



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations
Hearing on Voter Bills: Intros. 464, 648 and 796
October 1, 2015
Testimony of Henry Berger, Special Counsel to the Mayor

Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations. My name is Henry Berger, and I am special counsel to the Mayor. I am joined by Deputy Commissioner Winette Saunders from the Department of Correction and Eric Contreras and Lora-Lynn Byfield from the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the issues of: (1) promoting absentee voting among jailed individuals; (2) tracking the efficacy of distributing voter registration materials to students and providing students with registration materials in appropriate languages; and (3) providing assistance, if requested, for individuals signing up to be organ donors as part of the agency-based voter registration program.

Voting and civic participation are essential to a healthy democracy. The administration shares your concerns regarding New York City's extremely low voter participation rates. Not only is the number of registered voters among eligible citizens appallingly low, but the number of registered voters who actually go out and vote is only a fraction of where it should be.

Unfortunately, we all know that voter turnout among young people is even worse than the abysmal voter turnout rates of other adults.

Mayor de Blasio is deeply committed to reducing barriers to voter participation to make it easier to register to vote and to get out to vote. The Mayor's Office is working with our City agencies and the Board of Elections in the City of New York to make registration easier and more accessible and to make voting more efficient. To operationalize our commitment, we have created a Working Group that consists of me, the Mayor's Office of Operations, the Community Assistance Unit and the Mayor's Office of City Legislative Affairs. As one example of the efforts of the Working Group, it has worked with NYC Technology Development Corp. to develop an online voting registration pilot which is being tested at DCAS. It is not fully electronic because the State Board of Elections still requires an ink signature for voter registration and has thus far declined to accept electronic signatures.

As you know, City Charter Section 1057-a, which was enacted as Local Law 29 of 2000, requires certain City agencies and their contractors to assist and implement a program of distribution of voter registration forms to clients who are applying for, renewing or seeking recertification of services. Last year the Council amended Section 1057-a to add seven additional agencies to the program. Consistent with this administration's commitment to reducing barriers to voter participation, and to increase compliance with existing laws, the Mayor issued Directive One in 2014. Directive One requires the now 24 designated agencies to develop plans to ensure compliance with Local Law 29, and to submit semi-annual reports regarding implementation.

Last fall, the original 17 participating agencies each designated a primary coordinator for voter registration and submitted plans to comply with the law and directive.

Over the last year, the agencies:

- received in-person and online training for front line workers from the Campaign Finance Board;
- received an online tracking tool to capture activity at dispersed sites;
- obtained access to signage developed by the Campaign Finance Board;
- received a web site button to electronically link to voter registration for their home pages; and
- received instructions on securing registration forms from the Board of Elections.

We have also begun discussions with the Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation to explore how to best leverage technology in this effort.

These first 17 agencies submitted their first reports on July 15 of this year. The reports were reviewed by the working group with recommendations going back to the agencies, where needed. They were summarized and compiled in a report to the Council submitted on August 15, 2015. The next report is due January 15, 2016.

We are now in the process of integrating the seven new agencies designated in the expansion legislation into the program. The Mayor's Office of Operations has met with the seven new agencies and their implementation plans were due at the end of September with a start date of no

later than December 2015. The Working Group is following up with the agencies to assure that the plans are complete.

The working group has also met with voting advocates throughout the past year and will meet with them next in early October. We are in the process of securing translations of the voter registration forms, a voter registration guide and Voting FAQs prepared by the Campaign Finance Board so that they will be available in all of the languages required by EO 120 and by DOE - Arabic, Creole, Russian, French and Urdu – as well as the languages that the Board of Elections uses - Chinese, Spanish, Korean and Bengali.

Thus, we are aggressively pursuing ways to make it easier for NYC residents to register to vote. We strive to make it as easy and simple as possible. We firmly believe that exercising the right to vote for elected officials is the most effective way for people to make their voices heard in representative government. We are hopeful that our efforts are making real and lasting change with respect to voter participation.

With that, I will now address the specific pieces of legislation

628

The Administration applauds the City Council in its efforts to increase civic participation among our young people. As the Committee is aware, in accordance the Young Adult Voter Registration Act (YAVRA) enacted in 2004, the DOE provides voter registration forms to every graduating senior and to every high school for placement in their respective central offices. The

registration forms are delivered to schools along with a memo to school leaders, which outlines the provisions of YAVRA and explains how the registration forms should be distributed, and encourages students to return their registration forms and become active voters. In the weeks before graduation a notice is also included in the Chancellor's weekly newsletter to principals regarding the requirements of YAVRA. In addition to the distribution of voter registration forms, the importance of voting is a consistent and pervasive content strand throughout the grades K-12 New York City Social Studies curriculum and the New York State Social Studies framework.

Intro. 628 amends this law to require the City Board of Elections to assign a code to each geographic school district and create voter registration materials that include the relevant geographic codes. Voter registration forms that include the codes would then be distributed to students "at the same time and in the same manner as it delivers diplomas." Further, the DOE would need registration forms in "any language authorized by the state or city board of elections that the DOE deems appropriate for the students at each school."

The DOE would then issue reports, by borough and school, as to the number of students who were 17 or 18 at each school and the manner in which the materials were distributed.

The Board of Elections would then be required to add to its annual report, in a detailed description, by geographic school district, how the forms were distributed and how many were distributed, in what languages they were distributed, and how many were completed and returned to the board.

While the administration appreciates the spirit of the bill, it has a number of concerns with the legal and practical implications of these requirements.

As an initial matter, the City has serious concerns about placing affirmative operational mandates upon the Board of Elections, which performs a state function when it administers voter registration. The bill's new obligation to create many different coded registration forms and then track the distribution and return of those forms in the Board's annual report may well place an undue burden upon the appropriate exercise of that state function.

Moreover, we find this bill, as it relates to coding school districts, to be overly burdensome and essentially impractical. The city is divided up into 32 geographic districts. New York City has over 70,000 seniors who attend more than 550 high schools, public charter high schools and District 79 programs located throughout the five boroughs.

Printing 32 district forms in 10 different languages (a total of 320 different forms) for 70,000 students and assuring that the right forms went to the right schools would be a huge waste of paper and financial and operational resources. The City would need to spend tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars to implement a flawed system to find out merely whether schools are or are not registering high school seniors to vote. Additionally, assuming there are approximately 10 or more schools in each geographical district, all using the same code, it will be functionally impossible to identify or target the schools that are in need of more oversight.

This bill would likely create many more problems, procedurally, logistically and legally, than it would solve.

We are also concerned about the effectiveness of the current program. Delivering the voter registration forms to students at the same time as they are receiving their diploma is a misguided attempt to highlight the importance of voting. Giving voter registration forms to students as they walk out the door rather than making it part of a broader discussion of civic rights and responsibilities does not seem to be the best way to register voters and integrate these students into our civil society. It is unlikely that students are going to be thinking about voting on the day of their high school graduation, which is one of the most important moments in their lives. It's very bad timing. It is more effective to provide voter registration at a more appropriate time during the school year.

Last year the DOE worked with the City Council on a pilot program led by Council member Rosenthal to encourage more high school students to register to vote. As the Committee may be aware, the pilot program included a day of civic engagement activities culminating in a classroom voter registration drive for our 17- and 18year old students. 15 Council Members and 26 schools participated and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the current school year and hope more schools will join this important program.

Because each high school is different it is important that DOE and the high schools are provided with the flexibility to develop their own programs and implementation plan. The present law already provides that flexibility in subdivision b, and we therefore urge the Councilmembers to continue and expand these voluntary efforts by considering whether to afford greater flexibility

in the graduation day mandate of present subdivision c, while ensuring that DOE has the necessary discretion to determine the appropriate means of incorporating voter registration into its educational mission. The administration strongly supports school-based voter registration programs and looks forward to working collaboratively with Councilmembers on these programs that I outlined above.

In short, we look forward to working with the Council to find a more targeted solution in educating students about the importance of voting.

I'm sure Mr. Contreras and Ms. Byfield from the DOE are available with me to answer questions regarding intro. 628.

464

Intro 464 requires the DOC to implement and administer a program of distribution and submission of absentee ballot applications, and subsequently received absentee ballots, for eligible inmates who are in NYC jails. The Administration generally supports this bill, though there may be a need for technical amendments to ensure that absentee ballot applications are made available only to those who may submit them under Election Law. I will leave it to DOC to speak to any concerns they may have.

796:

Intro. 796 would require the staff at the 24 agencies that currently participate in the agency-based voter registration program to provide assistance with respect to the section of the form allowing

individuals to register to become an organ or tissue donor in NYC, if such assistance is requested or if assistance is normally provided w/the agency's own forms. The value of this important program cannot be over-estimated and the administration is supportive of this bill.

I look forward to answering your questions.

Statement before the
New York City Council
Committee on Government Operations
Ben Kallos, Chairman

By: Winette Saunders, Deputy Commissioner
NYC Department of Correction

October 1, 2015

Good Morning, Chairman Kallos and members of the Committee on Government Operations. My name is Winette Saunders. I am the Deputy Commissioner of Youthful Offender Programming at the New York City Department of Correction. I am testifying before you today to discuss the Department's policy related to voter registration, absentee ballots, and specifically Intro 464, which would require the Department's implementation and administration of a program for the distribution and submission of absentee ballot applications.

The New York City Department of Correction strongly advocates for all inmates to be educated on their right to vote and be given every opportunity to register and/or vote. To that end, the Department has worked diligently to ensure that all inmates are made aware of the effects, if any, of their incarceration on their right to vote, and the absentee ballot process that may be available.

Pursuant to Local Law 29 of 2000, the Department of Correction provides for the comprehensive distribution of voter registration materials to inmates, individuals visiting inmates, and Department staff. Voter registration forms, obtained from the NYC Board of Elections are offered in several languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean. DOC uses a number of avenues to ensure department-wide availability of voter registration information throughout the year, including posting informational fliers and posters and distributing voter applications in congregate areas, such as facility law libraries, social services areas, ministerial areas, barbershops, and visit areas. In addition, the Inmate Handbook, provided to each inmate upon entry into DOC custody, contains a section dedicated to the topic of voting. The section explains who may vote and the voter registration and absentee ballot process. The handbook also informs inmates how to obtain and mail back their voter registration forms and absentee ballot forms and/or applications.

The Department provides all materials year round in all facilities, including the Benjamin Ward Visit Center. In addition, voter rights awareness events are held before major general and primary elections (City and Federal), around national voter registration day, and during Voter Awareness month.

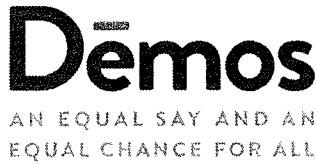
Voter rights awareness events are conducted in collaboration with partner agencies. During these events, inmates are able to submit voter registration cards and absentee ballot applications which are then delivered to the Board of Elections. These events are significant efforts, which is why we partner with outside groups. To effectively canvas all facilities requires considerable staffing and training. During the last election event, a group of eighty (80) volunteers and DOC staff were assigned within the ten (10) department facilities. Housing area by housing area, the group made announcements and assisted inmates as needed. Absentee ballot applications were widely distributed as part of these efforts. Furthermore, the Department issued teletypes, which were read to staff at all roll calls, to inform all staff of the voting information, that applications and registration forms are placed in facility areas, and related application deadlines.

As I mentioned earlier, the Department certainly recognizes the critical importance of the right to vote and the need for everyone not only to be informed of their right to vote, but also to be provided with the means to do so. The Department has taken steps to ensure that inmates have access to voter information throughout the year and not simply leading up to an election.

Currently, the Department provides voter information throughout the year and makes special efforts to ensure inmate accessibility to voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications, and assistance completing such forms and applications prior to elections. This legislation would require the Department to provide such information and assistance within a set time frame and require that the Department, within five (5) days after receipt of an absentee ballot application or absentee ballot, transmit it to the Board of Elections. Currently, absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots are considered privileged mail, and are mailed by inmates in the same manner as they would any other piece of mail. We believe this procedure complies with the requirements of the bill and there would be no need to change these procedures.

The Department's efforts to encourage voting are exemplary. DOC has served as a presenter at the NYC Campaign's Finance Board's annual Local Law 29 training that focuses on how to raise awareness of voting rights for NYC residents. DOC has been selected because of the innovative and collaborative practices we utilize to raise awareness for this unique population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. I am happy to answer any questions.



FOR THE RECORD

Hearing of the New York City Council
Committee on Governmental Operations
October 1, 2015

RE: Int. No. 464 - In relation to the Department of Correction promoting absentee voting among jailed individuals.

Int. No. 628 - In relation to improving young adults' access to voter registration materials by requiring the department of education of the city of New York and the board of elections of the city of New York to provide students with registration materials in appropriate languages and to track and report on the efficacy of distributing registration materials to students.

Res. No. 848- Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature and the People of the State of New York to amend the State Constitution, and the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation amending the Election Law to establish same-day and online voter registration.

Res. No. 695 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A2529/S857, allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote.

Thank you for inviting Demos to testify today about these measures to improve the administration of voter registration and increase political participation in New York City and State. My name is Liz Kennedy, and I am Campaign Strategist and Counsel for Demos, a non-partisan public policy organization that works for an America where we all have an equal say in our democracy and an equal chance in our economy. We believe that it is our government's responsibility to lower the barriers to political participation and take affirmative steps to encourage and facilitate voting, particularly among young people and other under-represented groups, and we commend the Committee for taking up the bills under consideration today.

The Department of Corrections should Promote Absentee Voting Among Jailed Individuals.

We support having the Department of Corrections promote absentee voting among jailed individuals who retain their eligibility. These individuals are in the

custody of the state, and unable to physically appear at their assigned polling places to cast a ballot. Thus, to it is incumbent upon the Department of Corrections to administer a program of distribution and submission of absentee ballot applications and ballots to all inmates who are eligible to vote (and return the ballots once cast to the Board of Elections).

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, which includes a disproportionate number of people of color. Taking affirmative steps to increase voting among eligible inmates will help close the voting gaps that lead to the voting population being older, whiter, and wealthier than the general population. A new Demos report “Why Voting Matters: Large Disparities in Turnout Benefit the Donor Class” notes that:

- In 2012, 26 million eligible voters of color did not vote, and among eligible voters earning less than \$50,000, 47 million did not vote.
- In 2014, 44 million eligible voters of color did not vote, and 66 million eligible voters earning less than \$50,000 did not vote.¹

To truly have a system of representative self-government we need to incorporate the voices of all the members of our society. Currently, public policy is “deeply biased towards affluent white people.”² Having the department of corrections administer a program to distribute, collect, and transmit, absentee ballots on behalf of eligible inmates is a positive step to increase political participation and cause government to be more responsive.

New York State should allow 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote, and New York City should monitor the success of its registration programs and offer registration materials in appropriate languages.

In the 2008 election, young people voted at the second-highest rate of all time.³ Voter turnout among 18-24 year olds grew by double digits from 2000 to 2008. Yet, they still had the lowest turnout of any age group. Sixty-seven percent of citizens 30 years or older voted.⁴ In contrast, less than half of eligible voters between the ages of 18-24 voted.⁵ In other words, in the second highest turnout of all time, more young people did not vote than voted.

This low level of turnout for any group is not good for our democracy. Young people face unique policy concerns and they should voice their preferences and

¹ Sean McElwee, *Why Voting Matters: Large disparities in turnout benefit the donor class*, Demos, September 2015, available at <http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Why%20Voting%20Matters-%20Large%20disparities%20in%20turnout%20benefit%20the%20donor%20class.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Research Products Fact Sheet New Census Data Confirm Increase in Youth Voter Turnout In 2008 Election, (April 28 2009) available at <http://www.civicyouth.org/new-census-data-confirm-increase-in-youth-voter-turnout-in-2008-election/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

priorities through the electoral process. Without their participation, our representative democracy becomes significantly less representative.

The primary indicator of voter turnout is registration. Once registered, voters are much more likely to turn out to vote. In the last Presidential election, the overall voting rate was 61.8 percent, but over 86 percent of registered voters voted.⁶ The disparity in registration rates can be seen with young voters. In the 2008 election, only 59 percent of eligible voters between the ages of 18 to 24 were registered to vote. In contrast, 74 percent of eligible voters over the age of 24 were registered to vote.⁷

Engaging potential voters at a young age is a successful way to increase voter registration, not just in the short term but also over a lifetime. Voters who are engaged at an early age are more likely to stay engaged.⁸ Pre-registering 16 and 17 year olds to vote can be an important first step to engaging young adults. It has also been proven to work. In 2008, pre-registered young voters in Florida turned out at a rate 4.7 percent higher than young voters who registered after turning 18.⁹

Pre-registration does not require any additional voter registration databases. Young voters who are not yet 18 can be entered as “pending.” Once they reach 18, their registrations can automatically move from pending to active. Currently, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia allow eligible voters to pre-register at sixteen.¹⁰ In Colorado, anyone who is an eligible voter over the age of 16 can register to vote, even if they will not be 18 by the time of the next election.¹¹ In addition, nine states allow voters to pre-register at seventeen.¹² Adding to this, 20 states allow teens to register if they will be 18 before the next election and seven states allow teens to register if they will turn 18 before the next general election.^{13, 14}

Additionally, beyond pre-registration, several states have programs to further engage young voters. Hawaii’s Office of Elections conducts pre-registration

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. The Diversifying Electorate- Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections), (2013) available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-568.pdf>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ The New America Foundation, Empowering California’s Youth: A proposal allowing voters to pre-register at age 16, (2007) available at http://www.newamerica.net/files/nafmigration/Pre_Registration_at_Age_16.pdf

⁹ Michael P. McDonald & Matthew Thornburg, Registering the Youth: Preregistration Programs, 13 N.Y.U. J. Legis. & Pub. Policy 51, 567 n.88 (2010), available at <http://www.nyujlpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Michael-P.-McDonald-Matthew-Thornburg-Registering-the-Youth-Through-Voter-Preregistration.pdf>

¹⁰ National Conference of State Legislatures, Pre-Registration for Young People (2013), available at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/preregistration-for-young-voters.aspx> (2013); A Uniform Advance Voter Registration Age: Boosting More Efficient Registration and Education Programs (2012), available at <http://www.fairvote.org/assets/Uniform-Registration-FACT-SHEETNATIONAL.pdf>

¹¹ The Governor of Colorado signed this measure on May 10, 2013. H.B. 13-1135, 69th Gen. Assembly., Reg. Sess. (Col. 2013), available at

<http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/C9538D3A79A9B9C487257AEE00573D96?open&file=1135sstaapp.pdf>

¹² National Conference of State Legislature, Pre-Registration for Young People

¹³ Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. Ibid

¹⁴ Arizona, Connecticut, Mississippi, Virginia, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Ohio.

outreach activities in the state's high schools through the Young Voter Registration Program.¹⁵The Office of Elections also recruits student volunteers to help conduct the pre-registration drives, which further engages young voters.¹⁶

Florida, which also provides pre-registration, has the Supervisor of Elections staff come to schools for one day and conduct registration drives through individual classroom visits or school- wide assemblies.¹⁷ In Osakaloosa and Palm Beach Counties, Supervisors of Elections voluntarily and on their own initiative extended their outreach activities to private schools, elementary and middle schools, and juvenile detention facilities.¹⁸

Washington State started a "Happy 18th Birthday" pilot program in 2008 where the Secretary of State mailed either a postage paid registration form pre-filled with the recipient's information or a postcard with instructions for Washington's online voter registration system to randomly selected young people nearing their 18th birthdays.¹⁹ A January 2009 analysis using the state voter registration database showed that 19-20 percent of those who received the mailing registered in time to vote in the presidential primary, whereas only 8 percent in the control group did so.²⁰ Wisconsin reaches out to young voters through a state law that establishes a "registration deputy" at every high school that is filled by a volunteering teacher or staff person.²¹

New York City is to be commended for its Young Adult Voter Registration Act. In our experience enforcing the National Voter Registration Act, Demos has found that implementing systems to monitor and report the provision of voter registration services leads to increased compliance and higher rates of voter registration.

We also support providing voting materials in all appropriate languages, since differing degrees of English proficiency should not disenfranchise any eligible voters in our vibrantly diverse metropolis.

New York State Should Expand its Online Voter Registration Program.

Many states are modernizing their election administration, adopting programs so voters can register to vote and update their registrations online, and we commend New York for being among them. Implementing Online Voter

¹⁵ McDonald & Thornburg, Registering the Youth: Preregistration Programs.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The Center for Voting and Democracy, Voter Preregistration Best Practices . (2013), available at <http://www.fairvote.org/voter-preregistration-best-practices/#.UdSOTDsqYr0>

¹⁸ McDonald & Thornburg, Registering the Youth: Preregistration Programs.

¹⁹ The Pew Center on the States, Washington State's Make Voting Work for 18 Year-Olds —Experiment 1 (Oct. 2009), available at http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2009/Washington_18_years_old_voting_brief.pdf

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ 2003 WISCONSIN ACT 265, § 41. 6.28 (2) (b) Wisconsin State Assembly. (Apr. 24, 2004), available at http://archive.fairvote.org/media/youthreg/WI_LAW.pdf

Registration is a logical step to integrate available technological advances into our electoral system. So far at least 28 states have adopted or are in the process of implementing the practice: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, as well as Washington D.C.

Registering voters online saves states and localities money. Printing and postage costs are typically borne by the government when using paper registration forms. Approximately one-third of the budgets of elections officials are spent on registration.²² Switching to an online system can result in significant savings at all levels of government. Arizona, for example, saw cost savings of over \$450,000 in Maricopa County alone in 2008.²³ The state first implemented paperless online registration in 2002 and over 70 percent of all voter registrations are now performed online.²⁴ In switching to an online system, Arizona found that, on average, paper registration costs were \$0.83 per registration, while the cost of an online registration was \$0.03.²⁵ In addition to significant cost savings, between 2002 and 2004, the state saw a 9.5 percent increase in voter registrations.²⁶ Washington and Delaware also report cost savings from using online registration.²⁷

Using technology can also help reduce the submission of incomplete forms. Too often a voter thinks he or she has registered but an incomplete form can make for a nonexistent registration. The computer protocol can make it impossible to transmit the form with missing data, enabling voters to have greater confidence in the system. Online registration also eliminates one part of election officials' job that has proven especially onerous and error-prone—deciphering applicants' handwriting in order to enter information into the registration system.

Online registration programs also reach an increasingly Internet savvy population, especially young Americans. Nearly 76 percent of individuals in the U.S. now live in a household with Internet access.²⁸ Online registration particularly benefits young Americans who are among the most likely to have Internet access but are the least likely to be registered to vote.²⁹ A recent study of Arizona's online registration system found that young and of-color voters are disproportionately likely to register online. Registration rates among 18-24 year-old citizens rose from

²² Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA), *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration* 17 (Jan. 2014) available at <http://www.supportthevoter.gov/>.

²³ Wendy R. Weiser & Christopher Ponoroff, *Voter Registration in a Digital Age*, (July 13, 2010), available at http://brennancenter.org/content/resource/voter_registration_in_a_digita...

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ PCEA, *The American Voting Experience* 26.

²⁸ Weiser, *Voter Registration in a Digital Age*.

²⁹ Michelle K. Cohen, *Online Voter Registration* (May 2013), available at <http://www.projectvote.org/images/publications/Online%20Voter%20Registration/Policy-Paper-Online-Registration-May-2013.pdf>

29 to 53 percent after it introduced online and automated registration.³⁰ Additionally, the Presidential Commission on Election Administration reports evidence that turnout may be higher among those registering online: “in Arizona in 2008, 94 percent of online registrants voted compared to 85 percent of those who registered by paper.”³¹

One limitation of online registration stems from state practices for capturing a voter’s signature. New York should expand its Online Voter Registration program to include eligible citizens who do not possess a state issued identification. Delaware allows any individual with a Social Security number to register online. The system transmits the data to the appropriate county electronically, but at the end of the registration process, the user must print, sign, and mail a form generated by the system to complete the registration. The application is incomplete until the signed form is received; however, if the form is not received, the individual can still vote a regular ballot on Election Day by showing ID³² and providing a signature at the polling place.³³ In Connecticut, a recently passed law will allow online registration for any individuals who have a signature stored in any database available to the state, including federal databases.³⁴

Also, New York could implement technology to electronically capture signatures, similar to signing for credit purchases or signing touchscreens. In 2010, Santa Clara County, California became the first to accept voter registration forms that were signed by hand and submitted electronically using mobile, touchscreen technology.³⁵ Each applicant’s information and electronic signature, captured on a mobile Internet device touchscreen, were integrated into a secure PDF file and applicants were able to email the secure file to the county elections office.³⁶

New York State Should Allow Same Day Registration.

Same Day Registration is a time-tested and proven pro-voter reform that significantly increases voter participation—particularly amongst populations with traditionally lower voter registration and turnout—without compromising the integrity of elections or substantially increasing costs. Voters in nine states and the District of Columbia successfully used Same Day Registration during the 2012 Presidential Elections; voters in five additional states were able to use Same Day

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ PCEA, *The American Voting Experience* 26.

³² The ID requirement is not limited to state-issued photo identification, and permits the use of utility bills, bank statements, etc. e.g., Delaware Commissioner of Elections, *Web Based Voter Registration Application*, § Terms & Agreement (2013), available at <https://registertovote.elections.delaware.gov/voterreg/TermsAgreement>

³³ Brennan Center for Justice, *VRM in the States: Delaware* (June 14, 2012), available at <http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/vrm-states-delaware>.

³⁴ H.B. 5024, Gen. Assembly, Feb. Sess. (Conn. 2012), available at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/ACT/PA/2012PA-00056-R00HB-05024-PA.htm>

³⁵ Fair Elections Legal Network, *Mobile Voter Registration* (Oct. 2010), available at http://fairelectionsnetwork.com/webfm_send/61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Registration programs for the 2014 Midterm Elections.³⁷ Same Day Registration was pioneered by Maine, Minnesota, Idaho, Wisconsin, and Wyoming in the 1970s, and in the last decade Same Day Registration has been adopted in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maryland, Montana, North Carolina, Vermont, and the District of Columbia (though it has been ended in North Carolina as part of the state's retrogressive moves to restrict voting access).³⁸

The number of eligible but unregistered voters in America is substantial – in 2012, 25 percent of eligible voters, roughly 51 million Americans were not registered.³⁹ One reason is because America is a highly mobile society. According to the US Census Bureau, nearly 36 million individuals changed residences between 2012 and 2013.⁴⁰ Many of these individuals failed to register to vote before the registration deadline, and found themselves unable to cast a ballot. Others who had timely submitted their voter registration applications found on Election Day that their names had not been added to the voter rolls and that their votes would not be counted.

Same Day Registration remedies both of these problems. Voters simply register to vote on Election Day or during the early voting period, or update a pre-existing registration record, and cast a ballot that will be counted. In 2012, approximately 1.5 million Americans used Same-Day Registration to vote their ballots and participate in democracy.⁴¹

Same Day Registration Increases Voter Registration and Turnout

States that allow Same Day Registration consistently lead the nation in voter participation. Four of the top five states for voter turnout in the 2012 presidential election offered Same Day Registration (the fifth, Colorado, enacted it in 2013).⁴² Average voter turnout consistently stands, on average, between 10 and 12 percentage points higher in Same Day Registration states than in non-Same Day Registration states.⁴³ Academic studies show that a significant part of this difference is directly attributable to Same Day Registration, and experts predict that adoption of Same Day Registration can increase turnout by a full three to six percentage

³⁷ For the 2012 Presidential Election, Same Day Registration was in place in Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. California and Connecticut passed SDR in 2012; Maryland and Colorado in 2013, and in 2014 Illinois and Utah adopted Same Day Registration pilot programs. California will not fully implement SDR until June of 2016; Connecticut, Maryland and Colorado have operated SDR since 2013; Illinois passed a law in January 2015 to make Same Day Registration permanent. North Carolina repealed One-Stop Voting, which included SDR, in 2013.

³⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures, *Same Day Voter Registration*, (2013) available at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-registration.aspx>

³⁹ The Pew Center on the States, *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America's Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade 1-2* (Feb. 14, 2012) available at

⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *Geographical Mobility 2012-2013* (Table 1), available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/migration/data/cps/cps2013.html>

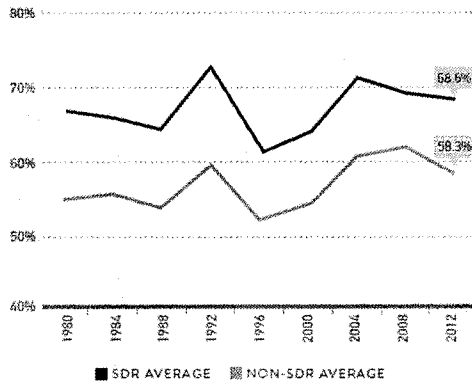
⁴¹ Estelle S. Rogers & Steven Carbó, *Same-Day Registration—a Factsheet* (Project Vote & Dēmos ed. July 2013), available at <http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/SameDayRegistration-Explainer.pdf>.

⁴² Rogers & Carbó, *Same-Day Registration*, at endnote 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

points.⁴⁴ Moreover, this increase can be achieved without administrative burden or increased incidence of voter fraud.⁴⁵

Turnout Rates in SDR vs. Non-SDR States, 1980–2012, Presidential Election Years



SOURCE: U.S. Elections Project, <http://elections.gmu.edu/turnout%201980-2012.xls>

STATE	VOTERS USING SDR	SDR USAGE (% OF VOTERS)
Idaho	117,861	17.69%
Iowa	66,289	4.17%
Maine	58,474	8.07%
Minnesota	527,867	17.89%
Montana	8,053	1.64%
New Hampshire	99,299	13.81%
North Carolina	249,922	5.61%
Wisconsin	337,880	10.95%
Wyoming*	28,017	11.18%
Washington, DC	34,646	11.77%
TOTAL	1,528,300	10.04%

SOURCE: As reported by state elections officials. Data on file with Demos.

* Preliminary 2012 data; further review pending

Same Day Registration Overcomes Barriers to the Vote

Voter registration serves several reasonable purposes. It helps ensure that only eligible citizens can cast a vote, and provides election officials with convenient lists they can use to notify voters about upcoming elections and the voting process.

However, pre-election voter registration requirements impose costs on voters as well, contributing to lower turnout among eligible voters in the United States. Requiring voters to register well in advance of an election is simply unworkable for many Americans. Many previously registered voters lose their eligibility merely because they have moved. About one in eight Americans moved in each of the 2008, 2010 and 2012 election, and were most likely to have registration

⁴⁴ See Stephen Knack, "Election Day Registration: The Second Wave," *American Politics Quarterly* 29(1), 65-78 (2001); Knack and White 2000; Craig L. Brians & Bernard Grofman, "Election Day Registration's Effect on U.S. Voter Turnout," *Social Science Quarterly* 82(1); 171-83 (March 2001); Mark J. Fenster, "The Impact of Allowing Day of Registration Voting on Turnout in U.S. Elections from 1960 to 1992," *American Politics Quarterly* 22(1)(1994): 74-87.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., R. Michael Alvarez, Stephen Ansolabehere and Dēmos, *California Votes: The Promise of Election Day Registration* (30 November 2008), available at http://www.vote.caltech.edu/sites/default/files/california_votes.pdf; R. Michael Alvarez, Jonathan Nagler and Catherine Wilson, *Making Voting Easier: Election Day Registration in New York* (23 April 2004), available at [http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/NY%20EDR%20report%202004%20-%20FINAL\(2\).pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/NY%20EDR%20report%202004%20-%20FINAL(2).pdf); M.J. Fenster, "The Impact of Allowing Day of Registration Voting on Turnout in U.S. Elections from 1960 to 1992," *American Politics Quarterly* 22(1) (1994): 74-87; B. Highton, "Easy Registration and Voter Turnout," *The Journal of Politics* 59(2), 565-575 (1997); Lorraine C. Minnite, *An Analysis of Voter Fraud in The United States* (19 December 2007), available at <http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Analysis.pdf>; Dēmos, *Election Day Registration: A Ground Level View* (20 November 2007), available at http://www.Demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/EDR_Clerks.pdf; S. Knack, "Election-Day Registration: The Second Wave," *American Politics Quarterly* 29(1) (2001), 65-78.

difficulties at the polls.⁴⁶ When you have just moved to, or are jumping from one job to the next while raising a family, registering to vote weeks in advance of an election may not be at the top of your to-do list.

This hurdle is compounded by the fact that the “percentage of people giving ‘quite a lot’ of thought to U.S. Presidential elections rises dramatically in the final four weeks prior to the election, just at the time when registration is no longer possible in half the states.”⁴⁷

Same Day Registration directly addresses these problems. Eligible citizens who have moved but failed to update their registration records, or missed the pre-election voter registration deadline, can simply register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day or during the early voting period. Same Day Registration can particularly benefit young adults, who move more frequently than the general population. Research indicates that allowing young people to register to vote on Election Day and other voting days could increase youth turnout in presidential elections by as much as 14 percentage points.⁴⁸

Same Day Registration Allows Voters to Correct Registration Problems Discovered at the Polls

Many Americans’ ability to exercise the vote is frustrated each election by faulty voter registration systems and records. In a 2012 report, the Pew Center on the States found that current voter registration systems “are plagued with errors and inefficiencies that waste taxpayer dollars, undermine voter confidence, and fuel partisan disputes over the integrity of our elections.”⁴⁹ According to experts at MIT, problems with registration resulted in 2.2 million votes lost in the 2008 general election.⁵⁰ Another study showed that 5.7 million people faced a registration-related problem that needed to be resolved before voting.⁵¹

⁴⁶ See: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Data on Geographical Mobility/Migration, available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/migration/data/cps.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, “Mover Rate Reaches Record Low, Census Bureau Reports,” November 15, 2011, cited in The Pew Center on the States, *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America’s Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade* (February 2012), at http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_Upgrading_Voter_Registration.pdf.

⁴⁷ Steven Carbo and Brenda Wright, “The Promise and Practice of Election Day Registration,” p. 72, in *America Votes!* (Benjamin E. Griffith ed., 2008), citing The Gallup Poll, *The Nine Weeks of Election 2000* (cited in Dēmos, *Voters Win with Election Day Registration* [26 May 2011], available at http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Voters_Win_2010_demos.pdf).

⁴⁸ Mary Fitzgerald, *Easier Voting Methods Boost Youth Turnout (February 2003)*, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), available at <http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP01Fitzgerald.pdf>.

⁴⁹ The Pew Center on the States, *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America’s Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*, February 2012, at http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_Upgrading_Voter_Registration.pdf.

⁵⁰ R. Michael Alvarez, Stephen Ansolabehere; Adam Berinsky; Gabriel Lenz; Charles Stewart III and Thad Hall, *2008 Survey of the Performance of American Elections, Final Report* (2008), available at <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Final%20report20090218.pdf>, cited in The Pew Center on the States, *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America’s Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*, February 2012, at http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_Upgrading_Voter_Registration.pdf.

⁵¹ See: Stephen Ansolabehere, “Voting Experiences,” PowerPoint presentation, July 30, 2009. This presentation reported findings originally published in the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (Cambridge, MA: Common Content, Release 1, 2009), cited in The Pew Center on the States, *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America’s Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*, February 2012, at http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_Upgrading_Voter_Registration.pdf.

Same-Day Registration provides a real-time, effective remedy to problems like these. A previously registered voter who only learns when she goes to vote that her name has been left off the voter rolls can simply update a faulty registration record or register anew with Same Day Registration, and cast a ballot that will be counted.

Same Day Registration is a Cost-Effective Means of Increasing Voter Participation

Implementing Same Day Registration may require little to no additional expenditures. In the 2008 presidential election, the state of Iowa spent less than \$40,000 to introduce Same Day Registration in its 99 counties. The single biggest cost incurred — \$26,000 — was for producing a training video used statewide by auditors and precinct officials. An additional \$9,000 was spent on Same Day Registration precinct kits, including registration forms, oath forms, and instructions; and \$1,568 was spent on Same Day Registration information brochures.⁵² All in all, Same Day Registration was implemented in a cost-effective manner — one that could easily be duplicated.

The cost of Same Day Registration implementation for Iowa's 99 counties was also minimal. Nearly half of the Iowa counties participating in a recent Demos study reported no direct costs, or only minimal costs associated with Same Day Registration.⁵³ On Election Day, most of the counties did not require additional staffing at the polls. And while some counties hired additional precinct officials to handle Same Day Registration, most new expenses were associated with additional printing and mailing of Same Day Registration-related forms.⁵⁴

The experience in Iowa is typical of the long-standing Same Day Registration states. One authoritative study indicates that elections are no more expensive to administer in states where voters use Same Day Registration than non-Same Day Registration states.⁵⁵ Indeed, in a telephone survey conducted by Demos of local election officials in the Same Day Registration states of Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, most respondents described the incremental cost of Same Day Registration as "minimal."⁵⁶ Where costs did exist, they were used for training and employing additional staff to help with registrations and with inputting data in the days following an election.⁵⁷ Note, though, that

⁵² [Former] Iowa Secretary of State Michael A. Mauro, "Iowa Secretary of State 2008 Report," on file at Demos.

⁵³ Laura Rokoff, Emma Stokking, *Small Investments, High Yields: A Cost Study of Same-Day Registration in Iowa and North Carolina*, Demos: A Network for Ideas & Action (forthcoming February 2012).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ R. Michael Alvarez, Stephen Ansolabehere and Catherine H. Wilson, *Election Day Voter Registration In the United States: How One-Step Voting Can Change the Composition of the American Electorate* (June 2002), available at http://vote.caltech.edu/sites/default/files/vtp_wp5.pdf.

⁵⁶ Demos, *Election Day Registration: A Ground-Level View*, available at http://www.demos.org/pubs/EDR_Clerks.pdf.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

respondents stated that Same Day Registration *neither added work nor expense*, but instead *shifted* the cost burden from one time and place to another.⁵⁸

Safeguarding the Vote with Same Day Registration

The great majority of local elections officials in Same Day Registration states surveyed reported that current fraud-prevention measures suffice to ensure the integrity of elections.⁵⁹ They also believe that Same Day Registration does not invite voter fraud.⁶⁰ In fact, the great majority of local elections officials in Same Day Registration states who participated in two Dēmos surveys reported that current fraud-prevention measures suffice to ensure the integrity of elections.⁶¹ Same Day Registration states impose heavy penalties for voter fraud; in the majority of states voters are required to show proof of residency and must sign an oath attesting to their identity and citizenship. Additionally, unlike registration by mail, Same Day Registration requires eligible voters to attest to their identity face-to-face before an elections official. Election audits, with strict penalties for violations, add an additional level of verification.⁶²

Moreover, elections officials familiar with SDR strongly endorse it. Mark Ritchie, Minnesota's long-time Secretary of State said, "Election Day Registration is much more secure because you have the person right in front of you—not a postcard in the mail. That is a no brainer. We [Minnesota] have 33 years of doing this."⁶³ Debbye Lathrop, the County Clerk in Laramie County, Wyoming said, "I think Election Day voter registration gives every citizen the greatest opportunity to participate in the greatest right that they have been provided."⁶⁴

Conclusion

We support the New York City Council's continued efforts to encourage political participation by all eligible New Yorkers, so that every voice can be heard in setting the course for our democracy.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Cristina Vasile & Regina Eaton, *Election Day Best Practices: An Implementation Guide* (July 2010), Dēmos, <http://www.demos.org/publication/election-day-registration-best-practices-implementation-guide>, page 25.

⁶⁰ See: Lorraine C. Minnite, *The Myth of Voter Fraud* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); also Minnite, *Election Day Registration: "A Study of Voter Fraud Allegations and Findings on Voter Roll Security* 18 November 2007), available at http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/edr_fraud.pdf.

⁶¹ Dēmos: *Election Day Registration: A Ground-Level View* (see above, at endnote 30).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Steven Carbó & Brenda Wright, *The Promise and Practice of Election Day Registration*, *America Votes! A Guide to Modern Election Law and Voting Rights* Ch. 5 (Chicago: ABA Publishing ed. 2008), available at <http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/The-Promise-and%20Practice-of-Election-Day-Registration-copy.pdf>.

⁶⁴ ⁶⁴*Ibid*



TESTIMONY

The New York City Council
Committee on Governmental Operations
Public Hearing on
Proposed Legislation on Voter Registration
&
Absentee Voting from Our City Jails

October 1, 2015
New York, New York

Prepared by:
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Testimony of the Legal Aid Society
Before The New York City Council
Committee on Government Operations

October 1, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to testify concerning the efforts to improve access to voting rights for all New Yorkers including individuals who are incarcerated in the New York City jails and young adults. We submit this testimony on behalf of The Legal Aid Society, and thank Chair Kallos and the Committee on Governmental Operations for inviting our thoughts on the subject. We applaud the Council for working to increase access to voting rights throughout our City and for our clients.

Since 1876, The Legal Aid Society has been committed to providing quality legal representation to low-income New Yorkers. We are dedicated to ensuring that no New Yorker is denied access to justice because of poverty. The Criminal Defense Practice of The Legal Aid Society is the largest defender organization in New York City, representing a very substantial proportion of the persons incarcerated in the New York City jail system. The Special Litigation Unit observes city-wide trends in policing, prosecutorial, and judicial decision-making, prepares strategic impact litigation and consults on policy reform with multiple levels of government. The Civil Practice of The Legal Aid Society provides legal representation to vulnerable families and individuals to assist them in obtaining and maintaining the basic necessities of life — housing, health care, food and subsistence-level income or self-sufficiency. Since its inception over 40 years ago, the Prisoners' Rights Project ("PRP"), has specifically advocated on behalf of New Yorkers in our City jails and State prisons. PRP's advocacy includes both litigation and working for legislative and policy reforms that improve educational and vocational programming, reentry services, and the continuity of medical and mental health care for our clients.

Throughout our practice areas, The Legal Aid Society regularly engages in efforts that empower our clients to participate in our community and voice their opinions about public policy and needed reforms. Therefore, The Legal Aid Society endorses the proposed legislation and resolutions which will help to engage our clients in exercising their civil rights through the voting process, making them a part of critical policy discussions relevant to their communities and our City.

The Legal Aid Society writes in support of the each of the following two bills: Int. Nos.: 0464-2014, 0628-2015, and in support of each of the following two resolutions: Res Nos. 0695-2015 and 0848-2015.

Int 0464-2014, Council Bill Re: The Department of Correction Promoting Absentee Voting by Individuals Housed in the City Jails.

This bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to implement and administer a program assisting individuals incarcerated in the City jails to obtain and cast absentee ballots. The bill includes a provision for aid in filling out applications for absentee ballots and requires that the DOC transmit the applications and ballots to the New York City board of elections. This move to include and engage individuals in our jails in the voting process adds to the City's current efforts to reform our City jails by improving educational and other programming, creating connections to community, and decreasing violence and the use of solitary confinement. Enhancing and enabling access to exercise the right to vote in elections sends a clear message of inclusion in the community and value of their participation.

Int 0628-2015, Council Bill Re: The Department of Education Providing Voter Registration Materials and Tracking and Reporting on Efficacy of Efforts

This bill – the “Young Adult Voter registration Act” - improves young adults' access to voter registration materials by requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to provide students with registration materials and to track the efficacy of these voter registration efforts. In addition to all public schools, the DOE District 79 operates the Island Academy on Rikers Island, Passages Academy schools throughout the City for youth in secure and non-secure detention and other alternative programs for students who have experienced an interruption in their studies. The bill should require that all DOE students of an age to register and/or to vote are provided with registration materials each year (distribution should not be limited to seniors or graduating students).¹ Incorporating voting registration into the DOE will enhance the positive development of all of its students and encourage them, regardless of the obstacles in their lives, to exercise their civil rights and become positive members of their community.

Res 0695-2015, Resolution to New York State Legislature to Pass A2529/S857 Allowing 16 and 17 Year Olds to Pre-Register to Vote

This resolution encourages the New York State Legislature to pass A2529/S857 which would permit 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register before they turn eighteen (and become eligible to cast a ballot). Unfortunately, over the past decade young people have consistently had a low turn-out rate at the polls. The expectation in the states that have already implemented pre-registration is that this election reform will encourage voting among young people. We agree with this effort to improve the ease of voter registration and encourage participation by youth in the electoral process.

¹ The current bill mentions “seniors,” “graduating students,” and also mentions reporting on distribution to students who are seventeen or eighteen years old during the relevant school year. The bill should clarify that distribution should be made to *all* students based on whether they are of an appropriate age regardless of their grade level.

Res 0848-2015, Resolution to New York State Legislature & People of the State of New York to Amend the State Constitution to Establish Same-Day and Online Voter Registration

This resolution encourages the New York State Legislature to establish same day and online voter registration. These election reforms would increase registration and turn-out of voters from all walks of life and from all communities. Accessible suffrage, the ability to vote and the participation in the electoral process is the essence of membership and participation in our democracy. Each person's vote, no matter their race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, no matter how privileged or disadvantaged, counts equally, but can only be counted when cast. We support this resolution that stands in favor of making the ballot box easily and equally accessible for all. Electronic access will increase registration by our young citizens who are more electronically connected than any prior generation. Same day registration will eliminate the disenfranchisement of individuals who fail to meet deadlines or who may have recently moved or are experiencing a transition that interfered with the ability to register or to provide a permanent address.

The proposed City and State legislation provides for easier accessibility to voter registration and the exercise of the essential civil right of casting ballots in our electoral process. The Legal Aid Society endorses these efforts that will assist our clients in voicing their opinions about public policy and needed reforms through voting. The Legal Aid Society endorses the proposed legislation and resolutions which will help to engage our clients in exercising their civil rights through the voting process, making them a part of critical policy discussions relevant to their communities and our City.

We thank you for the opportunity to address this important subject.



**TESTIMONY OF PRUDENCE KATZE
RESEARCH & POLICY MANAGER, COMMON CAUSE/NY
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
October 1, 2015**

Good morning. My name is Prudence Katze and I am the Research and Policy Manager at Common Cause New York. We provide a voice for citizens in support of open, honest and accountable government at all levels while working to strengthen public participation and confidence in our institutions of government.

New York State currently has the dubious distinction of holding the bronze, behind Texas and Indiana, for the worst voter turnout in the nation. New York City did its part in getting towards this record low: In 2014, only one-fourth of the city's 4 million registered voters cast a ballot. As the New York City Campaign Finance Board put it in a recent report, "this problem is larger than a passing wave of cynicism or waning commitment to civic values. Low voter participation has reached crisis levels." A large component of this crisis can be attributed to an inflexible and outdated electoral administration system that creates a headache out of the voter registration process.

At Common Cause/NY, we strongly believe that each level of government has their own responsibilities – whether it's the City Council, the Mayor, or the State Legislature – to identify how they can improve and strengthen election administration. The bills and resolutions before the Council today all do their part in enhancing our democratic institution and it is now past time for these ideas to be made actionable into law.

Int. 464 -2014 - In relation to the Department of Correction promoting absentee voting among jailed individuals.

It is disturbing to think of an individual losing their right to vote simply because they are being held in jail while awaiting trial. Distributing absentee ballots and providing assistance in filling out these ballots is a simple way for people to maintain their ties with society while the government does its part in maintaining the jailed individual's civil rights. We are strongly in support of this bill.

Int. 628 -2015 - In relation to improving young adults' access to voter registration materials by requiring the department of education of the city of New York and the board of elections of the city of New York to provide students with registration materials in appropriate languages and to track and report on the efficacy of distributing registration materials to students.

Young people, between the ages of 18 and 30, are the least likely to vote out of any other age demographic in New York City. But, the Council has the power to turn this statistic around. Programs

that engage students while in school are very effective in setting the stage for being a lifelong voter-expanding education and access to voter registration materials for all schools is a concrete way to do just that. We particularly welcome the reporting requirement, which will encourage more active school participation and will be a useful benchmark in determining the program's specific successes.

Resolutions on NYS Bills

Res. No. 695-2015 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A2529/S857, allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote.

More than twenty states currently allow young people to pre-register to vote before their 18th birthday. We applaud this resolution calling on our state legislators to allow New York to join this important club. As I said above, engaging and educating youth on the process of voting is a documented way in improving turnout and it also goes a long way towards enhancing overall civic engagement.

Res. 848-2015 - Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature and the People of the State of New York to amend the State Constitution, and the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation amending the Election Law to establish same-day and online voter registration.

Currently, people can only register on-line to vote through the DMV only if they already possess a NYS license. But, it should be as easy to register to vote online as filling in your social security when prompted by TurboTax. Expanding on-line voter registration while allowing a potential voter to register and vote on the same day will dramatically increase voter turnout as it already does in other states that have same day voter registration.

New York City can lead the way in turning around New York State's dismally low turnouts what better time to act than the year that marks the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. Common Cause NY looks forward to continuing to work with the Council on enhancing voting accessibility for all.

Thank You.



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations
Regarding Elections and Voter Registration Legislation
October 1, 2015

Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the Governmental Operations Committee. My name is Talia Werber, and I am the Policy and Research Manager for Citizens Union of the City of New York. Citizens Union is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers, which includes ensuring that our election and voter registration processes enable eligible voters to cast their ballots.

Thank you for holding this hearing today. Citizens Union is concerned about the low voter turnout and the barriers that exist to ease voter registration and participation. We commend the Council for proactively pursuing meaningful improvements to the administration of elections and voter registration. The package of legislation under consideration today demonstrates a laudable intention to expand voter registration efforts in New York City.

Citizens Union believes that some of these pieces of legislation would improve voter registration and participation, while others are not necessary to achieve this aim.

Legislation to Strengthen Voter Registration for Young New Yorkers

Intro 628: Citizens Union supports this legislation to strengthen the Department of Education's distribution of voter registration materials to students.

Passage of Intro. 628 would be an important step to ensuring that young adults register to vote. In 2004 then Council Member Eric Gioia led the passage and enactment of a local law establishing that the Department of Education provide voter registration forms to graduating high school students upon receipt of their diploma.

Intro. 628 would build off of those efforts in significant ways: stipulating that the Department of Education shall request forms in languages appropriate to specific schools; requiring that registration forms be coded to each geographic school district; and requiring reporting both by the Department of Education and the Board of Elections with respect to the distribution, completion, and submission of register forms.

Together, these provisions will bolster, modernize, and diversify efforts to register young adults, and therefore, Citizens Union urges passage of Intro. 628.

Res. 695: Citizens Union supports the underlying legislation because it creates greater opportunities for young people to register to vote and ultimately participate in our democracy.

This legislation would urge the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A5259/S857, which would enable young people to pre-register to vote when they first obtain a permit or license with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Currently most young people are not eligible to vote when they initially get their permit or license and therefore do not benefit from the DMV's intake process that seamlessly integrates voter registration. By offering pre-registration, young people will be automatically registered when turning 18, making it more likely they will vote. This will also allow for stability in voter registration rolls.

Other important provisions of the state legislation would require local boards of education to adopt policies that promote voter pre-registration and registration. This is critically important as high schools have established relationships with young people and are uniquely positioned to offer them the opportunity to pre-register to vote. Once young people leave high school and have obtained their driver's licenses, contacts with government entities diminishes for many young people, and with it the likelihood of being involved in the political process.

Legislation to Provide Voter Registration Assistance and Information

Intro. 464: Citizens Union supports part of this legislation to enable voter participation among jailed individuals who are eligible to vote by absentee ballot, yet raises concerns about the assistance provision because of the potential for partisan influence.

Individuals who are in jail, but have not been convicted of a felony, are eligible to vote in New York and would do so by absentee ballot. However, all too often jailed individuals are disenfranchised despite their eligibility because of difficulties with election administration.

Intro. 464 would require the Department of Correction to implement and administer a program to: distribute absentee ballot applications and subsequent ballots to eligible jailed voters during the appropriate time period; provide assistance in filling out such applications; and submit the applications and ballots to the Board of Elections.

Much of the program put forth in this legislation is imperative to ensuring that jailed individuals with the right to vote are able to exercise that right. However, Citizens Union does not support the provision regarding provision of assistance to jailed individuals in filling out registration forms, because this could lead to steering the registering individuals to a political party. The possibility of partisan steering is of particular concern from a government entity.

Citizens Union is also interested to learn more about the feasibility and design of this program's implementation. We support passage of this legislation, and urge the Department of Correction and Board of Elections to realize a successful effort to provide for registration and voting among jailed eligible voters.

Intro. 796: Citizens Union questions the need for this legislation, which restates existing law and similarly raises concerns about partisan assistance.

Citizens Union has been a consistently strong proponent of agency-based voter registration, and is pleased that the City Council is considering ways to strengthen the program. Simultaneously, Citizens Union believes that legislation be streamlined, and that our local laws be drafted in an efficient and understandable manner, not to be saturated with repetition. While we applaud the intent of Intro. 796, the text itself is an unnecessary amendment.

The law currently requires agencies participating in the voter registration program to be able to assist voters with filling out the registration form in its entirety. Intro 796 merely specifies that this includes one of the sections on the form – organ donation. If agencies are not succeeding in assisting individuals with this section of the form, this may be a problem of education, training, or enforcement. The solution would occur outside of legislation, and not by complicating existing law.

Additionally, as with Intro. 464, the extensive focus on assistance in the local law raises concerns about the possibility of government employees steering individuals to register for a particular party. Citizens Union urges the Council to clarify the meaning of “assistance” and address the potential for partisan influence.

Res. 848: Citizens Union supports the underlying legislation and constitutional amendment to establish same-day and online voter registration, which would bring New York State voter registration in line with other states’ modernized practices and reduce barriers to voting.

Same-day and online voter registration are critical reforms to improving voter registration. Citizens Union advocates for these reforms at the state level – we believe strongly that a healthy democracy in New York State requires administration of elections that encourage individuals to vote in a manner that is not merely convenient, but in line with the schedules and needs of modern life. With the technological innovations that have flourished in recent decades, and the advancement of voter registration reforms in other states and localities, we believe that same-day and online registration are essential elements to efforts to increase voter registration and turnout rates.

**IRA J. COPPERMAN – TESTIMONY AT THE NEW YORK CITY
COUNCIL MEETING, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015, 10:00
A. M.**

Thank you to LiveOnNY and to you for allowing me this time to speak on behalf of this measure.

I'm not a transplant recipient. I still have my native heart, lungs, kidneys, and all the organs that modern science is able to change today to bring joy and happiness where there is usually despair and sickness. They are still mine, although I have registered to be a donor so that one day I will be able to give them willingly to someone in need.

I'm the lucky spouse who was the beneficiary of someone's good wishes and commitment to life, someone who thought of life as an endless circle. And whose generosity and selflessness has given Glenda and me 17 more years of togetherness, with friends, family, grandchildren, and colleagues such as Julia Rivera, James Pardes, and Helen Irving at LiveOnNY, as well as many others at Transplant Support Organization (TSO) and Tina Sammon at Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO). These are individuals as dedicated as I am to changing the organ donation and registration dynamics in New York State.

I attempt to pay it forward by making the public aware of the needs of more than 120,000 people in the United States and the more than 10,000 of our fellow New Yorkers who are still waiting for that act of generosity and selflessness through an organ donation, or two or three if needed. I work with LiveOnNY, TSO, and TRIO; and I work on committees to make changes to state and national public policy concerning organ, eye, and tissue donation.

And how appropriate that this new measure from Councilperson Constantinides and his colleagues is linked to voter registration. On the one hand, the city is giving help to people so they have the opportunity to exercise the most fundamental right available in America, the right to vote, the privilege to vote, the obligation to vote. And so it is with registering to be an organ donor, the ability to save lives, to reaffirm the faith of doing one of the most helpful, the most altruistic, the most beneficial acts that a person can possibly do.

How wonderful that the people who work in 26 city agencies, going about their daily business, will provide support to people who want to register to vote and who now have the opportunity to register to become an organ donor.

I wholeheartedly support Councilperson Constantinides with this proposal, and I am ready to provide direct assistance to him at those agencies, if asked.

Thank you!

LiveOnNY Testimony to Governmental Operations Committee of the New York City Council
10.1.15

LiveOnNY is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives, providing comfort, and strengthening legacies through organ donation. We are the federally designated organ procurement organization for downstate New York, and we are honored to be before you today to testify in support of Bill 796.

Organ donors save lives. In fact, since 1988, there have been 637K lifesaving transplants in the US; all made possible by organ donors. Unfortunately, in New York we don't have enough registered organ donors. And, as a result, the lifesaving power of organ donation is not being fully realized.

More specifically, just 25% of New Yorkers are registered organ donors. The national average is over 50%. This, in part, is contributing to a troubling fact: every 18 hours someone in New York dies waiting for an organ transplant.

Despite this sobering statistic, progress *is* being made. The number of registered organ donors in New York State is up 58% over the last 4 ½ years. Over the same period, in downstate New York, registered donors have increased 76%.

An important driver of the notable progress is the addition of new organ donor enrollment portals. Two examples, voter registration and idNYC, stand out. In 2009, organ donor enrollment was added to voter registration forms in New York. The impact has been strong. Voter registration has accounted for 170K enrollments over six years. This year, idNYC was introduced with the organ donor enrollment option included on the form. The result: in just eight months, idNYC has accounted for 46K organ donor enrollments or 30% of all downstate enrollments in 2015.

New organ donor enrollment portals are clearly impactful. However, a key ingredient to the success of a new portal is active prompting and support. That is, just adding the organ donor enrollment question to a form is unlikely to produce the strongest results. Instead, when those

LiveOnNY Testimony to Governmental Operations Committee of the New York City Council
10.1.15

delivering the respective form actively call out the organ donor enrollment option, and provide support, organ donor enrollment increases. In fact, organ donor enrollment via voter registration was not particularly successful until 2012 when LiveOnNY began, among other things, working with NYC Votes and other groups promoting voter registration to ensure optimal attention to the organ donor enrollment option. Since 2012, voter registration has delivered over 10% of all organ donor enrollments downstate. Similarly, LiveOnNY believes that one of the reasons behind the success of idNYC as an organ donor enrollment portal is the training LiveOnNY provided, and the active role idNYC appears to be taking as it relates to the organ donor enrollment question.

It is not a surprise that active execution rather than passive execution of the organ donor enrollment option leads to more people signing-up to save lives. Support for organ donation in New York is overwhelming. In fact, according to a 2015 study, over 90% of New Yorkers support organ donation. Simply put, deliberate prompting and support is more effectively activating New Yorkers' positive feeling about organ donation.

LiveOnNY strongly supports Bill 796, championed by Council Member Constantinides, Council Member Johnson, and the many other distinguished members of the New York City Council. It is exactly the type of legislation that leads to results, as it institutes an active approach to organ donor enrollment. In other words, it is lifesaving legislation. In New York, that is legislation we desperately need.

Although our primary focus today is on Bill 796, there are other bills and resolutions being considered today that could positively impact organ donation, and save more lives. Currently, via voter registration forms, New York City students are being asked the organ donor enrollment question. In many cases, those students are making determinations to enroll (or not) as organ donors without information. LiveOnNY suggests, as the Committee contemplates Bill 628 and Resolution 695, that organ donation materials be included along with the voter registration materials. Distribution of such materials will help to ensure informed decisions

**LiveOnNY Testimony to Governmental Operations Committee of the New York City Council
10.1.15**

about organ donation, and will complement LiveOnNY's efforts to introduce much-needed organ donation education within New York City high schools. LiveOnNY is currently working with NYC DOE and the Council for School Administrators on a pilot of the organ donation curriculum LiveOnNY developed in collaboration with NYC DOE.

Finally, with regard to Resolution 848, LiveOnNY asks the Committee to ensure that the organ donor enrollment question be included in same-day and online voter registration.

When the power of organ donation is fully realized, more lives are saved. The legislation before you today, particularly Bill 796, will help New York get closer to fulfilling organ donation's full lifesaving potential. It is for this reason LiveOnNY asks the Committee to support Bill 796, and consider the suggestions LiveOnNY presented related to Bill 628, and Resolutions 695 and 848.

Thank you.



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**Testimony of Amy Loprest
Executive Director
New York City Campaign Finance Board**

**City Council Committee on Governmental Operations
October 1, 2015**

Good morning, Chair Kallos and members of the Government Operations Committee. I am Amy Loprest, Executive Director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board. I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to testify on the bills under consideration today.

As you know, the CFB works to register voters and promote civic engagement through our NYC Votes campaign. Our Voter Assistance Unit served as a lead coordinator on National Voter Registration Day. While we are still processing our final tally from NVRD, we registered over 3,000 new voters to date. Under both Local Law 29 and Directive 1, we work with city agencies to provide voter registration opportunities in their public spaces.

We believe it is critical that every eligible citizen be able to register to vote and cast a ballot with ease. Unfortunately, our election system falls short. We calculate that there are nearly 1 million citizens of voting age in this city not registered to vote. Only 1 in 5 citizens of voting age actually cast a ballot in the 2014 elections. And we know that turnout was particularly low for younger voters between the ages of 18 to 29. We support efforts to

create more registration opportunities, and we applaud the City Council for doing what you can to remedy this crisis.

However, it is clear our elections need a fundamental upgrade at the state level. We need more action in Albany on this issue. That is why NYC Votes is working to coordinate a statewide effort for Voter Day 2016, to bring concerned citizens to Albany on May 3rd to call for changes to our outdated election laws.

To turn to the bills under consideration today, the CFB currently provides training to Local Law 29 agencies on how to provide voter registration forms in their offices and assist voters in filling these out. Int. No. 796 would increase those current requirements, so that agencies would also assist voters with completing the optional section to register to donate their organs and tissues. If the bill passes, the CFB will modify its training to reflect these additional requirements. We urge the City Council to work with the administration before implementing any changes for agencies conducting voter registration.

The CFB supports Int. No. 464, which would require the Department of Corrections to administer a program distributing absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots to jailed individuals. We believe that spending time in a corrections facility should not be an additional barrier to exercising one's right to vote. The Department of Corrections is a covered registration agency under Local Law 29, and has a longstanding commitment to increasing the number of registrations at the sites they oversee. Because of this commitment, they have served as a model for other agencies and shared best practices at

the trainings that we administer to agency staff. We urge the City Council to work with the DOC to ensure that any program design included in this bill fits in with their operational needs while also effectively promoting absentee voting.

We have also found that confusion about voting rights does not end when people leave a correction facility. This topic was discussed at the most recent meeting of our Voter Assistance Advisory Committee; many New Yorkers on parole or probation do not understand if or when they can register or vote. We urge you to extend your efforts to ensuring that the Department of Probation continues to educate their clients on this issue as they re-enter society.

Int. No. 628 would require the Department of Education to distribute registration forms to city students that are coded by district, which would better provide the ability to track and optimize efforts to get younger New Yorkers engaged in the political process early. Amending Local Law 34 to add new coded forms for the Department of Education would allow us to track registration activity, as we currently do with Code 9 forms for city agencies and Code D forms for CUNY schools. These new opportunities for data collection and reporting will highlight areas of success—as well as pointing to places where more could be done. This level of accountability will ensure that we commit to creating a civic culture that welcomes young voters into the fold.

While these bills would help create registration and voting opportunities at the city level, we need action from the state in order to fundamentally overhaul our outdated pen-and-

paper voter registration system. The CFB supports Res. No. 695 and Res. No. 848 to call upon Albany to pass pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds, expand online registration, and amend the state constitution to allow for same day registration.

But we ask the City Council to go even further, and call on the Assembly and Senate to pass the Voter Empowerment Act (A5972/S2538A). The Voter Empowerment Act encompasses the measures in Res. No. 695 and Res. No. 848, and additionally includes automatic voter registration at the DMV and other government agencies—unless voters choose to opt out. This is the most comprehensive voting reform legislation pending in Albany. As I mentioned earlier, NYC Votes was able to register 3,000 new voters in one day on NVRD, through hard work and coordination with some excellent partners. With the Voter Empowerment Act, on the other hand, we could get all one million unregistered New Yorkers onto the voter rolls practically overnight.

It is long past time we discarded the pen-and-paper registration system we currently use and bring voter registration into the 21st century. This is why NYC Votes has made the Voter Empowerment Act part of its agenda. For the past two years, we have brought concerned citizens to Albany to tell their legislators why voting reforms matter to them. However, we have seen little momentum on this issue. We are working to make voting reform a top priority in 2016. In addition to bringing citizen volunteers to Albany on May 3rd, we are collecting petition signatures to support the Voter Empowerment Act, early voting, and better ballot design. We want to ensure that every eligible New Yorker is registered, every voter can get to the polls, and each voter can cast a ballot that counts. We

ask that everyone here today sign our petitions to send a clear message to our state legislators, and we ask that City Council members get their constituents involved by asking them to sign these petitions or get on the bus to Albany with us in May.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.



FOR THE RECORD

**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP, NYPIRG
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
ON
MEASURES TO INCREASE VOTER REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION
INT. NO. 464 - PROMOTING ABSENTEE VOTING AMONG JAILED INDIVIDUALS.
INT. NO. 628 – THE YOUNG ADULT VOTER REGISTRATION ACT.
INT. NO. 796 – ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS SIGNING UP TO BE ORGAN DONORS.
RES. NO. 695 - ALLOWING 16 AND 17 YEAR-OLDS TO PRE-REGISTER TO VOTE.
RES. NO. 848 – ESTABLISHING SAME-DAY AND ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION.
OCTOBER 1, 2015**

Good morning. My name is Neal Rosenstein. I am the Government Reform Coordinator for the New York Public Interest Research Group Fund, (NYPIRG). NYPIRG is a statewide, research and advocacy organization that is involved on a wide range of issues, including government accountability and election reform. It's a pleasure to be speaking before you this morning on a subject so vital to our democracy. We commend the Chair and the members of the Committee for their ongoing efforts to improve voter registration and participation rates across the city and look forward to working with you to continue these important efforts.

Int. No. 464 - Promoting absentee voting among jailed individuals. Last year, this committee and the Council took the important step to amend the city's Pro-Voter Law and to strengthen its provisions to provide voter registration services in city agencies. Intro 464 takes the next step by requiring the city to implement a program to assist eligible inmates in procuring absentee ballot applications.

State law only forbids incarcerated individuals currently serving time for a felony or on felony parole from registering to vote. There are many inmates in city facilities that have not been convicted of felonies. Such inmates should not be cut off from their communities and voting when simple solutions exist. Maintaining such ties to civic life holds benefits for both inmates and in ensuring registration rolls that adequately reflect the diversity of the city.

Importantly, Intro 464 recognizes that successful agency based programs rely on providing assistance to clients (in this case inmates), and also provides for transmitting the forms to the Board of Elections. Those are vitally important parts of an effective agency based program. *We urge the bill's passage.*

Int. No. 628 – The Young Adult Voter Registration Act. We commend the sponsors of the Young Adult Voter Registration Act for seeking to increase voter participation among high school students. Intro 628 recognizes the diversity of the city school system by requiring language appropriate voter registration forms to be distributed to city schools to provide to graduating seniors. The bill also seeks to increase accountability by requiring codes and reporting by the Department of Education.

NYPIRG supports this bill. While questions have been raised by the city regarding coding of forms, it is clear that the Department of Education should be able to report on all the metrics included in the bill. If the city objects to the coding of forms, we suggest that simple alternate language be drafted which would require the Department of Education to do a simple analysis of publicly available voter registration rolls to determine if students in their database are registering.

While we support this legislation, we repeat our call that the Mayor de Blasio can and should do more to register eligible High School students. The best model for registering high school students would be for the Mayor to voluntarily add the Department of Education to the list of participating agencies in the Pro-Voter Law. That would require verbal assistance to students and to the multitude of parents navigating the Board's enrollment procedures. It would also require transmittal of forms, oversight and accountability to the program. The Board of Education has the potential to reach vast numbers of eligible unregistered voters and we urge the Mayor to enact such an initiative.

Int. No. 796 – Assistance for individuals signing up to be organ donors as part of the agency-based voter registration program. In a typical year, NYPIRG registers or re-registers between ten and twenty thousand New Yorkers. We are glad to be able to offer New Yorkers the opportunity to fill out the organ donor section of the form. However, we have not yet had the opportunity to review this proposed legislation and therefore we have *no official position* today.

Res. No. 695 - Allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote. NYPIRG strongly supports legislation in Albany that would allow 16 & 17 year olds to pre-register and supports this resolution. Registration in young adults has historically been lower than other age cohorts. Yet once registered, young people do turn out in high numbers. In presidential years for example, between 70% and 80% of the much maligned 18-24 year old age group turn out to the polls.¹ A key barrier to participation is the registration process itself. NYPIRG sees this every year as we register thousands of college students across the city and state who yearn to be part of the political process.

Hopefully, this modest reform will pass the State Legislature and allow for a more robust program of voter registration in the city's schools. In past years, up to the passage of the Help America Vote Act, it was common practice for the City Board of Elections to accept the registration forms of all 17 year olds and simply enter them once the applicant was eligible. There's no reason why 16 year olds couldn't be added to this process. *NYPIRG urges passage of this resolution.*

¹ The participation rate of registered voters is compiled from the census bureau's statistics for overall participation rates of 18-29 year olds, see: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p20-573.pdf> and from Pew Research Center statistics on the overall percentage of 18-29 year olds who are registered, see: <http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/28/youth-engagement-falls-registration-also-declines/>

Res. No. 848 – Establishing same-day and online voter registration. NYPIRG strongly supports establishing same-day and online voter registration.

The state's antiquated system of voter registration is a relic of a bygone era. It serves little purpose other than to help self-perpetuate the re-election of incumbents and limit voter participation. New York should join those states offering Same-Day Registration through the passage of an amendment to the state's constitution.

Each year, just as interest in elections and candidates begins to peak, potential voters find that the deadline for registering to vote has already passed. Here in New York, campaigns for statewide and local offices barely attract public attention before October. By the time voters begin to focus on the election, the deadline has already passed. That doesn't make sense, especially when there are proven systems to do away with the voter registration barrier.

A system of "Same-Day" registration would dramatically increase voter participation in a state where participation has fallen to shockingly low levels. Electoral participation experts have long concluded that registration "black-out" periods lower voter turnout. One needs to look no further than the states that have same-day or no registration to show how well the system works (participation rates in "same-day" states are traditionally among the highest in the country).² In 2013, California – a state with large urban populations like New York - and our neighbor - Connecticut joined the Same-Day Registration states across the country.

It is clear adequate safeguards exist for online registration. In a state that has mail-in registration, online registration poses no new potential for fraud. Indeed, New York State currently offers online registration through the DMV. Unfortunately, such a system offers limited help to the residents of highly urbanized New York City. Only 52% of city residents 18 and over had a driver's license in 2010, while 92% held a license in the rest of the state.³

There's a tremendous gender gap in the city too. While 63% of male residents 18 years of age and older hold licenses, only 43% of women did. There were close to 450,000 more women than men living in NYC who were 18 and over in 2010, yet there were close to 400,000 less women than men with licenses here in the city. And while the Motor Voter law includes certain social service agencies like HRA, the City's low rate of drivers puts it at an electoral disadvantage statewide. Online registration would help put the city on an equal footing with the rest of the state and help ensure diversity of the state's voter registration rolls. *We urge passage of this resolution.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² Demos, "New Report: Higher Voter Turnout Linked to SDR," see: <http://www.demos.org/blog/new-report-higher-voter-turnout-linked-sdr>.

³ *The percentage of residents holding driver's licenses in NYS is derived from:* New York State Department of Health, "Estimated Population by Age, Sex and Region, New York State – 2010," see: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/2010/table01.htm and New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, "Statistics - NYS Driver Licenses on File – 2010," see: <http://dmv.ny.gov/statistic/statli10.pdf>.



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 1, 2015

Good morning Chairman Kallos and members of the Committee. My name is David Pechefsky and I am the New York Site Director for Generation Citizen. I am here today to testify in support of Intro. 628 and Reso. 695.

Generation Citizen works in schools throughout the five boroughs delivering an action civics curriculum to high and middle schools students through college volunteers trained and guided by our staff. We teach students how they can tackle a problem identified in their community through a policy lens. What we have found is that students in New York City schools and at our other sites in San Francisco, Providence, and Boston are eager to be civically engaged if given exposure to the idea that they can make a change and some of the knowledge and tools on how to do so.

We commend the City Council for securing funding in this year's budget for the Student Voter Registration Day initiative. The commitment of such resources in combination with measures such as Intro. 628 that will make voter registration materials more accessible to young people, but also set up a system for tracking youth voter registration across districts so youth voter registration efforts can be better assessed are very good steps. Continuing to push the state on allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote is also necessary and we appreciate your efforts in this regard.

Making voter registration easier for young people in combination with education around voting and civics generally will certainly help in increasing youth voting and strengthening our democracy.

Thank you for your work.



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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**Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on
Governmental Operations, RE: Res. No. 848, Res. No. 695, and Int. No. 628
Thursday, October 1, 2015**

Good morning. My name is Kate Doran. I serve as the Election Specialist on the Board of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York. As a multi-issue, non-partisan political organization we encourage informed and active citizen participation in government, work to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through advocacy and education.

For over 95 years, voter education, voter service, and voter registration have been priorities for the League of Women Voters in New York. We appreciate this opportunity to comment today.

The League of Women Voters has many times testified before this committee that we strongly support Online Voter Registration. It is more accurate, more secure, and less expensive than paper registration. It has the potential for shortening lines and increasing voter satisfaction at poll sites. We urge the various City and State Legislators, and Election Administrators to come together and solve the recognized challenge of the “Wet Signature.”

We also encourage the City Council and the Board of Elections to explore the possibilities of linking with the NYC Municipal ID Card for the electronic transfer of Voter Registrations and “Wet Signatures.” The successful DMV/BOE interface has now established protocols that could possibly be replicated to create a similar Municipal ID Card/BOE interface.

Furthermore, voter registration 10 days prior to Election Day is the standard in the NYS Constitution. (Currently, NY State demands voter registrations not later than 25 days prior to Election Day.) Years and years of reliance on manual paper registration processes have resulted in disenfranchisement of eligible voters in clear violation of Constitutional mandates. Online Voter Registration offers a path towards compliance with our Constitution.

The League also supports Same Day Voter Registration as a proven method of increasing voter participation, with the understanding that poll sites will have to have electronic devices, often referred to as “Electronic Poll Books,” with access to Online Registration. Election Administrators should waste no time in pressing the Legislature to support, and provide funding for Electronic Poll Books.

Accordingly, we support City Council Res. No. 848 calling for an amendment to the NY State Constitution, and amending of NY State Election Law to establish same day voter registration, and online voter registration.

The League supports Res. No. 695, calling upon the NY State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A2529/S0857, allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register to vote. Attached hereto, and incorporated into my testimony is an April 2015 Memorandum of Support prepared by the League of Women Voters of New York State.

(continued on the next page)

The City League cannot unreservedly support Int. No. 628, a Local Law in relation to improving young adults' access to voter registration materials by requiring various actions be taken by the NYC Board of Elections, and the NYC Dept. of Education.

While we are not troubled by the coding and tracking provisions, and we do not believe that assigning a code to each geographical school district will compromise voter privacy, we do believe that this Local Law is only marginally better than Local Law 29 with its generic "Code 9," requirements. Int. No. 628 is marginally better than Local Law 29 because such data as is collected may perhaps be more specific. The board of elections currently distributes approximately 100,000 hard copy voter registration forms to the DOE each year. If these forms were coded to identify schools, rather than the generic "9," we might know how effective this distribution effort really is. We suspect not very.

The flaw in Local Law 29 is that it does not call for voter education. Students need to know the importance, meaning, and value of being a voting citizen. Earlier this year volunteers from the League of Women Voters participated in the first NYC Student Voter Registration Day, which was held on Friday, March 20th. NYC Votes/NYC Campaign Finance Board did a first rate job of producing a short civics course, the centerpiece of which was an animated film on the history of voting. (Council Member Helen Rosenthal deserves recognition for her leadership throughout.) We understand that over 2,000 students were registered on that day. This initiative should be an annual event, if there were a way to mandate it, we would be in support.

Lastly, is it not inconsistent to require the board of elections to "provide voter registration forms, either in printed form or in a format suitable for printing," at the same time that you make a strong statement in Res. #848 about the advantages of Online registration.

Admittedly, we are not at a point where an 18 year old high school student can use her phone to register to vote, that is unless he or she has a NY State Driver's License, or Non Driver ID. But what about a collaboration with the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. What about coordinating with the DMV to send representatives to the next Student Voter Registration Day event. These days young adults typically ignore or reject paper transactions. Since the DMV is all we have now, we ought to use it to advantage in our NYC schools.

We thank the Governmental Operations Committee for its invitation to comment today, and for its continuing commitment to expanding the franchise and to serving the voters of the City of New York.

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About the League of Women Voters of the City of New York

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York (LWVNYC), a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The LWVNYC is celebrating 95 years of Making Democracy Work® at every level of government. In 1920, the League was founded as an outgrowth of the movement that secured women the right to vote to help new voters engage with their government. Today, the League empowers all voters to improve their local, state and national government. Visit www.lwvnyc.org to learn more.



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**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:

A. 2529 (Kavanagh) / S. 00857 (Carlucci)

TO: NYS Assembly Election Law Committee

DATE: April 29, 2015

Subject: An act to amend the election law, in relation to voter registration

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports this legislation, which would allow 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register to vote with the county board of elections in which they reside. Pre-registered voters turning 18 retain their eligibility to vote and, upon review of their county board, would automatically be registered without having to submit any additional paperwork.

New York currently ranks 47th in the nation in voter registration with less than 64% of eligible residents registered to vote. Low registration rates lead to poor turnout at the polls, as demonstrated by New York's recent participation rates in the presidential election years.

Voter registration among young people is much lower than for other age groups. This legislation will enable young people to pre-register to vote when they first obtain a driver's permit or license with the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles and become part of the DMV's intake process which integrates voter registration and motor vehicle processes.

Getting young people involved in the electoral process early is important so that their voting participation becomes routine before they attend college or enter the workforce.

The League of Women Voters of New York State urges your support of A.2529 (Kavanagh) / S.00857 (Carlucci).



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October 1, 2015

Hon. Ben Kallos, Chair
The New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations

Dear Chairman Kallos and Honorable Committee Members;

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on the several legislative proposals being considered by the New York City Council. I regret I am unable to deliver these comments in person and answer any questions you might have, but would be pleased to speak with you regarding these and other matters, at some future date.

Any proposals which promote voter registration and voter participation, and which ease the path of voters to their respective ballots, are worthy of merit but do require discussion in order to understand the impact of those ideas on the administration of any election. In regard to proposal 464, I would respectfully note that the focus is on absentee ballot applications and ballots for eligible inmates, but does not also address voter registration as a component of the proposed program to encourage participation by eligible inmates. Also, the requirement that within 5 days after receipt, completed absentee ballot applications and ballots shall be transmitted to the Board of Elections. That 5-day delivery as stated may make for a short turnaround for the receipt, processing and delivery of applications and ballots, and the timely return of voted ballots.

In regard to proposal 628 and Resolution 695, the current voter registration process in New York provides for early registration. However, eligibility is established provided the voter will be 18 within the same calendar year as the submission of a completed application. If applications received do not meet this calendar-year criteria, the need for system improvements that will permit the tracking of those applicants becomes necessary, so that the inclusion of those applicants as eligible voters, when their birthdays so permit, becomes a seamless process. Currently, high school students must complete Participation in Government classes prior to graduation, in which voter registration and

voter participation should be focus points of a successful curriculum. The proposal's key tracking components provided for in the proposal will serve to identify program success or where there might remain room for improvement.

The Council's proposal 796, which requires that assistance in the completion of voter registration applications include assistance with the section of the voter registration forms which offers an opportunity to become an organ donor, and the success of this program, can benefit from and be addressed in training conducted for agency staff providing that assistance. Reinforcing in existing training sessions that assistance is to be provided in the overall completion of the form, including the organ donor section of that form, and that such assistance should be thorough and non-partisan, would resolve any existing concern for level of assistance being provided.

Resolution 848 supports state legislative efforts to establish online voter registration and same-day registration, both of which are laudable goals. We must also ensure that the bipartisan process for the registration of voters is maintained in the application of technology to the voter registration process. The online completion of applications is a valid and timely goal, as is same-day registration, both of which would no doubt help New York improve the various registration and voter turnout statistics cited by advocates. However, we should take steps to ensure these practices and their implementing technology reinforce the concept and practice of bi-partisan of voter registration. The mere completion of a form does not ensure that a voter is registered, and the proposed change could result in challenges made to those voters' registrations and the casting and canvassing of such ballots. One example of a solution supportive of the resolution's goal would be the implementation of electronic poll books which would better facilitate the inclusion of more voters in poll books, avoiding affidavit ballots, as the lead time for the production of traditional hard-copy poll books would be significantly diminished.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer comments on the Council's proposals.

Sincerely

Douglas A. Kellner
Co-Chair
New York State Board of Elections



NYCLU

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

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New York, NY 10004
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**TESTIMONY OF
THE NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**

Before

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE**

On

Int. 464 & 628, Res. 695 & 848

October 1, 2015

The New York Civil Liberties Union respectfully submits the following testimony in support of Int. 628 and Resolutions 695 and 848, and in qualified support of Int. 464, to expand voting access in New York.¹

The NYCLU, the state affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization with eight offices across New York state and 80,000 members and supporters. The NYCLU's mission is to defend and promote the fundamental principles, rights and constitutional values embodied in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New York. Securing and protecting the right of all eligible New Yorkers to vote is a core part of our mission, as is expanding access to the vote to historically underrepresented populations. We commend the City Council for tackling this issue.

I. Qualified Support for Int. 464

Int. 464 requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to expand its efforts to ensure that people incarcerated at Rikers Island and other city jails are able to obtain and cast absentee ballots. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the right of pretrial detainees and people incarcerated on misdemeanors to vote via absentee ballot in 1974,² and yet the difficulties in obtaining and casting a secure absentee ballot from jail are often prohibitive. The DOC should bear the responsibility to make voting as easy as possible for people in city jails, and we support Council efforts to increase voting participation among this underrepresented population.

¹ The NYCLU recognizes Amanda Seelman, NYLS '17, for her assistance with this testimony.

² O'Brien v. Skinner, 414 U.S. 524 (1974)

However, due to the enormous power imbalance between incarcerated people and jail staff, and the intricacies of managing mail at Rikers Island and other facilities, the NYCLU has concerns about the DOC's ability to guard against partisan influence and breeches in the secrecy of the ballot. It is vital that these voters have the same right to secrecy and voting independence as their fellow New Yorkers. We recommend Int. 464 be amended to include concrete safeguards for the protections of a secret, and uncompromised, ballot.

II. Support of Int. 628

The percentage of young people registered to vote is the lowest it has been in 40 years, and less than 20% of people between the ages of 18 and 29 voted in the 2014 elections.³ New York City residents between 18- and 30-years-old have the lowest voter turnout of any age or socioeconomic group in the city.⁴ Youth are simply not taking advantage of their right to vote.

One reason for this is that the process to register can be complicated and inaccessible for teens. Providing registration information and materials in schools can help break down the accessibility barrier by meeting teens in a familiar location where they have access to trusted adults. This distribution must be thoughtfully designed, however, to provide teens with guidance and information on the importance of registering and voting. This must be done in the confines of a classroom or class activity, and should be focused on not just graduating seniors, but all students who are eligible to register, regardless of grade level.⁵

Int. 628, the Young Adult Voter Registration Act, can help narrow these gaps and promote youth voting, but it must be part of a larger effort. Adding a tracking mechanism to DOE-provided registration materials could provide an important measure of the effectiveness of the program, but only if the statistics are kept diligently and only if there is meaningful follow up with schools as a result of those reports. Tracking and reporting on these efforts should not, however, supplant the importance of developing new creative methods of encouraging and assisting young people to register and vote.

We applaud efforts on behalf of the DOE and the Council to ensure voter registration materials are available in all necessary languages and can be downloaded online. We encourage Councilmembers to participate in new or existing voter registration efforts at high schools, such as Councilmember Helen Rosenthal's Student Voter Registration Day. We hope the Council and DOE will commit the necessary resources to expand this program beyond a pilot to every high school in the city.

III. Support of Res. 695 & 848

To further the goal of increasing voter participation, the NYCLU supports Resolutions 695 and 848, which calls upon the State Legislature to create additional pathways to registration.

³ The Center for Information & Research on Civil Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), *2014 Youth Turnout and Youth Registration Rates Lowest Ever Recorded; Changes Essential in 2016*, Tufts University Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Available at <http://www.civicyouth.org/2014-youth-turnout-and-youth-registration-rates-lowest-ever-recorded-changes-essential-in-2016/>.

⁴ Samar Khurshid, *Student Voter Registration Push Targets New York's Turnout Crisis*, Gotham Gazette, March 19, 2005. Available at <http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/government/5642-student-voter-registration-push-targets-new-yorks-turnout-crisis>.

⁵ Students in New York can attend public school until the age of 21 if they have not received a diploma.

Registering to vote, and the various registration deadlines and paper requirements are huge deterrents to voting not just for young people, but many New Yorkers. Our city and state should take the necessary steps to break down all unnecessary barriers to realizing this right. Res. 695 supports a state bill that would allow 16 and 17-year olds to pre-register to vote in schools and at Department of Motor Vehicles offices. Res. 848 calls upon the state to enact a bill permitting same-day and online voter registration. We applaud the City Council's efforts to support these important state actions.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 7961 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: 10a Corporation

Address: 312 W 96th St NY

I represent: Self (OWS)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 464 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sumumba Sobulwa

Address: 307 BOWERY NYC NY

I represent: Occu-Evict (OWS)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL J. RYAN

Address: 42 BROADWAY, NY NY 10004

I represent: NYC BOE

Address: 42 BROADWAY, NY NY 10004

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

all bills - mixed in favor in opposition
opinion

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Talia Werber

Address: _____

I represent: Citizens Union

Address: 299 Broadway # 702 NY NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/01/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kate Doran

Address: 11 Polhemus Pl. Bklyn

I represent: League of Women Voters

Address: 4 West 43rd St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Iris Rosta

Address: 917-363-0759

I represent: TRIO Manhattan

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 464 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10-1-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diallo Shebazz

Address: 299 Park Ave, 6th floor, NY, NY 10171

I represent: One Hundred Black Men

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Oct 1, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WINETTE SAUNDERS

Address: NYC DOC 75-20 Astoria Blvd

I represent: NYC DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10-1-2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eric Contreras

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Department of Education

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10-1-2015

Name: Lora-Lynn Byfield (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Department of Education

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Prudence Katze (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 80 Broad St, Suite 2703

I represent: Common Cause NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 796

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

Name: EMMEN YANIVUCHI (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 5615 NETHERLAND AVE, BX, NY 10471

I represent: NATIONAL KIDNEY FDN.

Address: 3A EAST 93RD ST, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 464 Res. No. 848

in favor in opposition

Date: Oct. 1, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonathan Reiss

Address: 90 Riverside Dr.

I represent: Big Apple Coffee Party

Address: 90 Riverside Drive

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 796 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JAMES PARDES

Address: 460 W. 34th, NY, NY

I represent: LIVEONNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 628 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda Seelmann

Address: 95 Worth St, Apt 9J, NY, NY 10013

I represent: New York Civil Liberties Union Legislative Advocacy

Address: 185 West Broadway

New York Law
Clinic

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms School

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Pechefsky

Address: 175 Varick

I represent: Generation Citizen

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Loprest

Address: 100 Church Street, 12th Floor

I represent: NYC Campaign Finance Board

Address: 100 Church St., 12th Floor

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 796 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ira J Copperman

Address: 12 W 76, NYC 10025

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 028 ed Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HENRY BERGER

Address: CITY HALL

I represent: ADMINISTRATIVE

Address: CITY HALL

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 464 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Penny Mintz

Address: 298 West 11th St

I represent: self / Big Apple Coffee Party

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0464/0628 Res. No. 0695 +

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SARAH KERR

Address: 199 WATERST.

I represent: THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Address: 199 WATER ST. NY NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms