



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 444

Resolution supporting the elimination of all obstacles and barriers which prevent citizens with disabilities from exercising their constitutional right to cast a secret ballot, freely and independently, in all elections held in the City and State of New York.

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

Whereas, Currently, the constitutional right to cast a secret ballot is being routinely compromised and denied to citizens with disabilities in the City and State of New York, who must bring someone into the voting booth with them to assist them in voting; and
Whereas, The right to vote is a fundamental right that every citizen holds and is entitled to exercise freely and independently, so long as they register with their local election board; and

Whereas, New voting technologies can accommodate with great ease, accuracy, security and convenience, people with different types of disabilities, including wheelchair users, voters with hand, arm, or vision impairments and the elderly, as well as the increased number of parties, offices, and languages that the City's ballots must contain; and

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

Whereas, Every polling place must be made accessible to physically disabled voters in accordance with the accessibility requirements mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), in furtherance of the right to vote at the polls, and participate in the civic life of this City and State with fellow citizens; and

Whereas, The failure to have poll workers trained on the requirements of the ADA's accessibility guidelines regarding proper assistance of disabled voters at polling sites also creates obstacles and barriers that must be eliminated; and
Whereas, In light of the technological advances of the twenty-first century, this City and State should no longer permit any obstacles or barriers to exist that deny citizens with disabilities the right to vote without any need for another individual to assist them in the voting booth, thereby preserving their privacy in the voting process and upholding their constitutional right to cast a secret ballot; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the elimination of all obstacles and barriers which prevent citizens with disabilities from exercising their constitutional right to cast a secret ballot, freely and independently, in all elections held in the City and State of New York.

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