



## Legislation Text

**File #:** Res 0443-2002, **Version:** \*

Res. No. 443

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature and the Governor to accommodate people with disabilities with fully accessible voting machines by requiring immediate implementation of technologically advanced voting systems to significantly improve the election process and enhance democratic participation.

By Council Members López, Perkins, Addabbo, Barron, Weprin, Monserrate, Davis, Reed, Rivera, Avella, Martínez, Liu, Seabrook, Gerson, Baez, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Foster, Gioia, Gennaro, Jackson, Koppell, McMahon, Nelson, Quinn, Recchia, Sanders, Sears, Serrano, Vann, Yassky and Gentile

Whereas, The New York State Election Law was enacted mainly in contemplation of the old lever machines, which have many documented problems, are no longer manufactured, and need to be replaced with new voting machine technology; and

Whereas, This Election Law was also enacted prior to the disabilities' civil rights movement of the last twenty-five years which produced the passage of federal legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, protecting the rights of people with disabilities; and

Whereas, This Election Law was also enacted when there were far fewer parties and offices participating in elections, and when there were far fewer elderly and foreign language-speaking voters in the City and State; and

Whereas, The current voting machines are unable to accommodate disabled citizens in wheelchairs or with other certain mobility impairments, the blind or those with other visual impairments, and those with hand/arm impairments; and

Whereas, These antiquated machines also are becoming less able to accommodate on the ballot the increase in number of parties, offices, and languages other than English required by law in New York City, such as Spanish, Chinese, and Korean; and

Whereas, Many of these new voting technologies, unlike the current lever machines, enable voters who are physically handicapped, blind and have other types of disabilities to cast their votes on their own, without any need for another individual to assist them, thereby preserving their autonomy and privacy in the voting process; and

Whereas, The new voting technologies that presently exist or are now being developed can accommodate with great ease, accuracy, security and convenience, not only people with different types of disabilities, but also the increased number of parties, offices, and languages that the City's ballots must contain; and

Whereas, Extensive studies have demonstrated that these new voting technologies decrease the number of votes that are unable to be counted, increase the accuracy of all phases of canvassing and improve the security of the vote cast, thereby generally enhancing the ability and willingness of citizens to vote; and

Whereas, Many of these new technologies permit voters to select a straight party-line by the press of one button and certain of these new technologies accommodate the State's full-face ballot requirement; and

Whereas, The State has appropriated substantial funds to the City's Board of Elections to study and test new voting technologies, the State Board of Elections has certified three modern voting machines, and certain other newer voting technologies are now being considered for certification and use in New York; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature and the Governor to accommodate people with disabilities with fully accessible voting machines by requiring immediate implementation of technologically advanced voting systems to significantly improve the election process and enhance democratic participation.

LS#899: MFB

|1013|

|1013|