did not visit your page.

My father, who also voted at the Fallsmeade Elementary location, has a tremor in his right hand, which made it difficult for him to fill in the paper ballot, and he had to request a second ballot. I also have a son with Down Syndrome, who has low muscle tone and when he is old enough to vote, I know that it will be challenging for him to complete paper ballots should they still be utilized at that time. I know that many other individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities will have challenges filling in the circles used on these ballots.

I understand that some questioned the security of the touch screen voting system, which resulted in the passage of legislation to move back to paper ballots. However, there is no evidence to support this assertion and the paper system is not only antiquated but discriminates against individuals with disabilities.

I hope that your receipt of my email and others like it will prompt reconsideration of the use of paper ballots.

Sincerely,

Chiara Jaffe

May, 10th,2016 (sent in PDF's non image and HTML formats,only) PDF page 1 of 3

Commissioners

Thomas Hicks, Commissioner and Chair ;

Matthew Masterson, Commissioner ;

Christy A. McCormick, Commissioner

United States Election Assistance Commission(USEAC)

1335 East West Highway, Suite 4300 ; Silver Spring, MD 20910; E-mail: Listen@eac.gov

Bryan Whitener, Director of Communications & Clearinghouse

U.S. Election Assistance Commission; 1335 East West Highway, Suite 4300 ;Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone Number(s):301-563-3961 (Direct);202-290-8624 (cell);866- 747-1471 (Toll Free);E-mail:BWhitener@eac.gov ;

Re: HellerTestimony;RelatedRamseyCountyFollow-upComplaint&OSS-MnEACTestimony4-26-2016

Dear Chairman Hicks and Commissioners and Mr. Whitener and other interested party(ies).

Recognitions and my approval for taking testimony extended time from your public hearing on accessible voting. I did attend your April 27th, 2016 meeting.However, was not able to speak.Please accept this Electronic submissions or letter as testimony on your subject.

There are certain persons with variabilities,or whom voting is not yet fully accessible. I refer to sighted persons who are, for whatever reason, unable to understand English proficiency. There are two(2) types of Adults who are Pre and non-traditional readers.This is part of the Print disability groups [The Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008 records Blind and Print disabled.As well mentions Universal Design for learning UDL];Where,America Printing House of the Blind (APB;Also know in education system as NIMAC Federal mandate.Direct links provide below) reference Four Sub-groups],have partial accessibility to the ballot with current equipment, yet there are spaces in current technology that make it more challenging for them to understand the ballot and cast a meaningful vote. Also will include suggestion regarding the Function feasibility or practicability of AEC web site. Introductory with four(4) spaces. One(1) of Five(5) to make clarification. They are as follows

1) First. Sound programs are designed to communicate effectively the written words on ballots are already in place on assistive voting technology. Electronic and Universal design tools allow improved equal access, Level playing field. Now technology is use by most everyone. Not just functionally instructions, yet also independent affective and effectual, engagement. Understand the ballot and cast a meaningful vote is, essential goal (private vs independent). Its useful next operation of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG)or similar regulations, need to require third party vendors machines read all ballot language instead of accepting an Sound program that spells out any word.

2) Second or likewise, sound or read out loud programs are not currently mandatory to read punctuation marks on the ballot. If all data on voting ballot(Not limited to referendums) is not fully searchable (Again, including all grammar. Such, let not limited to, quotation and question marks, commas and symbols are not read out loud with a screen reader) it really transparent. Google mnrick@mninter.net([direct](#) link to handout and stream video, is available below) Once more, needs to be addressed in the VVSG process.

3) Third. Please also note that differently disabled persons(including yet not limited to Title 3;pre-reader at APB do have different preferences related to language barriers, a natural process, that continues to be expressed by Nine U.S. Senators Urge Obama Administration to Issue Title III Website Regulations ASAP (link is provided below)

4) Fourth. Print disabled and blind demand to be provide all voting equipment That allow the use of external keyboards, for is a suitable tool and skill for persons in this gathering of voters. They are acquainted with using keyboards to translate written text into audio through their use of screen readers improve required keyboarding skills on computers at work. This include some who wrote or spoke suggestions to United States Election Assistance Commission in the months of April and May of 2016.

5) Finally, reset or clarify your suggested Third grade reading level voting ballot(Not limited to referendums). Content on voting ballot (Not limited to referendums) are now set By local or states at what text difficulty? It my understanding, Nationally, Lexile reading metric, has now be adopted through the Education, Common Core language Arts Standards. As well, Leaders have move instructional reading level up by three(3) grade levels. Lexile is a utilize tool on state requires assessments. National Assessment of Educational Progress Leaders report, Lexile works best on informational text. Likly ties with two(2) Plain language Presidents Executive Orders of 1991. And Plain writing Act of 2010, too. Links are porvided below.

Since electronic message can be miss placed or lost, or attachment(s) place message in spam mail. Have use computer software to Place a High Priority(HP) and Request Read Receipt(RRR) on this message. Also, copied self . For Fuctional, security and ease and use reasons a PDF has been include as this HTML, Named:AccessPressFollow-up05--05-2016.pdf [Again attached PDF named: [HellerTestimony;RelatedRamseyCountyFollow-upComplaint&OSS-MnEACTestimony4-26-2016](#)

Thank you all for your time, consideration, hard work to improve how Public will, Acquire, Engage, and Enjoy, same independent Voting services, with ease of use.

RiCK ,4all 2e/Pd variable learners.; Phone number(s); 651.728.1317; Voice mail; 651.488.2735 ;

Cc:E-mail: mnriCk@mninter.net;

Attachment(s): This document named:

[HellerTestimony;RelatedRamseyCountyFollow-upComplaint&OSS-MnEACTestimony4-26-2016.pdf](#)

[4-14-15 letter.pdf](#) [Electronic letter from Ramsey County; Minnesota; sent to USEAC or Listen@eac.gov

Reference ---- Original HTML or E-mail Message ----

From: Black, Bert (OSS)

To: BryanWhitener

Cc: Patrick R. Leahy : mnrick@mninter.net

Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 5:46 PM

Subject: RE: Testimony and Mr. Heller

Suggestion regarding the Function feasibility or practicability of AEC web site. They are as follows:

Time bound. Do not confirm collection Public imput with authorizationwhen electronic response are requested.

One way communication(Access bound;no Public cross talk or bog related structure system created)

Not posting of transcript along side of AEC posted streaming video (s);Current do not have closecaptioning.

Assure all online posting are not in image formats(inform public when submitting when inculde hand images)

Not posting web accessibility policy(508 reset by Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0;Proposed Accessibility Standards for Federal Government Websites Highlights Double Standard Justice Department Seeks to Impose on Public Accommodations ; [Link: <http://www.adatitleiii.com/2016/03/tracking-the-trends-website-accessibility-lawsuits-by-the-numbers/>]

Nine U.S. Senators Urge Obama Administration to Issue Title III Website Regulations ASAP;
[Link:<http://www.adatitleiii.com/2016/01/nine-u-s-senators-urge-obama-administration-to-issue-title-iii-website-regulations-asap/>]

America Printing House of the Blind (APB) Links(Warning first link (pdf) may not be full accessable+load ;
www.afb.org/media/pdfs/afb_annual_report_2015.pdf ;www.aph.org/federal-quota/distribution-2014/

Google mnrick@mninter.net(direct link to handout and stream video);*Legislative Commission on Data Practices Meeting Schedule...Thursday, March 3, 2016 ;1:00 PM - 2:30 PM; ...Heller handouts...[URL:<http://www.lcc.leg.mn/lcdp/meetings/03032016/Heller%20Handouts.pdf>] end quote.*

PDF Named:HellerTestimony;RelatedRamseyCountyFollow-upComplaint&OSS-MnEACTestimony4-26-2016 PDF page 2 of 3

If interested Streaming video first 7 minutes...Direct Links or URL's:www.lcc.leg.mn/lcdp/audio/20160303.MP3

Referring URL posting prior links (Legislative Commission on Data Practices Meeting Schedule):
<http://www.lcc.leg.mn/lcdp/meetings.html>

Links to(Plain language Presidents Executive Orders of 1991. And Plain writing Act of 2010..PDF files require the free Adobe Reader.[<http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/exit.html?link=http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>]
www.archives.gov/open/plain-writing/

PDF Named:HellerTestimony;RelatedRamseyCountyFollow-upComplaint&OSS-MnEACTestimony4-26-2016 PDF page 3 of 3

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

RMayyr

-----Original Message-----

From: Robin [mailto:rgmayr@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Robin Mayyr. I am a legally blind resident of Suffolk County New York. I am a retired social worker now acting as an advocate for individuals and families living with disabilities. I sit on various town and county boards as well as other private committees acting in the interest of individuals with disabilities.

My reason for offering this testimony concerns wide spread unequal access in the voting process among individuals with disabilities and the aged.

At this time, I am not aware of any individuals within the disabilities community, who are having difficulty or who may feel disenfranchised with regard to their ability to register to vote.

> My focus concerns unequal access to the voting process using absentee ballots.

I am aware that all voting polls in New York State are required to provide accessible balance marking devices for use by individuals with disabilities. However, for those individuals with disabilities who, for what ever reason, prefer not to use the special Ballot marking devices at the polls, or who do not have the means to physically get to the polls, and alternative accessible option for voting must be available. Many individuals, including myself, who may be in this situation, prefer to vote via absentee ballot. Unfortunately, in New York State, the absentee ballot is not accessible to individuals with visual/print disabilities. That is, the print on these ballots is not readable.

I have reached out to my local Board Of Elections and other organizations, including the boards on which I serve, to no avail. It appears that no one is interested in upholding the rights of individuals with disability to vote. It doesn't matter if people with disabilities can register to vote if in fact, once they are registered they cannot vote.

I am aware of the lawsuit against the state of Maryland for inaccessible voting rights for individuals with disabilities. Maryland now provides an online procedure for marking a ballot, which can then be printed and mailed to the appropriate election board for processing.

We are living in the age of mandated excess ability, not only for websites, but for that most basic inalienable right, to vote.

My County Board of elections try to convince me that the reason they could not provide an accessible absentee ballot is because, the page would be too big and/or, they couldn't provide a ballot that was more than one page. That is plainly hogwash. If the powers that be could make it work in Maryland, they can certainly make it work in New York. We have to stop complaining that there's not enough money, or we just don't know how to do it, or we just don't have the time. The fact is, our government doesn't have the inclination and the rights of individuals with disabilities are being left by the wayside. It's wrong, it's unfair, it's on just. I will not stand for it and neither will the people with whom I work in the people for whom I serve diligently. People with disabilities are trying to perform their duty to vote. We cannot complain that things aren't right unless we make the effort to vote. It

RMayyr

empowers us, and it empowers our nation. If we are not given that ability, and we are not considered citizens, and we are at the very least second-best. That is not an option.

Please feel free to contact me, so I would like to be of further assistance.

Respectfully,
Robin Mayyr

Robin Mayr
73 Kurt Ln.
Hauppauge, NY 11788
Phone: 631-439-1395
*Mobile: 631-987-6811
Email: rgmayr@gmail.com

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Experience

Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2016 7:52 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting Experience

Hello EAC members and other concerned individuals.

My name is Joy Relton. I am totally blind and have been since I was about five. I am writing to share my voting experiences. I have voted in every election since I was 18 years old. As a blind person this has meant using a variety of processes and equipment. Initially, it meant everything from having my mother show me the various holes in which to put the stylus to cast my vote. When I moved across country away from my family and went to the polls on my own, I once had a representative from each of the parties go into the voting booth with me and show me the levers and observe my voting to avoid any challenges of bias. Then, of course as voting machines advanced, I attempted to vote using the touch screens in Fairfax county. This was a disaster for me. There was no tactile indication where to press. I had no indication whether my choice had been selected and it all ran so slow that even the volunteers at the pole couldn't ensure me that it had actually accepted my votes. So after having spent considerable time attempting to use a system which didn't give me feedback and wouldn't let me review my votes, I ended up having to have someone fill out a provisional ballot for me. Last year I voted completely independently for the first time in my then 58 years of life. Fairfax county Virginia has purchased the Express Vote Universal Voting Machines. The volunteers at the polling place where I vote were very excited to show it to me because they had been frustrated with my experience in past years. The volunteer brought the braille instruction sheet. She knew where to find the card in the cubby adjacent to the voting machine, to plug in the headset, to start the process and to explain what I need to do with the ballot when I was done. It was very exciting for me and for several of the volunteers who have gotten to know me over the years. The simple attached keypad has clearly indicated function keys, the instructions when you start up the computer are very clear and simple. Each time you do something you can verify what each key does and confirm that you have done what you intended to do. The keyboard with both bright tactile symbols and with braille is very easy to work with. Also, before I cast my vote I was able to read (listen to) my option to go over each vote and confirm or to pass over that item unchanged and go where I wanted to go. After each action I was asked for confirmation of my vote. Even the ballot, with its cut-off corner made it possible for me to vote independently for the very first time. Putting my ballot into the printer totally independently made me feel like a fully participating independent citizen for the first time in my life. This year, there were some new volunteers in my polling place and they were not as well trained or aware. For example, the individual didn't know where to look for the ballot in the cubbyhole. She didn't offer me the braille instructions, didn't know about the ear phones, or that she needed to click on the screen to start the process. I had to wait for quite a while she confirmed these things with another person who was in charge. For me, the wait was only slightly annoying. Mostly because I thought the individual should have been better aware of the process. Most important to me, was that I was able to vote independently for the second time in my life this spring and look forward to repeating this process in the fall.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Relton

Blind citizen of Fairfax County Virginia

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting in the Primary as a DeafBlind Woman

Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2016 3:56 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Voting in the Primary as a DeafBlind Woman

Because of my combined hearing and vision loss, I had found it frustrating and about impossible to vote confidently with the accessible voting machines in the previous elections.

When the NFB had helped developed the online Ballot Marking Tool for the Absentee Ballot, I found a way to privately and independently cast my ballot using the assistive technology that best matches my disability without the hassle of finding transportation, communicating with Polling staff that never seemed to correctly code the key card for nonvisual access nor seemed to have adequately tested the computer before hand to see if it would properly work.

All this struggle and frustration did not occur when I cast my vote in the primary. I have no technical difficulties with computer or printer.

I took my time and did not have to worry about my dad waiting while I plod along at the accessible machine at the voting site. I am so happy that the MD state Board of Elections offers the an Accessible Absentee ballot for the disabled for individual that could not otherwise vote for their choices with success.

Janice

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Accessibility

Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2016 10:22 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Cc: Lou Ann Blake

Subject: Voting Accessibility

To whom it may concern

The Puerto Rico State Electoral Commission (PRSEB) (Comisión Estatal de Elecciones) will this year have electronic ballot counting machines which as far as we know are not accessible by blind people or other persons with disabilities. On October 29, 2015, and at subsequent meetings of the HAVA Committee (November 18, 2015, February 4, 2016, March 21, 2016, and April 6, 2016), and at a meeting on March 9, 2016 with Ms. Liza García Vélez Esq., President of the PRSEC, I asked if the ballot counting machines were accessible for blind people. No one has so far been able, or willing to categorically certify if they are accessible for blind persons. Given the fact that the PRSEC will have a trial run of ballot machines on June 5, 2016, during Puerto Rico's primary election, it is worrisome that people with disabilities will not be able to access any information provided by the ballot counting machines.

Alpidio Rolón

President

NFB of Puerto Rico

Tel. (787) 781-9071

Puedo vivir la vida que quiero; mi ceguera no me lo impide.

I can live the life I want; blindness is not what holds me back.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voting for the blind

Sent: Sunday, May 08, 2016 6:03 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voting for the blind

in Ct., we can vote by phone at the polling stations. the first year was a disaster, but after that year, it was fine.

I have a great moderator who has gotten to know me & he knows all the steps to get on line voting by phone.

not many people vote by phone, but count me in the phone voting.

Eileen Torow

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voting experience

Sent: Saturday, May 07, 2016 1:18 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voting experience

I understand that you are looking for individual voting experiences as you update voting guidelines.

Please keep in mind that the way election personnel interact is very important.

I voted in the most recent primary. When I entered the polling place one of the staff members address my spouse a couple of times rather than talking with me. I am blind and I carry a long white cane. I ignored her behavior until she asked my husband, "is she going to vote?" We need election staff to treat us as voters who have capacity and this includes speaking to a person with a disability not to the people around us about us. Frankly, her ignorance was insulting. I am an attorney who supervises other staff at work and certainly can answer her questions and hear what she says.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story. I hope it helps.

"Every day we raise the expectations of blind people in the National Federation of the Blind. Live the Life You Want."

Patti Gregory Chang
National Federation of the Blind of Illinois, Treasurer
NFB Scholarship Committee Chair
NFB of IL: www.nfbofillinois.org
NFB: www.nfb.org

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: My Voting Experiences:

Sent: Friday, May 06, 2016 9:09 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: My Voting Experiences:

My Name is Kenneth Chrane.
I had assistance at my voting booth.

I live in zip code _____.

I used the audio voting machine, because I am Blind.

I had no trouble with the machine, and I understood the speech on the machine.

If you have any questions, please call me @

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Chrane

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Experience

Sent: Friday, May 06, 2016 7:50 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Cc: lblake@nfb.org

Subject: Voting Experience

Hello,

I live in Cheshire CT and vote locally at Norton School for all local, state, and federal elections.

In the past I have frequently voted via Absentee Ballot due to my visual impairment. I am partially sighted and was much more comfortable using the magnification device in my home when completing the ballot.

However, in the past several elections, perhaps the recent 3 or 4 years, our polling place is equipped with a device which allows me to vote using a land line telephone at the polling location. The user can vote by pressing buttons on the telephone to navigate and vote. The ballot is then printed out and the user can deposit the ballot in the appropriate receptacle. This is a very comfortable method for voters like myself who find great difficulty in using the standard voting options for normally sighted voters.

I hope this information helps the committee, and it is my fervent hope that this voting option is always available at the polling place for folks like myself to be allowed to vote as comfortably as other voters.

Thank you.

Bob Morrissey

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: VOTING EXPERIENCE FOR MAY 3RD PRIMARY IN INDIANAPOLIS

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 11:00 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: VOTING EXPERIENCE FOR MAY 3RD PRIMARY IN INDIANAPOLIS

To whom it may concern:

I have previously voted with the Ivotronix machine, which was very, frustratingly slow and cumbersome.

For the first time, I voted with the Express Vote. I found it very easy to use, nicely labeled, and much faster and easier than its predecessor. The Express Vote made voting a much more pleasant experience.

Susan Jones, Indianapolis, IN

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Story about voting as a person who is blind

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 10:40 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Story about voting as a person who is blind

Dear Sir or Madam:

I vote in Massachusetts. The truth is that even though my polling site is very close to my home, once I arrive at the building it takes several minutes to actually find the entrance. Often I end up at the wrong door and thankfully after much searching hear someone around and ask for assistance to the correct door.

The poll workers are very nice and helpful. However, almost every time I vote, there is a problem with the electronic machine. There is always an issue of who knows how to even turn on the machine or who was trained on using the machine. Sometimes, there is a headset available and sometimes not. I now take a headset with me.

I usually get to vote even if I have to end up telling my choices to a poll worker. There's no way to ensure that the person is actually writing down my choices and there is no privacy. The process takes a very long time. Whereas for the people who are not disabled, once they are given their ballot the process takes only a few minutes.

Regards,
Cheryl cumings

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: access to election info and voting challenges story

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 9:43 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: access to election info and voting challenges story

Hello,

It's refreshing to know that I matter to you; my voice and my vote matters. Until now, I, a blind woman, have only been able to vote with the sometimes misguided and unreliable assistance of sighted individuals with, at times, his or her personal or political agenda. The last time I voted, in 2008, I did so because I had access to vote electronically via a keypad that was connected to a screen sighted voters could read. At that time I was married. My spouse read the lengthy print voting information.

I've been uncoupled for sometime and do not have sighted assistance, that is, unless you count the wonderful text-to-speech screen reading software that I use in my personal life and in my professional life. I think It is a disgrace and insulting when our government champions putting the voting rights of undocumented individuals above the voting rights of citizens who happen to be blind or visually impaired. I am not second class and I find it disheartening that my government hasn't taken seriously my right to vote independently just as any sighted person can do.

I live in San Diego, a huge military town. I think that creating encrypted online voting that is designed from the start and at all levels to include everyone; universal access design, is the way to go. It is good for the environment and I think more people will vote, including citizens who are blind and visually impaired.

Thoughtfully,

Lisa Irving
San Diego, California

Blucas

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting with low vision

Sent: Friday, May 06, 2016 4:33 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting with low vision

I had found it difficult to go to polling places. I now vote by mail. The Notice of Voter Registration card I receive gives me notice well in advance so that I am aware of dates and has a phone number if I have questions. I think this makes voting much easier and that is what voting should be, made as easy to do as possible. Making it easier and not harder to vote for our representatives in government will include more people because life is demanding and there always seems to be too much to do, especially for people who may need a little more time to plan.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Successful Voting

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 2:15 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Successful Voting

Hello,

I'm happy to report that the four or five times I have used the talking voting machine, I am much impressed. The quality of the machine, helpful assistance from the workers at the precinct, and the audio instruction from the machine itself make for a smooth experience. I happen to be very comfortable with synthesized speech and braille, and I could not ask for anything better than what I have seen these last few years.

Congratulations on a job well done!

Respectfully,
Dale Lieser
instruction



This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.

SheilaABanks

From: Ronald Duchovic [duchovic@ipfw.edu]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 9:15 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Sir,

My voting experience was conditioned by two critical conditions:

1. The lack of accessible parking close to the polling location
2. The lack of convenient access to the polling location.

Unfortunately, the so-called "van accessible" parking areas are incorrectly marked. There is insufficient space to open a ramp from a van. The cross-hatched areas are too narrow.

Secondly, the location of building ramps for use by a wheelchair are often remote from the open doors leading to the polling locations. Consequently, a wheelchair-bound individual if forced to follow a long and often circuitous route to the polling station.

Ron Duchoic

Dr. Ronald J. Duchovic
Associate Professor of Chemistry
Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne
2101 Coliseum Blvd. East
Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1499
260-481-6293 (Office)
260-481-6070 (FAX)

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Pennsylvania: Bucks County, Tinicum Township

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 9:01 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Pennsylvania: Bucks County, Tinicum Township

That's where I voted in Pennsylvania Primary. I have been totally blind from birth and had to have assistance from a friend to do the voting. The booth had a touch screen in it and that's what was used. No other accessible voting option was offered. When I voted in Lexington Park, MD in 2012 and before that I was able to use a keypad and headset and got audio feedback and did my voting that way then. The Lexington Park community is in the back woods and most of the time poorly served so what happened in Tinicum Township surprised me since Pennsylvania is supposed to be more developed and better served on several levels.

--

SheilaABanks

From: Trevino, Danielle [DTrevino@nfb.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 9:04 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Voting Experience

Good morning:

My name is Danielle Trevino and I live in Baltimore, MD. I voted in our Primary election on April 26, 2016. I'm blind so I asked for assistance when I arrived at my polling location (11:001) and it seemed like everything was going to work out fine. A friend, who is also blind, went with me and he went to the desk first. We were checked in with no issues but immediately after we received our print-outs, the poll workers started shouting across the room "They're handicapped so they need the machine." And "these two...handicapped machine." I understand that it's a big room and that they needed to convey information to each other but the fact that they were so loud about it was unprofessional.

When my friend was lead to the accessible voting machine, he had to wait for the poll workers to call the help desk because the machine was not putting out speech. It turns out that the workers hadn't activated it like they were supposed to at the beginning of the day. My friend was finally able to vote without issue.

When I went up to the machine, the workers had to activate it again and the gentleman helping me out asked me If I was a Republican or Democrat; he was going to fill in the ballot for me. I told him that I could do it myself and he walked away. When I finished voting, I took my ballot and started walking to the scanner to cast my ballot. The same gentleman walked up to me and proceeded to grab my arm very firmly and he tried to pull me toward the scanner. I told him that I could walk on my own if he would just keep talking so I could follow his voice. He then got upset and said "I was just trying to help you but fine!"

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. I sincerely hope that more training is provided for poll workers in the area of professionalism while assisting someone who is blind. Thank you.

Danielle Trevino
Coordinator for Social Media and Member Engagement
National Federation of the Blind
200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place
Baltimore, MD 21230
P: (410) 659-9314, Extension 2358
E: dtrevino@nfb.org
W: www.nfb.org
FB: National Federation of the Blind
TW: @NFB_voice
Live the life you want in 2016. Join the NFB today!

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Blind person's voting story

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2016 8:03 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Blind person's voting story

Hi. I am blind. I vote in Teaneck, Bergen County, New Jersey.

My precinct has an audio-accessible voting machine, but it usually takes 20-30 minutes for the poll workers to set it up. I like using it, but I've pretty much given up, because the wait is so long while they scurry around, read instructions, and call someone for help.

Now I bring my neighbor, or squeeze in with 2 election workers, and the whole place can hear who I'm voting for.

I guess I'll have to wait for the accessible machine, next presidential election, because my neighbor and I don't agree, and I want to cast my own vote.

Tracy Carcione

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voters story

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 10:26 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voters story

I'm legally blind due to albinism in Oregon and I read in our voter pamphlet that we could go online to mark our ballot. I called up the local election office and a very nice woman called me back and walked me through how to use it online. All of Oregon votes by mail (or drop off) and I've been here 12 years and already done several ballots. I asked for help from my fully sighted husband in the past, just to make sure I'd marked everything correctly. This year, I can vote completely on my own. They offered to send me a large print ballot but I declined. I prefer to read using magnification. I'm very pleased with the kind and courteous elections official and while the website was a bit of "many clicks" to get where I wanted, it was straightforward enough to figure out on my own. I'll vote this way again.

Done Dennison

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: comment re:voting accessibility

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 3:01 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: comment re:voting accessibility

In Kansas, there has never been an option to get a mail-in ballot in a larger print format. The apparent presumption is that if a visually impaired voter is not able to complete a standard form as-is, someone else can "help" vote. This is ridiculous.

Charla Beall.

BFrankeberger

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voting as a blind person

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 4:10 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voting as a blind person

Voting was always intimidating as I had to bring someone into the "private" voting booth, chosen by the Precinct Captain, with me. The first lady told me who to vote for by her grunts, the second guy bounced my hand from his choice to who I chose, so I never knew who I voted for, the third and final lady suddenly went deaf in the voting booth.

Then I moved to a state where we vote at home on a paper ballot. I liked this much better, because if something escaped my research, I could stop and research on my own. Still, someone has to read the paper ballot to me.

I want to vote on line over a couple of days with my special pin. Tell me how to get an electronic signature, and let me zip it off to the Auditor in Mason County WA.

I want a truly private ballot like every sighted person out there.
Becky Frankeberger

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voter experience

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 1:56 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voter experience

My name is Tom TeBockhorst, and I am blind. I want to tell you about my voting experience. The first time that I was able to vote by myself was in 2008. I had no problems with the accessible voting machine. That was probably the most exciting feeling of life. Because always before I had to have someone help me to vote. So, every time that I have voted I have had no problems. I love the automark. It is the best accessible voting machine ever. I do hope that the next accessible voting machine will be easy to use.

SheilaABanks

From: Livingston, Cheryl [cheryl.livingston@nebraska.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 11:20 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Accessible voting experience

Hello,

I am a visually impaired person who uses the Automark voting machine. Before the voting machines came along, I would vote trying to fill in the small circles on the ballot. I would lean over the ballot and struggle to get all the black within the lines so that there was enough but not too much in the circle. I sometimes wondered if my circles were filled in enough to make my vote count. I didn't want to ask for help because I felt that my privacy would be violated by giving someone else access to my ballot. The first time I used the Automark, I was so excited and happy, I sat there in front of the machine and almost cried! I can now vote with confidence, knowing that I won't have a problem filling in the circles and won't have to struggle to read the ballots. I enjoy listening to the information and sometimes speed up the speech if I already know the issue or slow it down to consider it more carefully. I know that when I turn in my ballot, it is completed correctly and voting is a pleasure now for me. I hope this information helps in your survey. If you would like any more information from me, please let me know.

Cheryl Livingston
Vocational Rehabilitation Technician
Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
4600 Valley Road, Suite 100
Lincoln NE 68510
Phone: 402-471-8108
Fax: 402-471-3009
Email: Cheryl.livingston@nebraska.gov
Website: www.ncbvi.ne.gov
Like us on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: voting for the blind

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 11:10 AM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: voting for the blind

I'm legally blind and have voted every year since my disability. I go with my husband and he fills in the forms according to whom I want to vote. I don't read Braille. I'm told the blind can use the current voting method but I can't figure it out. If the voting machines were equipped with adaptive equipment and an earphone for privacy the names of the candidates could be announced to the voter and the person could either press a button or say yes when the name of his candidate was announced. Judith Bron

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting experiences for theblind/visually impaired

Dear Staff:

I have had no issues with voting because at this time I have the assistance of my wife. However, in the event she passes I have no way of knowing where to neither go and vote nor get the assistance to cast my ballots. I have a hard time trusting anyone with my civil rights, especially with emotions running as high as they normally do in contested elections whether they are at the city, county, state, or federal level.

Is there some way to ensure that those of us that are blind/visually impaired can vote, not having our rights subjugated by the helper, & have our voices heard? Maybe a phone in with a special passcode or something similar?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Sollars

May 3, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

The following comments were received through email and the Disability Rights Texas statewide Voter Rights Hotline in regards to inaccessible polling sites from voters with disabilities. Comments occurred during the time frame of October 2015-March 2016.

Curbside Voting sign was at accessible parking spots and said "honk for curbside voting". Parking spots are 100 yards from building plus interior distance into voting area. When voter asked how the curbside honking worked, a poll worker stated, "hopefully someone hears it".

No available accessible parking that is close to voter entrance, which is main entrance of school. Voter was unable to walk to voter entrance from where he would have to park. At time when voter was at site, buses were loading up kids and blocked the main drop off area/path to voter entrance into building. Voter was unable to cast a ballot.

Curbside voting signs are not at accessible parking area (posted at entrance door); no one was in voting room when voter arrived; poll workers stated they could not hear the car horn for curbside parking anyway.

Entrance ramp into building is too steep.

Polling site stated they did not have earphones for audio use of ballot; read ballot to voter so there was no privacy; poll workers used voter's signature stamp instead of her using it.

Voter stated that the school principal blocked the accessible ramp at voter entrance with a bench. Said the Principal would post a sign stating accessible route at main entrance.

Main entrance door was locked, sign was posted on door stating people with disabilities should go around and find someone who will let them in. There were no signs posted stating where the voter entrance was. Voter spoke to the precinct judge about this and he basically threatened her with moving the polling site if she continued to complain.

Caller was serving as an assistant to her elderly mother for voting. Caller had to bring along her son who has Autism. Because of the son's autism, he was being loud. Caller removed herself from the que line and waited away from line/in hallway with son, while checking on mother's place in line so she could provide assistance when needed. Throughout this time a poll worker was approaching various people in line, asking them to be quiet while people were voting. A different (female) poll worker approached the caller asking if she was there to vote (in a rude tone), caller said no but that she was here to assist her mother. Male poll worker later approached caller, with a brisk attitude, and said caller's son was causing too much noise and it was an issue. The female poll worker offered to have caller's mother go to the head of the line so she could vote. Caller then assisted her mother with voting (while son was with her) and stated that the male poll worker was right behind her while her mother was voting. Caller was not happy with the treatment given by polling site staff and is concerned that this could/may prevent her and her mother from voting again.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting experiences for theblind/visually impaired

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 11:16 AM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Voting experiences for theblind/visually impaired

Dear Staff:

I have had no issues with voting because at this time I have the assistance of my wife. However, in the event she passes I have no way of knowing where to neither go and vote nor get the assistance to cast my ballots. I have a hard time trusting anyone with my civil rights, especially with emotions running as high as they normally do in contested elections whether they are at the city, county, state, or federal level.

Is there some way to ensure that those of us that are blind/visually impaired can vote, not having our rights subjugated by the helper, & have our voices heard? Maybe a phone in with a special passcode or something similar?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Sollars

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: EAC webinar not captioned

I'm tuned in to today's webinar on HAVA, and was excited to see that closed captions were offered. However, they are not working. Very disappointing and ironic, given the focus of today's session. Please fix ASAP so that your session is accessible.

Caitlin

Caitlin Parton, Esq.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Good evening, I understand that you are accepting comments about our voting experiences, especially since enactment of the Help America Voting Act (HAVA). Although I am not able to personally attend the hearing in Boston, here are my written comments.

Doug Hall

I am totally blind since age 8. I started voting in 1968, when I turned 21, because that was the minimum age at that time. Since then, I've only missed voting two or three times. At first, I had to tell a sighted person how I wanted to vote and have that person complete the ballot for me. I had no way to tell if the votes were cast the way I wished. Then, in 2002, Volusia county and the state of Florida decided to initiate voting on DRE or electronic voting machines and people who were print impaired found that voting could be done fairly independently and in secret, just as long as poll workers were able to make the machines work and were knowledgeable and willing to assist people with disabilities. However, in 2007, a group of people who didn't trust electronic equipment and wanted to return to voting on paper, convinced the state's legislature to make electronic voting illegal. Florida's legislature did make an exception though, saying that people who are print impaired could continue to use the old unapproved equipment till 2012, when it was expected that manufacturers would come up with a system to enable people to vote on machines that would complete the paper ballots. Unfortunately, the legislature decided, in 2010, to delay the deadline from 2012 to 2016. Then, in 2013, they again delayed the deadline to 2020. Many of us felt that the Florida legislature was wrong to set up a separate and unequal system for those of us with disabilities and feared that the legislature would continue to delay compliance to HAVA and the ADA. Some of us decided to go to the polls and try voting on the old and defective equipment, because the alternatives were to either not vote at all, use absentee ballots or have a sighted person fill out the paper ballot at the polls for us. Leaders of the Florida Council of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of Florida continued to urge the legislature and state division of elections to upgrade equipment. The state of Florida mandates that no county may utilize any equipment that has not been certified by the Department of State, Division of Elections, even if that equipment is being used in other states. Unfortunately, the Division of Elections had not certified appropriate equipment, so we were forced to use the old and defective electronic machines.

In 2014, the Florida Council of the Blind agreed to develop and offer a voting survey, designed to gather details about people's responses to voting. Results of those surveys indicated that people who were print impaired, were quite unhappy with the way things were being done. Many people preferred to use sighted assistance and many other just refused to vote entirely. Another negative factor was the lack of poll worker training and inappropriate behavior toward voters with disabilities. We had planned to share the results with voting officials. Then in 2015, the Division of Elections finally certified two accessible voting systems, the ES&S Express Vote and the Dominion ImageCast Evolution (ICE). Just prior to the March 15, 2016 Presidential Primary, we developed and issued a revised voting survey, designed to obtain details about experiences, now that some counties have purchased the new equipment. That survey may be found on the fcb.org website and completed by anyone with internet access. So far, results appear to show that people are much happier with the recently certified accessible equipment, but are still upset at the lack of training and inappropriate behavior on the part of poll workers. Thank you for deciding to look into voting access issues.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Accessible voting testimony

As a totally blind person, it wasn't until the implementation of HAVA that I could vote independently without having to broadcast my choices to anyone near me or without relying on the honesty of others. I have waited as long as four hours to vote because the poll workers didn't know how to setup the accessible voting machine. Still, as a woman and a native American, I waited those hours because I understand the value of my right to vote. Our democratic system can only function if we educate ourselves on the issues and vote. I may not have huge sums of money to help elect someone that I believe understands my point of view, but my vote is as big as anyone else's.

Warm Regards,

DeAnna Quietwater Noriega

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

I am very thankful for the new voting machine. I am blind and was able to vote with dignity :-)

Sent from my MetroPCS 4G LTE Android device

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

As New York prepares for its primary election April 19 and the general election in November, the topic of voting has become more pronounced within the disability community.

Certainly, improvements have been made to the voting experience for people with disabilities. More polling sites are accessible, and more poll volunteers are cognizant of voters with disabilities. But, in general, far more education and training is needed to ensure all polling sites are accessible to voters with disabilities. An example:

Last month, AIM Independent Living Center was asked to evaluate a new polling site in New York's Southern Tier. While we were pleased that the local board of elections (BOE) reached out to us for consultation – the BOE was, at least, being proactive – we were surprised by the condition of the polling site. Prior to our inspection, the BOE informed us that it viewed the site as accessible, but we found several troubling issues.

First, the site had 26-50 parking spaces, but it did not have a single accessible parking space. Second, the "accessible entrance" had a threshold with an elevation difference of almost 4 inches. Third, the door to enter the polling site was very heavy and did not have a handle that could be used by someone with low grip strength.

Fortunately, we worked with the BOE to implement remedies, but it was disappointing to learn that what the BOE considered accessible was foundationally inaccessible.

More education and training for BOEs will help make sure more voters with disabilities can cast their ballots during elections.

Thank you.

John Zick

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

My name is Robert Jaco. I had a problem voting in our March primary in Missouri. I have voted in the same location several times; that is why this seems so frustrating. The same official who tried to help me vote several times couldn't get the audible ballot to work, so I had to have my wife and officials from each party present.

I hope this helps with the needed information.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Accessible Voting

To Whom It May Concern:

I have voted for the last two years using the accessible voting machine. I am able to do it independently and successfully. I would like to encourage others to vote this way by allowing support groups to have a speaker to explain how to use the machine and let them use it for a mock vote.

Linda Palmer

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

The first time I voted independently using the “handicapped” machine, I cried. To me a secret ballot is part of what being an American is all about. Before that because I’m blind, I had to have a friend help me or polling officials. By the time you get one Democrat official, one Republican official, one Seeing Eye dog and me in the booth, it doesn’t feel like secret ballot. I’m sure it was, but voting by myself is much better! About half the time the officials have had problems with the machines. I wonder if in the training they could make each official try turning on the machine and setting it up for audio voting. Currently they seem to have a set of instructions, but they’ve not done it. HAVA is one of my favorite laws.

Katherine Schneider, Ph.D.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Greetings,

I am writing to express my experience with the Automark Voting Machine which is at all voting precincts in Michigan. I am totally blind. Prior to the accessible talking voting machine I always had to either get an absentee ballot, or attend the polls and have someone assist me with voting. The first year the accessible process was available I visited my polling place and voted independently for the first time in my life! It seems like such a simple thing, but it was really important to me to get to do it myself, and still is. I was confident that the candidates I chose were listed on my ballot, and no one, but me, knew for whom I voted. I felt like a full-fledged citizen.

The process at my polling place is pretty easy. Occasionally the staff aren't very familiar with the machine and they forget to switch from "test" mode, and the machine spoils my ballot by running through its test. Eventually we all figure it out and then my voting can progress normally. For the upcoming Presidential election, I will be inquiring ahead of time with my city clerk to make sure those at my polling place are aware of how the machine works as not to hold up other voters.

I am grateful that I can vote independently. My State's website has a copy of the ballot that people can review in advance of voting, and this has been very helpful.

I think we should make voting easier for everyone. I think it would be wise to hold elections on Saturdays, and/or figure a system out whereby people could vote by phone. I also feel that the Electoral College was meant for an era when we had a lot of farmers and America was more rural. For this reason I would like our system to switch to the popular vote instead of the Electoral College.

Thank you,
Donna Rose

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Testimony

I recently voted in the Missouri 2016 Presidential Primaries.
I am 43 years old and totally blind.

I went inside the voting location and someone helped me over to the table to check in and receive a ballot. I was asked for identification and gave the worker my Missouri State ID. The worker searched in their system using an I pad and then asked me to verbally verify my home address. I didn't think about this at the time but realized later that nobody else checking in was required to verbally verify their home address. So I and my Wife who is also blind were the only ones checking in at the time who were required to announce our home address to all who were there to vote.

We asked about accessible voting and were told "The person who operates the machine called in sick today" by one of the workers at the voting location.

Our only option was to have someone read and mark the ballots for us along with a witness to verify the correct choices were made.

We called the Platte County Missouri Board Of Elections the next day and were told there was a roaming person who could have been there in about 10 minutes if the poll workers had called. Nobody offered, mentioned, or even suggested that when we were voting.

Steven Clark

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

I require the use of a wheelchair. I few years ago I had moved to a new apartment in Indianapolis. When I went to vote I was shocked to see a step into the polling place. Luckily I can do a wheelie in my wheelchair and pull myself into through a doorway but I was shocked there was no ramp. Andre Carson was shaking hands with people right outside the office and had I used a power wheelchair I would not have been able to get in w/o further inconvenience.

I've voted there again since and there was a little ramp put up, but I do remember having trouble parking- as I do everywhere I go in Indianapolis- there were no handicap spots available. And if there were they were any handicap spots even at the site they must have been taken. Handicap parking is terrible in Indianapolis.

Handicap parking is treated as a privilege, or as an entitlement, but it's a NEED for people who require extra space next to the vehicle for a mobility device. Handicap parking needs to be enforced and checked - it should be easy revenue for the city to bust people using other people's placards.

Handicap placards that say "No Expiration" should not exist. The No EXP placards are passed on to friends and family and that is why I can't shop at a mall during the holiday seasons.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Dear EAC,

The following is my testimony about my voting experience in the Primary in the State of Illinois, Bureau County, Village of Tiskilwa. But first, some background information: I am the Associate Director at Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living in LaSalle, IL. Because two of our staff members discovered disability rights violations in a previous election in Bureau County, they filed a complaint with Equip for Equality. Equip for Equality wrote to the County Clerk and laid down conditions the county would have to abide by in order for no legal action to take place. One of those conditions was to invite our staff to conduct a training for the election judges on disability etiquette, what it means to be accessible, and how to set up and use the accessible booth and accessible voting machine. I and two other staff members held two trainings; one in the early afternoon and the other in the early evening. I attended both.

With that being said I will now continue with my experience. The first issue: I live in a very small town where just about everybody knows everybody else. Our voting facility is in a side room of the fire station. There was no accessible parking available; no signage, no yellow space marked, no access aisle striping. The three parking spots that are in front of the building are flanked by a dirt driveway and the fire station driveway. There are no other parking spaces. People park across the street in the grass, which is where I had to park. The second issue: After receiving my ballot I looked for the accessible voting booth. It was nowhere to be found. I have severe arthritis in my knees, use crutches, and cannot stand for any length of time. The male election judge told me I could sit in a chair and pull it up to the table. I recognized the judge from the accessibility training we had conducted just last week. I told him I am supposed to have a privacy screen. He replied, "You are?" I stated that he was at the training and should have known that. So he took the privacy screen from the last voting booth on the end and placed it on the table. In that position people could have walked behind me and seen my ballot. So I told him that my back should be to the wall so no one could see what I was marking. He then pulled the chair around to the end of the table and moved the privacy screen also to the end of the table. I still felt people could walk from the voting booths and see my ballot. But since that was the only accommodation they offered, I acquiesced. The male judge then pointed out that they had the accessible voting booth but it was still in the box. No one bothered to set it up.

While I was voting I heard a female judge say, in a fairly loud voice, for everyone else present to hear, "She's going to raise hell about this." So, as I was leaving, I walked up to her and told her that I was going to raise hell because I heard what she said.

I know there are others in the community who have disabilities and need accommodations when voting. The election judges did not do their job to prepare the polling place for people with disabilities. But I blame the County Clerk because she has demonstrated that accessibility accommodations are not a priority with her and, therefore, not a priority for the county.

Lesley A. Gonigam, Associate Director
IVCIL
18 Gunia Dr.
LaSalle, IL 61301
Phone: 815-224-3126 ext. 214
Fax: 815-224-3576
Email: ad@ivcil.com

"Striving to enlighten the path and enrich the journey for persons with disabilities..."



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SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

I began voting independently several years ago when the telephone voting system arrived in Connecticut. Those of us who are visually impaired (I am totally blind) were thrilled. I actually had tears in my eyes upon completing my first ballot.

There were two instances with problems. The first time I voted via the telephone system, the polling place moderators had no clew as to how to activate it. Prior to the election, there was a practice system available which I accessed and learned how to use it. I had to tell the moderators what to do. Training for the moderators was lacking. The second instance was a technical glitch. The passcode didn't work and it took several phone calls to get a phone line for me to use. I realize things happen and received apologies in both cases.

The moderators at my polling place know what to do now and they know me. The sad thing is that I am the only person in Southington taking advantage of the telephone.

I feel blessed to live in a time when technology enables me to vote independently. There was a time that I thought it would never happen.

Thank you for listening.

Anne West

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

I am a member of the DVC (disability voting coalition) I am also a poll worker who uses a wheelchair. As the advocacy coordinator for Disability Options Network I have done a large amount of accessible voting surveys in the 4 counties that we serve (Beaver Butler Mercer and Lawrence counties in PA. I have found an unusually high amount of polling places that are not accusable. There needs to be more work on getting all polling places up to standards.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Fred C Hess
Advocacy Coordinator
Disability Options Network
831 Harrison St
New Castle, PA 16101
724-652-5144

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

To Whomever It May Concern:

I am totally blind and have voted using accessible equipment in two locations in Pennsylvania: Bethlehem (College Hill Moravian Church) and Greenwich Township in Berks County.

My experiences in Bethlehem (from August of 2008 to September of 2014) were mixed. The talking voting machine at that polling place often had problems. The audio connection between the machine and the headphones they supplied often had static or was shorting out. This happened several times in a row. Also, the election officials seemed to find my request to use the audio equipment taxing. They were very willing to help me, but several of them had to work on setting up the unit. They seemed to be intimidated by the set up process each time I voted. And, I voted in the general, primary, and state/local elections between August of 2008 and October of 2014.

My experience voting in Greenwich Township of Berks County, Pennsylvania has been nothing but positive. Though I have only voted there once so far, the officials knew how to set up the audio equipment right away. They even thanked me for using the equipment. Their demeanor was calm and professional.

Thank you for your attention to my testimony.

Sincerely,
Christie

--
Christie Gilson-Graves

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Letter in Support RE:AB2252

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Jacob Lesner-Buxton and I am community organizer who works at the Independent Living Resource Center, in Santa Barbara. I am also a member of the Secretary of State 's Voting Advisory Committee. I am writing to you in support of AB2252 . This bill would allow people with disabilities like me the option to vote by mail and cast our ballots privately and independently like many other California voters.

As a person with limited motor dexterity, it is a challenge for me to fill out a paper ballot. While accessible voting machines are helpful to me, they aren't always available for use. When living in Alameda County I voted at a polling that was consistently inaccessible. I struggled to enter down a small steep staircase without accommodation or an accessible entrance. And then once inside the polling place, at least three times the accessible voting machine was either broken or not set up to be used.

One such occasion was during the November 2012 General Election. I was recovering from surgery because of cancer which further compromised my strength and mobility. However, I wanted to vote. So, I went to my polling place at St. Andrews Baptist Church in Oakland. I entered through the only and inaccessible entrance to find that there was not a working accessible voting machine being provided that day. My only choice was to vote with a pen on a paper ballot. However, the polling place only had four voting booths for privacy and not knowing how long my strength would hold out I voted on a table in the open with privacy.

I have also tried voting by mail, but had to rely on friends or family to mark the correct choice. Luckily, I can see well enough to double check how my friend marked, but many do not have that ability. And once in when voting by mail in Santa Barbara my ballot was disqualified because of the irregularity of my signature – a common problem for people with my disability. As an advocate I have also heard of cases in which people with disabilities were not told about their ballot arriving in the mail, and they were not able to vote in that election

In the end, no matter how I vote I am often denied my right to cast a private and independent ballot or disenfranchised from voting. AB2262 would help ensure that everyone in California has a right to a free and independent vote. Additionally, it would also improve civic participation among people with disabilities in rural counties such as Santa Barbara who have difficulty traveling to polling places.

Thank you for working to increase access to democracy for all Americans.
Respectfully,
Jacob Lesner-Buxton

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony - voting access problems - Frank Welte

I am a registered voter in Alameda County, California, and I also happen to be blind. Ever since the county began making accessible electronic voting machines available in elections, I have taken advantage of this voting method whenever I could, first at the county elections office in Oakland, CA and later in my local precinct in San Leandro, CA.

The voting machine works well for me. However, on at least three occasions, the accessible voting machine at my precinct was not set up and operating when the polls opened at 7:00 AM, which is the time when I prefer to vote. I have ended up waiting for quite some time, a half hour to an hour, for the poll workers to figure out how to activate the voting machine. I believe the poll workers in my precinct are not receiving sufficient training in the operation of accessible voting machines prior to election day, so they are unprepared to accommodate blind and visually impaired voters.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

My name is Larry Johnson and I am totally blind. I live in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. I vote in every election at the polls and use the audible assistive system provided by our County. In general, it works very well. I have encountered two problems. Some of the election officials at the polling site are somewhat unfamiliar as to how to set it up which causes a delay. The other problem is that sometimes the headset offered is very uncomfortable, broken or fits very poorly. Nevertheless, the election officials are always eager to see me and willing to help. I appreciate very much being able to independently and secretly cast my ballot. Thank you.

ect:

Listen@eac.gov
FW: Testimony

Good afternoon,

Thank you for allowing written testimony, prior to your hearing on April 27, 2016 in Boston on Accessible Voting.

I am blind and have voted in federal/state elections since 2008 using accessible voting systems in the State of New Hampshire. My first experience was with the telephone/fax voting system used prior to 2016 in New Hampshire. On several occasions the system was not functioning properly. When working the telephone/fax voting system allowed me to vote independently, privately and it produced a faxed ballot different than the ballot used by the general public and could not be counted in secret. The ballot was kept in a separate box and counted manually at the end of the day. This could not be considered a secret ballot. This system never met the requirements of the HAVA or the ADA guidelines.

In the 2016 New Hampshire primary election the Secretary of State used the "all4one" system. This system was not ready for prime time. The access by voice command was shut off, the speech program was very, very poor and a problem for most. Like the telephone/fax system the "all4one" voting system printed out a ballot that had to be recorded manually and cannot be considered a secret ballot.

After a decade, with a 16.5 million grant, the State of New Hampshire has failed to put in place a voting system that produces a means for a person who is blind to vote independently, privately and secure a secret ballot. The Secretary of State's goal is to have the "all4one" voting system programmed to do this by September 2016. This has been their goal since 2006. This begs the question of why have they failed their citizens who are blind? The technology is here in 2016 to make it happen. The funding is there to make it right!

In addition, the Secretary of State's, is unwilling to share their accessible voting system with cities and towns in local elections. There has been little awareness of the "all4one" voting system, a lack of training for consumers and election workers.

I became an American citizen in 2007 and it was stated that my most important right as a citizen was to vote. I will be turning 69 this year. Will I live long enough to be able to vote independently, privately and have a truly secret ballot in my life time?

Thank you for caring,

Guy M. Woodland

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Accessible Voting

Minnesota is a beautiful state with many wonderful qualities. I am proud to call it home. However, there are a few things I would like to see improved. One is the experience of Minnesota voters with disabilities. I describe my own experience in the following essay, written after I voted in a local election in November, 2015.

Voting Rights, Right?

Every year, as Election Day approaches, at least one of my caregivers urges me to get an absentee ballot. "It's so much more convenient," they insist. "You can take as much time as you need. And you don't have to worry about transportation. And besides, as a person with a disability, you're entitled to vote absentee." (I finally realized this year, they're probably thinking, "*And we won't have to listen to you complain about the election judges.*" So this year I'm trying a different approach to venting my frustrations.) Every year, I refuse their pleas. "No," I insist, "I want to vote on Election Day. At the polls. Like everybody else. As a disabled person, that is also my right. And I want to exercise it. Besides, *use it or lose it*, right?"

Voting at the polls on Election Day is even more important to me since I learned I have a right to use the AutoMARK device, located at every polling place in Minnesota, to make it easier for me to vote independently. The device scans my ballot; displays it on a screen, one race at a time, in large print; and reads the ballot out loud to me. I can use a keypad or a touchscreen to make my selections. The device then reviews my selections and prints them on my ballot. What could be simpler? No more getting overwhelmed by the number of items on the page. No more worrying about whether or not I have correctly joined the little arrows or colored in the correct circle. No more relying on someone else to help me with the ballot. I can vote independently. Just like everybody else. I LOVE it! The election judges have a rather different opinion.

As I have been a registered voter in the same precinct for several years, everything goes smoothly until I pick up my ballot. "I would like to use the AutoMARK device," I request. The reaction is immediate. And either amusing or annoying depending on my mood. (I don't think I could cause any greater stir if I said, "I have a bomb in my purse with my finger on the detonator." If I didn't think a criminal court judge would be even less amused than the election judges by such a claim, I might be tempted to try it.)

The two election judges distributing the ballots look at each other with expressions ranging from confusion to panic. One of them starts out, "But we have these wonderful voting booths right over here. And over there is a lower one where you can sit if you like. We'll even get you a chair. Or there is a table across the room. You could sit there. Your friend could help you with your ballot. Or we can get one of the other election judges to read and mark your ballot for you. Which would you prefer?" Their thoughts are so loud, I can almost hear them. "*Oh, no! Not that infernal machine! It's just like a computer. It has a screen. And buttons. And it talks! And if you push the wrong button, it might... EXPLODE... or something.*" I smile politely and repeat, "I would prefer to use the AutoMARK device." Finally, they locate someone willing to risk life, limb, and

reputation by approaching the device. (I am actually very comfortable using the machine, and could use it independently if such were permitted. But the one time I attempted it without first receiving permission, I was physically stopped. "That's a machine for blind people," I was told "you need to go use the voting booths over there.")

The reality is the election judges don't know what to do with me. I don't fit into any of their known categories of disabled people. I am clearly not Blind, Deaf, Wheelchair-bound, Elderly, or Mentally Retarded. I am too independent to fit into the Poor Handicapped People Who Need Our Help category. Since I have no obvious physical deformities or revolting mannerisms, I don't fit the Disgusting Disabled People Who Should Be Hidden from Polite Society category. As I arrive with a cane and a caregiver, it is difficult to consign me to the Perfectly Capable People Who Are Pretending to Be Disabled category. And my age of over 40 years makes me at least slightly too old for the Young People These Days Don't Know Their Place category.

So what do you do with someone who doesn't fit into any of the pre-defined categories, who is too foolish to heed the advice to just vote at home, who refuses the helpful offer of another person to read the ballot, and who insists on using that Infernal Machine?!

Usually, they cluster around like a flock of mother hens until someone finally escorts me to the AutoMARK device and "helps" me get started with it. Once I have finished voting and am putting my ballot into the box (like everybody else), the person manning the ballot box gushes, "Thank you SO MUCH for coming!" I am never quite sure whether that means, "*Thank you so much for making the extreme sacrifice of coming to vote in person despite the great hardship involved,*" or "*Thank you so much for leaving now so we can get back to dealing with NORMAL people.*"

Sometimes I think more training would help. I consider suggesting a mandatory information session – or at least a memo that would be sent out to all election judges – detailing how to treat (and not treat) voters with disabilities. But then I realize it would be a mostly futile effort. Most of them have had 60 or more years to develop their cultural attitudes about disability. There is virtually no chance they will change those attitudes because of one 15-minute presentation. I can only demonstrate to them, and to succeeding generations, that it IS possible to be both disabled and independent. And hope that eventually cultural change will catch up with even the election judges.

Deborah Bailey
Chaska, Minnesota

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting experience

Hello,

I wanted to share my voting experience as a voter with a disability in Monroe County. This is the second time I've attempted to vote and the workers were not aware of how to operate the accessible Ballot Marking Device (BMD). Also, I was NOT given a private vote as other voters were surrounding the area of the BMD. I have expressed multiple times to the Board of Elections that this was an issue and I feel it is not taken seriously. The voting process took thirty minutes between setting up the BMD, voting, and asking for assistance inserting the ballot. This was much longer than the time an able bodied person took to vote.

Thank you,

Ericka Jones
Systems Advocate
Center for Disability Rights
497 State Street
Rochester, New York 14608

(585) 546-7510 (Voice)
(585) 546-5643 (Fax)

www.cdrnys.org
www.facebook.com/rochestercdr
www.twitter.com/cdrnys

Have you signed up for the NY Disability Vote Network?

www.NYDVN.org

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Access

From: Marcia Trawinski [<mailto:marfred106@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 12:38 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting Access

My polling information: _____

I have lived and voted (I vote in my lobby) at _____ for 20 years. During that time, I have had many problems, preventing me from voting successfully.

I have encountered judges who were not aware of procedures for voters with disabilities (I have a vision impairment).

Before we had accessible voting machines, I had one experience where after I began voting with 2 judges (one republican one democrat) one

judge "just walked away". I had to summon the head judge in order to continue voting.

Since the arrival of accessible voting machines, I have experienced many judges who were unaware: that there was an accessible voting machine; they were expected to actually operate it; and how to set it up so I could vote. This resulted in many long delays.

I have diligently reported these problems to the Board of Elections with mixed results. Problems persisted until 2015 when I was finally able, for the first time, to vote without problems. I did however, have a member from the Board of Elections oversee my voting. In March of 2016 (Illinois primary) I encountered a delay of over 20 minutes because no one knew how to start the machine. Several judges had conversations and made phone calls resulting in an eventual successful voting experience.

I take voting seriously and I am offended every time my rights are violated. We thought we had solved the problems in spring of 2015 (mayoral election) however the most recent election has demonstrated there are still problems.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information either via this email or on my cell: -

Marcia Trawinski



April 21, 2016

Voters with disabilities have long been disenfranchised from the voting process. Thankfully, with the Passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), all State and Federal elections have adopted a universally accessible voting system and all polling places now have access to a Ballot Marking Device which allows people with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

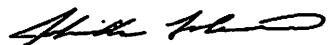
Unfortunately, New York State has allowed local elections additional time to comply, and the use of lever machines in local elections has continued for years. People with disabilities also continue to encounter individuals in charge of the polls being completely oblivious and inefficient regarding their voting needs. This leads to feelings of uneasiness on the part of the individual who may then become dissuaded from voting in the future. As in my case where being visually impaired makes it very difficult to read small text, I was discouraged from voting for many years as I attempted to convince myself that voting was not important, that I did not care, that it did not bother me and that my vote did not matter all as a means to mask my shame of being different.

As New Yorkers were gathering to cast their votes for the 2016 Presidential Primaries, Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc. sent representatives, including myself, to inspect various voting sites throughout the communities of lower Westchester County to ensure their accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Some major features being inspected included: accessible parking, ramps, door handles, doorways and entrance ways wide enough for wheelchair users, and the availability of the ballot marking device. The results were mixed with negatives mostly revolving around the limited availability of accessible parking and in one case a locked entrance door at the ramp. It was definitely uplifting to observe that no lever voting machines were being utilized at any site and the ballot marking device was available for individuals with disabilities in all locations.

As I went to cast my vote in this year's Primary Presidential Election, I again encountered individuals who were unsure of not only how to assist a person with a visual impairment who does not require the use of the ballot marking device but how to explain the voting process outright. Although pleasant, the vibe of uneasiness and panic from unpreparedness was apparent from the representatives at the poll as they stumbled over their words while looking towards each other for help, prolonging what should have been a simple explanation of the voting process.

Although we are heading in the right direction we must continue to educate society as a whole regarding accommodating the needs of individuals with disabilities. We must also take responsibility for the continued ignorance which still exists in society. It is normal to feel uneasy around individuals whom are different and instances which we do not encounter often. Therefore we must make it a point to get involved within the community and never choose not to participate due to feelings of fear or shame. Taking part in the voting process is a perfect example as we not only exercise our civil rights but we also exercise our duty to educate.

The State Board of Elections (SBOE) has issued a report offering guidance to counties and municipalities offering pragmatic suggestions on how to move all local elections to the same accessible voting system in a cost effective manner which is being used in State and Federal elections and is already being used in many counties in local elections. Elected officials should continue to work to ensure this transition is prompt, thorough, and results in the accessible, reliable, and uniform election system that New Yorkers deserve.



Achille Iolascon M.A. / MHC
Systems Advocate
Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc.

SheilaABanks

From: Rick Webb [rwebb@acetekk.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 12:16 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Voting-Access

I have had numerous issues voting since becoming legally blind October 12, 2004. I haven't been able to cast a private ballot in local (Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska) elections since then because neither accessible voting machines nor electronic methods are available; however, I have had access to accessible voting machines and electronic voting methods for the majority of federal and state of Alaska elections since 2008. The times I didn't have access in those elections were transportation based after my area was redistricted, and my polling place was moved from down the road which was reachable on my ATV to a location in another precinct in the city 10+ miles away.

The new polling place requires a \$35 cab ride each way which I can't afford on my limited fixed income, or someone I know to take me which requires them to drive from town to my house after work, take me to vote, and return me to my house before going home for dinner which people aren't willing to do very often because of the time required. The retired people I know all work the polling stations so aren't available. Riding my ATV to my old polling station and voting a questioned ballot would allow me to vote for elected representation on the federal level, not state level since it is a different precinct which I've done once to weigh in on those decisions. In 2014 I was made aware of the new electronic method over the Internet. I used it with some difficulty which required my screen reading software as well as my limited vision and screen magnification. When I got to the point of submitting the ballot, I hit the submit button which seemed to do nothing; therefore, I pressed the submit button numerous times before I finally received a message that my ballot was cast about 20 minutes after I first pressed the submit button, I wasn't sure if I voted once or eighteen times. The electronic voting process wasn't completely accessible to my screen reader software, so a person without some vision wouldn't be successful in casting a ballot using that method.

Thank you for this opportunity,
Rick

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 12:16 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting-Access

I have had numerous issues voting since becoming legally blind October 12, 2004. I haven't been able to cast a private ballot in local (Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska) elections since then because neither accessible voting machines nor electronic methods are available; however, I have had access to accessible voting machines and electronic voting methods for the majority of federal and state of Alaska elections since 2008. The times I didn't have access in those elections were transportation based after my area was redistricted, and my polling place was moved from down the road which was reachable on my ATV to a location in another precinct in the city 10+ miles away.

The new polling place requires a \$35 cab ride each way which I can't afford on my limited fixed income, or someone I know to take me which requires them to drive from town to my house after work, take me to vote, and return me to my house before going home for dinner which people aren't willing to do very often because of the time required. The retired people I know all work the polling stations so aren't available. Riding my ATV to my old polling station and voting a questioned ballot would allow me to vote for elected representation on the federal level, not state level since it is a different precinct which I've done once to weigh in on those decisions. In 2014 I was made aware of the new electronic method over the Internet. I used it with some difficulty which required my screen reading software as well as my limited vision and screen magnification. When I got to the point of submitting the ballot, I hit the submit button which seemed to do nothing; therefore, I pressed the submit button numerous times before I finally received a message that my ballot was cast about 20 minutes after I first pressed the submit button, I wasn't sure if I voted once or eighteen times. The electronic voting process wasn't completely accessible to my screen reader software, so a person without some vision wouldn't be successful in casting a ballot using that method.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Rick

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

Expires: Thursday, May 26, 2016 12:00 AM

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 2:47 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: testimony

My name is Lauren Tuchman. I am totally blind and successfully cast my vote independently this afternoon in Montgomery County, Maryland with the use of a fully accessible voting machine. I found the machine very easy to use once it was explained to me by an election judge. It felt very gratifying to cast a secret and independent ballot. I have, in previous elections, gotten personal sighted assistance due to technical glitches with accessible voting machines. This was the smoothest voting experience I've ever had.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting Experience

Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 2:39 PM

To: Listen@eac.gov

Subject: Voting Experience

Hello: My experience using the Auto Mark has been good, but I have not been treated very well by election officials. In some ways, it has turned me away from voting. Lisa

SheilaABanks

From: Monica Bartley [mbartley@cidny.org]
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 2:28 PM
To: Listen@eac.gov
Cc: Margi Trapani
Attachments: HighlightsCIDNYsurveysofApril 16 PrimaryElection Final.pdf

Dear Mr. Hicks,

The Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) conducted accessibility survey of over 50 polling sites for the New York Presidential Primary Election on April 19th. We have conducted these surveys since 2003 and consistently find that over 70 percent of New York City's polling sites have barriers for voters with disabilities (See CIDNY Poll Site Survey Summary from 2003-2016 on page 8). We were also the downstate contractor for PAVA from 2005-2014 and have been monitoring the City's compliance with HAVA and the ADA each election. We noted that a Hearing was held recently by your committee on accessible voting and the progress made since the passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). I am enclosing a copy of our survey summary from the April election for your Committee's information. We would be happy to talk with you and the committee about our experiences monitoring the New York City Board of Elections and the consistent access issues that people with disabilities face at each election.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Monica Bartley

Monica Bartley
Community Outreach Organizer
The Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY)
841 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10003
Tel: [646-442-4152](tel:646-442-4152)
Fax: [212-254-5953](tel:212-254-5953)
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www.cidny.org

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On the Eve of the Presidential Election, the New York City Board of Elections Suppresses the Disability Vote

As New York selected its parties' Presidential candidates, CIDNY's surveys of New York City polling sites showed barriers to access that mirror the same problems we have documented over the past 13 years. Voters with disabilities looking for accessible entryways still can face confusing or missing directional signage; voters who need ramps may find ramps at their sites that do not meet ADA standard and have barriers that prevent their use. If voters with disabilities get into their polling sites, they still may find confusing directional signs or lack of signs to the voting area, narrow pathways, obstructions in front of accessible voting machines or the ADA booth, and poll workers who are still not trained to accommodate people with disabilities. The following is a summary of the barriers we identified. The pictures included below are examples of the issues we documented.

CIDNY teams surveyed a total 58 sites during the April 19, 2016 Primary Election. Of the 58 sites surveyed only 13, or 22 percent, were without barriers.

April 19, 2016 Primary Election

	No. of Sites with Barriers	% Barriers
Ramps	13	22%
Exterior/ Interior Signage	12	21%
Entryways/ Pathways	11	19%
Interior Access*	32	55%
No. of Sites with Barriers**	45	78%
No. of Sites without Barriers	13	22%
Total No. of Sites Surveyed	58	

* *Interior access barriers include insufficient space to access the BMD.*

** *Some polling sites have more than one barrier.*

Ramps

Ramps still present problems at some polling sites around the city. In some cases the built-in ramps do not have adequate landings and in other cases temporary ramps placed by the NYCBOE were not installed correctly or had other barriers, for example:

Surveys identified built-in ramps without adequate landings, so they were not ADA compliant. For example, the landing space was too short, less than the 5'x 5' required.

At one site, a temporary ramp placed over an existing ramp created a bump between the landing and the ramp that was a hazard for people using a walker or a wheelchair.

There was a small ramp on the sidewalk leading to the entrance of another site. It is unclear why ramp was placed there. This ramp was not attached to anything and was free standing in the pathway.

There was a long hallway which was sloped at 2:24. While the slope meets the ADA standard, there were no handrails for people who use wheelchairs or walkers.

At other sites, temporary ramps were over 30' but had no landing as required by the ADA. The length of these ramps without landings would present problems for people using wheelchairs or walkers who need to rest or for those who have breathing issues that would require them to stop and rest when navigating the ramp.

Photo #1. IS 108 Brooklyn - over 30'
and no flat landing as required.
No rest spot for people using walkers or
wheelchairs.



Photo #2. IS 302 Brooklyn – unclear why this ramp was here.



Entryways/Pathways

Exterior

There were several pathways that had abrupt changes. There were broken sidewalks/curb cuts at pathways to enter the polling site, which poses problems for someone using a wheelchair or a walker. Because most of these do not have detectable warnings, they can also be tripping hazards for those who are blind or who have low vision.

Photo #3. PS 273 - Cracked sidewalk on pathway to accessible entrance, needs beveled overlay



Photo #4. PS 46 - Cracked sidewalk at accessible entrance – tripping hazard and potential barrier for someone using a wheelchair

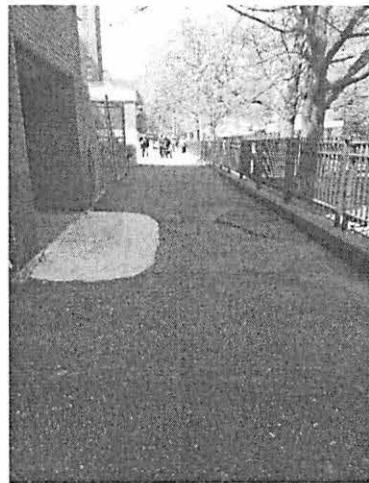


Photo #5. PS 188 – Abrupt level change in sidewalk with no detectable warning – tripping hazard and potential barrier for someone using a wheelchair



Interior Access

Narrow pathways in voting areas were barriers to access to voting areas and machines. Some materials were left by the schools, some chairs, etc. were placed by poll workers.

Photo #6. PS 173 – Chairs blocking access to voting area.

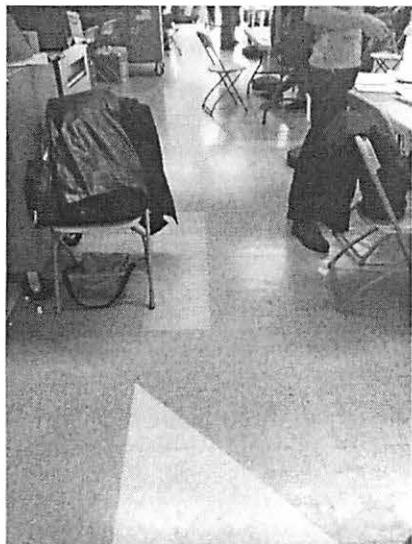


Photo #7. Authors Academy – Space too narrow to enter voting area with a wheelchair.



Photo #8. PS 173 - Pathway too narrow for access and privacy voting area.

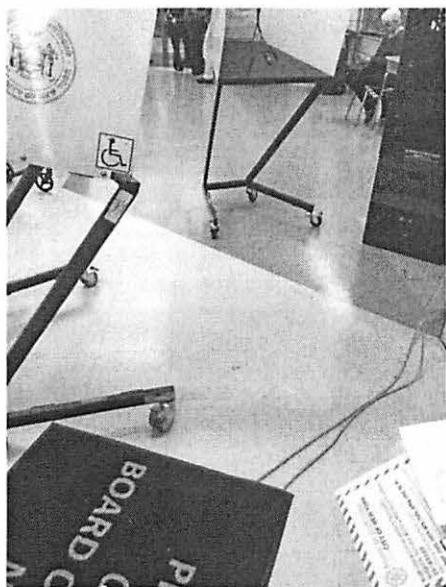


Photo #9. WH Maxwell – Security booth blocks access and narrows entryway.



BMD Access

Inadequate clearance space for the BMDs that will allow a voter using a wheelchair to access the machine continues to be a problem. Surveyors also found that some poll workers still did not know how to use the machine. The BMD was not working at several sites. At two of the sites, the BMD was down, at one of the sites this was the result of a paper jam that they had not been able to clear. Difficulties in setting up the BMD still seem to be occurring: one coordinator reported she was given the wrong key so she was unable to open it and at two sites the BMD was turned on, but no one knew how to set it up so a voter who requested to use it was unable to do so.

Photo #10. PS 190 – Chairs blocking access to BMD.

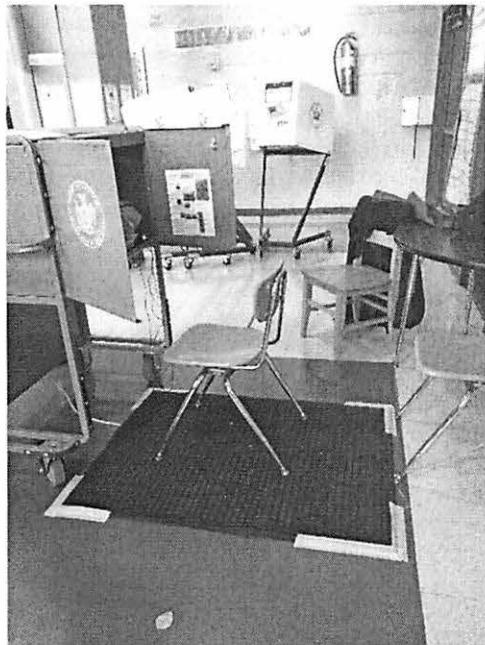


Photo #11. WH Maxwell – poll and other furniture narrow pathway, blocking access to BMD.



Doorways

There were entry doors that did not meet ADA standard width of 32".

There were a few sites with obstructions to entryways by items used to prop doors open.

Several doors were too heavy, were not propped open securely and did not have a door monitor.

Photo # 12. PS 175 – Heavy door, not left open.
No door monitor.



Photo #13. PS 202 – Heavy doors at accessible entrance, no door monitor.



Photo #14. IS 171 Brooklyn Chair used to prop open doors
Unstable and potential tripping hazard. Also narrows entryway.



Insufficient Signage

There was a lack of appropriate directional signs to the voting area at several of the sites. For those who needed the accessible entrance these signs created confusion and barriers to access.

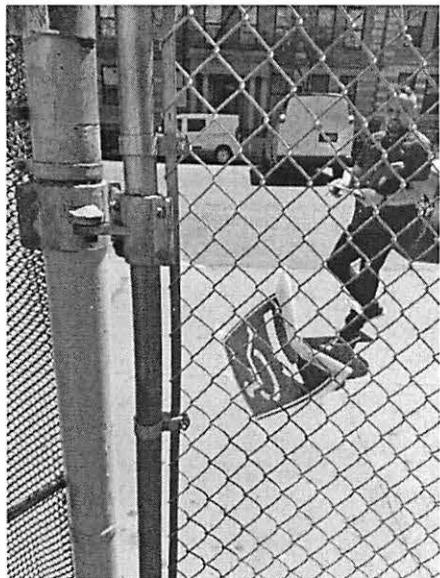
Photo #15 PS 273 - Directions to accessible entrance (on another street) was up a set of stairs and impossible to read from the street.



Photo #16. PS 173 – Poorly attached sign for accessible entrance, now useless for directions.



Photo #17. Authors Academy – Poorly attached signage for accessible entrance directions



Other

Some of the space issues in the interior voting areas were because of schematics supplied by the NYCBOE. At one site in Brooklyn, poll workers did not know how to read the schematic and set up the site as best they could. The coordinator at one site complained that the scanners were placed at the far end of the voting room away from the voting area. At another site, the coordinator said that the cords they had for the BMD did not reach far enough to allow for the clearance needed.

At several sites, poll workers did not know how to use the accessibility functions on the BMD and therefore could not help voters who needed them. In some cases, poll workers stood behind voters and watched them fill in ballots or watched them mark their ballots on the BMDs – preventing voters with disabilities from voting privately and independently as is protected by law.

CIDNY Poll Site Survey Summary from 2003-2016

Results of the April 2016 CIDNY surveys mirror results of surveys done since 2003. The April 2016 surveys show that 78 percent still exhibit barriers that render New York City polling sites non-ADA compliant and inaccessible to New York City voters with disabilities.

April 19, 2016	58 Sites Visited 45 sites or 78% with Barriers
November 2015	43* Sites Visited 37 sites or 88% with Barriers
November 2014	62 Sites Visited, 43 Sites or 69% with Barriers
September 2014	46 Sites Visited, 33 Sites or 72% with Barriers
November 2013	80 Sites Visited, 27 Sites or 66.6% with Barriers
November 2012	132 Sites Visited, 108 Sites or 81.8% with Barriers
September 2012	43 Sites Visited, 37 Sites or 86% with Barriers
November 2011	55 Sites Visited, 46 Sites or 84% with Barriers
November 2010	53 Sites Visited, 40 Sites or 75% with Barriers
September 2010	53 Sites Visited, 42 Sites or 80% with Barriers
November 2009	51 Sites Visited, 43 Sites or 84% with Barriers
November 2008	65 Sites Visited, 54 Sites or 83% with Barriers
September 2008	24 Sites Visited, 21 Sites or 87% with Barriers
November 2007	50 Sites Visited, 42 Sites or 84% with Barriers
November 2006	15 Sites Visited, 15 Sites or 100% with Barriers
November 2005	77 Sites Visited, 57 Sites or 74% with Barriers
November 2004	85 Sites Visited, 52 Sites or 61% with Barriers
September 2004	35 Sites Visited, 15 Sites or 43% with Barriers
March 2004	44 Sites Visited, 30 Sites or 68% with Barriers
November 2003	31 Sites Visited, 14 Sites or 42% with Barriers

*One site was not in operation.

Since 2003, CIDNY has surveyed 1102 polling sites; with an average of 75.3% with barriers.