



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0390-2014, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 390-A

Resolution in support of A.4749/S.1703, an act to amend the election law in relation to requiring the New York City Board of Elections to provide Russian interpreters at certain polling locations.

By Council Members Treyger, Deutsch, Johnson, Mendez, Richards, Koslowitz, Cohen, Rodriguez and Eugene

Whereas, A.4749, currently pending in the New York State Assembly, and companion bill S.1703, currently pending in the New York State Senate, require that in any city having a population of one million or more, which contains any county that has a population comprised of 5 percent or more of people whose first language is Russian, the board of elections shall provide Russian interpreters at polling locations in those election districts; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the population of Russian speakers with limited English proficiency (LEP) in New York City exceeds other language groups who are provided interpreters, such as Korean and Bengali, with approximately 114,000 LEP Russians compared to 47,000 LEP Koreans and 39,000 LEP Bengalis; and

Whereas, In compliance with Federal law, New York City Board of Elections posts signs, provides translated voting materials and translation services for Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Bengali speaking voters; however there are no such signs, materials or translation services for Russian speaking voters; and

Whereas, The absence of Russian translators at polls has been an enduring problem in New York City, potentially alienating and disenfranchising a large segment of New York City voters, and preventing greater voter participation in the democratic process; and

Whereas, According to local election coordinators and advocates, the Russian community has requested interpreters for years, without success; and

Whereas, In order to help ensure that the Russian speaking population in New York City feels fully integrated into the social fabric and the democratic process, the State legislature should pass A.4749/S.1703, which seek to amend the election law to require the board of elections to provide Russian interpreters at certain polling locations; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports A.4749/S.1703, an act to amend election law in relation to requiring the New York City Board of Elections to provide Russian interpreters at certain polling locations.

JC/AM/LW
LS # 1831
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