

ELECTION INFORMATION GATHERING TASK FORCE



Final Report

August 14, 2020

Task Force Members

Co-Chairs: Legislators Catherine Borgia and Vedat Gashi
Vice Chair Alfreda Williams and Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky

Staff

James Silverberg and Dayana Gomez

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introduction	2
I. Communications	4
II. Websites	7
III. Poll Locations	8
IV. Poll Workers	9
V. Equipment	11
VI. Early Voting	14
VII. Election Day	15
VIII. Absentee Ballots	16
IX. COVID-19 Compliance	18
X. Summary/Recommendations	20
XI. Appendices	22
A. Board of Legislators Documents	23
B. County Executive Documents	29
C. Board of Elections Documents	34
D. Testimony from Community Organizations & Constituents	36

Introduction

The June 2020 primary elections were conducted under highly unusual circumstances. The Coronavirus pandemic delayed the Democratic Presidential Primary, originally scheduled for April 28, 2020, until June 23, 2020, the primary date for other offices. The consolidated primary date, the large number of hotly contested races throughout the County (including Democratic primaries for District Attorney and two out of the three Congressional districts partly contained in the County, as well as a Republican primary for one of those three Congressional seats), and high voter turnout combined with logistical difficulties caused by the pandemic to create long lines and administrative difficulties at many of the County's polling sites. These extraordinary conditions also exposed weaknesses in voter and poll worker education systems. The record-crushing demand for absentee ballots combined with problems at the US Postal Service resulted in late delivery of ballots. While the evidence is anecdotal, it does appear that all of these factors worked together to disenfranchise some voters, and seriously inconvenience many more.

County Legislators received an unusually high number of complaints concerning the conduct of the 2020 Primary. Concerned about the need to do better for the 2020 General Election – an election extremely likely to face the same pandemic-related conditions as the Primary – Board of Legislators Chair Benjamin Boykin established this Task Force. Co-chaired by Catherine Borgia, the Chair of the Committee on Budget and Appropriations, and Vedat Gashi, Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation, Task Force members also included Alfreda Williams, Vice Chair of the Board of Legislators and MaryJane Shimsky, Majority Leader of the Board of Legislators. The Task Force was asked “to obtain public input about the June 23rd Primary Election” and recommend “proactive steps that can be taken for the November 3rd General Election.” To that end, the Task Force conducted a public input session on Wednesday, July 8th, at 7 PM, and accepted written submissions from constituents. All told, the public information session received the accounts of 81 people, and 164 emails and other written accounts were placed in the public record. Chair Boykin also asked the Task Force to submit a report to the Board of Legislators on August 7, 2020, a date delayed by the power outages caused by Tropical Storm Isaias.

Primary responsibility for conducting elections in this County rests with the Westchester County Board of Elections (BOE). The BOE is led by two commissioners, one Democrat and one Republican. Their independence is carefully protected by State law: once appointed, Commissioners can be removed only by the Governor, and only for cause. The main responsibility of the legislative and executive branches of County government with regard to elections is the power of the purse, appropriating both operating and capital expenses. However, under State statute and decisional law Boards of Election may make required expenditures without the consent of their counterparts in County government, and bill the County for those expenses.

This Task Force recognizes that the Board of Legislators (BOL) lacks the power to require policy or operational changes at the BOE. However, given the public outcry about the problems surrounding the 2020 Primary, and the near universal fear about the consequences of a repeat performance for the 2020 General Election, this Task Force is condensing public comments and recommendations into this document. We do so in the spirit of assisting the BOE with identifying problems and possible solutions. This Task Force and the Board of Legislators stand ready to cooperate with the BOE, the Executive branch of County government (which has already submitted a written proffer of assistance to the BOE), and all other relevant bodies to make sure that all voters who want to vote in the 2020 General Election will be able to do so, with minimum inconvenience; and that their votes will be counted in an accurate and timely manner.

I. Communications with the Voting Public

Communication with the voting public and all stakeholders is one of the critical areas where concerted, coordinated and focused local action can have a significant positive impact on a November 2020 General Election. Many comments the BOL received focused or touched upon this problem.

The Governor's executive orders and other decisions made in response to the pandemic, including consolidating the Presidential Primary originally scheduled in April with the Congressional and local Primaries in June; requiring that absentee ballot applications be mailed by local Boards of Elections to all registered voters; and reducing or waiving of some of the voter communications requirements made the June 2020 Primary voting experience more confusing and complicated. The decision by the Westchester Board of Elections to significantly condense Election Day polling sites due to lack of poll watcher staffing added to the confusion, as many voters were uncertain of their Election Day and/or Early Voting polling site.

In addition, although Early Voting was used successfully in the November 2019 General Election, and was one of the most successful components of the June 2020 Primary, it is still a new concept for many Westchester voters, who are used to going to the polls on Election Day.

County Executive Latimer has pledged the resources of the County's Communications team, which will significantly enhance the Board of Elections' communication reach and breadth. The BOL has also committed resources to extend the communications reach, using central BOL communications staff and individual legislator's communication.

We also recommend partnering with stakeholder organizations such as the League of Women Voters, voting rights advocacy groups, Westchester nonprofits, school districts, local governments, and the Westchester faith-based community to disseminate information on how to vote in the November election. The BOE should also consider hiring a communication consultant individual or firm on a short-term basis to create, direct, and manage a detailed Communication Plan from now until Election Day.

The Communication Plan should include:

Campaign Encouraging Early Voting

Early Voting was very successful in Westchester both times it has thus far been made available. The Board of Elections chose 17 sites around Westchester and set days and hours during the time allowed by New York State (NYS) law. We urge the BOE to choose more Early Voting sites, especially in cities such as White Plains, Yonkers and Mt. Vernon, which have a high concentration of resident voters and voters who commute to those cities during the workweek. Since NYS law allows voters to vote at any Early Voting site in the County, a communications plan should include information about all Early Voting sites and hours. Hours of operation should also be expanded, as staffing allows. Wide dissemination of Early Voting sites, dates,

and hours should begin as soon as those sites are confirmed. This information should be frequently posted on all social media platforms for voter access.

Education Regarding Absentee Ballot Process

It is anticipated that NYS will once again allow voters to use COVID as an acceptable excuse for receiving an absentee ballot. It is not certain that the State will once again require BOEs to send out absentee ballot applications. Regardless, we anticipate a large number of absentee ballots to be cast in the General Election.

Filling out the absentee ballot, especially for someone unfamiliar with doing so, can be confusing. This is a high stakes problem for enfranchisement, since an incorrectly-completed ballot could be subject to challenge and discarded.

We recommend easy video tutorials be created in the top 5 languages spoken in Westchester and disseminated widely via official County websites, email lists, social media, and through stakeholder partners. Tutorials should include instruction on how to fill out the absentee ballot application, how to fill out the absentee ballot, and how to prepare the envelope and return the ballot. Uploading the instructional videos to YouTube will also reach additional voters who may lack connection to our local political process.

Latest Information on Polling Sites

As soon as Early Voting and Election Day polling sites are set, they should be made available on all websites and social media platforms. An up-to-date list should be sent regularly prior to Election Day to the Westchester County newsletter lists, the local print, broadcast and online media, and to all partnering organizations. Any change to sites should be disseminated immediately using all available mediums.

All Materials “En Español”

Every communication in any medium - print, spoken, online, social media, etc. - should be translated into Spanish and made available to all partners and stakeholders. In addition, community organizations should be engaged to make sure the translations are free of national idioms and appropriate for the multinational populations they serve. Westchester County should provide additional translation services as needed upon request.

Partnering with other Government Entities and Outside Organizations

The Board of Elections, the County Executive's office, and the Board of Legislators should coordinate and collaborate on all communication efforts. Other stakeholder organizations, including local governments, the League of Women Voters, voting rights advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, school districts, nonprofits, and political organizations should be encouraged to disseminate all communication about the General Election to their members and constituencies.

An All-Media Approach

The BOE's communications strategy should also take a thorough, all-media approach to conveying information to voters. A thorough list of all print and online publications (including Countywide and local weeklies, Patch and Daily), broadcast media (including radio and television outlets), websites and social media should be at the ready, and information should be sent to all outlets in all media.

II. Websites

A frequent concern raised by constituent comments was the difficulty of accessing information on the BOE website and the main Westchester County website.

Starting as soon as possible, County IT should create pages that are easily accessible from all county homepages, including the BOE site, the BOL site and the main westchestergov.com site, with very prominent graphics to indicate how to access links.

All information on the website must be updated at least daily, but more instantaneously if needed for example if a polling site changes or has technical difficulties.

Westchester County should consult with stakeholder organizations as necessary to help them create similar links.

All information on County websites should appear in English and appropriately translated in Spanish.

III. Poll Locations

Part of the confusion for voters during the June 2020 Primary stemmed from the consolidation of Election Day poll sites. In addition, several Early Voting sites were different than the Early Voting sites used in the November 2019 General Election. The BOE Commissioners report that they are actively looking for sites and plan to open a minimum of 17 Early Voting sites and 200-285 Election Day sites. This will still represent a consolidation of the customary 360 polling sites, and may be unavoidable, as many sites are not currently available for polling due to COVID health concerns, including senior facilities, nursing homes, and firehouses. Opening more locations also relies on the ability to recruit and train a sufficient number of poll workers to adequately staff sites. Polling sites must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Location Choice and Distribution

Any ADA accessible facility that receives Federal funding can be required to be a polling site, including schools and municipal buildings. Social distancing requirements create additional complexities when searching for new sites. Sites that are accessible by foot or public transportation in dense communities should be a priority. In addition, experience with the 2020 Primary indicates a correlation between the number of voters per polling site and the length of the lines at those sites. Effort should be made to ensure that there are sufficient voting locations in each community, given the number of voters who reside there.”

In addition, we recommend that conversation continue with sites to reconfigure space to allow for more comfortable social distancing. Long lines of voters and social distancing requirements of 6 feet between family groups create a need for use more space inside a facility, including larger space for the actual voting machines and indoor space to accommodate lines indoors, especially in the case of inclement and/or extreme weather.

Public Communication of Polling Sites

It is critical that the BOE begins to communicate with voters as soon as sites are determined and Election Districts assigned. This is particularly important since many if not most voters will cast their ballots in sites different from those they used for past elections. We recommend that timely, complete information about where to vote be released no later than late September. We recommend that all voter information explain that there might be a different/new site than the voter had in the past; and that, due to the pandemic, voters should be on the lookout for last-minute changes. If a site needs to be changed, information should go out promptly. We further recommend that social media and electronic communications be used to convey this information whenever possible. We recommend that the BOE work with local clerks offices to communicate information about polling sites.

IV. Poll Workers

Both BOE Commissioners raised the alarm about the available pool of trained poll workers at a BOL Committee Meeting prior to the Primary. This is a significant concern. The majority of currently trained poll workers are over 60 years of age, putting them at higher risk for serious complications should they contract COVID. The BOE Commissioners have also argued that the hands on portion of training must take place in-person, and in small numbers due to the pandemic. On Election Day the polls are open from 6 am to 9 pm, creating a 16 hour-plus day for poll workers when openings and closings are taken into account. Some people might want to be a poll worker, but are not available for the entire day. NYS law does allow for split days for poll workers; however the Westchester BOE has not chosen to use that provision to date.

Recruitment

The BOE has mailed cards to all registered voters seeking new poll workers for the General Election. At present, those who have contacted the BOE to apply have received a generic message saying they will be contacted, but that there are many applications and the respondent might not be needed at present. The intent is good, but voters have complained that they found the solicitation more discouraging than welcoming. We therefore recommend that in the future, this message be used, but changed to reflect that the BOE is working hard to get all volunteers trained and further information will be forthcoming.

Recruitment efforts should be stepped up and should be continuous throughout the year. Local political committees should be encouraged to ask district leaders and other volunteers to become poll workers. School district workers, government employees, and other workers who have Election Day off should be encouraged to apply. In fact, the County Executive offered County workers to serve as poll workers. Local college students and high school students older than 18 should be recruited. All workers should be offered the enhanced pay scale in place for the 2020 General Election.

We also recommend the Commissioners consider adopting split shifts as it will increase the pool of available workers.

Training

The BOE Commissioners have indicated they are working on a training video that will alleviate the need for some of the training to be in-person. However they believe workers must spend part of the training on the actual machines with which they will be working. We recommend as a short-term solution that the in-person, small attendance training begins immediately; and that as much online training as possible be made available. As one voter said, "If I can learn how to fix my car from watching a video online, I can learn how to use voting equipment." As soon as possible, a program should be found or developed to have the machine interaction part of the training delivered remotely, similar to flight simulation or video game technology. If that is not

feasible, in-person training should take place continuously, with refresher videos sent out to trained workers closer to Early Voting.

Returning poll workers need refresher classes. These classes could easily be made available online.

Relevant laws on voter qualifications and voting rights should be reviewed with new and returning poll workers to minimize calls to the BOE during Early Voting and on Election Day. A hotline should be established for quick resolution of questions as needed.

We also recommend a FAQ/Reminder sheet be created, given to each poll worker, laminated, and distributed to each Early Voting and Election Day polling site.

V. Equipment

Which Voting Machines?

Critics have expressed sincere concern that the Westchester BOE has decided to conduct Westchester elections using the Dominion ImageCast Evolution (“Dominion ICE”) voting machine. While this report is charged with examining problems voiced by voters regarding their experience in the 2020 Primary election, and the experience with the voting machine was not one of them, we nevertheless address the matter briefly here.

Under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) each polling place has to have at least one voting machine for disabled voters. In 2008, Westchester County began using Dominion ImageCast voting machines (the “Dominion IC”) to comply with the law. By law, each polling place has to have at least one such voting machine. The Bond Act authorizing the purchase of the Dominion IC voting machines listed the “period of probable usefulness” as ten years.

When the Dominion IC voting machines had exceeded their period of probable usefulness, and accordingly manifest problems of dependability and impeded flexibility, the BOE moved to replace the 420 Dominion IC voting machines with the newest version of the same machine, the Dominion ImageCast Evolution.

The WCBOE began its move to replace the Dominion IC machines in 2019, by purchasing and using 40 Dominion ICE voting machines for use in Early Voting in 2019. In 2020, the BOE purchased another 120 Dominion ICE voting machines so that it could administer the Early Voting sites for the 2020 Primary Election and Primary Day. No voters expressed any complaint or negative experience related to their use of a voting machine during the 2019 Early Voting, the 2020 Primary Early Voting, or the 2020 Primary Election – all conducted exclusively using the Dominion ICE voting machines.

Critics nevertheless allege that purchasing the Dominion ICE machine was a mistake because of security concerns, that purchasing updated machines was unnecessary, and that the bonding for the updated voting machines was an unnecessary and imprudent expense during a time of financial strain.

Selection and Certification of Voting Machines

New York Election Law grants the County Boards of Elections sole responsibility for selecting voting machines. Election Law § 3-226. The certification of voting machines in New York State is conducted by the NYS Board of Elections (NYSBOE) Commissioners but must adhere to federal standards.

The BOE has duly chosen the Dominion ICE voting machine. NYS Election Law further requires the NYS Board of Elections to certify the voting machines, and the NYSBOE has indeed certified the Dominion ICE voting machine – twice – unanimously.

It bears noting that the Dominion ICE voting machine was subjected to a second certification review, specifically to address the specific “serious security flaw” complained about by certain experts and activists now. After considering these very same security concerns, the NYSBOE again – unanimously – chose to certify the Dominion ICE voting machine at its meeting held October 22, 2019. Thus, the WCBOE acted within its authority to direct the purchase of the Dominion ICE machine.

Independence of the County BOE & Funding Purchase of Voting Machines

The law makes clear and the Courts have affirmed the independence of the County BOE from the County Legislature and Executive, specifically regarding the selection of voting machines. The Election Law also provides that an attempt by the County to withhold funding from the County BOE will be resolved in favor of the County BOE. Election Law § 7-203(3) provides that *"[i]n the event that ... the county shall not execute a contract or contracts for the purchase of, the necessary voting machines, such contract or contracts shall be awarded, made and executed by the state board of elections"* and that such costs *"shall be chargeable to the county"*.

So, if Westchester County chose to obstruct the selection of voting machines, Election Law § 7-203(3) states that the funds **shall be** expended by the state board of elections, and that Westchester County **shall** reimburse that expenditure.

The **voting machines would be funded in either instance**, but the exercise is not without financial implications. If expenditure is made directly, it would be made through a Bond Act passed by the County at a time of historically low bond interest rates. If the expense is made by the State Board of Elections, it is possible that the County would have to “reimburse” as a deduction against the County’s State Aid package it receives, or out of the operating budget, meaning that the entire amount would have to be paid upfront; both of these scenarios would pose an incredible burden on cash flow for a budget already incredibly strained by the Coronavirus.

Necessity of New Machines

The machines that the BOE is choosing to replace are 12 years old, with a predicted useful lifespan of 10 years. As a report by the Brennan Center for Justice on voting machine security observed, “The lifespan of electronic voting machines can vary, but experts agree that systems over a decade old are more likely to need to be replaced for security and reliability reasons.”

A tour of the facilities provided to County Legislators and discussions with technicians showed starkly that these 12-year-old machines present very specific challenges to administering an election, especially in the current environment, where polling sites may need to be consolidated. For example, technicians reported that loading the required data for the Early Vote takes several minutes on the Dominion ICE voting machine, but takes much longer on the older Dominion IC voting machine – and at the conclusion of that very long time, the Dominion IC could fail, and the process would have to be restarted.

Given its age and technological limitations, the 12-year-old Dominion IC fails at a far greater rate than the new Dominion ICE voting machine. The Dominion IC machines also contain a more primitive computer operating system – one that has significantly less robust security protocols than the newest version of the machine, the Dominion ICE.

Critics of these machines call for no machine to be purchased until some more perfect machine is developed sometime in the future. These same critics have made this same argument against the purchase of machines for many years – but have never put forth a viable alternative machine to use.

We have no indication that another more perfect voting machine is in development, or imminently available. Certainly none before the election to be held on November 3rd 2020. However, we recommend that the BOE closely monitor the industry, and review any voting machine certified by NYSBOE in the future to determine if better alternatives merit purchase by Westchester County.

Security Concerns

The mere selection of a voting machine does not end concern for election security. The BOE has measures at the current warehouse and office facilities. Those physical security measures must be constantly monitored and enhanced as needed. Additionally, all BOE staff that are in possession of data, physical machines, polling books, or other equipment, or who handle absentee ballots must be trained on a continuous basis in security protocols.

To ensure confidence in the voting public, all security concerns should be thoroughly investigated and all processes should be audited on an annual basis at a minimum, with particular vigilance to cybersecurity threats.

We recommend the BOE investigate hiring an assets management consultant to define a system that will track all chain of command transfers, so that any security issue that develops can be more easily corrected.

Printers and Electronic Poll Books

The complaints concerning voting equipment during the 2020 Primary concerned the ratio of electronic poll books and printers to voting machines. Calls from poll workers to the BOE flagging absentee ballot applications by voters showing up to vote in person, and inquiring about other voter qualifications, can back up lines, therefore requiring more poll books than scanners. Occasional printer delays also require increasing the ratio of printers to scanners. We also understand that, since voters will be assigned specific voting places for the 2020 General Election, the BOE may order a quantity of pre-printed ballots. Doing so will help move lines along, and can double as emergency ballots in the event of a power outage.

VI. Early Voting

Early Voting has been permitted in NYS since the 2019 General Election. Despite disagreements about the worthiness of the type of equipment used during the Early Voting process, it was generally acknowledged by voters that Early Voting was the most successful part of the June 2020 Primary, with the fewest problems reported. Once Early Voting is well established and becomes accepted by the general voting populations, many of the issues of long lines on Election Day will be ameliorated naturally.

Locations

Considering that the COVID pandemic will likely still be in full force for November, we recommend that Early Voting be expanded to the maximum hours and days allowed by NYS law. New York State law allows any voter in Westchester County to vote in any early voting location within the County. We recommend that additional Early Voting sites be established in the major cities with high populations and for which there is a significant number of Westchester voters commuting during the workweek, including White Plains, Yonkers, and Mt. Vernon. Once locations are established, significant and regularly updated communication should go out on poll sites and hours. All communications mediums can be used to publicize sites.

Voter Education

Since many voters remain uncertain about Early Voting, it is important that all stakeholders, especially those who have voted early, give widespread testimonials about the ease, safety, and convenience of Early Voting. Cooperation with stakeholder organizations to encourage Early Voting should be encouraged. An all-media approach (see Section II) should be used for voter education. We recommend a widespread campaign to tell voters they are eligible to vote at any Early Voting site in Westchester County.

VII. Election Day

Although voters currently have other options, we anticipate that many voters will still choose to vote on Election Day. One of the most frequent concerns of constituents who sent the BOL comments was operational difficulties on Primary Election Day.

Voter Education on Locations

As discussed in the Locations section, confusion about where to vote on Elections Day was widespread and caused much distress. We recommend that voters be informed using all media outlets about polling locations for Early Voting and Election Day Voting. When practical, signs should be posted in prominent places in municipalities indicating where polling places are located. Signs at former polling places should be large, prominent and noticeable, unlike the letter-sized signs used for 2020 Primary Day. We recommend that polling sites be available on all local and County websites. If possible, an interactive feature which would allow voters to put in their address to find their Election Day and Early Voting sites would be very helpful.

We also recommend that communication go out through all mediums and through partners that people should anticipate long lines as record voter turnout is anticipated. Recommend that people plan for a potential wait and bring portable chairs, water, external phone chargers, snacks, etc. to minimize their discomfort in case of long wait.

Uniformity of Procedures at Polling Place

We recommend more education of poll workers on Frequently Asked Questions that have required calls to the BOE on Primary Day, including printed information for each poll worker and poll site.

We further recommend better communication between polling sites and the BOE when problems occur. A direct hotline for issues should be created and staffed by BOE staffers to address issues quickly.

VIII. Absentee Ballots

Since Westchester expects record voter turnout for the Presidential election, and since it is likely to be widespread interest in voting by absentee due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, we should be prepared for an unprecedented number of votes to be cast by mail. Considering the facts that there are approximately 600,000 active voters in Westchester County; that a turnout approaching 80% is not out of the question; and that approximately 50% of ballots for the 2020 Primary were cast absentee, the BOE could be faced with over 200,000 absentee ballots. Preparing for this requires several steps to be taken immediately to manage the logistical needs. There are also opportunities to make the absentee ballot process more efficient in the long-term.

The normal process requires a voter to request an absentee ballot application, generally by mail. The application can be downloaded from the BOE website and mailed in, or picked up at the BOE headquarters and several other locations such as post offices and libraries. Once a ballot application is received and processed by the BOE, a ballot is created specifically for the voter and mailed back. The voter fills out the ballot, and returns it via mail or in person to the Board of Elections. Voters can also drop off (or have someone deliver) completed, signed, sealed absentee ballots to any polling site. Ballots that are postmarked by Election Day are counted if they are received by the BOE before 7 days after the election (extended to 10 days in the June Primary). Beginning with the June primary, the BOE also has accepted absentee ballot requests via email or by phone.

Absentee ballots are held for up to 10 days after Election Day before they are opened, recorded and counted. If someone sent in an absentee ballot and subsequently voted in person during Early Voting or on Election Day, that voter's absentee ballot is discarded. As with every function at the BOE, two employees (one Democrat and one Republican) review each ballot.

Several issues should be addressed given the anticipated increase in volume of absentee ballots for the 2020 General Election and beyond.

Space issues

There will be an increased need to have secure, adequately large space for employees to manage absentee ballots. Prior to Election Day, the tasks include: opening absentee ballot requests, logging requests, creating each voter's personalized ballot, mailing the ballot voters. There must be adequate, safe, and secure space to store ballots as they arrive back to the BOE. After Election Day, additional space will be required to open the ballots, determine ballot validity, and cast the vote. The search for extra facilities should begin immediately, with the assistance of the County Executive and Real Estate Director.

Additional Staffing Needs/Training

Processing ballot requests, receiving ballots, and opening and recording absentee ballot votes require diligence, care, and high degrees of competence. In past elections, many BOE staffers have been deployed to manage this sensitive and critical task. We recommend that BOE Commissioners make an anticipatory evaluation of the number of additional people they will need to assist with these tasks, given the expected increase in absentee ballot voting. Any additional staff brought on to help manage this process must be of very high quality and must receive excellent training. Anticipatory recruitment and staffing, perhaps from other County departments, should begin immediately.

Equipment needs

Anything that helps to automate the absentee ballot processing at the BOE would improve the speed and accuracy of this process.

BOE Commissioners have already purchased envelope opening machines to assist in the absentee application process and more of these might be required. Other equipment that might help include: scanners to record receipt of absentee ballot requests, a system that logs when a ballot was sent to a voter, and a system that helps automate when an absentee ballot was received. Such a system could be made public via a website so that voters could check the status of their absentee ballot. This type of tracking is currently available in other states with long experience of mail-in voting. We recommend that BOE and County IT begin looking into the feasibility of such a system for November 2020. Establishing such a system will go a long way in bolstering voter confidence in the conduct of our elections, especially in light of the Trump Administration's attack on absentee voting.

Other physical requirements include increased furniture, tables, and personal protective equipment for all workers handling absentee ballots.

Drop off boxes for ballots

In the Primary, we discovered that some absentee ballots were not stamped by the Post Office. Ongoing issues with postal delivery make this another area of concern for a large volume of absentee ballots. The Governor issued an executive order to allow all ballots received within the 10-day window to be counted if it was not postmarked. Many other states have ballot drop boxes, similar to FedEx drop boxes, that allow voters to drive or walk up and deposit absentee ballots in a no-touch manner. We recommend the BOE and County Executive office look into the opportunity and legality of purchasing and installing such boxes, and employ them at all Early Voting sites, at municipal and County office buildings, and any other appropriate, secure place.

IX. COVID Compliance

It goes without saying that the Coronavirus presented challenges to every aspect of the 2020 Primary Election, and will do the same for the General Election. Every section of this report, and the recommendations at the end, reflect these realities, whether explicitly or otherwise. This specific section is reserved for discussion of compliance with public health practices in the conduct of the election.

Considering the number of live voters and poll inspectors in the 2020 Primary, the number of complaints about compliance with PPE practices was relatively low. Given the heightened sensitivity to these issues in June of 2020, a low number of complaints is likely a positive sign that overall compliance was very good. Election inspectors' own health concerns undoubtedly helped to ensure good behavior.

However, maintaining proper public health practices for the General Election will require continued vigilance, training, and sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) equipment and supplies (including masks, gloves, face shields as appropriate, hand sanitizer and supplies for sanitizing voting equipment). Given the likelihood of record or near-record turnout, it is critical that the BOE obtain and properly distribute adequate quantities of PPE and cleaning supplies, and have a plan for dealing with situations in which polling places unexpectedly run out. Poll worker training and guidance regarding social distancing requirements and proper use of PPE will be key.

We do not know what the fall is going to bring – whether the expected second wave of the virus will already be here, or whether there will be more complacency, or even resistance, regarding public health practices. Poll workers need to be trained to handle these potentialities, and be adequately supplied to keep themselves and the voters safe.

One last area of concern expressed by voters was the physical spacing at polling places, including how to cope with long lines. Primary Day was unseasonably hot, and voters expressed concern for the health of elderly and other vulnerable people on line, especially at locations in Ardsley, Mamaroneck and Yonkers, where many voters waited for hours outside in the heat. Suggestions included chairs and water, and working with the owners of the polling places to configure lines inside their facilities. The odds of a heatwave for the General Election may be low, but an early cold snap, rain, snow or strong winds are all within the realm of possibility. For that reason, finding ways to house more voters inside buildings while they wait might be a better choice where possible.

There were also complaints about the inability to socially distance in areas where voting took place, or in the corridors leading to and from those areas. Dobbs Ferry Village Hall was one location with relatively tight corridors. Voters also claimed that the largest room in a facility was not necessarily the area in which the voting took place. Ardsley Middle School was placed in this category by voters familiar with the facility. Frank and effective discussions with those who

own or operate our polling sites about optimizing social distancing will be critical, especially if the rate of infection takes a turn for the worse in coming months.

X. Summary/Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges in all aspects of life in 2020. The delay of the presidential Primary, a substantial increased need for absentee ballots, difficulty in securing safe, ADA compliant early voting sites, a decrease in willing and able poll workers and the need to consolidate primary day voting sites led to communication issues, voter confusion, hours long wait times at the polls, equipment concerns, and social distance safety fears.

Since the June 23, 2020 primary The Board of Legislators and the Election Information Gathering Task Force (EITF) has made themselves available to hear from Westchester residents about their experience via emails, public hearings, social media, and committee meetings; at the same time, working with the Board of Elections Commissioners and the County Executive to share these concerns, offer assistance where capable, and negotiate the purchase of additional needed equipment, in order to ensure that the general election in November runs as smoothly as it has in pre-pandemic years.

As stated throughout the report, the EITF makes the following recommendations, many of which are already being implemented at the time this report was written:

1. Partnering with the County Executive, Board of Legislators, and stakeholder organizations such as the League of Women Voters, voting rights advocacy groups, Westchester nonprofits, school districts, local governments, and the Westchester faith-based community to disseminate information on how to vote in the November election.
2. Creating a communications plan which includes:
 - a. Early Voting education & encouragement
 - b. Absentee ballot voter education
 - c. Mass distribution of voting site locations & times
 - d. Bilingual information materials
 - e. Easily accessible & navigable websites for voter access
 - f. A comprehensive all-media approach, which all outlets and media used to reach out to voters.
3. Open as many polling sites for Early Voting and Election Day as possible. This will allow for shorter lines, which will increase social distancing capabilities and increased voter turnout. Working with the Executive Branch of County government may unearth new potential sites.
4. Consider allowing two work shifts for poll workers on Election Day to increase the number of available poll workers.
5. Continue early recruitment for new poll workers for Early Voting and Election Day.
6. Train poll workers early and often, preferably remotely, and in person in small groups as needed. The training should include the use of the equipment as well as voting laws. Refresher courses for experienced poll workers may be suitable for online instruction.
7. Provide poll workers with easy reference FAQ sheets to help them problem-solve on site, and provide them with their own hotline to reach someone for help when needed.

8. Obtain a large, safe space for the secure storage and processing of absentee ballots.
9. Create an online application that allows voters to track the status of their absentee ballots from application to receipt of ballot at BOE
10. Investigate and purchase technology to help streamline opening and recording of mailed ballots such as scanners, envelope opening machines, enhanced programming to record. Work with asset management professionals to create a chain of command security system to minimize physical and cyber threats to machines and data.
11. Work with municipalities to site no-touch ballot receiving boxes in high density areas, perhaps in Municipal Buildings as well as Early Voting and Election Day polling sites.
12. Ensure enough PPE-masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, gloves, disinfectant wipes, pens- are available for every poll worker at every voting site for Early Voting and Election Day.

We trust that the data collected and information analyzed will prove useful for all parties working together to ensure a safe, secure, and smooth election process for the 2020 Election. We expect this report to be used as a tool for future elections in Westchester County.

APPENDICES



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 2, 2020

CONTACT:

Jason Chervokas
Director of Communications
(914)-995-2838
jmch@westchestergov.com

NEW ELECTION INFORMATION GATHERING TASK FORCE ANNOUNCED; PUBLIC INPUT SESSION SET FOR JULY 8, 7 P.M.

White Plains, NY — A new Election Information Gathering Task Force has been established by Board Chairman Ben Boykin. The Task Force will obtain public input about the June 23 Primary Election and about pro-active steps that can be taken for the November 3 General Election. It will provide a report to the Board of Legislators by August 7, 2020.

The Task Force will hold a public input session on Wednesday, July 8 at 7 p.m.

In order to ensure public health safety, **the session will be conducted remotely**, rather than in-person, pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1 as extended.

The public will have **multiple ways to participate**:

- **Online:** To register to speak via the Board's Webex online teleconferencing system, please visit this link. Speakers will be called in the order of registration: <https://westchestergov.webex.com/westchestergov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e544cf7dd60ae8922a643c64a2ea73444>
- **By Telephone:** Participants who wish to speak by phone should register by 3 p.m. July 8. To register, members of the public may call (914) 995-2800. Please leave a name and a callback number where we can reach you when the comment session begins.
- **In writing:** Comments can be submitted in writing by emailing BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com or mailing them to the Clerk of the Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Ave., 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 1060. Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. on July 15, 2020.

Speakers shall be limited to three (3) minutes.

The session will be streamed live and archived on the Board's website, <http://www.westchesterlegislators.com>

The Board of Legislators members of the Task Force are:

- Vice Chairwoman Alfreda Williams
- Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky
- Legislator Catherine Borgia, Chairwoman of the Budget & Appropriations Committee, Task Force Co-Chair
- Legislator Vedat Gashi, Chairman of the Public Works & Transportation Committee, Task Force Co-Chair

###



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 29, 2020

CONTACT:

Jason Chervokas
Director of Communications
(914)-995-2838
jmch@westchestergov.com

**LEGISLATORS TO MEET WITH ELECTION COMMISSIONERS ABOUT VOTING
IMPROVEMENTS
Committee of the Whole Meeting Planned for July**

White Plains, NY — The Westchester County Board of Legislators will convene a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting in July to hear from the Commissioners of the County's Board of Elections about how to improve voting conditions in November in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board Chairman Ben Boykin (D- White Plains, Scarsdale, Harrison), said, "The Board of Legislators has no authority over how the Board of Elections conducts elections. The BOE is an independent body that reports to the State Board of Elections. But it is imperative that voters in Westchester have confidence in the way elections are held in our County, and as representatives of the people of Westchester, we must do what we can to ensure that.

"The June 23 primaries were conducted under a perfect storm of difficult conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented process for and volume of absentee voting, the difficulty in recruiting and training poll workers in the face of the pandemic, and the challenges of locating a sufficient number of suitable voting places presented challenging circumstances.

"Unfortunately, as a result, confusion about absentee voting was widespread and Election Day lines were unacceptably long. It is imperative that we examine what happened and understand quickly what steps need to be taken to make sure that things will be better in November."

The Board of Legislators is planning a COW for the week of July 20 with County Board of Elections Commissioners and staff. In future meetings, the BOL is also planning to speak with voters, advocates, State Board of Elections representatives and others to help ensure that clear and pro-active steps are taken before November.

In particular, Legislators are interested in hearing about improvements in the following areas:

- Early voting
- Communications
- Poll worker recruitment and training
- Poll sites
- PPE and safety supplies
- Physical and absentee voting logistics

Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D - Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington), said, “Our voting system had to deal with numerous shocks during the June primary, the result of the coronavirus pandemic and the largest primary voting turnout in decades. Westchester County’s election system cannot be caught by surprise again. We need to make sure we are ready for what will likely be record-setting turnout for the general election in November. We look forward to working together with the Board of Elections, advocates, State officials and others to make sure our County is prepared for November.”

The Board of Legislators would like to hear first-hand experiences from those who voted this June as well. We are asking voters to share their experiences, as specifically as possible, by email at BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com

###



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 23, 2020

CONTACT:

Jason Chervokas
Director of Communications
(914)-995-2838
jmch@westchestergov.com

**DATE SET FOR MEETING WITH ELECTION COMMISSIONERS ON VOTING
IMPROVEMENTS**

Committee of the Whole Meeting Scheduled for Wednesday, July 29 at 10 a.m.

White Plains, NY — The Westchester County Board of Legislators will convene a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on Wednesday, July 29 at 10 a.m. to hear from the Commissioners of the County's Board of Elections (BOE) about how to improve voting conditions in November in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 202.1, as extended, in order to protect public health and maintain necessary social distancing, the meeting will take place without in-person public access, but, as with all our public meetings, the proceedings will be streamed live and archived on our website, www.westchesterlegislators.com.

A live link to the stream will appear on the Upcoming Events section of our online meeting calendar at https://westchestercountyny.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=1 when the meeting begins.

The June 23 primaries were conducted under a perfect storm of difficult conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the BOE's ability to recruit and train poll workers. In addition, changes in the availability of traditional polling sites meant that many new locations had to be found. Also, a series of gubernatorial emergency Executive Orders changed election dates and deadlines multiple times, and instituted new absentee balloting procedures, leading to a dramatic increase in the volume of absentee voting.

The BOE faced a daunting task in conducting elections in that environment, and the COVID-19 pandemic is sure to present similar challenges this November, when turnout will be significantly higher.

The County Board of Legislators has no authority over how the BOE conducts elections. However, as the elected representatives of the people of Westchester County, we know that nothing is more important than the people's right to vote. To the extent that the legislature can gather information, ask questions, and provide recommendations to the BOE, we must do that.

The COW is just one of several step the Board of Legislators is undertaking to assist voters and to provide recommendations to the BOE.

A newly created Election Information Gathering Task Force met Wednesday evening, July 8 to hear from more than 70 members of the public who registered to speak during the online event. Many of those who spoke were long-time poll workers. We also received more than 150 written comments. The comments offered valuable and real-world user-experience data we hope will be useful to the BOE.

In addition, our Budget & Appropriations Committee met on the morning of July 13 with election professionals and advocates to hear about their experiences and suggestions.

The Election Information Gathering Task Force will assemble the information from these meetings and prepare a report, including recommendations, to be completed by August 7.

###

Latimer Offers Plan To Help Ensure Smooth Voting On Election Day 2020 In Westchester County

Published: 15 July 2020

Latimer said: "While the Westchester Board of Elections is state controlled we are all in this together. I want people to vote, I want them to be engaged – and we are here to help."

(White Plains, NY) – In the wake of a primary election day filled with issues, Westchester County Executive George Latimer released a four-point plan aimed at offering assistance to the state-directed Westchester Board of Elections (BoE) in advance of Election Day 2020. The plan, which has already been given to Board of Elections Commissioners Reginald Lafayette and Douglas Colety, includes assistance with additional polling place inspectors, replacement polling sites, additional temporary staff for absentee ballot counting and early voting.

Latimer said: "Our nation was founded on the principle of free and fair elections – without them nothing else truly matters. The Board of Elections are a state-directed entity but what I am offering is a way to utilize the strength of our County government to assist in the democratic process."

Among the new procedures is utilizing Westchester County employees, who already have Election Day off, as polling place inspectors. Latimer said utilizing these workers, along with also securing new polling sites to keep a reasonable number of locations open but avoid the use of nursing homes and other high Covid-19 risk areas, is simply streamlining our government workforce and utilizing County connections.

Latimer said: "While the Westchester Board of Elections is state controlled we are all in this together. This is our County and we have an American duty to make the voting process as accessible as possible to those who want to exercise their civic rights. I want people to vote, I want them to be engaged – and we are here to help."

Additionally, the last two points of the plan are to provide resources to the BoE to hire part-time poll workers to count absentee ballots as well as open up early voting locations so that any duly registered Westchester voter can vote at any early voting location site.

The four point plan was shared with BoE leadership as well as Board of Legislators leadership.

Read the full letter [here](#).

George Latimer
County Executive

July 27, 2020

TO: Reginald LaFayette, Commissioner
Douglas Colety, Commissioner
Westchester County Board of Elections

RE: November General Election

Commissioners,

Following up on our memo of July 10th and our subsequent conversation, we are implementing the plans we presented, with the following actions:

1) Additional Polling Place Inspectors

By August 15th, we will send an e-mail, with video, to all County employees, requesting their service as Poll Inspectors. We will provide them, at your direction, separate points of contact for those employees (County residents) registered as Republicans and those registered as Democrats, so they may express their interest directly to you. As you establish whatever screening process you choose, you will advise us of those you are accepting as Inspectors along with the date(s) for their training. We will then advise the respective Department Heads of the time needed to allow for such training. You will deploy the Inspectors as you see fit on Election Day.

2) Replacement Polling Sites

We have already informed our contacts with School Superintendents, and Municipal Officials, of the likely need to find a number of new polling sites to replace those used in 2019 that no longer satisfy the State requirements established during the coronavirus outbreak. Andrew Ferris and Steve Bass of our team will work with your designees to review all polling sites, and determine which ones need replacement, and where alternative sites may exist. We will reach out to make the necessary contacts with those alternate sites to enable your office to secure commitments for those sites well in advance of the time needed to inform voters of the new locations.

Office of the County Executive

Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Email: ce@westchestergov.com
Telephone: (914)995-2900

westchestergov.com

3) Early Voting – Marketing Plan

Catherine Cioffi, Director of Communications, will work with your designees to fashion a Marketing Plan to promote early voting dates, times and sites. We expect to use social media, public media, including press conferences and interviews, and other promotional efforts designed to increase the usage of Early Voting – already well received in our county, but with a greater upside in participation which can reduce the volume on Election Day itself. Once your designees have been established, they can call Catherine to set up a meeting to develop and finalize the plan and its implementation.

4) Additional Temporary Staffing for Mail Absentee Ballots

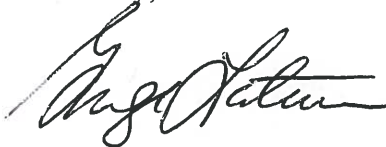
Please advise us within the next thirty (30) days the additional temporary staff, and the total personnel costs involved, needed to ensure the large scale mailings for absentee ballot requests, and the following mailing of the ballots themselves, in a timely fashion. Joan McDonald, Director of Operations, will supervise the process affirming the resources available for this task; you will be in charge of the hiring process as is normally the case.

5) Tracking of Expenses for Potential CARES Act Reimbursement

We believe that most of these expenses will be covered by the funding which came directly to the County from the federal CARES Act. This is separate and apart from the CARES Act funding which went directly to the Board of Elections. The coding of expenses has some specific requirements. Joan McDonald will identify a person to work with whomever you designate to assist in tracking these expenses.

We are committed to this assistance as a positive way to accomplish the agreed upon end goal of conducting the smoothest possible Election Day 2020. Only the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic warrant our direct involvement and assistance in this manner. We are ready to implement these actions immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Latimer", written over a horizontal line.

George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

George Latimer
County Executive

TO: Reginald LaFayette, Commissioner, County Board of Elections

Douglas Colety, Commissioner, County Board of Elections

DATE: Friday, July 10, 2020

RE: November 3rd General Election 2020

Commissioners,

Understanding that we face a record turnout for the General Election this year, the County Administration stands ready to offer our assistance to overcome any obstacles that may stand in the way of ensuring the best possible experience for the voters of our county in exercising their right to vote. With that thought in mind, we make the following offers to your department:

1) **Additional Polling Place Inspectors.**

The County Administration has closed all County offices on Election Day, November 3rd as a scheduled holiday. This enables us to encourage and solicit our workforce to sign up for duty as Polling Place inspectors. Since they already have the Election Day off, this will allow them to serve as inspectors; we will also provide sufficient time off, as needed, at no cost to the employee, for the appropriate training as may be designated by the Board of Elections. Those who serve as inspectors who are already County employees would receive compensation for this additional work covered by the County Administration's budget resources, at no direct cost to the BoE budget. We will work with you to ensure the necessary balance of inspectors are encouraged, and we are optimistic that this will help you achieve the necessary number of inspectors to allow for all of the normal polling places to be properly staffed for Election Day. Notwithstanding the heavy volume of voters which accompany any Presidential Election, full activation of all usual polling places should help in reducing long lines and delays. We can begin this process immediately if you wish.

2) **Replacement Polling Sites**

The COVID pandemic has made some of the traditional polling sites inaccessible for use in this year's election. Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, et. al. are unlikely to be available for normal General Election voting. The County Administration is ready to assist in identifying alternate sites for polling purposes, as close to the original polling sites as possible, to avoid doubling up of election districts in a single site. We will utilize the relationships we have built with school districts, municipal governments and community organization centers, to help you secure those alternate sites that are handicap accessible, have adequate parking, lighting, properly sized rooms and so forth. As one example, we know that two (2) election districts that vote in the City of Rye have done so at The Osborn Auditorium, located inside that skilled care nursing facility. We have taken the liberty to speak with the Rye City School Superintendent to determine the availability of Osborn Elementary School, in proximity to the The Osborn Auditorium, which could serve to house those two EDs for Election 2020; the school district is willing to work with the Board of Elections to provide adequate space as a replacement location. We know there are other such sites across the County, and we believe we can assist you in

George Latimer
County Executive

securing proper alternatives wherever the need exists. We can provide a team to assist your team in ensuring the logistics of each polling place provides adequate space for social distancing, as well as proper space to queue voters waiting to vote.

3) **Additional Temporary Staff for Absentee Ballot Counting**

Anticipating the larger turnout in this Presidential election year, and assuming we will see a record number of absentee ballots, the County Administration is prepared to allocate resources for the BoE to hire temporary workers to assist in handling mail-in absentee ballots if needed. This will ensure the BoE has the manpower available to meet the need prior to the election to process mailings of absentee ballot applications, and the subsequent mailing of requested ballots themselves, as well as the manpower to ensure a speedy and accurate tally of election results after the election.

4) **Early Voting**

Since New York State adopted in-person early voting in 2019, Westchester voters have had the opportunity to cast their ballot prior to Election Day at one of the designated sites across the County. Early voting has helped minimize wait times and provide more opportunities for voters to participate in the election in the week leading up to it. For the 2020 General Election, Westchester County voters will be able to vote at any of the early voting locations, regardless of where they live. A voter in a municipality with a particularly busy polling site could cast their ballot at a less busy location in another town or city. In the coming months, the County is fully willing to work cooperatively with the Board of Elections and utilize the resources of our Communications Department, developing with your guidance a detailed plan to spread public information about early voting to all, in order to help Westchester voters take advantage of the opportunity to cast their ballots at an early voting site.

There are other means by which the County Administration can be helpful, and we would welcome that opportunity. We share the same goal – the successful administration of the General Election for 2020. We recognize such decisions fall wholly within your authority, as your line of report extends not to the County Administration or Board of Legislators, but rather to the State Board of Elections. But we offer our efforts as a partner, to help you achieve the goal of a smooth, inclusive election, wherever we can be of help.

We look forward to working with you on these and other issues at hand.

Sincerely,

George

George Latimer
Westchester County Executive



REGINALD A. LAFAYETTE
Commissioner
Fax 914-995-7753
JEANNIE L. PALAZOLA
Deputy Commissioner

25 Quarropas Street
White Plains, NY 10601
914-995-5700
www.westchestergov.com/boe

DOUGLAS A. COLETY
Commissioner
Fax 914-995-3190
DOROTHY L. DIPALO
Deputy Commissioner

August 11, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

Benjamin Duke
Covington & Burling LLP
620 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10018
pbduke@cov.com

Dear Mr. Duke,

We are in receipt of your letter of August 5, 2020 requesting compliance with N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-600.

As an initial matter, we must reject any suggestion that the Westchester County Board of Elections (“WCBOE”) has tried to “confuse the public” regarding early voting. Indeed, Westchester County early voting rates are among the best in New York State, a fact of which the WCBOE is proud.

Without waiving any rights, and in response to your request, please allow this letter to serve as written confirmation that, as mandated by § 8-600(3), all eligible voters registered in Westchester County will be able to vote at any early voting poll site in Westchester County for future elections, including throughout the early voting period for the upcoming November 2020 election.

The WCBOE is ensuring that its communication plan complies with § 8-600(5) by informing eligible voters of the opportunity to vote early, as well as publicizing:

- the location and dates and hours of operation of all polling places for early voting;
- an indication of whether each polling place is accessible to voters with physical disabilities; and
- a clear and unambiguous notice to voters that if they cast a ballot during the early voting period they will not be allowed to vote election day.

Westchester County Board of Elections

The WCBOE will provide a copy of its communications to voters.

Sincerely,



Reginald A. LaFayette

Commissioner

Westchester County Board of Elections



Douglas A. Colety

Commissioner

Westchester County Board of Elections

ELECTION INFORMATION GATHERING TASK FORCE



Public Written Comments

July 2020

Task Force Members

Co-Chairs: Legislators Catherine Borgia and Vedat Gashi
Vice Chair Alfreda Williams and Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky

[REDACTED]

From: Eileen Guzman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:44 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary election

My name is Eileen Guzman and live on [REDACTED] in Yonkers. I had back surgery in March and was happy when I received an application for an absentee ballot for voting. Both my sister and I filled out the applications but never received the ballots. Election Day I went to vote at my usual voting place PS29 and the line was as long as the building. In the 30 yrs I have lived here I have never waited on a line outside the building. I am walking with a walker and could not wait on a line that long. I returned home and tried again later. The line was even longer double the length of the building. I couldn't vote this year. I want to make sure this problem is corrected before November as I don't want to miss that election as well.

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: Gisele Weiss [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:42 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Vote

I received my ballot 3 days after The primary election.

[REDACTED]

From: Stephen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:19 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Day Voting Problems

My wife and I completed absentee ballot applications, and mailed them back to the Westchester County Board of Elections on June 1. I received my ballot at our temporary address in Puerto Rico on Saturday, June 20. Since the BOE requires absentee ballots be postmarked by the day before the election/primary, I had to make a special trip to the P.O. on Monday June 22. Hopefully the PO postmarked it on that day, or my vote would not be valid.

My wife's situation was worse. Even though she and I filled out identical absentee ballot applications, requesting the ballot be sent to our temporary address in Puerto Rico, my wife's ballot was sent to our permanent home address in Greenburgh. Since we were not there, she never received the ballot, and was unable to vote in the Primary. She (and I) vote every year, so she was understandably upset at not being able to do so this year.

Though my ballot was sent to the correct address, it was received just one business day before I could timely complete and mail it. My wife's ballot was sent to the wrong address, preventing her from voting. Both these issues are due to the actions (or lack thereof) of the Board of Elections.

My wife and I will likely be in Puerto Rico on Election Day. If we are, we intend to request absentee ballots for the November's General Election. We do not want a repeat of what occurred in the Primary.

Thank you.

Stephen Pappas
Delia Reyes

[REDACTED]
White Plains, NY 10603

[REDACTED]

From: Henry Feintuch [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:19 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Alice Feintuch - Willow Towers Assisted Living [REDACTED];
[REDACTED]
Subject: Voting problems

Our family moved to Elmsford 3 years ago after downsizing from Chappaqua. My wife works in healthcare in New Rochelle, I have a public relations practice in Manhattan (temporarily shuttered: working from home) and our son Alex is unemployed due to Covid-19.

Though we were mailed absentee ballots, we chose to wait until the primary to vote hoping to learn more about the issues and candidates as the election approached. That turned out to be a poor decision given election day debacles in our county.

We went to the combined "super polling site" in White Plains at 6:30pm and viewed a line of a 150-200 persons (or more). We went to dinner and came back at 7:45... only to discover the line was now out of the parking lot and running up several streets with easily 400 persons on line. We work for a living and could not wait until 11pm or later.... We felt fully disenfranchised by Westchester's decision to keep most polling locations closed and consolidated. It was a decision bound to blow up as fewer locations and interested voters could only lead to long lines, machine breakdowns and voter gridlock.

This was a shameful decision that put Westchester County in the same realm as backwater hamlets that have no better choices. We hope you restore more polling places and proper resources into this hallmark of democracy especially since this year's presidential election and other races carry enormous and outsized importance.... We hope you will find the way to restore democracy into our voting system in Westchester County.

Henry
Henry P. Feintuch,
President, FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS
Past President, PRSA-NY
CFO, PR World Alliance
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Stephen Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:19 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Election

I was one of the first voters in Tarrytown Depot voting site. The attendants were unable to sync the computer with the printer for the ballots. They were calling for IT who did not arrive. After waiting 30 minutes, I requested a paper ballot. When I left there were 50 people in line and the printer was still not working. It seemed like the staff had not had adequate training and there was no timely support. Very disappointing.

--
Sincerely,

Steve Kelly

[REDACTED]

From: Kenneth Stahn [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 6:54 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Mail in Voting

I have not one case where the mail in ballot was considered successful. I believe pandemic or not that the age old ballot box at all polling location be used. This November election is to important to have the results dragged out for days/weeks with some sides complaining regarding results and accuracy.

Republican Democrat Liberal or Conservative.

It needs to be accurate and the new untested way needs much work before November.

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Friedman, Debbie
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 6:49 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Barr, Nancy
Subject: FW: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

From: Irene Gmail [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 12:38 PM
To: Barr, Nancy <neb7@westchestergov.com>
Subject: RE: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

Hi Nancy,

Jonathan mailed his form to request an absentee ballot before the deadline, a few days after I sent it in....BUT he received the ballot in the mail yesterday, way PAST the election date of June 23rd. I received the ballot in plenty of time to vote absentee but thought you should know about Jonathan's experience of having to vote in person. Hope this is not the case in November.

Thanks!
Irene

From: Kathy Schuler [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 6:30 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: NY Primary June 23

It was my experience in working at the polls on 6/23 in the gym at Pleasantville High School (Town of Mt. Pleasant) that the Board of Elections was not prepared for the number of in-person voters who wanted to vote that day.

When we arrived at 5 a.m., there were no tables or chairs in the gym. We had to wait for a school district employee to move furniture and Board of Election equipment out of a closet to begin setting up.

Voters were on line before the polls opened, and voters were on line when the polls closed; there was no time during the day without voters on line. So poll workers could not catch up with paperwork, double-check anything, or take regular breaks.

My polling place was not air conditioned; that was a problem not only for workers and voters but also for our printers, which stopped working repeatedly because they were overheated, thus causing longer and longer lines of voters. The school employee kindly supplied two industrial-strength fans, which helped a little with air circulation but were so noisy we could not hear most voters behind their masks. They could not hear us very well either, so we were all losing our voices by the end of the night.

There was no Board of Election supervisor present, except one tech worker who set up the poll pads and printers. She was great with restarting the printers when they stopped but did not know anything about procedures.

There was no binder in our "blue bag" with information about changes to procedures for affidavit ballots, closing the ICE machines, telephone numbers for calling the Board of Elections, or any other questions that arose during the day. During the early voting, we were told that decisions on those questions would be made before Primary Day and that the Board of Elections employee assigned to our polling place would tell us what had been decided. Since no Elections employee was present, we never got any answers to those questions.

We were mostly unable to reach the Board of Elections by telephone. In trying to get permission for voters to vote in person after an absentee ballot was issued, I had to leave the gym to get phone service and most often did not get any answer. After about 10 such calls a worker at another table told me that the Board had decided we should just stop calling them about this and let people vote in person even if they had received an absentee ballot.

I do not believe any poll workers besides me had ever worked on the poll pad/ICE machine system before that day, and even I had never seen the ICE machines closed down at the end of voting, because that was not done during the days I worked on early voting. Several workers were trained during two-hour stints in the early voting period, but that was clearly not enough training. We had no information about keeping tallies of votes cast on each ICE machine or whether we needed to keep ballots from each table separated and cast in separate ICE machines.

There were not enough paper masks for voters, but way too many plastic face shields, which no one wanted to wear. Voters also complained that they had not received their absentee ballots, that they were afraid to mail an absentee ballot because the post office has been so unreliable lately, that they had received incorrect information about early voting locations, that they felt the young man who was directing traffic at the door was not wearing his mask fully pulled up, that they had to wait too long, that the next voter was standing too close, and that the gym was too hot and unsafe because too many people were in there at once.

There were no sample ballots for the Democratic presidential primary, and that ballot was apparently confusing to many people. This resulted in many spoiled ballots and wasted time. The poll workers who unpacked the affidavit ballots could not find any affidavit ballots for that contest either, which resulted in having to print ballots manually to be used as affidavit ballots.

From all of this, it should be clear that we will need many, many more sign-in tables, printers, ICE machines, and poll workers if we are going to have in-person voting in November. We also need more training or at least written instructions about changes in procedures. Additionally, I believe the PHS gym is unsuitable as a polling place in warmer weather.

-Kathy Schuler
Pleasantville

[REDACTED]

From: lisa vereline [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 5:51 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting

I submitted my ballot into the box right next to the entrance of the daycare center on the Greenburgh campus.

I hesitated for a bit because there was no sign indicating that was the box where I should put my ballot. I went back to the car after I walked up to the box and then called someone who told me that yes that is the box in which to put the ballot. I feel there still should have been a sign on or next to the box so that residents would be certain as to where they should place it.

Sincerely,

Lisa Vereline

From: Paul Feiner <pfeiner@greenburghny.com>
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 5:18 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: please forward to Board of Legislators for your primary election analysis

Honorable Legislators:

Thank you for reviewing the primary day fiasco. These are some of the concerns residents highlighted to me on primary day. I hope that the Board of Elections will give priority attention to correcting the many problems that took place. Our democracy depends on voter confidence of the integrity of our elections. The Greenburgh Town Board is meeting on Wednesday night so I will be unable to attend your meeting. I appreciate the fact that these comments will be included in the record.

Complaints I heard: 1) People did not receive absentee ballots; 2) long lines - some people waited for more than two hours to vote (some people voted after 11 PM); 3) Machines malfunctioned - one of registration machines that printed ballots kept shutting down because of inadequate power; 4) lack of air conditioning at some polls; 5) malfunctioning machines; 6) reduction in polling places. 81 election districts--5 polling locations. Confusion since people didn't vote at the polling location they always vote at. Polling locations should not be reduced - voters should always vote at the same location; 7) unsure if absentee ballots that were sent in the ballot would be counted since postal service is not reliable (I had suggested that the Board of Elections send voters a confirmation that they received the ballot or provide voters with an identification number enabling voters to confirm if the ballot was received). It would be interesting if the county would analyze - after votes are counted - how many ballots were invalidated because they arrived too late. 8) Elderly and disabled residents with canes had to wait for up to two hours to vote and not afforded any accommodations; 9) people who were dehydrated and with temperature waited on lines --some left before voting; 10) lack of adequate help at polling places to control crowds.

PAUL FEINER

Greenburgh Town Supervisor

Legislators to Meet With Election Commissioners About Voting Improvements this Wednesday July 8 at 7 PM. The session will be streamed live and archived on the Board's website,
<http://www.westchesterlegislators.com>

Westchester County Board of Legislators

<https://clicktime.symantec.com/3M6m2aBPYJxVmhSaPCGreYw7Vc?u=www.westchesterlegislators.com>

website for Legislators forms

The Board of Legislators would like to hear first-hand experiences from those who voted in the June primary. The deadline for comments is July 15. They are asking voters to share their experiences, as specifically as possible, by email at BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com.

From County Legislators:

A new Election Information Gathering Task Force has been established by Board Chairman Ben Boykin. The Task Force will obtain public input about the June 23 Primary Election and about pro-active steps that can be taken for the November 3 General Election. It will provide a report to the Board of Legislators by August 7, 2020.

The Task Force will hold a public input session on Wednesday, July 8 at 7 p.m.

In order to ensure public health safety, the session will be conducted remotely, rather than in-person, pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1 as extended.

The public will have multiple ways to participate:

- Online: To register to speak via the Board's Webex online teleconferencing system, please click this link: <https://westchestergov.webex.com/westchestergov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e544cf7dd60ae8922a643c64a2ea73444>. Speakers will be called in the order of registration.
- By Telephone: Participants who wish to speak by phone should register by 3 p.m. July 8. To register, members of the public may call (914) 995-2800. Please leave a name and a callback number where we can reach you when the comment session begins.
- In writing: Comments can be submitted in writing by emailing BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com or mailing them to the Clerk of the Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Ave., 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 1060. Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. on July 15, 2020.

Speakers shall be limited to three (3) minutes.

The session will be streamed live and archived on the Board's website, <http://www.westchesterlegislators.com>

Your responses to the 2020 Census questionnaire will help the Town and School Districts obtain additional federal funds for schools, roads and public services. PLEASE RESPOND AND HELP GREENBURGH!

"Be Counted- my2020census.gov"

From: Carol McMillan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:52 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: FW: Voting observations

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Carol McMillan
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:51 PM
To: bolpubliccomments@westchestergov.com; Nancy Barr
Subject: Voting observations

I am very sorry to see that Westchester County joins the many jurisdictions that did not have a smooth election process in the recent primary. Clearly action must be taken to insure a different result in November. Having worked as an election inspection for many elections, and now, having taken part in early voting for the most recent two elections, I would like to share a few observations.

First, the addition of early voting is a laudable achievement for New York. In November, I knew that I would be recovering from surgery on election day and was delighted to have the opportunity to go to the polls before I was incapacitated. More recently, as I became nervous that my absentee ballot had not arrived and the election date neared, I once again went out to vote early. Both times, I went to Harrison, and found the process smooth and efficient. However, last spring when I took my training as an inspector, it was dismaying to have early voting barely mentioned, and then with the news that regular polling places would have to check a list of early voters before allowing potential voters to sign in and cast a ballot. I could only imagine the kind of havoc and lines that process would create. Surely there is a better way to integrate the system. Since I did not work as an inspector for either the November or recent election, I can't comment on how it really worked in practice, but suspect that may have had an impact on the length of the lines reported in some places.

Consolidating the polling places seems like a wise idea, especially given the fact that in many locations, only Democratic voters were involved. However, I was surprised to receive my notification card that after 30 years of voting in the same polling place, my new spot was a good distance from my home. No reason was given on the postcard, and it would have been easy to add a bit of information to that effect. One reason given for the consolidation in the followup coverage was the lack of available inspectors. However, I personally was never contacted about working so I do wonder how thorough the outreach was.

The coming election is of critical importance to the nation. Let's please do everything possible to make it easy and secure for everyone to participate. Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment.

Carol McMillan
Rye Brook

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

[REDACTED]

From: Kate Permut [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:47 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Fwd: Primary voting in Ossining and Peekskill

From: Kate Permut [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 2:49 PM
Subject: Primary voting in Ossining and Peekskill

Dear Legislators,

This provides you with my experience on the evening of June 23, when visiting the Community Center polling places in Ossining and Peekskill, NY. Please know that I am a resident of Scarborough, NY and personally voted by absentee ballot, which I submitted by mail. My purpose in visiting the two polling places on Primary Day was to hand out palm cards flyers for CD-17 candidate Allison Fine (within the appropriate distance and designated areas for each spot), as well as to drop off a supply of free bottled water (a few cases, available for free, to anyone who needed it) in case there were people waiting outside in the heat. It was a very hot afternoon. When I arrived at Ossining's Community Center at 5 pm the line was out the door, with about 20 voters waiting in a line (at appropriate social distance) that stretched around the corner and down the street. The line moved very slowly and I observed one elderly man with a cane who left his place in line to sit in the shade. I don't know if he ever voted. The line grew by 7-10 more people by the time I dropped off the water and headed to Peekskill.

In Peekskill the line was out the door of the Community Center at 6 pm and, looking in the door, people were in a line (trying to maintain social distance) that wrapped around the hall, down the stairs, and around the hall in the lower level. Those exiting reported a 45 minute wait. The line grew longer quickly and soon grew in length out to the street and curved around the corner of the plantings in the plaza. Again, there were elderly voters waiting in the heat, as well as parents with small children. One woman showed me her postcard, which she said sent her to a closed polling location in another part of town. By chance she ran into another voter, who told her to go to the Community Center instead. by 6:30 pm I dropped off the water, moved to the appropriately distant spot and handed out my literature, then headed home. Please note that the people already in line seemed determined to wait and vote, but the long line was observed by many drivers passing by, and the unknown factor is whether some gave up their right to vote, having observed the long wait ahead.

I have attached my photos of that day.

In my opinion the closing of polling places, the erroneous information on postcards, and long lines that awaited voters were major problems that disenfranchised many Westchester voters. This situation needs to be fixed ASAP so that voters in November - who may have to wait in the cold and rain - do not have to choose between their health and their democratic right to vote.

Sincerely,

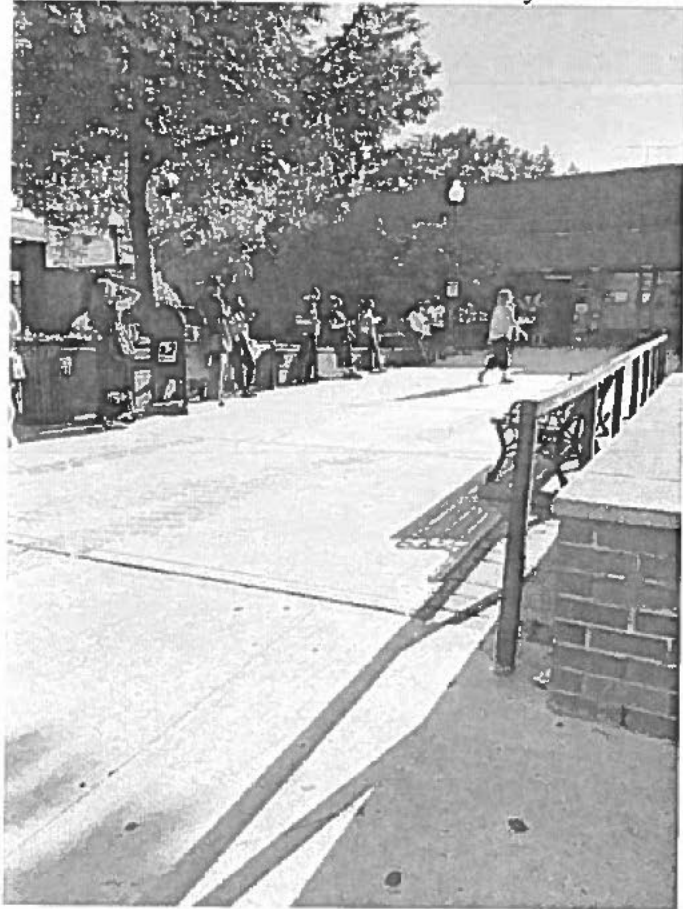
Kate Permut

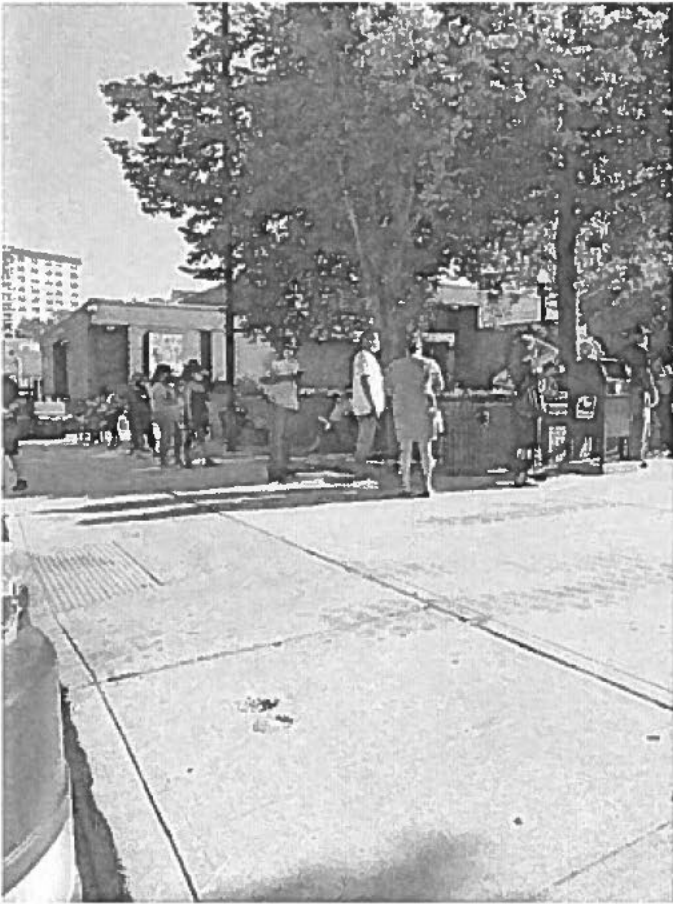
[REDACTED]
Scarborough, NY 10510
[REDACTED]

Line of Voters in Ossining



The line outside of Peekskill Community Center





[REDACTED]

From: Renee Cohen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:25 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: renee marks cohen
Subject: Comments re Election
Attachments: 070520NotetoCountyBdLegis.reNov. election-ReneeCohen.docx

7/6/20

TO: Westchester County Bd. of Legislators

FROM: Maureen ("Renee") Cohen [REDACTED] White Plains, NY

RE: Election procedures for November 2020

- 1) First, I thank County Executive George Latimer and County Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin for their wisdom, humanity, and clarity in communicating with County residents about COVID-19.
- 2) In planning ahead for the November 2020 Election, let us plan and act as if a new wave of COVID-19 will be here. We must be proactive and prepared, just as we were when the County Center was outfitted as a hospital.
- 3) I just learned that the Board of Elections does not process the Absentee ballots as they arrive. The ballots are all processed together after a certain deadline. Has an efficient system been devised to count the votes on Absentee ballots? Are there sufficient staff to handle this?
- 4) For the November election, it may be wise to have everyone vote by Absentee ballot, especially if the alternative were to have Polling places *different* than the pre-COVID locations. ***Whatever system is chosen, and chosen EARLY, the public must be educated about the details.***

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Cohen

7/6/20

TO: Westchester County Bd. of Legislators

FROM: Maureen ("Renee") Cohen [REDACTED]

White Plains, NY

RE: Election procedures for November 2020

- 1) First, I thank County Executive George Latimer and County Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin for their wisdom, humanity, and clarity in communicating with County residents about COVID-19.
- 2) In planning ahead for the November 2020 Election, let us plan and act as if a new wave of COVID-19 will be here. We must be proactive and prepared, just as we were when the County Center was outfitted as a hospital.
- 3) I just learned that the Board of Elections does not process the Absentee ballots as they arrive. The ballots are all processed together after a certain deadline. Has an efficient system been devised to count the votes on Absentee ballots? Are there sufficient staff to handle this?
- 4) For the November election, it may be wise to have everyone vote by Absentee ballot, especially if the alternative were to have Polling places *different* than the pre-COVID locations. ***Whatever system is chosen, and chosen EARLY, the public must be educated about the details.***

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Cohen

[REDACTED]

From: Angela Usobiaga [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:20 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Suggestions for your consideration

PROBLEM 1: the increase in mail-in ballots undoubtedly results in more manpower needed to produce, mail, receive and record the ballots. This problem, particularly the receipt and recording of ballots, will probably get worse in November since more people tend to vote in the general election than in the primaries. There is potential that it could take a much, much longer period of time to determine the actual winners AND that fatigued workers could make critical errors.

SUGGESTION 1: Recruit, train and hire per-diem workers to work in the mail-in ballot process, similar to what the BOE does with poll workers. It is less risky than the risk to poll workers since they can be put in a controlled setting to optimize their personal protection.

PROBLEM 2: Getting more than one ballot because you requested one via phone, mail or downloaded one from the BOE website, only to get a second ballot from the BOE. It causes confusion, and some may think or assume their mail-in ballot was lost and vote for a second time.

SUGGESTION 2: With the state mandate to allow absentee ballots to all, discontinue all ballot requests and automatically mail a ballot to everyone on the registration roster. The website would need revision to reflect the following: (1) you can't request or download a ballot request; (2) you will automatically get a mail-in ballot; (3) even if you you receive a mail-in ballot, you are not obliged to use it and can still opt to vote in person.

Thank you for any consideration to these suggestions.

Angela Usobiaga
Pleasantville, NY

[REDACTED]

From: James Telesco [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:12 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: NO Mail in Ballots!!!

Do not even think that we need mail in ballots. Voting is a right given by the Constitution and it must be taken seriously. Voting in person is the only way to ensure a TRUE vote! I remember watching the people of Iraq voting for the first time since the removal of Saddam Hussein. These people risked their very lives in order have their vote cast and counted properly. They each put their finger in ink in order to make sure the election was legitimate. Their purple finger was a badge of courage! They did NOT just "mail it in"!

This November I will be proud to wear my mask, socially distance and vote! This will be my badge of courage as should it be everyones!!!!!!

NO MAIL IN BALLOTS!!!!!!!!!!

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail
Get the new AOL app: mail.mobile.aol.com

[REDACTED]

From: Eleanor Carren [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:04 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: How Do I check to tell if my absentee ballot was counted ?

I sent in my absentee ballot back to Westchester County Board of elections, to the White Plains address given on the pre-printed address with the stamp already on it. I looked for the place to put my signature. I had one ballot for local elections and another for presidential Primary. I couldn't find a place to sign either one. On the return envelope I put my self-stamped printed name on upper left hand corner. Will each ballot be counted? Please respond . VERY CONCERNED. ELEANOR CARREN [REDACTED] Irvington, N.Y.

[REDACTED]

From: stacey smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 3:47 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Public input from NY primaries

To whom it may concern,

The primaries held on June 23, 2020 in Westchester County, NY were horrendous. The lines were long in scorching heat and I'm confused as to why more than one location was not open to hold the demand that is normally supported by local schools. Whomever decided to shutter people over to a tiny community center did not at all do their homework. I went 45 minutes before work and stood on a line that did not move and then later came back after work to see a line wrapped around the community center at 6:50p. Needless to say I'm sickened that I was unable to utilize my right to vote because someone did not plan very well. My options have got to improve be the general election in November. How are we in the 21st century and we can't get this right. Truly absurd!!

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

From: Kristen Prata Browde
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 1:38 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting Problems - Primary Election June 23, 2020
Attachments: wrong address.pdf

To the Board of Legislators:

I write to raise four distinct issues with the June 23, 2020 primary election, all directly attributable to the Westchester County Board of Elections.

1. Voters were given inaccurate information about where to vote early. Attached please find a PDF of the card sent to me by the Board of Elections, with the incorrect address for the Mt. Kisco early voting location. It is my understanding that voters in at least five towns were given inaccurate information, which was then compounded by the lack of training for election inspectors, some of whom turned away voters who showed up at the location on their cards but were told they had to go back to their assigned voting location to cast an early vote. As you're aware, any Westchester voter entitled to vote in the primary should have been permitted to vote at any early voting location in the County.
2. The location chosen for early voting for voters in Mt. Kisco, Bedford and New Castle was completely unsuitable, so remote that it was virtually impossible for anyone not possessing a car with GPS to find it. The location was a building buried deep in a public park, more than a mile from any public transportation – and the nearest public transportation was a Bee Line bus stop. The location was several miles from the Mt. Kisco Metro North station.
3. Although I requested an absentee ballot (application sent by e-mail) I did not receive one.
4. I voted on the first day of early voting. As has been reported, I, like many others who voted that first day, initially received an incomplete ballot, one that only had the presidential primary page. I walked to the booth to fill it out and I noticed that it was presidential/delegates only, no CD 17, no DA, no Assembly District 93. I went back and asked where the rest of the races were and was told I didn't have a local primary in my district. I informed the poll worker that I was reasonably certain that he was wrong, considering that I was running in the primary, forgetting, for the moment, that there was a countywide race for DA. He sent me to a second poll worker who offered the same reason, that I didn't have any local primary races. I repeated that I was running in the primary, and he sent me to the woman in charge of the location. Two other voters were there in front of me (both of whom were trying to vote for me) talking to her – they had the same problem. No second page. She called White Plains and afterward one was given an affidavit ballot, the other, I believe, got a printed ballot. I told her my story, she called White Plains again, and after some delay I was given a second page – but not explanation of the problem. Another poll worker said someone previous had the same problem. I then cast both ballots...

Subsequently, in media interviews, the Democratic Party's Board of Elections Commissioner said that "fewer than 100" people were given incomplete ballots, and he blamed the problem on a software problem.

Though as of the writing of this e-mail it appears that a record number of voters participated in the June primary, all of the above actions served to potentially suppress the number of people who voted. All of these issues, in my view, demonstrate systemic deficiencies at the Board of Elections. I have little doubt that many will attribute these deficiencies to failures at the top of the organization, however I am in no position to judge who or what is at fault.

That inability aside, I would urge the Board of Legislators to take all appropriate steps within its purview to ensure that these deficiencies are corrected prior to the November general election.

Kristen Browde



27

28

29

[REDACTED]

From: Fabian Patino [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 1:01 PM
To: BOL Public Comments

Good afternoon,

I would just like to comment that in Mount Kisco, which has a large Spanish speaking population information was posted only in English at the original voting sites which if unaware of the change I would have gone, like town hall and the library. People were also informed in English to translate for themselves on the village's Facebook page. At the voting location information was available in both languages showing that it was possible to do so at the other sites.

Thank you,
Fabian Patiño

Westchester County Board of Elections
25 Quarropas Street
White Plains, NY 10601

2020 Primary
Voter Polling Place Information
Primaria 2020

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY 10601
PERMIT NO. 3

OFFICIAL
ELECTION MAIL

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Information para el votante del lugar de votación.

This year voters have the option to vote on Primary Day, June 23rd, or early between June 13th and June 21st.
Este año los votantes tienen la opción de votar el día de las elecciones, el 23 de junio, o votar anticipado entre el 13 de junio y el 21 de junio.

If you vote early, your Polling Place is:

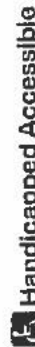
Si vota anticipado, su lugar de votación es:

MT KISCO MEMORIAL COMPLEX
125 LOZZA DR
VALHALLA, NY 10595

If you vote on Primary Day June 23rd, your Polling Place is:

Si vota el día de las primarias el 23 de junio, su lugar de votación es:

HORACE GREELEY HIGH SCHOOL
70 ROARING BROOK RD
CHAPPAQUA, NY 10514



Handicapped Accessible



Handicapped Accessible

ELECTION DISTRICT IS / DISTRITO ELECTORAL ES
TOWN/CITY: NCTL WARD: DIST: 16

Early Voting times are on the other side of this postcard.

Los horarios de votación anticipada están al reverso de esta tarjeta postal.

Polls are open 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on June 23.

Los lugares de votación están abiertos de 6 a.m. a 9 p.m. el 23 de junio.



KRISTEN P BROWDE

CHAPPAQUA, NY 10514-1500

REGINALD A. LAFAYETTE
Commissioner of Elections

DOUGLAS A. COLEY
Commissioner of Elections

[REDACTED]

From: Rosemarie Munns [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 12:57 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Election Information Gathering Task Force - Public Input

Hello to the Board of Legislators.

I received an email from Benjamin Boykin regarding the Election Information Gathering Task Force. I am taking advantage of this opportunity to voice a suggestion.

I am one of hundreds of Election Inspectors who are in the front line working the polls on Election Day. I have also worked the past two Early Voting.

Voters should be informed **weeks** before Early Voting starts that this option is available to them. Early voting should be aggressively promoted within the communities of the county, weeks before the start date. Mayors should robo call residents. Signage in public places throughout communities. Media attention.

Buck slips in high traffic public locations like supermarkets, libraries and on and on.....

If more voters take advantage of Early Voting, it will cut down the traffic at the polls on Election Day.

From a health perspective, Early Voting reduces the exposure to COVID-19 as well.

Thank you for forming this Task Force and taking our suggestions.

Have a great summer!

- Rosemarie Munns

[REDACTED]

From: Sarah Malin LeBuhn [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 12:37 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: re: June 23 vote

Dear Task Force,

As the June election was postponed from its original date, and there were an unusually large number of absentee ballots to be counted, we are left weeks later still without information as to who the winners are. Early votes can be tabulated, and due to the pandemic there will undoubtedly be an enormous number of absentee ballots cast in November as well. Can we not start counting these ballots ahead of time? Are there rules in place that prohibit this? They shouldn't be considered "absentee" ballots anyway, but simply "mail in early" votes, just like those cast in person the week before election day. Handling this well could change New York State to be an all mail-in voting state which would aid in participation and reduce the need to staff polling places.

Thank you!

Sarah LeBuhn

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 1:10 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Request for Spekaing Time on July 8, 2020

July 3, 2020

BOL:

Note my e-mail inquiry to the BOE commissioners and my column below.

I will lay out my request to them, and report any updated response they gave.

Your inquiry is critical to election confidence among the voting public.

Dick Hubert
Contributing Reporter / Columnist
Westmore News

[REDACTED]
Rye Brook, New York 10573-5403
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: 7/3/2020 12:55:02 PM Eastern Standard Time
Subject: Dead People Still on the Voting Rolls, and Getting Official Ballot Requests - YOUR RESPONSE PLEASE

July 3, 2020

Hi Commissioner Doug Colety:

I'm writing you about a Republican voter mess, but I'm copying Commissioner Lafayette as well, as I think this is an example (see below) of bipartisan mismanagement at the County BOE.

And I'd like your response by Monday at 3:00 PM for my upcoming column (see this week's column below my signature line).

As a result of the publication of my column on the School Board voting mess (not your responsibility, I know), I got an e-mail this morning from one of our readers urging me to contact a friend whose mother, a registered Republican, died in 2008 and is still on the voting rolls.

I spoke to her this morning, recorded the interview for publication, and have all the details.

Basically for 12 years now this Armonk resident has been trying to get her late mother OFF the voting rolls. She has written and called your office over the years without success. And at this point she has given up.

Her mother died in Doral Greens, where I live. But the voting rolls your office manages followed her to her daughter's home in Armonk, and to this day communications from the County BOE tell her mother where to go to vote, how to get an absentee ballot, and in the case of the June 23rd primaries, solicited her voting participation.

By the way, as a result of the mismanagement of the County voting rolls, her late mother received a ballot to vote in the Armonk School Board elections, which she threw out.

Someone could have voted in her stead, in both the School Board and the June 23 primaries, and in the November elections, which leads us to the question: will you and Commissioner Lafayette be publishing the exact count of invalid ballots in the June 23 primary, and why those ballots were declared invalid?

I suspect this is not an isolated case, and plagues the voting rolls in general.

So, I'd like to know how you explain such an example, what efforts you indeed are making to clean up the voter rolls, and why citizens should have any faith in the BOE's ability to run unblemished elections.

If you want to call me, for a recorded on-the record interview, that is great!

Commissioner Colety, you did refuse an earlier interview request (a couple of weeks ago), but I suspect that refusal was in your role as head of the County Republican Party. I hope you can take that hat off, put the BOE hat on, and respond.

Commissioner Lafayette, your response would be welcome as well.

My column is below my signature line.

Sincerely,

Dick Hubert
Contributing Reporter/Columnist
Westmore News

[REDACTED]
Rye Brook, New York 10573-5403
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

-0-

Dick Hubert's Worldview: Do our local school board election results indicate a potential crisis in voting by mail?

By Dick Hubert

Thursday, July 2, 2020 5:31 AM



These are the voting materials received by every registered voter in the Blind Brook School District, where 111 voters had their ballot voided. From right to left: the ballot, the unmarked envelope to seal it in, the oath and signed envelope which had to contain the unmarked envelope containing the ballot, and the postage paid return envelope to drop in the mailbox. Dick Hubert|Westmore News

From Our Editor

By Jananne Abel

I have reached out through the New York Press Association to other member papers to share the number and percentage of invalid ballots in the June 16 all-mail-in-ballot school board election and budget vote in the districts they cover and look forward to receiving some replies.

When 19.6% of the total ballots cast in the Port Chester school board election and budget vote – 764 votes, were declared invalid, I was expecting an explosion of outrage.

After all, if those ballots had been valid, they could easily have changed the election results.

But at whom should the outrage be aimed?

Voters who couldn't figure out how to vote by mail?

What about the Governor's office that ordered the school board mail-in vote statewide, or the State Education Department that never thought to produce illustrative literature, commercials, or anything else to walk first-time voting-by-mail citizens through the process?

And was Port Chester alone? How widespread is the problem?

And if Port Chester is not alone, and the problem is indeed widespread, should this not raise alarm bells as we look forward to the November elections which may rely heavily on voting by mail?

We've been attempting to find a partial answer by checking with other school districts locally and around the County to ask about *their* invalid ballots. Remember, every registered voter was sent a mail-in ballot kit to vote in the school board elections. There was no need to request one.

In the Blind Brook School District election, where three candidates were running for two seats, 111 ballots were declared invalid. That constituted 5.5% of all ballots received.

Interim Superintendent Colin Byrne offered up a list, in no particular order, of what met the disqualification standards:

- *There was no oath envelope enclosed in the return envelope;
- *The oath envelope was not signed;
- *The oath envelope was signed by someone other than the person to whom the ballot was addressed;
- *The signature did not match the official signature;
- *The ballot was not enclosed;
- *Other material was enclosed with the ballot;
- *The ballot was received after the designated deadline.

Byrne summed up all of the above in a classic understatement: "I would say, in general, that it is important for everyone to carefully read all directions and to contact the individual in charge of the election if there are any questions."

As they say in the TV pitch commercials, "wait, there's more."

We put our heads together at the Westmore News and picked out a dozen districts in Westchester to which to address the same question.

They are Rye City, Rye Neck, Mamaroneck, Scarsdale, Edgemont, Harrison, White Plains, Bedford, Somers, Tarrytown, Yorktown, and Ossining.

So far, we have received a limited response, as many of those responsible for overseeing the elections are on vacation and won't be back until well after the July 4 holidays.

White Plains District Clerk Michele Schoenfeld said that in their uncontested election, of 5,080 valid return ballots, nearly 700 additional ballots (more than 10%) were voided. The biggest reason: 452 ballots came in after the posted deadline.

In Yorktown, District Clerk Yvette Segal reported that in their contested election (three candidates, two seats):

- *Oath envelopes NOT signed: 253

- *Null and VOID: 23 (Incorrect markings, etc.)

- *Unable to Determine Voter: 35

- *Received after 6/16/20: 79

Unlike in Port Chester and Blind Brook, even if all the invalid votes (390) had been cast for the third-place candidate, that candidate would have lost.

In nearby Rye City, District Clerk Lauren McGowen reported: "The annual Rye City School Budget Vote and Board Trustee Election for 2020 was a contested election. We had seven candidates running for two open seats. Of the 2,834 votes mailed in, 243 were declared invalid, which equates to 8 1/2% of the votes cast."

McGowan added: "Reasons for the disqualifications were unsigned oath envelopes and selecting more than 2 candidates on the ballot."

Clearly we have more invalid voting results from the June 9—extended to June 16—school board election and budget vote to find and report.

We would hope that other news outlets throughout the state would join us in this quest to discover if Port Chester's high 19.6% invalid ballot result is a local anomaly or a worrying and unexpected outcome of voting by mail where even an unacceptable 5-10% may be the norm.

But make no mistake. There's no excuse for the school districts and Boards of Elections throughout the state, and of course here in Westchester, not to go the last mile in educating voters about how to exercise their vote-by-mail responsibility.

And as this is written, while we wait for all the results of the June 23 primary elections, another election with a large percentage of mail-in-ballots, we can only ask for thorough reporting of the invalid ballot count from the Boards of Elections in question.

That primary election itself is under investigation by the Westchester County Board of Legislators, which is holding what it calls a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting in July to look into "confusion about absentee voting." Other issues the COW will review are, according to a June 29 media release:

*Early voting

*Communications

*Poll worker recruitment and training

*Poll sites

*PPE and safety supplies

*Physical and absentee voting logistics

It's not just voting by mail that has the potential for electoral nightmares to come.

Dick Hubert, a retired television news producer-writer-reporter living in Rye Brook, has been honored with the Peabody Award, the DuPont Columbia Award and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Journalism Award.

Editor's Note: This column, written by Dick Hubert, represents his opinion and not that of this newspaper.

[REDACTED]

From: Robin Golden [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 11:44 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting in primary

Hello,

I am writing to voice my opinion on the terrible situation we had for the June primary in Mamaroneck this year. I have voted every year at Chatsworth Elementary School in Larchmont and have never had an issue. This year was a complete nightmare. I waited 2 hours in the scorching heat to vote. It was ridiculous to have 4 voting machines for the entire district where in the past I would assume we had at least double that - since the four elementary schools were open to voters. There were many people that left the line. The elderly could not stand outside in the sun for two hours nor could young parents with little children. People were fainting and crying but were determined to stay and vote. This can not happen during the general election. We need to know that our usual polling locations will be open and not be all together again at Mamaroneck Town Center.

By the way there was very little advertising to let us know about early voting this year. Since this is new for us, I would really recommend getting the word out especially in light of Corona - so people can vote early and avoid the crowds.

Thank you,
Robin Golden

[REDACTED]

From: Claire Prohl [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:57 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary on June 23

From: Claire D Prohl, [REDACTED] Somers, NY 10589

I voted by mail. I received my application in the mail automatically, well in advance of deadline. (Note: My husband is registered in a different party for which there was no primary in our district. He rightly did not receive a ballot application in the mail.)

I sent in my ballot application and received my ballot in time to vote. It was very easy to fill out both the application for the ballot and the ballot itself. I'd like to always have the option of such an easy way to vote!

I want to note that I am strongly against voting online. It is VERY risky and also lacks a paper ballot, which is essential for fair elections.

Claire Prohl

[REDACTED]

From: Ellen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:48 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary election feedback

I thought it all went well. However, early voting should have been promoted more. I saw one Facebook post the first day of early voting, and that was it. Since early voting is still new in NY, many people didn't realize they would have the option.

Thank you for encouraging feedback.

[REDACTED]

From: Pam [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 9:48 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Barr, Nancy

My request for an absentee ballot was sent in to the Board of Elections the day after I received the request form in the mail. Being over 70 years of age, I felt it was safer to vote absentee this Spring. However, I never received the ballot. A number of people here in Harrison told me that theirs never came either.

I called the Board of Elections before Election Day, and was told I was too late and that my only choices to vote were (a) in person at the BoE office before Election Day by completing another absentee ballot there or (b) by going to the one polling place in downtown Harrison on Election Day.

Having no intention to give up my right to vote, I went to the school in downtown Harrison to cast my ballot.

It was clear in talking to poll workers there that I was not the only Harrison resident who did not receive their requested absentee ballot.

It is my firm belief that something was wrong with the BoE system and/or at the USPS or both. And that remedies must be sought and placed in effect before the general election in November.

Pamela D. Stockton
[REDACTED]
Harrison NY 10528

[REDACTED]

From: William Dingee [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 9:24 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Mail in Election

My household received school district mail in ballots for all 3 of my children who do not even live in the state anymore. Records are not up to date and possibly lead to voter fraud. I have no confidence in mail in voting, but would support a multi-day in person voting process due to Covid-19. I am also in favor of an ID check at the poles.

Bill Dingee
[REDACTED]
South Salem, NY
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Martha Schwartz [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 3:22 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23rd Primary Absentee Voting

To: Westchester Legislators
From: Martha Schwartz

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ardsley on Hudson NY 10503
Re: Absentee Ballot

In mid-May I mailed a request for an absentee ballot for the Primary Election
Having not received a ballot In early June I telephoned the Board of Elections in White Plains. They claimed my request had been processed.
A week later I still had not received a ballot, so I telephoned again. The BOE said they would send another (I confirmed the address) The week before the election, having still not received a ballot, I decided to Early Vote at my poll, Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

I have only compliments for the staff and set-up at the Voting Site. They had to contact the BOE since my record indicated that I had requested an absentee ballot. The BOE claimed they sent two!

Voting should not be this hard! Thanks to you all for taking a look at it.

[REDACTED]

From: Polly Schneck [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 12:30 PM
To: Covill, Kitley; BOL Public Comments
Subject: Re: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

To Whom It May Concern:

My sister received this email on June 18, 2020. She never sent a "Forgot Password" request and was wondering whether this was an attempt at phishing. Given our desire to protect voting security and access, we thought that it might be worth alerting you to the email. Should you wish to reach my sister, please call her at [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Isobel P Schneck
[REDACTED]

Here is the email:

From: Ny.govld@its.ny.gov
Date: June 18, 2020 at 5:17:54 PM EDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Information you requested from New York State

This email was sent in response to your "Forgot Password" request.

Dear Tiye Bhutia,

This email was sent in response to your "Forgot Password" request. If you DID NOT make the request, you may disregard this email.

By selecting forgotten password you have begun the account reactivation process. For security reasons you will be asked to complete two steps. First, establish three new shared secrets and second, create a new password. Once you have completed these steps your account will be reactivated.

Please [click here](#) to reactivate your account. Please do not close out of the browser while completing the account activation.

If the above link does not work please copy and paste the below URL into your browser.

<https://my.ny.gov/FPSV3/reset.xhtml?rid=35409b16-b4c2-4171-8539-283728c862b1&nygovldlang=en>

[REDACTED]

From: Andrew Strawcutter [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 12:28 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Covill, Kitley
Subject: Primary election experience

Hey, no problems!

I got the instructions in several ways, the material arrived by mail as I had been told, I filled out the absentee ballot and I put it in the mail. Easy breezy.

I was very happy with the process and with not having to go physically to the polls.

One thing, candidates need to get on board for their sake. I continued to get some candidates' promotional pieces of mail **AFTER** I had sent in my ballot! In at least one case, the first piece of information which I received on a particular candidate came after I had voted.

Thank you for asking!

Andrew Strawcutter
North Salem NY

[REDACTED]

From: Bill Alexander [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 8:53 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Comments re June Primary

TO: Leaders of Task Force on June Primary Leaders

As you know the decisions made by the Westchester Board of Elections are made by Both Commissioners not just the Democratic Commissioner.

The comments I am hearing re issues with the primary are directed solely at the Democratic Commissioner (Reginald Lafayette) as if all the decisions was only his, with no reference to Republican Commissioner Doug Colety.

The other issue is that it is being stated over and over again is that Hon. Reginald Lafayette is the Democratic Party Leader (non paid position) and the Democratic Election Commissioner ignoring the fact the Doug Colety is the Republican County Party Leader and the Republican Election Commissioner. Please note that throughout the State of New York that are many County Party Leaders (Dems & Rep) who are also Election Commissioners. In addition, many of them are also paid for their position as County Party Leaders.

In your leadership role, it would be appreciated you direct the speakers that their comments should be directed at both Commissioners as the both must agree before any action is taken by the Westchester County Board of Elections.

Hon. William (Bill) Alexander
[REDACTED]
White Plains, New York 10605

[REDACTED]

From: Quinn Fluet [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 4:08 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Elections Concerns

Hello! My name is Quinn Fluet, and I'm a long-time Westchester resident, having lived in Mt. Vernon and Mamaroneck until going to college. Despite being a GA resident and voter, I have many friends and family members who vote in Westchester, and I've always lauded our elections.

This year, I was lucky enough to volunteer in Jamaal Bowman's campaign in NY-16. On voting day, Mamaroneck inexplicably had only 2 voting machines in one location for one of the larger towns in our area. For over 25,000 residents, two machines, at a singular voting site, Mamaroneck Town Center.

This caused many of the people at the site to be discouraged and leave, especially as the wait times ticked up to a reported three hours. Having been volunteering for much of the night, this estimate was accurate. I met many residents who weren't able to wait that long, and one woman accused unsafe COVID practices inside the facility, with a lack of distancing.

The reported reasoning for this situation, with one site for the entire area, was to cut down on transmission risk. I can't imagine a single situation where compressing a town into one place with two machines for hours is safer during a pandemic. It violates the very concept of social distancing, and makes no common sense. This needs to be changed before the upcoming elections.

Additionally, around 9pm, Elliot Engel was electioneering within 80 feet of the polling location, shaking hands, hugging, and talking to voters as they waited on line. I reported this to the Board of Elections, and other people in the Bowman campaign recorded this incident. We also reported it to the poll workers on-site, who were very receptive. New 12 was at the scene, and may have footage themselves.

Sincerely,
Quinn Fluet
[REDACTED]

From: M Otten [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 1:55 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Boykin, Benjamin; Scarsdale Voters Choice Party; Stevens, Carolyn; Chervokas, Jason; LaFayette, Reginald; Colety, Douglas; Peter Siris; Herbert Kaplan; Ronald Randall; Bill Rosser; Lucy Kennedy; Anselm Fusco; Clark Peterson; Mayor
Subject: Public Comment for Election Preparations
Attachments: Voting by Mail -NY Final rs-mo37.pptx

Thanks for providing an opportunity for public comments. A group of NY Metro area alumni are very seriously concerned about the probable chaos that will occur after the November 3 election, possibly leading to unresolved Congressional and Presidential races. I attach a fairly thoughtful presentation we've developed on Voting by Mail in NY, and reproduce here 3 key charts that summarize the problems and propose necessary remedies. I would appreciate knowing if and what the County Board of Legislators can do to effect a better than expected outcome? I do appreciate your recognizing the challenges ahead with sufficient lead-time for remedies.



Rejected and Disputed Ballots are serious problems

According to the Election Administration and Voting Survey report to Congress, in 2018, 1.42% of all votes counted nationwide were rejected, a significant number in close elections.

- In N.Y. the percentage was 15.0%.
 - Another 4.52% of ballots were excluded for other reasons.
 - Only 52% of New Yorkers who received mail-in ballots in N.Y. had their votes counted.
- **Most Ballots are rejected because of errors in the *process* of the voter's submission.**
- The failure to match signatures is often an issue.
 - In some states, failing to seal the envelope invalidates the vote.
 - Some states require notarized statements and witnesses as well as voter IDs.
 - In Washington State, election officials threw out more than 47,000 votes in the 2020 primary, because not all voters remembered to select a political party on the front of their ballot.
- **18 states inform voters if their ballot is being rejected for signatures or other reasons. 32 states do not.**
- New York is not one of these states that does not inform voters.

Why Is New York so bad at Mail-in Voting?

- N.Y. has had very low levels of mail-in voting, so it has less experience than other states.
- N.Y.'s registration and voting systems are out of date, leading to many mistakes in addresses.
- N.Y. has a high percentage of people for whom English is a second language, leading to translation issues.
- Until this year, N.Y. has never offered early voting.
- N.Y. has traditionally had the lowest turnout in primaries in the country, because the political in prior years scheduled Congressional and Local Primaries on different days, thus tamping down voting.
- N.Y. does not start counting mail-in votes until election day, putting greater pressure on poll workers.
- N.Y. does not inform voters when their votes have been rejected, not counted, or not received
 - More than one quarter of people who sent back their ballots though they were voting, but their votes did not count.

What can be done in N.Y. to save this election?

- NY should immediately try to upgrade its registration list.
- NY should offer its citizens 'COVID concern as a valid Medical Excuse' for an Absentee ballot
 - With clear instructions so that its citizens can apply for absentee ballots
- To make the process function more smoothly, N.Y. should pass legislation to allow votes to be counted when they are received, instead of on election day.
 - Early counting will reduce mistakes.
- To limit disputed votes and the risk of a disputed election, New York should inform any citizen whose vote has been disqualified, not counted, or ruled provisional, so that citizen has the chance to vote again.
 - This will require legislation.
- New York should offer early voting for two weeks, instead of one week, so voters who do not feel comfortable with mail-in votes and poll workers, most of whom are over 60, do not have to risk their lives in order to vote.
 - With early voting, people who have provisional ballots have time to resolve the situation

References are available for all data (mostly government sourced), if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Otten

Scarsdale, NY



www.reformelectionsnow.org

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: M Otten

To: ral4@westchestergov.com ; dac7@westchestergov.com

Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020, 4:58:39 PM EDT

Subject: Voting by Mail - November 2020 - some questions.....

Dear Commissioners Lafayette and Colety,

I am sure you are already heavily engaged with the challenges of the November 3, 2020 election. I am leading a non-partisan group of Business and Law School alumni, who have become very interested in the challenges of election reform as it relates to government and representation in our democracy. We are quite naturally worried about this particular election and have a few questions, answers for which would vary by County in New York. We would appreciate your answering a few questions for Westchester County:

1. Are our voting machines designed to handle absentee ballots?
2. I believe NY State law limits counting of ballots until Election Day. What is our process to ensure a timely, accurate and acceptable count of all ballots?
3. Do we have a process to validate ballots and a means for a voter to correct his ballot if there is a technical or interpretation rejection issue? How will challenges be handled? New York has one of the worse records in the country for rejected ballots by mail. (See attached data on 2018 failures, admittedly with a very small number of absentee ballots submitted [around 3% of total].)
4. How long do we anticipate after November 3 before we have a dependable tally of votes?
5. As a longer term question, do our voting machines and processes have the capability to handle Ranked Choice Voting (which is being implemented in NYC for the first time this year)? This could have been a valid option for contested local elections such as we're having this month for School Board.

I attach for your information the presentation material we've used with interested NY Metro area groups on "Voting by Mail," somewhat from a layman perspective. Comments from you as experienced professionals would be valued. You may also have seen the panel discussion at the following link, which includes interviews with experienced administrators from other states, and therefore might be of interest, either from their comments, or by reaching out to them directly.

I wish you a successful election in this very unusual and challenging year,

Cordially,

Michael Otten

[REDACTED]

Scarsdale, NY 10583



<http://www.reformelectionsnow.org>



Voting By Mail During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**People Should Not Have to Risk Their Lives To Vote-
But Are States in General and New York in Particular
Prepared for More Voting By Mail?**



No Political Issue Is More Controversial Than Vote by Mail

- Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Ron Wyden (D-Or.) have proposed legislation allowing national mail-in voting. Many Democrats back this legislation.
- Donald Trump hates the idea, even though he personally voted by mail. Trump said,
 - “Tremendous potential for voter fraud.” With all vote by mail ... *“you’d never have a Republican elected in this country again...Mail ballots are corrupt.”*
- Other Republicans agree:
 - Kentucky Republican Representative Thomas Massie tweeted “universal vote by mail would be the end of our republic as we know it.”
 - Minnesota’s Republican Party chairwoman, Jennifer Carnahan, declared, “The apocalypse has arrived.”

Despite the political diatribes, evidence suggests voting by mail does not benefit Democrats and hurt Republicans. So what is all the tumult about?



Issues With Voting By Mail Raised by Both Parties and by States

Before looking at how individual states handle voting by mail, let's look at the issues over which the two parties are fighting.

1. Is voting by mail some unique Democratic partisan idea?
2. Is Voting by Mail Partisan?
3. Does Voting by Mail increase turnout?
4. Is Voting by Mail more expensive?
5. Does voting by mail lead to "fraud" as Trump and the Republicans suggest?
6. How big an issue are "disputed" or "rejected" ballots?
7. Will Mail in Votes lead to disputed elections?
8. When are mail-in votes counted?
9. How do different States handle voting by mail?
10. How can States limit disputed ballots— a very serious issue?
11. Can we logistically handle the increase in mail-in votes?
12. How can fraud be prevented?



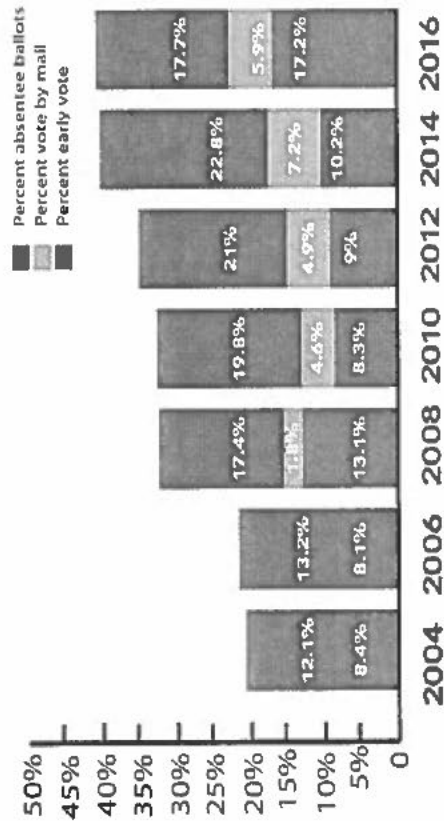
Voting By Mail and Early Voting Is Not Partisan idea.

Voting by Mail and Early Voting are becoming increasingly used and could reach 50% this year even without COVID-19.

In 2016, 41% of all voters voted early or by mail, more twice the rate in 2004. With legislative changes in many states. Including Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, California, and Hawaii, even without COVID-19, half of all Americans will early or by mail in 2020.

90

Given that half of all voters will vote early or by mail-in, why all the commotion?



If those who vote by mail had really favored one party over the other, or if there had been massive fraud, wouldn't we have heard something about these problems before now?

4

States With High Voting by Mail or Early Voting Are Red, Purple and Blue.

States with More Than 50% of Ballots Cast Via Early, Mail, and Absentee Voting, 2016				
State	Total Votes	Early, Mail, Absentee Totals	Early, Mail, Absentee Percent	
Arizona	2,722,660	2,042,084	75.0%	
Arkansas	1,048,513	627,411	59.8%	
California	14,610,494	8,592,587	58.8%	
Colorado	2,884,199	2,722,919	94.4%	
Florida	9,613,669	6,555,802	68.2%	
Georgia	4,147,181	2,426,261	58.5%	
Hawaii	437,697	229,562	52.4%	
Montana	516,901	333,666	64.6%	
Nevada	1,128,492	781,788	69.3%	
New Mexico	804,073	541,730	67.4%	
North Carolina	4,690,195	3,055,960	65.2%	
Oregon	2,051,452	2,051,452	100.0%	
Tennessee	2,545,271	1,679,087	66.0%	
Texas	8,701,152	5,452,437	62.7%	
Utah	1,114,567	772,888	69.3%	
Washington	3,363,452	3,287,705	97.7%	

In the 2016 Presidential Election, 16 States had more than 50% early or mail-in voting.

This mix between red, blue, and purple states does not indicate this is the highly partisan issue politicians would lead us to believe.



Democrats are Less Likely to Receive Their Ballots.

Studies have shown voting by mail is generally partisan neutral. However, in some cases. It may benefit Republicans.

Voters who Don't Receive their Ballots are often Democrats

The first step in voting by mail is for people to receive their ballots. Yet in 2018,

- 72% of ballots mailed to voters are returned, meaning
- 28% either voted in person or did not receive ballots.
- State-wide studies indicate that those least likely to receive ballots are:
 - Younger people, who often move.
 - Poorer people, who may often be forced to change addresses.
 - People for whom English is a second language.
- **Each of these demographics lean Democratic, meaning Republicans benefit.**



Voting By Mail Demographics Favor Republicans

- White voters are more than twice as likely as Black or Hispanic voters to vote by mail. (+Rep.)
- Rural voters are more likely than urban voters to vote by mail. (+Rep.)
- People over 65 are most likely to vote by mail. (+Rep.)
- English as a second language voters have the lowest participation among mail-in voters. (-Dem)
- Republicans have outpaced Democrats in organizing their supporters to vote by mail. (+Rep.)
 - In Arizona, more Republicans than Democrats automatically receive a mail ballot. (+Rep.)
- According to Prof. Michael McDonald from the University of Florida, “When you have a system of elections that has multiple methods by which people can vote...—**mail ballots tend to be the most Republican of the group.**” (+Rep.)
- **If Voting By Mail benefits Republicans and hurts Democrats, why are the leaders of both parties taking opposite positions?**

Voting by Mail Leads to Higher Turnouts

- Voting by Mail increases turnout in all elections.
 - In 2018, states that offered 100% voting by mail had a turnout of 68.3% compared to a national average of 56.7%, a highly substantial difference.
- Small but meaningful increases in turnout are found in midterm and presidential elections.
- Larger increases are found in primaries, local elections, and special elections.
- The increase comes by bringing marginal voters into the electorate and by retaining voters who might otherwise drop out of the electorate.
 - Voters do not have to take time off from work or wait in long lines.
 - Older and infirm citizens can vote.
 - Rural voters do not have to drive 40 miles or more to find a polling place.

Voting by Mail Reduces Costs

Once all voting by mail is established, costs decline because jurisdictions no longer need to staff as many traditional polling places.

- A 2016 study of Colorado by the Pew Charitable Trusts found that costs decreased an average of 40%.

In the transition to all voting or no excuses voting, new equipment needs to be purchased and increased printing costs are incurred.

- This could be a significant issue in 2020 as states will have to spend a lot of money to accommodate more voting by mail.
- These would be one-time expenses, albeit at a time when States budgets are stressed.



Voter Fraud Remains Infinitesimally Small

- None of the five states that hold their elections primarily by mail have had any voter fraud scandals since making that change.
 - Oregon has sent out more than 100 million mail-in ballots since 2000 and has documented only about a dozen cases of proven fraud.
- From 2000-2012, only 491 cases of absentee ballot fraud have been identified nationwide.
 - In New Jersey in 2004, 4,397 voters were alleged to have voted twice within the state. 3 cases were found to be fraud.
- Centralized state computer registers mandated by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 have reduced the potential for both voter fraud and clerical errors.
 - If people try to vote multiple times in one state, they are flagged by the system.
- Because databases are state-based, they are not able to flag people who vote in two states. This practice, however, does not appear to be widespread.
 - In N.Y., 1000 people were alleged to have voted in both New York and Florida. 2 cases were substantiated.



Most Voter Fraud Comes From Clerical Errors

Most examples dead people or duplicate voting are clerical errors at the polls.

Dead People Voting

- Alan J. Mandel, who died in 1997, was alleged to have voted in 1998. The vote was cast by Alan J. Mandell (two "l"s). Local election workers simply checked the wrong name off the list.
- Hilde Stafford had her vote rejected because she was listed as deceased by the Social Security Administration. She was very much alive, although apparently not receiving her Social Security Benefits.
- In 1995, Maryland disqualified 89 voters for being dead. All were alive at the time their ballots were cast.

Matching Names

- New Jersey has two voters named Kathleen Sullivan, **with the same birthdate**. Both voted. One was disqualified.

Victim of Domestic Violence

- A Wisconsin victim of domestic violence had her vote rejected because she gave a different address, so her former husband could not find her.

Second Home Address

- A Louisiana Congresswoman had her vote rejected because she listed a Washington D.C. mailing address.



Vote Harvesting By Political Operatives Is a Problem

Vote Harvesting occurs when political operatives collect ballots from voters.

- Some ballots may be stolen, or some votes may be paid for.
- In 2018 in North Carolina a Republican operative was accused of collecting ballots from unsuspecting people and voting for the Republican. The House seat was left empty for 9 months.
- In Cairo, Ill., homeless people were paid \$5 to vote for a candidate for sheriff and county clerk.
- In Tarrant County Texas (Ft. Worth), operatives requested absentee ballots, filled them out, went to the voter's homes to get a signature, and then delivered the ballots to the polling places.
- In East St. Louis, Ill., a judge was convicted of casting 20 ballots in others' names in 2002. His cousin, a city councilman, was convicted of registering people from outside his precinct to vote fraudulently from a neighbor's address in 1995.

Vote harvesting can be limited if states refuse to accept bushels of ballots from operatives. If each person has to deliver or mail an individual ballot, harvesting becomes much more difficult.

Voting By Mail Could Reduce the Threat of Fraud

Despite the few instances of people voting in 2 states and vote harvesting, voting by mail could be safer than voting at polling places, because it is much less susceptible to hacking.

- Polling places increasingly rely on direct-recording electronic voting devices. A single successful software hack could potentially affect thousands of votes.

99

Phil Keisling, the former Oregon secretary of state who introduced that state's mail-in voting system, believes voting by mail is actually safer.

- *"Mail-based voting systems today are far less risky than most polling place elections, precisely because they distribute ballots in such a decentralized way. To have any reasonable chance of success, an organized effort to defraud a mail-based system and its safeguards must involve hundreds of separate acts, all of them individual felonies, that must both occur and go undetected to have any chance of success."*

13

There are Issues with Voters Receiving and Reading Ballots

- **In 2018, 42.4 million ballots were mailed, but only 30.4 million were returned.**
 - Some of these voters could have decided they did not want to vote. Some could have voted in person.
 - But many could have changed addresses and not received ballots.
 - This can be a serious problem because most states do not do a good job of keeping voter registration addresses up to date.
- **Mail delivery is not uniform and may disadvantage Minorities**
 - Native Americans on reservations or rural Alaskans may not have street addresses.
 - Homeless people, including those living in shelters, also may have difficulty getting mail.
- **People for whom English is not a first language also have difficulties.**
 - Hispanics and Native Americans have the highest disqualification rates.
 - Gwinnett County, Ga. Printed its bilingual ballots in a font size of 6.5, too small for many to read. Gwinnett rejected 595 absentee ballots.
- **Not all ballots received are counted. .**
 - In 2018, only 98% of the returned voted were counted.
 - In New York, the percentage is 90.8%, meaning 9.2% of the votes received were not counted.



Rejected and Disputed Ballots are serious problems

According to the Election Administration and Voting Survey report to Congress, in 2018, 1.42% of all votes counted nationwide were rejected, a significant number in close elections.

- In N.Y. the percentage was 15.0%.
- Another 4.52% of ballots were excluded for other reasons.
- Only 52% of New Yorkers who received mail-in ballots in N.Y. had their votes counted.

- **Most Ballots are rejected because of errors in the *process* of the voter's submission.**

- The failure to match signatures is often an issue.
- In some states, failing to seal the envelope invalidates the vote.
- Some states require notarized statements and witnesses as well as voter IDs.
- In Washington State, election officials threw out more than 47,000 votes in the 2020 primary, because not all voters remembered to select a political party on the front of their ballot.

- **18 states inform voters if their ballot is being rejected for signatures or other reasons. 32 states do not.**

- New York is not one of these states that does not inform voters.



Rejected and Uncounted Votes Create Disputed Elections

There have been several disputed elections in which mail-in votes played a role.

- In the 1984 election for Indiana's 8th Congressional District, the Democrat won by 34 votes. After mail in votes were disqualified, the Republican led by 400 votes. The seat sat empty for 4 months while courts re-qualified many of the mail-in votes, after which the Democrat led by 4 votes. Congress, which was controlled by Democrats, voted to seat the Democrat. Republicans went ballistic and stormed out.
- In the 2008 U.S. Senate race in Minnesota, incumbent Norm Coleman held a 215-vote lead after the first count. (A third-party candidate won 15.2% of the vote.) Al Franken challenged the disqualification of absentee ballots. It took courts eight months to resolve the issue, while keeping the crucial seat vacant. Franken won by 225 votes
- In 2018 in North Carolina a Republican operative was accused of "ballot harvesting," collecting ballots from unsuspecting people, and voting for the Republican. The House seat was left empty for 9 months.
- In the Florida U.S. Senate race in 2018, Rick Scott defeated Bill Nelson by 10,033 votes. 32,492 absentee votes were disqualified for arriving late, even though more than 10,000 were postmarked on time. 5,586 votes were rejected because the signature on the envelope did not match that on the ballot, 14,000 mail votes were damaged.

With our current polarization, we can not afford to have a disputed election in 2020, but with a likely substantial increase in mail-in votes, this risk is substantial.

Why Do States Wait to Count Mail-in Votes?

Mail in votes should be easy to count, because they arrive well before the election.

- **The problem is 15 states** (New York, Alabama, Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming, and Wisconsin) and D.C. **only permit election officials to begin processing mail in ballots on Election Day. Four of these states will not permit processing until after the polls are closed.**
- Since mail-in votes have to be checked for validity and scanned, they are slower to count.
 - By delaying the start of counting until election day or the close of polls, election officials are forced to rush their work.
 - This creates far more chances for errors, especially in validating the votes.

Delaying the start of counting is foolish.

- **These states should pass a law enabling early counting of early votes.**

Easy Steps to Prevent Voter Fraud

There are some easy ways to prevent fraud and mistakes in voting.

- **Maintaining up to date voter lists.**
 - Most states have out of date records.
- **Identity verification:** on the mail ballot envelope coordinated with drivers' license or other I.D.
- **Bar codes on envelopes and Ballot tracking through the U.S. Postal Service** to help voters know whether their ballot has been received.
- **Secure drop-off locations** to ensure that ballots are not stolen or tampered with
- **Postelection audits:** to enable election officials to identify any irregularities or misconduct in the vote.
- **Polling sites as a fail-safe:** to ensure that every eligible voter can cast a valid ballot.

Informing Voters if their votes have not been received or have been disqualified.

- States not do inform voters if their votes are not going to be counted.
 - Only 19 states currently notify voters, and only then if there is a signature issue.
 - Most states do not inform voters in a timely manner if their vote is disqualified for another reason.
- If States count mail-in votes when they are received and give voters who are disqualified an opportunity make corrections, many of the problems can be resolved. .



Early Voting Helps Limit the Threat from Covid-19

Early Voting has proven very successful.

- In states with early voting, a large percentage vote early. This increases turnout and reduces the risk to people from COVID-19. Because there are fewer crowds, voters and polls workers can have social distancing.
- In 2018, none of the major northeastern states offered early voting, although N.Y. and N.J. have now changed their policies.
- **9 states still do not allow early voting.**
 - With current high levels of unemployment, states should have no trouble hiring workers.

2018 EARLY VOTING

FL	32.1%
GA	47.9%
ILL	22.7%
MD	28.4%
NV	56.8%
NC	52.0%
TN	59.2%
TX	68.4%
NY	0.0%
NJ	0.0%
CT	0.0%
PA	0.0%



Early Voting
No Early Voting
All Mail Voting System



Why Are Both Parties Fighting Over Mail-in Voting?

Now we know that mail-in voting:

1. Does not hurt Republicans or benefit Democrats
2. Increases turnout.
3. Reduces costs over the long term,
4. Has limited fraud, and
5. Allows people to vote without risking their lives

We also know that there are relatively simple ways of reducing voting issues by:

1. Eliminating operatives from delivering bushels of ballots,
2. Counting early enough to identify problem issues, and then
3. Contacting voters and giving them a chance to rectify these issues.

Given these facts, why are Republicans so opposed and Democrats so in favor of mail-in voting?

- **The Answer is --COVID-19**



2020 is a critical election

- Donald Trump is running for reelection.
 - Both parties believe they can win.
- The Democrats hope to retake the Senate. Mitch McConnell likes things the way they are .
- 2020 is a census year, after which redistricting will occur.
 - In 2010, Republicans won in many states and gerrymandered against Democrats.
 - Democrats want to win some of these states and change the pattern of gerrymandering.
- The stakes in this election are probably higher than they have been in any election in our lifetime.
 - COVID-19 could threaten everything.



Donald Trump Does Not Hate Voting By Mail- He Hates Losing

- Trump cast his own vote by mail.
- Trump understands that older white people and rural voters, his voters, are more likely to vote by mail, and that people of color and ESL voters, not his people, are less likely to vote by mail.
- Trump knows that in most worlds, voting by mail helps Republicans.
- Despite his promises that we have licked COVID-19, Trump knows if the virus lingers towards election day, Democrats will be at a huge disadvantage.
- **Trump is against voting by mail, because in the world of COVID-19, and only in the world of COVID-19, it could help the Democrats.**



Democrats understand the political reality of COVID-19

- Democrats dominate in urban areas.
- COVID-19 has hit urban areas much harder than rural areas.
- Democrats saw the lines and the turnout in Milwaukee, with only one open polling place for every 120,000 people.
- Democrats know that if the pandemic lasts until November, its voters will be most impacted.
- The stakes in 2020, with a Presidential election and a census redistricting, are too high for Democrats to wait and hope the pandemic will be over.

The key question for both parties and for all citizens is can the states make the changes necessary to handle the likely influx of mail-in votes?



How do individual States deal with *Voting By Mail*?

There are three basic systems among our states:

- Everyone can vote by mail.
- Everyone who asks can vote by mail, and
- Only those with justified excuses can vote by mail.

Listening to politicians, you would assume Democratic states would have the most flexible rules, while Republican states would have the most restrictive rules. You would be wrong!



Which States Allow Everyone to Vote By Mail?

Colorado, Oregon, Utah, Washington and now Hawaii send all voters mail-in ballots.

- Politically: Utah is red. Colorado is purple, and the other three are blue.
- In 2018, turnout in these states was 66.3% compared to a national average of 56.7%

While all voters can vote by mail, most do not return their votes from their mailbox.

- According to the 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections, a 66% of people in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington returned their ballots to a drop box or a polling place to limit fraud or the risk of non-delivery.
 - Among those who returned by mail, 47% dropped off their ballot at a U.S. Post Office or mailbox rather than having a postal worker pick it up at home, further limiting chances of an error or theft.
- In each of these states, voters are informed if there is an issue with their mail-in vote.

In these states, voting by mail is easy and efficient.

Which States allow Selective all Voting by Mail?

- **California:** Any county may conduct any election as an all-mail election.
 - 50% of California voters are now eligible for all mail.
- **Nebraska and North Dakota, deep red states, allow counties to select All Voting By Mail**
 - In Nebraska in 2018, turnout in counties with all voting by mail averaged 71% compared to a statewide average of 58%, significant increase in red districts of a red state.
- Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, and New Mexico allow small municipalities to conduct elections by mail.
 - These are primarily rural Republican districts.
- **8 States** allow local elections, referenda, and special elections to be conducted by mail-in.
- Texas allows everyone over 65 to mail-in votes.

These 22 states include 10 red, 7 purple, and 5 blue, hardly the composition one would expect given the current political dialog.

Swing States Use No Excuses Voting By Mail

In these states, citizens must ask for an absentee ballot, but everyone who asks receives one.

- Some states, such as Arizona, allow residents to join a list that automatically receives absentee ballots for every election.

• These states have already geared up for voting by mail.

• **All the genuinely competitive states fall into this category.**

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------|-----------|
| • Pennsylvania | Michigan | Ohio | Florida |
| • Georgia, | North Carolina | Maine | Wisconsin |
| • Minnesota | New Mexico | Iowa | Nevada |
| • Virginia | | | |

- **If all the competitive states already have no excuses absentee voting, what exactly do Democrats hope to gain?**

Partisan States require a justifiable excuse for a mail-in ballot

These states include:

- **Red states:** Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.
 - **Blue states:** Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island.
- **In 2018, these states had turnout of 52.5% compared to the national average of 56.7%**
 - **While 23.2% of all votes in the 2018 election were mail in votes, in these states the percentage was only 4.5%.**
 - Because these states have less experience with mail-in votes, they also have the highest percentages of rejected votes.
 - In these states, 4.1% of mail-in votes are rejected, compared to a national average of 1.4%
 - If these states have a high percentage of rejections with few mail-in votes, what will happen if the demand for mail-in votes increases?

Can We Logistically Handle a Surge in Mail-in Votes?

While mail-in ballots seem like an excellent solution in this age of COVID-19, experts say inconsistent state rules, slow-moving county governments, and limited resources to buy equipment and materials could make it difficult to ramp up for the 2020 election.

- In many states implementing a vote by mail system could be difficult because voting is controlled by counties, each of which sets its own rules.
 - Rural counties frequently use machines that produce no paper backup.
- Many states use paperless voting machines or touch-screen devices that are not compatible with voting by mail systems.
- Most election scanners can't read ballots voters print out on standard printer paper, so election staff have to hand-transfer votes to a ballot made from official ballot stock.
 - This simple task requires 4 people—one to read the ballot, another to mark the votes on the stock paper ballot, and two to monitor each of them.
- In Kentucky, where only 2% of voters mailed in ballots in 2018, Secretary of State Michael Adams said switching to voting by mail is “not something to be done at the drop of a hat... The move could cost millions of dollars and still be flawed.”



There are large differences between these groups of states

There are large differences in the percentage of mail-in votes between states that allow anyone to ask for a ballot and those that require validated excuses.

The states with no excuses averaged 42.0% mail-in ballots in 2019 with Arizona and Montana exceeding 70% and California approaching 60%. The states with excuses mail-in voting averaged 2.9% with no state exceeding 5.1%.

The states with no excuses voting already have the infrastructure to increase their percentages. The states with excuses voting largely do not.

States With No Excuses Voting				States with Excuses Voting			
	Votes	Mail-In	Pct	Votes	Mail-In	% mail	
mich	4341340	1061825	24.5%	ak	790,656	11,611	1.5%
az	2409906	1899240	78.8%	k	1,619,587	23,971	1.5%
ca	13828680	8286728	59.9%	la	1,519,552	41,363	2.7%
fl	8355817	2604544	31.2%	miss	961,025	17,979	1.9%
la	1344279	325098	24.2%	sc	1,739,705	70,558	4.1%
id	612582	76197	12.4%	te	2,267,428	38,855	1.7%
MN	2618245	640707	24.5%	wva	597,149	30,238	5.1%
Mont	508262	367541	72.3%	de	365,550	13,436	3.7%
OH	4520678	941447	20.8%	mass	2,753,623	84,280	3.1%
	38539789	16203327	42.0%	ny	6,356,896	226,151	3.6%
					18,971,171	558,442	2.9%

What is the Learning Curve?

- States like Washington, Oregon, and Utah required several election cycles to solve the problems of all mail-in voting.
 - People often need the chance to correct signatures or make other changes.
 - Registration lists and voting data bases need to be updated.
- States that have no excuses absentee voting and a large percentage of mail-in votes are already geared up to handle a surge of voting.
 - It should not be difficult for Arizona which handled 79%, or California, which handled 60% mail-in ballots in 2018.
- But States that have traditionally had a very low level of mail-in votes and have not taken steps to handle the influx could have serious problems.
- No state is more ill equipped to handle and increase in mail-in votes than New York.
- Florida Prof. McDonald says States “are not going to be able to manage the mass requests that are going to come. **It’s going to be a mess. Wisconsin is the canary in the coal mine. In November, we are going to have a whole flock of dead canaries.**”



New Yorkers Don't Vote in Primaries

- In the last three off-year elections, the average primary turnout was 18.8%. In N.Y., it was 4.4%
- New York ranked 49th, 50th, and 50th in primary turnout.
- In the general election of 2018, N.Y. ranked #40.

Primary Turnout Off Year Elections			
	2010	2014	2018 Avg.
U.S	18.0%	19.0%	18.8%
AK	33.7%	38.8%	31.8%
CA	23.3%	17.2%	22.2%
ME	32.1%	12.1%	23.5%
MI	21.8%	17.4%	22.4%
MT	26.8%	27.4%	29.1%
OH	20.3%	14.5%	17.7%
OR	27.1%	25.2%	26.5%
PA	20.9%	13.2%	16.9%
WA	29.9%	24.3%	28.8%
WI	21.3%	14.6%	19.8%
WY	33.5%	28.0%	31.5%
NY	9.0%	1.4%	4.4%

- New York simply may not be ready for a high turnout of any kind.
- Source- Bipartisan Policy Center



When it comes to Mail-in Voting, No State is as Bad as N.Y.

According to the Election Administration and Voting Survey report to Congress, N.Y. has

- The Lowest Percentage of Ballots Counted.
- The highest percentage of ballots rejected-15.0%---10x the national average.
- The lowest percentage of ballots counted/ballots returned.
- The lowest percentage of ballots counted/ballots transmitted.

With a very small mail-in turnout, more than one quarter of the people who returned ballots and almost half of the people who were sent ballots, did not have their votes count.

If these are the results in a year with low turnout, what will happen in 2020 when mail-in votes skyrocket?

2018 Elections										
	Ballots Transmitted	Ballots Returned	%	Ballots Counted	% Counted	Ballots Rejected	% Rejected	Other	total	Counted/ returned
										counted/ transmitted
NY	341270	249002	72.95%	226151	90.82%	34095	15.08%	-11244	180812	72.61%
CA	13687191	8286228	60.54%	8289332	100.04%	1617	0.02%	-164754	8122961	98.03%
AZ	2672384	1899240	71.07%	1874577	98.70%	8567	0.46%	16096	1882106	99.10%
CO	3467664	2449409	70.64%	2430239	99.22%	19170	0.79%		2411069	98.43%
CT	96559	91602	94.87%	89887	98.13%	1725	1.92%		88162	96.24%
Maine	193558	185763	95.97%	183664	98.87%	2119	1.15%		181545	97.73%
MA	105454	89437	84.81%	84280	94.23%	5157	6.12%		79123	88.47%
Michigan	1123415	1061835	94.52%	1055822	99.43%	6013	0.57%		1049809	98.87%
Montana	442425	367561	83.08%	366188	99.63%	1373	0.37%		364815	99.25%
PA	216675	195953	90.44%	186664	95.26%	8714	4.67%	575	178525	91.11%
WA	4460649	3112157	69.77%	3064219	98.46%	32327	1.05%	15611	3047503	97.92%
WISC	168788	150114	88.94%	147597	98.32%	2517	1.71%		145080	96.65%
TOTAL	39584450	28470065	71.9%	27874803	97.9%	430014	1.5%	165248	27610037	97.0%

Why Is New York so bad at Mail-in Voting?

- N.Y. has had very low levels of mail-in voting, so it has less experience than other states.
- N.Y.'s registration and voting systems are out of date, leading to many mistakes in addresses.
- N.Y. has a high percentage of people for whom English is a second language, leading to translation issues.
- Until this year, N.Y. has never offered early voting.
- N.Y. has traditionally had the lowest turnout in primaries in the country, because the politicians in prior years scheduled Congressional and Local Primaries on different days, thus tamping down voting.
- N.Y. does not start counting mail-in votes until election day, putting greater pressure on poll workers.
- N.Y. does not inform voters when their votes have been rejected, not counted, or not received.
 - More than one quarter of people who sent back their ballots though they were voting, but their votes did not count.



N.Y. Reject Many Provisional Votes

An additional problem with vote counting concerns provisional votes. These votes occur when someone goes to the wrong polling place, or there is an issue with the address or signature.

In 2018, N.Y. accounted for 5.3% of all votes, but it also accounted for 10.8% of all provisional votes, meaning New Yorkers were being questioned at 2x the national average.

Of these, 120,778 provisional votes were rejected, 1.9% of all votes. For the U.S. as whole, 0.51% of all provisional votes were rejected. Excluding N.Y., the percentage drops to 0.43%, meaning N.Y. is rejecting provisional votes at almost 5x the national average.

With the highest percentage of uncounted mail-in votes, the highest percentage of rejected mail-in votes, and the highest percentage of rejected provisional votes, it is clear there is something wrong with the voting system in N.Y.

N.Y. is Negligent in Maintaining its Voter List

N.Y. state does not spend the time and money to keep its voter lists up to date. According to the Election Administration and Voting Survey report to Congress, in 2018,

- States sent registration confirmation notices to 10.2% of all registered voters. New York sent notice 3.2%.
- States received valid responses from 2,084,434 voters (9.7% of those mailed). New York received valid responses from 16,980 voters (4.2% of those mailed).
- Overall, 1% of registered voters in the U.S. responded to communications from their election bureau. In N.Y., the percentage was 0.13%, roughly 1/7 the national average.
- **In 2016, the results were even more bizarre. .**
 - N.Y. sent 554,980 notices. Of these, it reported 30% undeliverable, 53% status unknown, 11.5% other, and 0% valid.
 - In other words, according to the report to Congress, N.Y. reported it did not receive even one valid registration confirmation in 2016.
- Most states do not do a satisfactory job maintaining their voting lists, but no state is as negligent as N.Y.
- One of the reasons N.Y. always has among the lowest voting turnouts is that it makes it difficult for its citizens to vote, rejects too many votes for obscure reasons, and does not maintain its voting lists.

What can be done in N.Y. to save this election?

- NY should immediately try to upgrade its registration list.
- NY should offer its citizens 'COVID concern as a valid Medical Excuse' for an Absentee ballot
 - With clear instructions so that its citizens can apply for absentee ballots
- To make the process function more smoothly, NY should pass legislation to allow votes to be counted when they are received, instead of on election day.
 - Early counting will reduce mistakes.
- To limit disputed votes and the risk of a disputed election, NY should inform any citizen whose vote has been disqualified, not counted, or ruled provisional, so that citizen has the chance to vote again.
 - This will require legislation.
- NY should offer early voting for two weeks, instead of one week, so voters who do not feel comfortable with mail-in votes and poll workers, most of whom are over 60, do not have to risk their lives in order to vote.
 - With early voting, people who have provisional ballots have time to resolve the situation.



Voting Should Not Lead to a Disputed Election

The problem with giving every American the right to vote by mail is that many states, especially New York, are not prepared for a vast influx.

- **The worst outcome would be to have an election disrupted by suits over disqualified ballots.**
 - We have seen these types of disputes in Senatorial and Congressional elections.
- **Reform Elections Now is concerned that too rapid an increase in voting by mail could stress some state systems, especially those in New York.**
- **New York should immediately take steps to accommodate voters and build the logistic capability to handle an influx of voting by mail.**



Voting By Mail- Conclusion

Voting by mail is an excellent concept that has been caught up in extreme partisanship.

- At Reform Elections Now, we do not care if voting by mail benefits Republicans or Democrats. We think voting should be made easier.
- In this time of COVID-19, people should not have to risk their lives to vote.
- Governments should:
 - Make it easier to vote by offering no excuses voting by mail and early voting at polling places that protect people's health.
 - Invest in technology needed to handle early voting and voting by mail.
 - Change the laws so they can start counting votes immediately upon receipt.
 - Reject bushels of votes submitted by political operatives.
 - Contact any voter whose vote is rejected, so that voter has another chance to cast a ballot.

Our country should ignore the political rhetoric from Washington and act now to protect our Democracy.

Peter J. Siris
June 17, 2020
39

[REDACTED]

From: cyndy travis [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 10:00 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: NY primary in 10706

Hello,

We asked for and got absentee ballots. However, without explanation, the name(s) on return envelope said our address was in Ardsley.

We live in Hastings on Hudson

so we called our local Dem chairperson, she said if not sure, vote in person early vote in Dobbs OR vote on 6/23 at Ardsley middle school.

what a total waste of absentee ballots. I called DOE next day, person said , "oh that Ardsley address was okay because that is where you would vote on 6/23"

why was this not made clear? what if we couldn't vote in person for health reasons and then was afraid to have ballots lost or NOT COUNTED/CONTESTED???

Explanations MUST be included or people won't vote. FIX THIS.

thank you.

Cynthia Travis and Jim Metzger

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Joel Brown [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 6:41 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary election

Thanks for this comment opportunity. I requested a mail-in ballot which arrived for presidential nominees only. There was no indication that another ballot would arrive a couple weeks later with the local and state candidates, so I did not trust the paper ballot. Though the second ballot finally arrived, I voted in person at Greenburgh Town Hall, which was quick and easy.

Joel Brown
[REDACTED]
Hartsdale NY 10530

[REDACTED]

From: Adam Hart [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 11:07 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Absentee Ballot Issues

As a district leader, I mailed an application for an absentee ballot the first day I was able to. That was some 6 weeks before the election. I did not receive a ballot. So I sent a second form in a week before the election and received a ballot 3 days before the election.

--
Sincerely,
Adam Hart
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Harriet Leibowitz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 6:18 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary voting

I voted early afternoon at the Memorial Pool complex in MK. It was quick, clean, comfortable, there was a table to sit at if you wished, and the staff, was cleaning before and after I left. Great job. thank you,
Harriet Leibowitz [REDACTED] Mt. Kisco

[REDACTED]

From: Maryjane Shimsky [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 6:03 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: BOL Public Comments; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Primary Day Voting Account

I already forwarded the eblast to Suzanne -- and to you!

MaryJane Shimsky
[REDACTED]

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

From: Joy Haber
To: David Imamura
Cc: BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com; MaryJane Shimsky ; Gabrielle Bordwin ; Paula Romanow Etzel ; Suzanne Berger
Sent: Thu, Jul 2, 2020 3:27 pm
Subject: Re: Primary Day Voting Account

Thank you, David, it's great that you provided this very comprehensive assessment. I suggested to the Chairman yesterday that it would be helpful if all the Legislators reached out to the Chairs in their districts to provide feedback on Primary Day for the hearing next Wednesday. I know a press release went out today and the Legislators' e-newsletters will follow ...

MJ/Gabby I can forward the press release to Suzanne unless you are already doing that

On Thu, Jul 2, 2020, 3:07 PM David Imamura [REDACTED] wrote:
Dear Legislators,

My name is David Imamura, I am a Co-Chair of the Irvington Democratic Committee, a member of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission, and a co-author of Goldfeder on Election Law, a legal treatise on New York Election Law. I would like to provide you with my account of the leadup to Primary Day/Primary Day itself as well as areas which I feel can be improved. The areas that stand out to me are: (1) the BOE needs to be much more communicative to the public about alternate methods of voting/where new polling locations are, (2) there need to be a greater number of voting kiosks, (3) there need to be a greater number of check in tables and (4) in Primaries there needs to be a way in a primary for poll workers to see if a person is registered non-affiliated/independent.

Prior to Primary Day

The Board of Elections's greatest fault in my mind was failing to communicate to people that they should try to vote absentee or early as well as their failure to communicate that polling locations had changed.

As Co-Chair of the Irvington Democratic Committee, I was very cognizant that the decision to cut the number of polling locations could lead to long lines and mass confusion. When the Board of Elections announced that there would be no polling location in Irvington, our Committee actively attempted to contact voters to tell them that (1) there was no in person voting location in Irvington and (2) that they should vote either absentee or early. Our Committee sent out multiple messages via telephone, social media, and e-mail attempting to inform voters of this fact. Meanwhile our village government also promoted absentee/early voting and reminded voters that there would be no polling location.

What upset me most was that the Board of Elections did not seem to take any responsibility in telling voters that their polling locations were closed or that they should try to vote absentee/early. Indeed, only a single mailer went out to Irvington voters to inform them that their polling location had changed (as opposed to six or seven contacts from either our committee or the village government). This mailer was at best confusing and did not convey the urgency of the issue,

that voters' normal polling locations were closed and that they should actively look into voting through alternative means. There was only a single mailer when there should have been far more. Meanwhile, the official notice on where early voting/primary day voting would be was not distributed within the statutory deadlines. Since we had advance notice of the polling location, we went ahead and began telling people that all Irvington polling locations were closed almost a week prior to the official announcement. That should not have been the case.

Primary Day

On Primary Day, the BOE needs (1) a greater number of voting kiosks, (2) a greater number of check in tables, (3) an ability for poll workers to look up independent/non-affiliated voters.

As part of my role as Co-Chair of the Irvington Democrats, I thought it was my responsibility to spend all day at the polls and to try to facilitate people voting faster in order to avoid long lines. The Dobbs Ferry polling location had at its peak 45 minute lines (which admittedly paled in comparison to other polling locations). The polling location was run rather well, however I would propose certain improvements.

Lack of Kiosks

First, the greatest bottleneck at the Dobbs Ferry polling location was the number of people who could vote at the small kiosks/stands. BOE staff had blocked off 2 out of 4 desk areas for each stand for social distancing purposes. As a result, at any given time only 6 people in the entire polling location could be voting at any given time, leading to delays. This was the greatest obstacle to voting. There needs to be a greater number of stands.

More Check In Tables

Second, while this was not as much of an issue in Dobbs Ferry, there were delays in checking people in. The smallest typo could triple the amount of time required for someone to be checked in. There should have been more tables for check in. The fact that ballots needed to be individually printed also added delays.

Ability to Look Up Non-Affiliated Voters

Third, not germane to a discussion of the General Election, the other major issue that poll workers confronted was an inability to look up whether a voter was non-affiliated/an independent. When checking voters in, if a poll worker could not find the voter they had no way of determining whether they had made a typo or if that person was registered as unaffiliated or independent. I ended up becoming the go to person for looking up missing voters because the voter file I had on my phone was more accurate in finding voters than the system that poll worker had. I sat behind the check in table and helped poll workers with this. The fact that I as a party chair had better access to the voter file/helping find people than the poll workers themselves I found extremely disconcerting. While this would not be an issue in the general election, it has been an issue in every Primary that I have been a poll watcher and this issue should be fixed.

Ultimately, I have no criticism of the poll workers or BOE staff at the Dobbs Ferry polling location, in fact I think they did their best in a very difficult situation and have nothing but praise for their service. However, I feel that the tools they were provided were inadequate.

Thank you for your service and let me know if you have any questions.

David Imamura
Co-Chair, Irvington Democratic Committee
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 4:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Covill, Kitley
Subject: June Primary Comments

Dear Westchester County Board of Legislators,

Thank you for your attention to voting problems in the June Primary.

With three Katonah voters in our family we each had a different experience with absentee ballots for the primary election. Two of us, my husband and I, are currently living abroad in Vancouver, Canada. We applied for absentee ballots last fall and checked the boxes to obtain all ballots for the coming year. Both of us did receive and returned ballots for the election last November.

For June's primary election, I received two ballots and my husband didn't receive a ballot at all. My first ballot arrived in Vancouver before the primary election date was rescheduled from April to June. This ballot had all the democratic presidential candidates and delegates on it and nothing else.

I didn't return that ballot because it was soon announced that the democratic presidential primary would be cancelled in NY. After the governor ordered all voters be sent ballots via mail, I received another ballot with only the NY State Assembly candidates on it. Not knowing that this ballot was incomplete, I filled it out and returned it on time. Once again, my husband did not receive a ballot.

I later learned that my daughter in Katonah received a different ballot than I did. Hers included all of the democratic presidential candidates and delegates, the NY State Assembly candidates and the Westchester County DA candidates.

Although I understand the Board of Elections faced numerous challenges in conducting an election during a pandemic, it is concerning that voters received different ballots, some of which were incomplete. In looking back at my experience it seems I was supposed to return both ballots I received, but that was not clear. However, neither ballot gave me the option to vote for DA candidates. Further, attention must be given to ensure that absentee ballots are sent to all who request them.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Teresa Donkin
Katonah

BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com

[REDACTED]

From: Jennai Gaskin [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 12:07 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June Primary Voting Experience in Westchester

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently voted in person for the June Primary. My normal polling place is Daniel Webster Elementary School, but it was changed to New Rochelle High School. I waited almost an hour to vote (arriving just around 9:00 am and leaving the polling site just after 10:00 am), which is something I have never experienced before while voting in Westchester. I first waited outside for approximately 5 minutes before speaking with the receptionist who asked if I needed assistance voting. We were then asked to disinfect our hands with a hand sanitizer that was provided before entering into the main waiting area.

Once in the main waiting area, I waited a total of 45 minutes before I was able to register, receive my ballot and vote. It was extremely hot - there was no AC and only one large fan that pointed away from the line. We did not receive any information about the reason behind the delay, but it appeared that the poll site workers were having delays with the registration technology. About 15 minutes into my wait, poll site workers then informed us that there were two lines and we were free to break off this line and join the other. Those who joined the other line did not finish any faster.

Notably, the ballots were not pre-printed and waiting, but had to be printed once you checked in at the registration table. I noticed the poll site workers had a tough time both reloading the printer with paper and making sure the ballots printed properly. Additionally, it appeared that the poll site workers had issues finding voters in their online registration system, which also contributed to the delay. There was a period of at least 15 minutes where no one was actually filling out their ballots at the station.

Finally, we did not receive gloves or a new pen to mark our votes. The same black pen used to bubble in our votes was shared amongst voters, which is troubling given the way COVID-19 spreads.

I understand the poll workers were short staffed and overwhelmed and I do want to thank them for their service. However, waiting times like these coupled with lack of proper PPE and virus transfer prevention measures could certainly turn people away from the polls come November.

Sincerely,

—
Jennai E. Gaskin, Esq.
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Susanne Servin [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 10:54 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: absentee ballot primary voting

It worked very well from my end for me.

It is on your end where the problem lies - the counting of the ballots. maybe some training is needed!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Susanne Servin
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Katherine Goodman [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 7:53 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting in NYS Primary, June 23, 2020

My voting experience in my polling place was very positive. Although I had signed up to vote by absentee ballot, that ballot never arrived in the mail. Mount Kisco, NY waived the absentee ballot and allowed all voters who are registered with a party to vote in person in the June primary. The polls at Leonard Park in Mt. Kisco were very safely and efficiently run, with masks required, distancing maintained and short wait-times for voters to complete their ballots.

Katherine P Goodman

[REDACTED]

From: marty-ann kerner [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 7:45 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting in the primaries

My husband and I voted early and in person in Pound Ridge. We had requested, but not received our absentee ballots so we decided to go in person. We were the only voters there! The poll watchers were many, they were well protected with masks, gloves, etc. They were well trained. The entire experience went flawlessly. They called to cancel our absentee ballots as we had come in person.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 7:38 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Latimer, George
Subject: Fwd: Legislators to Meet With Election Commissioners About Voting Improvements

Board of Legislators: It is my understanding that you would like to hear first-hand experiences from those who voted this past month of June 2020. Following is my succinct account:

My wife and I voted at the public library

Eastchester, New York

on Father's Day Sunday, June 21st at around 4pm. It was a breeze. There were only a few other people voting at the time and the poll workers were extremely courteous and efficient. It was annoying to have to wear a mask and wash hands etc but that's just CovidLife. All in all, the voting went as best as one could expect.

Thanks for being interested in my personal experience as a voter. Besides my college years, am a lifelong resident of Westchester County and am very concerned about voting rights. I've recently been following the activities of the Citizens for Voting Integrity New York whose mission is to ensure that every vote is counted as cast, and that elections are secure, transparent and verifiable. I'm happy to have a voice on any county efforts to insure voting integrity in Westchester.

Please kindly acknowledge receipt of this email.

Best,

-Donato Vaccaro

[REDACTED] Eastchester, NY 10709

Donato Vaccaro, Ph.D.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Sara L Schupf [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:43 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Covill, Kitley
Subject: voting

Importance: High

I am so pleased you sent this email asking about our experience voting. I have been meaning to follow up but I was not sure who to call. I found the process confusing and intimidating. After several calls I finally found my card that was sent telling me where to vote. There was a number on the card which I called to request an absentee ballot which I called. The woman I spoke to was very curt and not friendly. I did not understand her directions and had her repeat the email I needed two times. I imagine she was busy. She gave me a website to go to so I could get an application for an absentee ballot. She told me I had to do it right away as the deadline was that night.

I sent in the two requests for absentee ballots as directed to boe-westchester@westchestergov.com and we never received our ballots. I have the two emails I sent requesting the ballots. I forgot about it until it was the day before the voting and I tried to reach someone about what to do and learned we would have to come in person to vote since we did not have our ballots. We did not vote as I am not going to go in person. I am 80 years old and my husband is 84. We are not going anywhere where there are crowds or we have to stand in line etc.

I have read about how bad the voting process is in several places. I did not think in Westchester there would be a lack of follow up or we would not receive our ballots as requested. This election is not as serious as November for us, but come November I want to be sure we have our absentee ballots and we will be able to vote.

Please tell me exactly what we need to do to receive absentee ballots. Do I need to resubmit our applications or what do we do?

Kitley I want to thank you for your important emails and keeping us all updated and feeling connected. You are doing a great job and we are most grateful.

Kind regards,
Sara Schupf

Sara Lee Schupf
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Tanya Azarchs [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 4:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting experience

I voted by absentee ballot for the local and presidential primaries and found the process very easy and convenient. One suggestion: I received the ballots with 2 envelopes, which I mixed up after opening. It would be good to have instructions about which ballot should go in which envelope.

--

Tanya Azarchs
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: kate arens [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 4:13 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: absentee voting

I live in North Salem. My husband and I requested absentee ballots. The applications for them arrived in a timely fashion, as did the ballots themselves. We filled them out and sent them the day after they arrived here, so presumably they were counted in the primary. All went smoothly. Thank you.

Kate Arens

[REDACTED]

From: Phyllis Ross [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 2:37 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Covill, Kitley
Subject: voting experience

My husband and I were concerned when we did not receive our ballots a full two weeks after sending in our applications, so we voted early at the Leonard Park location in Mt. Kisco. That experience was smooth and safe. Good distancing, hand sanitizer. Poll workers did not consistently wear masks, but most did.

Thanks for reaching out for input!

Phyllis Ross

[REDACTED]
Katonah, NY

[REDACTED]

From: Elizabeth Calderon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:36 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting in the Primary

I am in District 16 and I attended Early voting at the Eastchester Library. It was an excellent experience! I hope there will be Early Voting in November. I am 79 yrs old.

Elizabeth Calderon
Bronxville

[REDACTED]

From: Andrea Snyder [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: voting June 23, 2020

I voted at 79 Bouton Rd in South Salem,NY
I never requested an absentee ballot.
the onsite voting was good. Everyone wore masks and social distanced when possible
I got a card in the mail prior to this telling me where to vote
Andrea Snyder

[REDACTED]

From: Nancy Kessler [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:23 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Covill, Kitley
Subject: Voting Issues

I requested an absentee ballot but the ballot that arrived did not have any presidential primary candidates on it. It only had congressional candidates. Therefore, I went to vote in person at the Mt. Kisco Memorial Pool. Several issues there:

1. Trucks lining the long roadway with large signs and people harassing each voter as they entered the polls. They were technically 100 feet away but it was quite intrusive.
2. When I got in, the officials had to call White Plains to explain I had received an absentee ballot but wanted to vote in person. They were told that they no longer had to call for this issue.
3. The ballot I received was confusing. All the presidential candidates were on one page and, almost as an afterthought, the congressional candidates were on page 2. It was easy to miss.
4. I did not want to use a communal pen. Are we able to use our own?
5. **PRIVACY:** The new paper ballot system is not private. There are four or five people able to see my ballot before I put it in the machine. I strongly oppose this new system.
6. Please make sure absentee ballots are correct and available for the November election.

--
Nancy Kessler
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

"You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing."
-George Bernard Shaw

[REDACTED]

From: Rachel Asher [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:19 PM
To: BOL Public Comments; Covill@westchesterlegislators.com.
Cc: Andy
Subject: absentee ballot delayed

My husband Andrew Kuhn's absentee ballot arrived June 23, 2020, despite having been requested by mail the same day as mine (which arrived a week earlier).

RACHEL ASHER / ASHER, GAUGHRAN P.C.
[REDACTED] armonk, NEW YORK 10504
[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE: This message is intended only for its designated recipients. It may contain confidential or proprietary information to attorney-client or other confidentiality protections. If you are not a designated recipient of this message, you may not review, copy or disseminate the message. If it was received in error, please notify the sender by return email and delete the message. THANK YOU.

[REDACTED]

From: James Wrightsman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 5:07 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting by mail

Our experience was perfect, We filled out our forma and in due course received our ballots. We then mailed them in.

Jim Wrightsman

From: Robin Golden [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 11:44 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting in primary

Hello,

I am writing to voice my opinion on the terrible situation we had for the June primary in Mamaroneck this year. I have voted every year at Chatsworth Elementary School in Larchmont and have never had an issue. This year was a complete nightmare. I waited 2 hours in the scorching heat to vote. It was ridiculous to have 4 voting machines for the entire district where in the past I would assume we had at least double that - since the four elementary schools were open to voters. There were many people that left the line. The elderly could not stand outside in the sun for two hours nor could young parents with little children. People were fainting and crying but were determined to stay and vote. This can not happen during the general election. We need to know that our usual polling locations will be open and not be all together again at Mamaroneck Town Center.

By the way there was very little advertising to let us know about early voting this year. Since this is new for us, I would really recommend getting the word out especially in light of Corona - so people can vote early and avoid the crowds.

Thank you,
Robin Golden

[REDACTED]

From: Claire Prohl [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:57 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary on June 23

From: Claire D Prohl, [REDACTED] Somers, NY 10589

I voted by mail. I received my application in the mail automatically, well in advance of deadline. (Note: My husband is registered in a different party for which there was no primary in our district. He rightly did not receive a ballot application in the mail.)

I sent in my ballot application and received my ballot in time to vote. It was very easy to fill out both the application for the ballot and the ballot itself. I'd like to always have the option of such an easy way to vote!

I want to note that I am strongly against voting online. It is VERY risky and also lacks a paper ballot, which is essential for fair elections.

Claire Prohl

[REDACTED]

From: Ellen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:48 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary election feedback

I thought it all went well. However, early voting should have been promoted more. I saw one Facebook post the first day of early voting, and that was it. Since early voting is still new in NY, many people didn't realize they would have the option.

Thank you for encouraging feedback.

[REDACTED]

From: Pam [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 9:48 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Barr, Nancy

My request for an absentee ballot was sent in to the Board of Elections the day after I received the request form in the mail. Being over 70 years of age, I felt it was safer to vote absentee this Spring. However, I never received the ballot. A number of people here in Harrison told me that theirs never came either.

I called the Board of Elections before Election Day, and was told I was too late and that my only choices to vote were (a) in person at the BoE office before Election Day by completing another absentee ballot there or (b) by going to the one polling place in downtown Harrison on Election Day.

Having no intention to give up my right to vote, I went to the school in downtown Harrison to cast my ballot.

It was clear in talking to poll workers there that I was not the only Harrison resident who did not receive their requested absentee ballot.

It is my firm belief that something was wrong with the BoE system and/or at the USPS or both. And that remedies must be sought and placed in effect before the general election in November.

Pamela D. Stockton
[REDACTED]
Harrison NY 10528

[REDACTED]

From: William Dingee [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 9:24 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Mail in Election

My household received school district mail in ballots for all 3 of my children who do not even live in the state anymore. Records are not up to date and possibly lead to voter fraud. I have no confidence in mail in voting, but would support a multi-day in person voting process due to Covid-19. I am also in favor of an ID check at the poles.

Bill Dingee
[REDACTED]
South Salem, NY
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Martha Schwartz [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 3:22 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23rd Primary Absentee Voting

To: Westchester Legislators
From: Martha Schwartz

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ardsley on Hudson NY 10503
Re: Absentee Ballot

In mid-May I mailed a request for an absentee ballot for the Primary Election
Having not received a ballot In early June I telephoned the Board of Elections in White Plains. They claimed my request had been processed.
A week later I still had not received a ballot, so I telephoned again. The BOE said they would send another (I confirmed the address) The week before the election, having still not received a ballot, I decided to Early Vote at my poll, Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

I have only compliments for the staff and set-up at the Voting Site. They had to contact the BOE since my record indicated that I had requested an absentee ballot. The BOE claimed they sent two!

Voting should not be this hard! Thanks to you all for taking a look at it.

[REDACTED]

From: Polly Schneck [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 12:30 PM
To: Covill, Kitley; BOL Public Comments
Subject: Re: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

To Whom It May Concern:

My sister received this email on June 18, 2020. She never sent a "Forgot Password" request and was wondering whether this was an attempt at phishing. Given our desire to protect voting security and access, we thought that it might be worth alerting you to the email. Should you wish to reach my sister, please call her at [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Isobel P Schneck
[REDACTED]

Here is the email:

From: Ny.govld@its.ny.gov
Date: June 18, 2020 at 5:17:54 PM EDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Information you requested from New York State

This email was sent in response to your "Forgot Password" request.

Dear Tiye Bhutia,

This email was sent in response to your "Forgot Password" request. If you DID NOT make the request, you may disregard this email.

By selecting forgotten password you have begun the account reactivation process. For security reasons you will be asked to complete two steps. First, establish three new shared secrets and second, create a new password. Once you have completed these steps your account will be reactivated.

Please [click here](#) to reactivate your account. Please do not close out of the browser while completing the account activation.

If the above link does not work please copy and paste the below URL into your browser.

<https://my.ny.gov/FPSV3/reset.xhtml?rid=35409b16-b4c2-4171-8539-283728c862b1&nygovldlang=en>

Legislators to Meet With Election Commissioners About Voting Improvements

Published: 29 June 2020

White Plains, NY — The Westchester County Board of Legislators will convene a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting in July to hear from the Commissioners of the County's Board of Elections about how to improve voting conditions in November in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board Chairman Ben Boykin (D- White Plains, Scarsdale, Harrison), said, "The Board of Legislators has no authority over how the Board of Elections conducts elections. The BOE is an independent body that reports to the State Board of Elections. But it is imperative that voters in Westchester have confidence in the way elections are held in our County, and as representatives of the people of Westchester, we must do what we can to ensure that.

"The June 23 primaries were conducted under a perfect storm of difficult conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented process for and volume of absentee voting, the difficulty in recruiting and training poll workers in the face of the pandemic, and the challenges of locating a sufficient number of suitable voting places presented challenging circumstances.

"Unfortunately, as a result, confusion about absentee voting was widespread and Election Day lines were unacceptably long. It is imperative that we examine what happened and understand quickly what steps need to be taken to make sure that things will be better in November."

The Board of Legislators is planning a COW for the week of July 20 (specific date to be determined) with County Board of Elections Commissioners and staff. In future meetings, the BOL is also planning to speak with voters, advocates, State Board of Elections representatives and others to help ensure that clear and pro-active steps are taken before November.

In particular, Legislators are interested in hearing about improvements in the following areas:

- Early voting
- Communications
- Poll worker recruitment and training
- Poll sites
- PPE and safety supplies
- Physical and absentee voting logistics

Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D - Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington), said, "Our voting system had to deal with numerous shocks during the June primary, the result of the coronavirus pandemic and the largest primary voting turnout in decades. Westchester County's election system cannot be caught by surprise again. We need to make sure we are ready for what will likely be record-setting turnout for the general election in November. We look forward to working together with the Board of Elections, advocates, State officials and others to make sure our County is prepared for November."

[REDACTED]

From: Francesca Hagadus [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 12:12 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Election Problems

We did not receive an application for an absentee ballot for one of my sons. I printed one out for him and mailed it in.
We did get our ballots in time.

The voters with the word "Mount" in their address were sent randomly to Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon or Mount Kisco

Francesca Hagadus

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Ferrara, Josephine
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 11:39 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Boykin, Benjamin
Subject: FW: District 5 user comments

Please see email below from David Schwartz-Ardsley on Hudson, zip 10503. Thank you.

Kind regards,
Josie (Josephine) Ferrara

Josephine Ferrara

Assistant to Chairman Benjamin Boykin II
Community Affairs and Legislative Aide
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601
(914) 995-2818
jafj@westchestergov.com

From: Webmaster
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 7:45 PM
To: Ferrara, Josephine ; Boykin, Benjamin
Subject: District 5 user comments

Hello,
David Schwartz has submitted the following message:

Subject: Board of Elections

Ben, to whom is the Board of Elections responsible? Their performance in the recent primary was terrible. My own family member asked TWICE for an absentee ballot. TWICE she was told it had been sent. IT NEVER CAME. She voted in person but think how many were disenfranchised. How can this be reformed? Ho can Lafayette and Colety be removed and professionals installed. TO WHOM DO THEY REPORT? David

User Details:

Name David Schwartz
Email Address [REDACTED]
Confirm Email Address [REDACTED]
Street Address [REDACTED]
City Ardsley on Hudson
Zip Code 10503
Email Subject Board of Elections

Comments Ben, to whom is the Board of Elections responsible? Their performance in the recent primary was terrible. My own family member asked TWICE for an absentee ballot. TWICE she was told it had been sent. IT NEVER CAME. She voted in person but think how many were disenfranchised. How can this be reformed? Ho can Lafayette and Colety be removed and professionals installed. TO WHOM DO THEY REPORT? David

[REDACTED]

From: Erica Babad [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 6:44 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: voting feedback

Good morning,

Thank you for soliciting feedback about the voting procedures. I voted early (Saturday 6/20, I think) at the Mt. Pleasant Community Center in Valhalla. There was no line, and a masked volunteer sat at a table outside the voting room with hand sanitizer. Everyone inside appeared to be wearing masks.

However, when I went to the table to sign in, the volunteers all had their masks under their noses. I asked them nicely to pull them up, which they did - but after I voted I looked over to the table and their masks had slid down again.

Proper use of PPE must be followed at the voting sites. Whoever was the supervisor needed to do a better job of enforcing the use of masks.

Sincerely,
Erica Babad
Thornwood, NY

From: Andy Laub [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 10:08 PM
To: Shimsky, MaryJane; BOL Public Comments
Cc: County Executive (WEB); Boykin, Benjamin
Subject: Primary Day Problems
Attachments: image0.jpeg; image1.png

Dear County Legislator Shimsky,

Thank you for taking the time out to review the exbordant amount of problems that took place this past primary date on June 23rd, 2020.

While COVID19 has taken a toll on all of us, the conduct of the Board of Elections and their leadership was inexcusable.

With the usual 81 polling sites in Greenburgh reduced to 6, seniors were forced to travel long ways waiting a longtime in the hot sun to vote. I wanted in particular to bring your attention to Hannah Strong of Scarsdale, an 87 year old holocaust survivor. She applied twice for an absentee ballot without success. When she gave me authorization to obtain an absentee ballot the board turned me away, even though the law clearly stipulated an absentee ballot could be returned in person by the 23rd.

Throughout the process, they sent misleading information and were defensive. I am sharing documents I saved of the Commissioner and his staff saying everything was fine and was complicit in these problems and the defensiveness of his staff. I am calling for Election Commissioner Reginald Lafayette and Taijain Nelson to be terminated for their unlawful performance asap.

I am upset about what this process does to our democratic process and am fully ready to work with you to remedy this.

Best wishes,
Andy Laub

Download full resolution images
Available until Jul 29, 2020

[Click to Download](#)

Video.mov

0 bytes

[Click to Download](#)

Video_1.mov

0 bytes

Best,

Andy L.
Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Laura Chess [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 11:09 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting

To Westchester Legislators,

I requested an absentee ballot and received it in the mail. The directions for completing the process were unclear and I mistakenly sealed the ballots incorrectly. I called the Westchester Board of Elections and a very helpful woman answered the phone. She stated many people were confused with the process and that I could unseal the envelopes and reinsert the ballots as per her instructions and then tape the envelopes back up with my initials. I followed these directions and mailed in the ballots.

My daughter had the same confusing experience along with several friends I talked to.

This mail in ballot process needs to be cleared up before November. Please let me know how this process will be corrected.

Thank you,

Laura Chess

[REDACTED]
Larchmont, NY 10538

[REDACTED]

From: Christine Peters [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:38 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting

Dear BOL committee on elections,

I am writing due to a negative experience with the primary vote. My mother is 70 years old and she had a challenging time waiting to vote. She voted early at the Will library and she had to wait while a machine was broken. My mother has a double knee injury and her long wait was quite painful. Please remember people that have disabilities and the possible environmental issues that could arise in early November. I was outside of Saunders HS on primary day when it was quite hot and people were left to wait outside for long periods of time without water. Thank you for reading this email.

Sincerely,
Christine Peters

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:57 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Election Reforms Needed in Westchester and New York State

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for working to address the serious problems confronting our electoral system here in Westchester and in New York State.

I am a life-long resident of New York State, and a long-time resident of Westchester County (Town of Mamaroneck). I am also a District Leader. Most importantly, I am a very concerned citizen.

In **Part 1**, below, I list various **suggestions for much-needed voting reforms in Westchester County and New York State**. Some of these are **COVID-related**, while others relate to **serious, longstanding defects in our voting system that have been tolerated for far too long**.

In **Part 2**, below, I describe **actual voting experiences of myself and neighbors during the 2020 Primary Elections, June 23, 2020 and Early Voting, at the Mamaroneck Town Center**.

Preliminarily, I note that, over the past several years, I have contacted the **Westchester County Board of Elections** on various occasions, regarding Absentee Ballots for family members or others, or to obtain information for myself and others about dates and deadlines for voter registration, early voting and the like. **The "front-line" Westchester BOE employees I have dealt with have always been helpful, responsive and pleasant**, even when dealing with the unusual changes and demands (e.g., Special Elections, Early Voting, calendar revisions, etc.) of recent years, and we should appreciate their diligent efforts under very trying circumstances. **The problems we have experienced are the responsibility of more senior officials.**

Part 1: Important Voting Reforms Needed in Westchester County and New York State

Many of the problems experienced during New York's 2020 Primary Elections were due to **COVID-19**. However, **there are also many other serious, fundamental flaws in New York's voting system which must be addressed**.

Exercising the fundamental democratic right to vote should involve neither mystery nor trauma. ***Our goal must be to encourage and facilitate voting by a well-informed and involved citizenry.*** To that end, I respectfully submit the following suggestions:

1. Improvements for In-Person Voting, especially for COVID safety:

(a) **More voting locations** are needed, especially on Election Day, and likely also for Early Voting.

(b) **Locations must be large enough for social distancing**, and they must be **well ventilated**.

(c) All persons who enter a polling place must **wear masks** as otherwise required.

(d) **"Extra" people** (beyond social-distancing capacity) **must wait outside**. To avoid having voters wait on long lines, especially in inclement weather, it would help to use a **"number" or "speed pass" system** that would allow voters to arrive and obtain a "pass" or "ticket" that would allow them to return and vote during a specified time window.

(e) **Protect poll workers and expand the pool of willing and available poll workers by providing shorter work shifts of, say, 7 to 8 hours**. Why should poll workers be required to work grueling, marathon shifts exceeding fifteen hours, as seems to be the current practice??

(f) **Promote Early Voting**: Public Service Announcements and other such means should be used to encourage the voting public to take advantage of Early Voting, especially for the upcoming 2020 General Elections!

2. Update our Voter Rolls! Only people who now live here should be on the official voter rolls. From personal experience as a District Leader, I know that the official BOE voter rolls continue to include the names of people who have died or sold their home and moved, for a year, two years or even longer afterwards. Why?! **Dead people and people who no longer live here should be removed from the voter rolls within a reasonable time, following basic procedures for notice and opportunity to object.** Since deaths and property sales are both a matter of public record, voter rolls should be regularly compared to such records, and New York State law should require that to be done at specified intervals. The law should also require appropriate notice and opportunity to object.

3. Encourage voter registration by current residents. Both the State and County should do so by providing voter registration and other non-partisan election information via communications triggered, for example, by real estate sales; DMV transactions; school registrations; tax filings and other routine / official communications with residents, whether they own or rent their residences.

4. The BOE must make all BALLOT INFORMATION fully and readily available to voters BEFORE they vote. This information should be made available online on the official BOE website AND in paper form (sample ballots) at the BOE and at the polling sites, while people are waiting to vote. Sample ballots can be in the form of "hand-outs" and / or large, prominently displayed posters. This will not only support **more Informed voting**, it will also **help speed up voting** as voters waiting to sign in and receive their official ballots can study the ballot beforehand, and be ready to mark their ballot when they get to the head of the line. (The BOE should not be permitted to abdicate this important responsibility to outside, unofficial organizations such as the League of Women Voters or Vote411.)

5. Expand Mail-In Voting for "Absentees" as well as anyone else who chooses to obtain their ballot by mail. This would alleviate not only the current COVID-19 health threat, but would also alleviate many other (non-COVID) challenges involved with in-person voting.

6. Voter Privacy / Ballot Secrecy: The small, divided, round tables used at polling sites in Westchester County afford no real privacy as voters mark their ballots. For some, this is a mere annoyance. For others, however, such as those who are subjected to undue influence by a spouse, other relative, or caregiver, that lack of privacy is tantamount to disenfranchisement, or, worse, they may be forced to vote for someone they oppose. Surely the County and State must require and provide proper, private, voting equipment and conditions.

7. No election results should be publicly reported until after the polls have closed AND all voters "in line" as of closing time have actually voted. Preliminary results can be very misleading and, if reported before people have voted, can affect how they vote, or even whether they remain in line to vote! No doubt some people who waited in line long after 9 PM on June 23, received, on their mobile phones or devices, preliminary results reported by News12 or other outlets soon after 9 PM when the polls "closed" theoretically, but not actually, and some people may have been influenced by those preliminary reports either to change their vote or not bother to stay in line to vote at all.

8. Ranked Voting: Avoid the potential for inappropriately skewed election results, where a less popular or less desirable candidate can win if the majority of votes are split among "too many" candidates who are more desirable. This can happen in any election (Primary or General) where there are three or more candidates. Such "skewed" results undermine and impair the democratic process. Moreover, besides providing more appropriate results, **ranked voting can also obviate the need for "run-off" elections -- saving time, uncertainty, and taxpayer dollars!** NYS Election Law should be revised to achieve those results.

9. Simplify! Educate! Very few people -- even those who are educated and aware -- understand the system, rules, and ballots for races such as the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary delegates, or Primaries for "Judicial Delegates" for Westchester and nearby counties. At a minimum, clear and complete info about how delegates are selected, their role, etc., should be made readily and publicly available to all voters. Better yet, the system should be reformed so as to be comprehensible to concerned and conscientious voters.

Part 2: The 2020 Primary Election: Early Voting and Primary Day, June 23, at the Mamaroneck Town Center

I took advantage of **Early Voting, which worked out well (for me), though some improvements should be made.** I received the Board of Election's Voter Information mailing, which, for my address, was accurate. I voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center during the last half-hour of **Early Voting, on Sunday, June 21.** The line was not long, and the Election workers were helpful and pleasant. For the most part, basic COVID precautions were observed. I had also visited

the site the previous afternoon, and the circumstances were similar. However, **Sample Ballots were not available on either occasion.**

Before the election, I had **strongly encouraged other voters to take advantage of Early Voting or Absentee Voting.** Unfortunately, **some people insisted that they "always vote on Election Day" and that they would do so again on Primary Day, June 23.** Of course, as we now know, things did not go as they'd expected.

One of my contacts who voted on Primary Day went to vote **around noon.** At that point, the line at the Mamaroneck Town Center already extended outside the building. It **took him an hour,** but he was able to vote. He also was able to obtain a sample ballot, apparently photocopied by the Election workers.

One of my longtime neighbors (name available on request), a woman in her 60's, told me that she and three family members arrived at the Mamaroneck Town Center at **7:45 PM** on June 23. At that point, the line was already down to the Post Road and beyond. She remained in line, standing for **four hours,** and finally voted at **11:45 PM,** and then **had to walk, alone, near midnight, back to the Mamaroneck High School parking lot to get to her car.** Unfortunately, **her family members were unable to endure the four-hour ordeal and left without voting.** Hence, **three intended votes were forfeited.** And, although she had the stamina and determination to endure, she was very concerned that others in the line would succumb to the heat during the four-hour ordeal.

Although I had voted "Early", I **also went to the Town Center on Primary Day, as a volunteer and to observe.** I remained outside. When I arrived, at about 6:00 PM, the line of voters already extended down to the Post Road and for a distance southward. When I left, at about 10:00 PM, the line extended even further, almost to the entrance to the Mamaroneck High School parking lot. Likely the line would have been even longer but, by then, countless people had already given up and left without voting.

Surely we can, and must, do better.

Thank you very much for your concern and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Maryellen Chomsky
Mamaroneck, New York**

[REDACTED]

From: Jodie Reaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:54 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Pac Swac
Subject: SWAC PAC Voting Survey
Attachments: VOTING SURVEY SUMMARY.docx; ATT00001.htm

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments about the Primary Election on June 23, 2020. Attached to this email you will find the results of a survey that SWAC PAC members sent to their membership.

Should there be any follow-up questions please feel free to reach out to me using either of the email addresses above and/or the phone number below.

Many thanks,
Jodie

[REDACTED]

From: Carole Conklin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:41 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Election and Absentee Ballot

Dear Westchester County Legislators:

My name is Carole Conklin and I reside at 4 Curran Court, Yonkers and I am blind. I normally do not do absentee ballot for voting for I choose to go to my polling site and vote in person independently and with privacy. there were issues in having that happen at my polling site many times throughout the years but that's another story for another time.

The normal process was that an absentee form would be mailed to you to be filled, send it back and then the absentee ballot gets mailed to you to fill in and send back. that would mean me having to have someone sighted assist me to fill the form as well as the ballot which took away my independence/privacy in voting. Of course with the pandemic and my compromising health issues, I had to take this route. After I had mailed the absentee form, I learned that the Board of Elections had made an accessible fillable absentee form as well as ballot which did not exist before, but you would have to email someone at BOE for them to email you the form to fill and then you would get the absentee ballot via email as well. To clarify, what's currently on their website is not user-friendly for those who use screen readers and Not in a fillable format where one can type information in the fields. Anyway, when I called to see since I had already submitted the form via mail if I could still get the ballot that is accessible for me to fill on my own, I was told I couldn't because the only way I could get it is by the process as I just mentioned of emailing to get the absentee form that was accessible to Phil and then getting the absentee ballot that was accessible.

I feel that I should've been able to still get the accessible absentee ballot emailed to me even though I did not submit via email with the absentee form as they had my absentee form that I sent through the mail. The BOE website should have had the accessible fillable absentee form on their website in the first place being ADA complian.

Thank you for your attention in this matter and forgive any formatting as I am working quickly composing this on my iPhone as I just learned about this deadline being today at 5:00 PM God bless you And thank you for all that you do for the community!

Best regards,

Carole Conklin

"Let that light within you always shine!"

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: How accurate and up-to-date are our voter registration rolls?

Dear Ben Boykin and the Task Force studying our election problems,

My name is Ron Rhodes and with my family we have lived in White Plains for more than 40 years. My question is "How accurate and up-to-date are our Westchester voter registration rolls?"

I ask this question because in last month's White Plains School Board election my aunt received an unsolicited absentee ballot in the mail. The only problem is that my aunt died 5 years ago in August of 2015. Obviously no one in my family requested the absentee ballot in her name that was sent to us.

Over the past 5 years I have contacted the White Plains Board of Elections on a number of occasions however my aunt remained on the voting roles. If the names of people, who have died or moved away from White Plains, are not being removed on a regular basis from the voting roles. . .doesn't this raise a question on the integrity of who is eligible to vote in our election process?

Public confidence could be restored if a responsible official before each election were to certify that the election roles are in fact accurate and up-to-date.

Thanks for your efforts to correct our election problems,

Ron Rhodes

[REDACTED] White Plains, NY 10605

From: gezina bouma [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 3:54 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: My experience with early voting in the Primary

On the first day of early voting, I was the 15th voter at the Poll in the Yonkers Riverfront Library.

- Everyone was very friendly and old.
- There was hand gel.
- They had opened the doors for ventilation.
- Although or perhaps because I was one of the firsts, it took a full hour to stand in line and cast my vote.
- Thankfully there was one chair for the person who needed it.
- Either the 2 machines were very slow, or the operators were not yet familiar with them.
- There was a problem with a printer it seemed.
- I was accidentally handed a Spanish language Ballot, and could not get an English replacement one.
- Someone had to translate the directions for me on how to pick Electoral College delegates. Not sure if I did it right...

That was my experience with early voting in the 2020 Primary in the Yonkers Riverfront Library.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

[REDACTED]

From: Dara Gordon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:48 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: estroff@nysenate.gov
Subject: Voting during the 2020 primaries

My husband and I found getting our ballots were really very easy for us. We sent in an application for the ballot really early and got them. Then Gov Cuomo mailed one out to everyone so we got a second one, this time with pre-paid envelopes. We filled out the second set and mailed in way before it was due. I guess my big concern is that they be counted properly. So we didn't have a problem getting them but who knows if our votes/ballots were even counted. That is a worry for us. Thank you and I hope you can assure voters that their votes count and we aren't disenfranchised. Daralynn Escher Gordon & Kenneth S. Gordon

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Wednesday, July 15, 2020 1:25 PM

To:

BOL Public Comments

Subject:

June primary

There was hardly any information that the primary was also a republican primary. No mailing notice. Nothing. This lack of information led me to believe it was a Democratic primary only. For shame.

Sent from my iPhone

From: patricia weems [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:02 PM
To: BOL Public Comments; Williams, Alfreda; Shimsky, MaryJane
Subject: BOE Primary - 2020
Attachments: Board of Election meeting on 2020 Absentee Ballots.docx

*** Regular Election Voter Signs In ~ Absentee Ballot Voter Signs Out on Back Page / PROBLEM!
Follow exact same procedure.

*** Percentage of rejected ballots? Late arrivals = Delayed returns. How many unsigned ballots?

*** Two different Congressional Districts on the same ballot. Something new? If so, NOT good!

*** Front and Back for an Absentee Ballot is very "different" from a regular ballot. Make the ballot longer.

*** If a presiding Governor has to change the date of an election, that should be all that he needs to do. The BOE commissioners must have the power to set rules and regulations for any entity that has access and permission to use Voter Registration Books. Those entities must abide by rules from the Board of Elections. As it stands, the School Boards and Fire Districts have their own independent rules that differ from New York State Voting Mandates. NY State BOE should have complete jurisdiction over the continuity and final decisions of all voting rules, regulations, policies, procedures and implementation.

From: Kent Thomas [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:30 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Election Comments

Members of the Election Information Gathering Task Force,

The primary election held on June 23 of this year was fraught with missteps and errors on the part of the Westchester County Board of Elections. In addition, the reduction and relocation of polling places due to the coronavirus, causing confusion and lengthy lines, eroded the confidence of voters. The decision of the Board of Legislators to intervene by gathering information regarding the problems which occurred and to hopefully begin the process to correct the deficiencies through a dialogue with the local BOE is most welcome.

Training and Execution

Although I did not work the past election, I have been an Elections Inspector for almost ten years now. When I took my first training class I was shocked at the cumbersome documentation and the antiquated processes required the day of the election. I have to admit that it took me two to three years to feel that I knew the training material and would be able to perform all of the necessary procedures proficiently the day of the election. There is too much to discuss in writing, but several suggestions for improvement are:

- Make the Poll Worker and Scanner Manuals available digitally either on a BOE device or available for iPhone and Android. It should be fully searchable
- Again, digitally and possible as a built in feature of the above documentation, provide a decision tree feature which can be used by the inspector in determining the procedure for any circumstance with arises
- Streamline the opening and closing procedures through a digital device which prompts the inspector step by step for each of the procedures. This could even include scanning of the bar codes on the machines as well as the various bags and cases used for poll materials. A hard copy could be printed and signed off on by the inspectors.
- Provide online training, but also include access to a video which could be reviewed independently by Elections Inspectors to "bone up" on the procedure prior to the election if they desire.
- Modify affidavit ballot envelopes to include a checklist, with check boxes, of all required information. I have seen too many bad ballots due to things like no voter signature or no Elections Inspector signatures.
- Have a designated "senior" inspector at each location who has been determined to have a higher level of knowledge to respond to questions from other inspectors

Absentee Ballots

- The state has developed a fillable absentee ballot form – progress!
- Develop a method of completing the form digitally, affixing electronic signature and electronically returning the request if possible
- Permit the return of absentee ballot requests via email on an ongoing basis

- Document the accepted methods of document capture of a printed absentee ballot request for transmission via email. i.e. is a phone picture acceptable?
- Correct any issues with postage paid envelopes receiving post office cancellations as proof of mailing date
- Develop an online tracking system to permit voters to ascertain if their ballot was received by the BOE
- Develop a facility for contacting voters to correct errors in absentee ballots as permissible
- Discontinue permanently the policy of Elections Inspectors needing to call the BOE if a voter who was already issued an absentee ballot decides to cast their vote in person at a polling location

Polling Location + Notification

- Make sure that the correct address is shown. Have BOE personnel verify mailings are correct
- As a note, we did not receive a polling location notification. That may have been because we had already requested and received absentee ballots, but people in that category should be notified as they are still able to cast their vote in person.
- Allow any person to cast a ballot at any polling location
- Ensure that polling locations are adequate for social distancing, especially for poll workers

Elections Inspectors are generally a very conscientious group who are asked to man the polls for a grueling sixteen hours or more on Election Day. They do the best they can, but we must remember that they only use the skills for which they were trained one, two or at a maximum three times a year. In my mind, this means that the emphasis needs to be on facilities that can make the tasks to be performed on Election Day as easy as possible. As noted above, the introduction of more technology is the key to ensuring successful elections operation.

Again, I appreciate the BOL's involvement in this matter and look forward to the release of the report on August 7.

Kent Thomas

Mount Kisco

[REDACTED]

From: Beverley Nalven [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 12:58 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Counting absentee bslots

It is absolutely imperative in a democracy that every vote is counted. I am 86 years old and many of my friends are also in our 80's. We trust that our votes and those of every citizen who trust in government be counted. It is inexcusable to reject any absentee ballot that arrived within three days of the deadline, just because there was not deadline stamped on already state paid return envelopes

Beverley Nalven

[REDACTED]
Larchmont NY 10538

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: Brian Kane [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 12:34 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Absentee ballots

It is already 3 weeks since the primary election and it is unclear when the ballot counting will be completed. That is unacceptable. It undermines confidence in the system. It invites accusations of fraud and vote manipulation. This is a problem that needs fixing immediately.

[REDACTED]

From: Tamara Stewart [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 11:52 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June Voting Problems/Improvements

Good afternoon All-

Thank you for convening a meeting to debrief June Primary Election problems and, hopefully, avoid repeating them in November. As a longtime election inspector who lives and works in Mt. Vernon, I am concerned about what I saw and experienced last month. Here are some suggestions for how the Board of Elections could improve voting in November:

1. Make sure that voter postcards have the correct addresses for early and in-person voting
2. Encourage voters to request absentee ballots and vote by mail
3. Have more than one early voting location in Mt. Vernon to avoid long lines
4. Have secure dropboxes for voters to use to return absentee ballots at early voting and strategic locations throughout Westchester
5. Recommend that voters bring their postcards to the polls to expedite the sign-in process
6. Have a social distancing ambassador or several ambassadors at polling locations with multiple districts, deployed to direct traffic flow, take temperatures, remind voters to social distance, and check that masks are being worn inside polling locations
7. Expand early voting hours

Thanks in advance for considering my suggestions, and thank you for doing what you can to ensure that every vote counts in November.

Warmly,
Tamara Stewart
Mt. Vernon, NY

[REDACTED]

From: Lauren Gaudio [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 3:34 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Streamline information

I was unable to participate in the public hearing, but I did want to submit a brief comment. During the primary elections, it was not as easy as it could have been to figure out where to vote. My sister, for example, requested an absentee ballot which did not arrive on time. She then wanted to participate in early voting, but it was tricky to help her figure out where her early voting site would be.

It would be great if the county could have one website where you put in your information and then get a clear list of dates and locations for all the available voting options - absentee, early voting period and election day information. Having a clear link to help people contact human beings with questions would be even better.

Thank you for taking my two cents and for planning ahead for the upcoming election.

Best,
Lauren Gaudio
White Plains resident

--

"I wish I could show you when you are lonely or in darkness, the astonishing light of your own being."

-- Hafiz

[REDACTED]

From: Allegra Dengler [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 8:00 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Allegra Dengler
Subject: 2020 primary a repeat of problems in the 2016 primary
Attachments: logo-small2.png; ATT00001.htm; CVI Report for BOL 4.24.2017.docx; ATT00002.htm

Dear Legislators

Attached is a report we filed with the Westchester Board of Legislators four years ago. At that time, Westchester did not investigate problems with the 2016 primary since NY AG Schneiderman stepped in to investigate Westchester and NYC. The AG eventually issued a report that resulted in the firing of 2 lower level BOE staffers in NYC. But there was no attention in the report addressing Westchester's problems.

The problems at SUNY Purchase led supporters of a losing candidate to question the election results. The 2016 problems at the SUNY Purchase pollsite were felt by the Sanders campaign to be a deliberate attempt to suppress the vote at a location known to be a strong Sanders electorate. It appeared to them to be a corrupt effort by the County BOE to prevent a strong Sanders vote so as to not embarrass Clinton in her own home county. Of the students who succeeded in voting at that location, 272 voted for Sanders and 4 for Clinton.

Reggie Lafayette was on the ballot as a delegate for Clinton, while administering the election and counting his own votes. This year he was on the ballot to be a Biden delegate. Shades of Brian Kemp!

This November, all voters and candidates must have full confidence that the vote count reflects the will of the voters, and that no voters are denied the right to vote by lines, confusion, intimidation, post office problems, inadequately trained or hostile pollworkers, machine breakdown, corrupted pollbooks or misinformation.

Thanks for all you are doing in this difficult time.

Allegra Dengler
WWW.CITIZENSVOTINGNY.ORG

From: Allegra Dengler [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 1:33 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Allegra Dengler; County Executive (WEB)
Subject: Voting problems at the June 23 primary
Attachments: PastedGraphic-1.tiff

Dear Legislators-

Thank you for your investigation of the recent primary and the serious effort you are making to restore a functioning democracy to Westchester.

The most alarming aspect of the Commissioners conduct has been their insistence that their infrastructure and voting machines are impervious to cyberattack. This cavalier attitude towards cybersecurity is disturbing. There are many vulnerabilities in Westchester. The voter database and electronic pollbooks are known to be vulnerable to hacking from enemies foreign and domestic. The commissioners insistence on buying and using the infamous Dominion ICE machines threatens the integrity of the vote count, as it can mark on and invalidate votes without the voter's knowledge.

Were the procedures recommended by the NYS Board of Elections to ensure secure operation of the Dominion ICE followed everywhere it was used?

Mail in ballots are very vulnerable to fraud and loss, especially so when implemented in a rushed manner. Every effort must be made to ensure that we have an election we can believe in this November. That requires transparency and responsiveness that the current BOE commissioners seem unwilling or unable to provide. If the BOE won't do it, you as the Board of Legislators can provide some transparency through a voter assistance website that would provide correct information and ballot tracking for voters, including updates on the length of lines.

Would it be possible for you to utilize a county cybersecurity expert to oversee the BOE security? "It's time America's leaders got serious about voting security."

NEW YORK TIMES VIDEO: I Hacked an Election. So Can the Russians. By MATTEEN MOKALLA, TAIGE JENSEN and J. ALEX HALDERMAN | Apr. 5, 2018

"It's time America's leaders got serious about voting security." <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000005790489/i-hacked-an-election-so-can-the-russians.html>

My personal experience:

I voted absentee. I applied online and got the ballot on time. I encountered the following problems:

1. Confusing language on the ballot envelope that asked for a witness signature
2. Confusing website, in particular polling location. This is a screen shot from June 11, two days before early voting started It showed my regular poll site, which was not used for early voting.



3. I mailed in my ballot from out of town and have no confidence that it arrived and was counted.

Thanks for the seriousness with which you are putting into addressing the transparency and security flaws revealed in the disastrous primary. November promises to be much more contentious. Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized the presidential election as rigged and refused to commit to conceding if he loses the race. Congressional races are also at risk. Westchester must be prepared.

Allegra Dengler

Tarrytown, NY 10591

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:28 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting at the New Rochelle Library!

I decided to go out to vote (as opposed to mail-in) after staying at home for many months. I wanted to experience voting as I always have - live! I was prepared to take the risk.

Waiting on a very short and well marked line going into the lobby of the library was fine. Being let into the room where I would sign-in and mark and cast my ballot was also, fine. But as issues arose at the check-in desk and more time was required for me to wait, I noticed that the person at the desk was allowing more people in...and more people. The number of people being let in to this relatively small room was not coordinated with the number of people leaving!

I looked around and there were people almost shoulder to shoulder at the kiosks filling in their ballots. Pens were being passed from one person to another without wiping them down. Yes, everyone was wearing a mask and the staff were pleasant and helpful, but the entire voting process just didn't feel safe.

I can't imagine myself voting under these conditions in November. Please advise.

With care,
Deborah Disbrow

From: Deborah Porder [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 8:14 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: NY Democratic Lawyers Council Incident Reports for June 23 Primary
Attachments: V Cronin Absentee.jpeg

Dear Legislators:

I worked on the NYDLC Voter Protection Hotline during early voting and on primary day. The Executive Director of NYDLC has permitted me to share the incident reports we received. Please be sure to look at the attached photo of the absentee ballot of Virginia Cronin that she did not receive until July 8. The postmark indicates that the BOE mailed it to her on July 7.

Unique ID	Documenter	Class of Issue	Subtype of Issue	Time stamp	Scale of those affected	Source of Report	County	Precinct	Pollsite
69660	Liza Abraham	Polling Location	Long Lines	2020-06-24 00:34:41 EDT	polling-place	poll_observer	Westchester		VAN CORTLANDTVILLE ELEM SCHOOL
69659	Alexandra Lowe	Voting Equipment and Machines	Not enough voting machines	2020-06-23 23:10:47 EDT	polling-place	hotline	Westchester		NEW ROCHELLE HS
69651	Deborah Porder	Polling Location	Long Lines	2020-06-23 21:10:59 EDT	multiple-voters	hotline	Westchester		MAMARONECK TOWN CENTER <u>DOV</u>

69648	Linda Wintner	Polling Location	Long Lines	2020-06-23 20:06:59 EDT	polling-place	hotline	Westchester	MAMARONECK TOWN CENTER
69521	Myra Saul	Vote by Mail	Voter unable to return ballot	2020-06-23 15:04:55 EDT	one-voter	hotline	Westchester	
69509	Alexandra Lowe	Other	Other	2020-06-23 14:57:38 EDT		hotline	Westchester	

69423	Deborah Porder	Voting Equipment and Machines	Other	2020-06-23 12:10:18 EDT	polling-place	hotline	Westchester Rye-10	RYE MIDDLE SCHOOL	<u>o</u>
68866	Deborah Porder	Vote by Mail	How to vote by mail	2020-06-19 13:51:36 EDT	multiple-voters	hotline	Westchester		
68467	Jarret Berg	Election Day Ballots	Error on Paper Ballots	2020-06-14 12:36:48 EDT	polling-place	hotline	Westchester		
68442	Liza Abraham	Vote by Mail	Voter unable to return ballot	2020-06-09 03:25:42 EDT	one-voter	poll_observer	Westchester		<u>ma</u>

68287	Jordan Barth	Voter Registration	Eligibility	2020-06-11 15:56:03 EDT	one-voter	hotline	Westchester		
Sonita Bennitt	Deborah Porder	Polling Location	Long line	July 6, 2020 7:34 PM EDT	multiple voters	e-mail	Westchester	Mamaroneck Town Hall	
Virginia Cronin	Alexandra Lowe	Vote By Mail	Voter Unable To Return Ballot	July 11, 2020 9:24 AM EDT	one voter	e-mail	Westchester		

Deborah Porder

Ford, David

From: Jackie Alleva [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 11:07 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23 Primary Election

Dear Election Information Task Force,

I am a resident of Mamaroneck, NY, and voted in the June 23 Primary Election. I waited almost 4 hours on line. I got to the ONE election site for my town at 7:30 pm and did not leave until almost 11:30 pm. There was one voting location as opposed to the usual 10-12 locations. I understand these measures were taken in response to Covid-19, but having one location was insufficient and irresponsible. If the point is to socially distance and minimize large gatherings, it would have been wiser to open more voting locations. Although voters on the long line were mindful of spacing and wearing masks, given the duration that we were standing on line our exposure to other people/potential Covid was increased.

In addition to the wait time, I was really disappointed by my voting experience. The man who was helping move along the line outside was great, however the people inside who checked my ID and gave me my ballot, were rude and did not provide any explanation on filling out the ballot and told me to fill it out anywhere, directing me to sit at the end of the table by the entrance without any privacy barriers. I was sitting right at the entrance as other voters were walking in and felt extremely uncomfortable and rushed - after waiting 4 hours. The election day in Mamaroneck was poorly executed and quite frankly left a bad taste in my mouth. Local news was there covering the long lines and wait times and interviewing residents who all expressed disappointment.

If the Primary Day voting experience is any indication of what the November Presidential election day will be like, I am very concerned. Please consider my testimony when planning the November election day.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate the open invitation for feedback.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Alleva
Resident of Mamaroneck, NY

Ford, David

From: Martine Cadet [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 7:57 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Feedback fro Public Voting Hearing

Hello,

I participated in early voting in Mt. Vernon, NY.

- 1st issue was the address on the voting card was incorrect. Instead of stating early voting would take place at Mt. Vernon City Hall and providing the correct address, it provided an address in Mount Kisco which made no sense. I ignored that and headed to the polls the last Sunday which they were open as I didn't want to be caught in a crowd on election day.
- 2nd issue was poor communication and wait time for a small number of people waiting to vote. It was a particularly hot day and when I arrived there were ~3 people inside, socially distanced and 1 person ahead of me outside. After about 15 minutes and seeing a few people exit the building the line still didn't move and more folks gathered outside. There was 1 person manning the desk who never bothered to provide any updates to those of us dying in the heat and once inside it was clear there was no communication between them and the folks upstairs where voting was taking place. All in all I stood outside for close to 40 minutes before finally being let inside.

Once we got past the 1st security point it was much, much easier. There were only 3 people in line upstairs and I got in and out in about 10 minutes.

Recommendations

- Ensure voting address and times are accurate prior to sending out mailings
- Walkie talkie between check points so folks in the voting area can communicate to those at the security line to help move people forward as folks may exit from many different exit points and security has no line of sight
- Man security checkpoint with more than 1 person so someone can communicate and monitor those on line to ensure social distancing and mask wearing is enforced, while having the security desk secured

Thanks so much.

Sincerely,

Martine Cadet
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Marc Schindelheim [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 3:50 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: July 23rd Primary Election

Dear Task Force members,

I am sorry I could not make last week's task force meeting. However, I do have the following comment:

I was shocked to see how many people were on line on June 23rd to vote at the Board of Elections office on Quarropas Street in White Plains.

It was so easy to submit an absentee ballot, or vote early on one of the numerous early voting days.

I assume so many people were on line because there was not enough publicity for the alternative means of voting rather than having to stand on line for hours at one of the few polling places open.

My recommendation is that there must be more advertising, especially in lower income neighborhoods and in large apartment buildings to inform the public of the alternative options than to wait for the actual election day. You need to get the word out if there is not to be a repeat on Election Day in November.

Thank you for listening.

Best,

Marc Schindelheim

Ford, David

From: Jenny Geer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:40 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Testimony re June 23 Primary Election

To the Board of Legislators,

I'm Jenny Geer and I live in the Town of Mamaroneck. I am very concerned about the way the primary election was managed and the implications for November.

As a leader of Larchmont/Mamaroneck Indivisible, I invested a lot of time trying to communicate with our members about how to vote during the pandemic. There was helpful information from many sources — I received countless e-mails from different elected officials and from the League of Women Voters, among others.

Virtually none of this information came directly from our Board of Elections! In fact, the little communication I received from the BOE included a card that **inaccurately** stated that my early voting site was Mamaroneck Town Center, when as I understand the law, **it should have listed all of the early voting sites in Westchester**. The BOE website was extremely unhelpful and difficult to navigate. Every time I checked the website to see if it had been updated I found nothing new and gave up.

For myself, I did request absentee ballots from the BOE and they arrived promptly. But **there was no explanation** for why the Presidential ballot arrived on its own, still with the April 28 date (after the fact) or that there would be a second ballot coming. I received one ballot with no postage paid, another ballot with postage paid, and no indication of whether they could be combined into one envelope. I fielded questions from many other people who were also confused.

Worried that my absentee ballot might not be counted (I'd heard that the BOE was going to be deluged with absentee ballots), **I decided to vote early**. I was happy to see there was no line — the process went fairly smoothly and the site seemed well run. However, because I had been sent absentee ballots, the poll worker said she **needed to call the BOE to let them know so I could vote in person** — I subsequently learned that this should NOT have been necessary, that I should have been allowed to vote without any question after my identity and eligibility had been established. The BOE didn't answer the phone the first few times, so it took several minutes. I can only imagine what a delay this must have caused on Election Day.

Indeed, **the voters who chose to vote on Election Day were not so fortunate** — my group votes at Mamaroneck Town Center (the **ONLY** polling site in the Town), where the wait was up to four hours and the poll closed at 1 am. I personally know several people who gave up and didn't vote. We all thought this could happen in Georgia and Wisconsin, but not here. Even if it wasn't intentional, it sure feels like **voter suppression** — the fact that people didn't vote as a result cannot be tolerated.

The voters who chose to be safe and vote absentee now have no way of knowing if their votes counted. No bar code to track their ballot, no way to know if the post office even delivered them, or whether they had the required postmark. Even now — three weeks after the fact — we the voters have no updates on how long it's going to take to count the tens of thousands of ballots that were received.

In closing, I have a few questions for you in advance of your meeting with the BOE Commissioners on 7/29;

— Why don't we know anything about this process? The BOE seems to operate with no transparency and the voters can't follow along — before, during, or after the election.

— Why was there no investment in *proactive* communications and education by the BOE so that more people would understand the voting process during this pandemic?

— Why did the BOE not encourage people to vote early, which would have eased pressure on them on Election Day, given the consolidation of polling sites?

— Who is responsible for the decision to disseminate **inaccurate** information about the early voting sites?

— Why doesn't the BOE post updates on its website with current information about the vote counting process?

I appreciate the efforts that the BOL is taking to investigate this election, given that the BOE seems to be accountable to no one. I would also like to express my support for the comments of Susan Lerner of Common Cause, Jarret Berg of EarlyVoteNY and Andy Buder of NYDLC at today's BOL meeting. I hope you will follow their recommendations and where you don't have the legal authority, you will do your best to put public pressure on the BOE, and also advocate for state legislation to be passed that would be in effect for the November election.

Respectfully,

Jenny Geer

[REDACTED]

Larchmont, NY 10538

[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Deborah Porder [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 12:49 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Watch these videos to see what happened during the primary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b62w0yqx7A#action=share>

<https://twitter.com/IndvsbleScarsdl/status/1275573263385722881>

*Deborah Porder
Scarsdale, NY 10583*

Ford, David

From: Jarret Berg [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 10:59 AM
To: Jarret Berg
Subject: VoteEarlyNY Submission to Westchester BOL
Attachments: VoteEarlyNY 7-13-2020 Submission to Westchester BOL.pdf

Dear Committee Members and Westchester Legislators, County Executive Latimer and Deputy County Executive Jenkins,

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and efforts to improve election administration in Westchester for all eligible voters ahead of Fall 2020 and for the opportunity to weigh in on this important work.

Attached please find VoteEarlyNY's submission, which touches primarily on:

- A) the requirements of New York's Early Voting law;
- B) several adjustments Westchester can make right now to ensure voter access and improve the voting experience in Fall 2020 across all three voting options;
- C) The potential of e-poll books to improve administration, transparency, and oversight;
- D) Lack of oversight by the State Board.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you'd like to discuss any of these matters further.

Regards,

Jarret Berg, Esq.
Co-Founder

VoteEarlyNY
Early Voting Is Your Right. Use It!

[REDACTED] | @VoteEarlyNY | <http://www.voteearlyny.org>

New Yorkers can confirm voter registration [here](#).

Ford, David

From: David Griff [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 8:47 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: printed ballots

good morning. when we arrived in Mount Kisco to vote, one of the two printers failed. it appeared that somebody was on hand to assist with the printer and tried to fix it. it did not appear that there were any protocols about what to do with the rest of the room. fortunately, there were only five people and 4 of us knew each other. if the room had been crowded, it could have been a problem.

if the "printing ballots" method or other technology is to be used, please consider:

- having at least one back-up printer available for every 2 or 3 printers being used. ideally, all computers and printers would be networked
- having an IT person on site and at a remote location "help desk" who can be contracted for troubleshooting
- protocols for disruption. when the printer failed, half the BOE persons in the room became involved, but it was clear that most of them had no idea about how to fix the problem. when a voting station fails (for whatever reason), protocols should exist so that somebody in charge in the room takes control of the situation. this includes ensuring that the person(s) most able to address the issue are engaged; others are given direction of what to do/where to go; a plan exists for controlling the voters in the room; and allocating votes to other voting stations (i.e., moving people from Line A to Line B, C and D)

thanks for your work to keep our democracy running.
best regards.

david m. griff

Ford, David

From: Beth Kava [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 7:31 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Ferris Avenue , White Plains Polling Place

The Ferris Avenue polling location in White Plains has the following limitations:

1. The area for voting is inadequate, forcing voters to forego privacy and certainly to be unable to socially distance. It is crowded with paraphernalia . People who have moved from homes in the south end to places like Westage Towers and who vote there are shocked at the difference in voting conditions between those two communities.
2. It is inaccessible to people with disabilities or with young children or the elderly. A steep set of stairs or a steep ramp define the main access points. If one drives, there are usually only one or two parking spots, if any, as the rest of the spots are taken by DPW or fire department vehicles and make maneuvering treacherous. While there is a sign that says handicap parking it is virtually invisible and in a dangerous spot. My requests to have DPW vehicles park on the street on Election day or to allow street parking on Ferris Avenue in front of the building have not happened.
3. New voters to the site can find it impossible to find the entranceway.
4. The path from the parking area or the steps to the entranceway is treacherous and virtually impossible to navigate with a walker or wheelchair. THE SITE DOES NOT MEET ADA REQUIREMENTS.

There are several election districts which use this site which include Westage Towers, Hillside Terrace and the Ferris Avenue community. One of those districts has the lowest voting rate in White Plains. The accessibility and conditions of the site do not support voter enfranchisement and the failure of the BOE to improve conditions for us is perplexing.

I have written to the BOE several times over the past years about this issue. Harley Lewis, who recently passed away, wrote also, to the Board Of Elections, the Journal News and the League of Women Voters about this. Neither of us ever got a response. I even tried to make an appointment to speak with the BOE officials and never even had the courtesy of a reply.

I know something can be done about this site.

Beth Kava
[REDACTED]
White Plains, New York 10601
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Dorothy ClarkeClarke [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 2:58 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23 Primary at 20 Cedar Place school.

To whom it may concern:

Voting at the Cesar Chavez school at 20 Cedar Place was completely unsatisfactory.

—Only two computers to print out ballots. Were these the same machines used for early voting at the Riverfront library? Only two machines was unacceptable for so many voting districts voting in person. There were long lines down the sidewalk. People had to wait 3 to 4 hours to vote.

—Social distancing was impossible in the lobby where voting took place. By the lobby was the large unused gymnasium that could have accommodated more machines with good social distancing.

—It is a long walk for the elderly.

—At the Cedar Place entrance was a sign saying use the entrance on South Broadway, which meant walking an additional distance all the way around Highland Avenue and up South Broadway. If you went in the Cedar Place entrance the elevator was locked and no one knew who had the key. Most of the time there was no attendant. This was difficult for handicapped people. Otherwise one had to walk down at least three flights of stairs to get to the polling place, impossible for the handicapped—and then walk out the South Broadway entrance and join the end of the line. After voting the elevator there was locked as well, so one had to walk UP the stairs to exit at Cedar Place.

—Surely if Cedar Place has to be used again the gymnasium could be used. Surely the voting machines could be brought from the normal voting places and set up in separate areas of the gym with signs indicating where one should vote.

—In addition, it is now July 12 and the results of counting absentee ballots have not been posted. This is an unacceptable delay.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Clarke
Democratic County Committee member, Yonkers Ward 4, District 18

Ford, David

From: queenie palladino [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 2:10 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: KEEPING IN PERSON VOTING

We believe that the only time mail-in ballots should be used is when voters are out of their voting area or are physically disabled as certified by a doctor and cannot submit their votes in person on election day.

[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Maria Rose [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 5:34 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Absentee ballots
Attachments: IMG_2204.jpg; ATT00001.txt; IMG_2200.jpg; ATT00002.txt

These "applications " were found tossed in the woods on Manning Ave. Found on two separate days. Look at the addresses on both. Hopefully these were tossed because they were not used but something like this should not be left out in the open. The delay in counting the ballots Received doesn't help either. I hope the registered active voter files have been updated for November 2020.



DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
200 BRIMLEY STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Absentee Ballot Application Enclosed
Solicitud para la papeleta de voto ausente adjunta

MASSACHUSETTS
611030500

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

200 BRIMLEY STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01103

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

200 BRIMLEY STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01103

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

200 BRIMLEY STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01103



BOARD OF ELECTIONS
30 BROADWAY, 7 FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-1829

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Absentee Ballot Application Enclosed

Solicitud para la papeleta de voto ausente adjunta



303228702

MAILED 10/11/98 JAL/TCH 5-DIGIT 10026

1-10-1998 11:18 AM

Postage: 0.00

New York, NY 10026-1937



Ford, David

From: Ruth Cowan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 10:36 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Board of Elections

The Board of Elections completed failed to do its job properly with regard to the primary election:

1. Its website was completely confusing; it was exceedingly difficult even to find its address on the website, let alone figure out how to get an application for an absentee ballot.
2. I had no confirmation that my application was received.
3. I received a ballot for the CANCELLED Presidential Primary on April 28th, TWICE, once on May 10th and then again on May 25th, which was infuriating, confusing AND a complete waste of money. Nothing was said, either time, about when a ballot for the local races might appear--if ever.
4. By early June I had lost hope of the ballot ever arriving and had resigned myself to having to vote in person, which was exceptionally risky for me, as I am 79 and have asthma
5. When the REAL ballot finally appeared, its instructions were badly worded. No explanation was offered for why there was a place for a witness to sign.

This whole fiasco was an act of voter suppression. It doesn't matter to me whether it was deliberate suppression or just incompetence, the end result was the same.

YOU HAVE GOT TO APOLOGIZE TO THE CITIZENS OF THIS COUNTY AND MAKE A TRANSPARENT EFFORT TO INSURE THAT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS DOES ITS JOB CORRECTLY THIS FALL.

Ruth Cowan, Irvington NY

Ford, David

From: Susan Greenberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 11:07 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting

To the Board if Legislators:

Common sense dictates that the option of voting by mail and early voting are not just appropriate but an absolute necessity for the upcoming November elections. I would consider anything less to be detrimental to our health and well-being and would result in low voter turn-out thus creating an atmosphere of voter suppression.

Regards

Susan Greenberg
[REDACTED]

New Rochelle, NY

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Maynard Makman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 10:35 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting absentee:

We did not have difficulty receiving our absentee ballots BECAUSE WE REQUESTED THEM before the automatic mailing of them to everyone. Thus we could vote early . We recommend that voters request absentee ballots well before election dates so that there is no delay. Marianne and Maynard Makman, New rochelle

Ford, David

From: Bordwin, Gabrielle
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Vanderberg, Sunday
Subject: FW: Voting issue Friday, June 19

Forwarding Jodie Reaver's statement (below) at Legislator Shimsky's request, re. Election Information Gathering Task Force.

Gaby Bordwin
Legislative Aide to MaryJane Shimsky,
Westchester County Legislator - 12th District
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601
Tel: 914-995-2095 | Email: gsbb@westchestergov.com

Follow the "BOL" on our [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



From: Jodie Reaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2020 11:54 AM
To: Shimsky, MaryJane <mjs2@westchestergov.com>
Cc: Bordwin, Gabrielle <gsbb@westchestergov.com>
Subject: Voting issue Friday, June 19

Good afternoon MaryJane and Gaby,

Yesterday, around 2 PM, I went to vote in Dobbs Ferry and my experience left me with grave concerns. A few weeks ago I cast my absentee ballots. Today, I went in to Dobbs Ferry to invalidate those ballots and recast my vote. Honestly, I did this to test the system.

The two poll workers were unaware this was an option. They were polite, kind and said they needed to check with supervisor. They checked with their supervisor who told me that I could not vote as my ballot had already been cast. At this point I told him he was wrong and our discussion became contentious.

I told him I know my rights and I can recast my ballot, that the other will be withdrawn. He again told me I was wrong and that it didn't make sense that I could cast my ballot twice. I explained that they needed to call BOE and that I wasn't leaving until he called.

He called the BOE and they confirmed I was correct. He then turned to me and said I was correct and instructed the poll workers as to how to move forward. He was clearly angry. I then asked if he would be providing education for the poll workers or at least make sure they all knew this was a valid option. In addition, I asked if

he would send a note to the BOE to make sure they tell all supervisors so that there is no further confusion. I suggested that a simple fix could be to write down rules and type them out for poll workers - he was not impressed.

This man then told me to write to my county legislator to ask for more funding for the BOE for personnel costs. I chuckled and told him I'd gladly write to MaryJane Shimsky, my county legislator, and share his concerns about funding and my concerns about BOE employees not knowing the rules. In addition, I made it clear to him that I would share his desire for increased funding with my stipulation that any increase goes to taking the personnel from a party patronage position to a professional position. I made it clear I wasn't insinuating he was not professional.

He then told me only the State controls how the BOE is operated and that nothing can be done about how it is run locally, I needed to take up my concerns with the State. I told him he was wrong and that the County controls the implementation of the BOE. He then corrected his statement and said the State does something and the county does control implementation. I then thanked him for repeating what I said.

At this point the poll workers chuckled and winked at me (both women mind you) and he stormed out of the room.

I did get my ballots and recast my vote but it was not pretty. The poll workers were kind and gracious and actually thanked me for standing my ground and helping them understand the rules.

My concerns are:

1. Poll workers don't know the rules.
2. BOE employees don't know the rules.
3. Staff are asking voters to ask for more money for personnel but are hostile, rude, angry and defensive.
4. If I didn't know my rights and if I didn't demand he call the BOE (or I would have) I would not have been able to vote.

What can be done to overhaul how our local BOE is operated? To me, it seems voting is becoming more intricate and complex. We need to make sure that it is operated by professional staff. What is the best way to make this happen and what can I do as a person to make this happen? I can see what the League will do, but if they won't move on this what can I do?

Thanks,
Jodie

Jodie Reaver

Ford, David

From: Bordwin, Gabrielle
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:44 PM
To: Vanderberg, Sunday
Subject: FW: Polling Place Card Errors

Forwarding Char Wiegel's statement (below) at Legislator Shimsky's request, re. Election Information Gathering Task Force.

Gaby Bordwin

Legislative Aide to MaryJane Shimsky,
Westchester County Legislator - 12th District
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601
Tel: 914-995-2095 | Email: gsbb@westchestergov.com

Follow the "BOL" on our [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



From: Char Weigel [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 2:25 PM
To: Bordwin, Gabrielle <gsbb@westchestergov.com>
Subject: Polling Place Card Errors

Hi Gaby,

Thanks for the time this afternoon.

I wanted to follow up after Legislator Shimsky's helpful information in our LWVR Annual Meeting on Saturday.

As we discussed, my husband and I had received our Voter Polling Place Information cards last week. Today I received two new cards for our address with other people's names on them. We live in new construction so this was not an old address for anyone. I've attached photos of the correct cards (Charlene and Charles Weigel) and the two cards we just received with the wrong names.

I called the BOE and a very helpful person told me that there had been a massive clerical error. When the cards were printed, apparently the address did not advance as new names were added. I don't know if the people whose cards we received in error will get a second set of cards at the correct address or not receive the info on their polling place.

I also told the person at BOE that I had not yet received my absentee ballot. Obviously if this duplication happened with the absentee ballots themselves, it would be a greater problem. She advised me that if I do not receive the ballot by tomorrow, to do early voting rather than chance it. If my ballot came after tomorrow, she said to just rip it up.

I have a call into Kathy Meany, the new LWVW president, to let her know about this conversation. Perhaps the League can be helpful informing people about the clerical error and the advice about not sending in an absentee ballot if not received by tomorrow. My conversation with the BOE was as a citizen, not a League representative, so Kathy would need to call in her official capacity if she feels the League should get involved.

I felt very sorry for the person I spoke with at the BOE. She said they had received "thousands" of calls on this issue and people were screaming at her about this being voter fraud. It's not confidence-building, but it is not voter fraud. She does have a hard job taking these calls right now.

As I mentioned, I reached out to Teresa Toscano at Legislator Williams' office (my district) as well to share this information.

Take care and thank you for all you do!

Char

Ford, David

From: Bordwin, Gabrielle
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:43 PM
To: Vanderberg, Sunday
Subject: FW: [ML] Newsletter: Voter Suppression is REAL in this race

Forwarding Allison Fine's statement (below) at Legislator Shimsky's request, re. Election Information Gathering Task Force.

Gaby Bordwin
Legislative Aide to MaryJane Shimsky,
Westchester County Legislator - 12th District Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601
Tel: 914-995-2095 | Email: gsbb@westchestergov.com

Follow the "BOL" on our Website | Facebook | Twitter

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

From: Allison Fine [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 5:11 PM
To: Barr, Nancy <neb7@westchestergov.com>
Subject: [ML] Newsletter: Voter Suppression is REAL in this race

This week the Board of Elections sent tens of thousands of voters the wrong early polling place information. That is on top of problems getting absentee ballots out and information yet to be sent on where to vote on Election Day – in ten days.

Voter suppression doesn't have to be intentional to be effective.

Here is a letter I sent today to the Board of Elections calling for them to resign immediately:

<https://allisonfine2020.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5e6eb8776070077266f155b5a&id=a393217797&e=046eb9bf92>

This election will be decided by hundreds, not thousands, of votes. I can win this election if OUR supporters vote.

This was never going to be an easy race to win, but it is winnable. But, I need your help.

DONATE. You know, I made a decision to pivot from a traditional campaign to a digital and "social" one in early March. And that included spending less time fundraising and more providing resources and focusing on building a social network to make sure friends are telling friends about the campaign.

You have already been so generous, but I really need your help right now to get through the noise. We need to make sure people know where and how to vote and we want to get this wonderful ad up online for everyone to see:

<https://allisonfine2020.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5e6eb8776070077266f155b5a&id=5da8c44955&e=046eb9bf92>

Please donate here if you can:

<https://allisonfine2020.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5e6eb8776070077266f155b5a&id=090258f733&e=046eb9bf92>

TEN DAYS OF ACTION. Starting today, Saturday, we begin our week of action.

The easiest, and most effective, way to help is to text 3-5 friends to encourage them to vote for me. If all of our supporters reach out to just a few friends in the district, we will reach thousands of friends in an instant. This is so much more powerful than getting messages from a stranger.

TEXT AND PHONE BANKING. We need lots of people on the horn getting the word out!

Schedule for phone banking:

Sunday 6/14 - 5-8 PM
Monday 6/15 - 5-8 PM
Tuesday 6/16 - 5-8 PM
Wednesday 6/17 - 5-8 PM
Thursday 6/18 - 5-8 PM
Friday 6/19 - 5-8 PM
Saturday 6/20 - 5-8 PM
Sunday 6/21 - 5-8 PM
Monday 6/22 - 5-8 PM
Tuesday 6/23 - Noon-5 PM

Please sign up to help here:

<https://allisonfine2020.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5e6eb8776070077266f155b5a&id=a2a3edcff2&e=046eb9bf92>

If you can't make any of these scheduled phone banks, email joseph@allisonfine2020.com to make calls at a time of your own choosing.

We need people on the phones every day throughout this week!

And last but not least, we have a few lawn signs left: give us your address if you want us to place one on your lawn (contactless drop-off!):

forms.gle/qgNvyg7pYWdxJh8H9

Thank you SO much for your enthusiasm and support. This certainly has been one crazy election season and I couldn't have gotten to this point without you. Now let's bring it home to victory!

=====

Unsubscribe neb7@westchestergov.com from this list:

<https://allisonfine2020.us5.list-manage.com/unsubscribe?u=5e6eb8776070077266f155b5a&id=18f5c164e5&e=046eb9bf92&c=93a3a0683e>

Ford, David

From: Bordwin, Gabrielle
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:42 PM
To: Vanderberg, Sunday
Subject: FW: You both asked for detail....(Kristen's voting problems)

Forwarding Kristen Browde's statement (below) at Legislator Shimsky's request, re. Election Information Gathering Task Force.

Gaby Bordwin

Legislative Aide to MaryJane Shimsky,
Westchester County Legislator - 12th District
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601
Tel: 914-995-2095 | Email: gsbb@westchestergov.com

Follow the "BOL" on our [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



From: Kristen Browde [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 7:40 PM
To: Damon R. Maher; david.buchwald@gmail.com
Subject: You both asked for detail....

I was at the early voting location hidden deep in a park in Mt. Kisco, far from anywhere accessible to anyone who might need public transportation to get to the polls.

At approximately 12:45 PM today I went in to vote, and my name came up on the Ipad. They printed a ballot and handed it to me.

I walked to the booth to fill it out and I noticed that it was presidential/delegates only, no CD 17, no DA, no Assembly District 93. I went back and asked where the rest of the races were and was told I didn't have a local primary in my district.

I informed the poll worker that I was reasonably certain that he was wrong, considering that I was running in the primary, forgetting, for the moment, that there was a countywide race for DA.

He send me to a second poll worker who offered the same reason, that I didn't have any local primary races. I repeated that I was running in the primary, and he sent me to the woman in charge of the location.

Two other voters were there in front of me (both of whom were trying to vote for me) talking to her – they had the same problem. No second page.

She called White Plains and afterward one was given an affidavit ballot, the other, I believe, got a printed ballot.

I told her my story, she called White Plains again, and after some delay I was given a second page – but not explanation of the problem. Another poll worker said someone previous had the same problem.

I then cast both ballots...

Kristen

--

Kristen Browde

Candidate for New York State Assembly - District 93

www.KristenForNY93.com

914-266-9222 office



Ford, David

From: Polly Schneck [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Covill, Kitley; BOL Public Comments
Subject: Re: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

Dear Ms. Covill -- Thank you for all of your excellent communication as a District Legislator. I truly enjoy your well-crafted, informative, and easy-to-read emails.

Last night, I joined the public input session for the Election Information Gathering Task Force. I had not registered to make a comment, but I should have.

Three points:

- 1) I was struck by the number and variety of logistical problems, errors, and (I believe inadvertently) illegal actions taken by the BoE in NY that were encountered by voters. Some of the comments in the mtg last night were certainly eye-opening for me and served to underscore how labyrinthian election laws and procedures are in every locale. I'd love to do what I can to improve the voting process in NY -- even if it's just simplifying the execution of the election laws (some of which the BoE seems not even to be aware of).
- 2) I was among those who encountered snafus related to the June 23 elections -- including receiving my requested mail-in ballot on the day that it was due (my husband never received his) and receiving a postcard from the BoE that listing an erroneous location for early voting (the postcard listed an address in Valhalla instead of in Mt. Kisco). At a time when it is essential that everyone who wants to vote is able to so, we should ensure that the process of voting is as easy and painless as possible. What are the necessary changes that we must make to the election systems to allow for easy voting? Is it a financial problem (i.e., does the BoE need more money to be able to run a better process?)
- 3) I'm not sure whether the BoL and/ or the BoE are aware of an organization called Democracy Works ([Democracy Works](#))?



Democracy Works

Democracy Works is a team of software developers, public policy
works, and civic organizers building the tools n...

They are a nonpartisan nonprofit that provides tools for voters to make voting easier and
tools to support election officials, including one that ameliorates processing mail in ballots.
Perhaps they can be of assistance?

Thank you and take care,

Polly Schneck Goldman
[REDACTED]

On Thursday, July 2, 2020, 04:50:29 PM EDT, Kitley Covill wrote:



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

A new Election Information Gathering Task Force has been established by Board Chairman Ben Boykin. The Task Force will obtain public input about the June 23 Primary Election and about pro-active steps that can be taken for the November 3 General Election. It will provide a report to the Board of Legislators by August 7, 2020.

The Task Force will hold a public input session on Wednesday, July 8 at 7 p.m.

In order to ensure public health safety, **the session will be conducted remotely**, rather than in-person, per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1 as extended.

The public will have **multiple ways to participate**:

- **Online:** To register to speak via the Board's Webex online teleconferencing system, please click on the link: <https://westchestergov.webex.com/westchestergov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e544cf7dd60ae8922a64>. Speakers will be called in the order of registration.

Ford, David

From: Anu Sachdeva [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:53 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Fwd: Voting on 6/23

Hello

I went to the polling station late on Tuesday after a full day's work and dinner at around 8:30. I was on line for over four hours and finally voted at 12:50 AM.

I personally saw many people leave for different reasons, many had kids at home and childcare issues, people were thirsty and tired from standing and moving so slowly. Turns out standing is harder than walking and moving your body.

This is simply unacceptable in a first world country.

Thank you for your time

--

Anu Sachdeva
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Concerned Voters Of Westchester [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:43 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: coville@westchesterlegislators.com; Smith, Colin; Cunzio, Margaret; Gashi, Vedat; Boykin, Benjamin; neb7@westchesterlegislators.com; Parker, Catherine; Borgia, Catherine; Clements, Terry; Shimsky, MaryJane; Maher, Damon; Tubiolo, David; Walter, Ruth; Johnson, Christopher; Alvarado, Jose; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] County
Subject: Executive (WEB); Jenkins, Kenneth
Attachments: Comments to the Election Information Gathering Task Force
Remarks before BOL Special Committee—July 8.pdf

Dear Committee Members and Westchester Legislators, County Executive George Latimer and Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins,

Thank you members of the task force for giving me the opportunity to speak last night. As I mentioned at the hearing, I am submitting my full remarks electronically for your information in connection with your important work.

Please note that these comments are in two parts. The first part sets forth the problems evident during the June 2020 primary election and proposed solutions. The second part sets forth the election law violations and irregularities that marred the administration of the June 2020 primary election.

Very truly yours,

Myra Saul
Representative for the Concerned Voters of Westchester

Comments for the BOL Election Information Gathering Task Force—July 2020

My name is Myra Saul. I am a representative of Concerned Voters of Westchester, a new non-partisan coalition dedicated to the notion that elections should be accurate, fair, fully accessible, safe and secure.

This past primary election was a disaster—poorly planned and poorly executed. We cannot have a reoccurrence of this failure in November.

First, the election was conducted in violation of several of the state's election laws. Second, there were numerous irregularities as well. These violations and irregularities are contained in a separate document, which I have attached. The Board of Legislators (BOL) has the power to investigate and can ascertain whether the facts lead to the uncovering of additional election law violations that may have arisen from these irregularities. As you collate the first person accounts of those submitting testimony, please bear this in mind.

Items In Need of Immediate Remediation

Voters seemed to be the last concern of the Board of Elections (BOE or Board). In order to have confidence that the November election will run smoothly, the following items must be remedied immediately:

1. Communication—There simply was no good communication between the Board and the voters. The least the BOE can do is to adhere to communication rules set forth in the Election Law. Further, the BOE must deliver a clean, well organized, coherent web site that caters to the needs of voters, not the BOE. In addition, the BOE must do a better job of reaching voters where they are with social media, print and other avenues about critical election information, especially about early voting capabilities and changes in poll sites.

2. Early Voting—Early voting serves two purposes. The first is to permit voters to vote at their convenience, not simply one day. Early voting serves a second equally important function: it alleviates the pressure to have all electoral activity condensed into one solitary, high stakes day. If the BOE had been more pro-active in advertising early voting in a

timely way, then the crush of voting on election day could have been alleviated.

3. Voting Centers----The BOE must provide voting centers throughout the county during early voting; it doesn't have the option to "assign" voters to particular sites if it has the appropriate equipment, which the BOE has. BOE does not have discretion in this matter. Voting centers should not be a "heads I win, tails you lose" proposition as it is now whereby the BOE announces "assigned polling sites" and at the same time proclaims at some later point that any voter could have voted anywhere during early voting. This point dovetails with the merits of early voting. See item 2 above.

4. Polling Sites—Several of the polling sites were in places that were not optimal. The BOE should aggressively use its full power under the election law to obtain the best sites for voters, including places at which voters can safely social distance.

5. Training—It was clear that the BOE did not adequately train its poll inspectors, because they often did not do their job properly, even in the most elemental way. Poll workers should have known that the electorate had two ballots this election. Poll workers should have known how to supply emergency ballots when machinery broke down and how to keep the flow of voters moving. Poll workers should not have questioned voters about whether they had voted absentee or had asked for an absentee ballot. The BOE should have conducted poll inspector training remotely.

We also note that several poll workers expressed the desire to work on election day but were rebuffed by the BOE.

6. Security—The use of public wifi is unacceptable. The BOE should implement a plan to institute State Board of Elections (SBOE) security procedures and reassure voters that it is adhering to electronic poll book security procedures prior to the November election.

7. Lines— As we know, voters in Mamaroneck stood in line for hours; the site's last voter did not vote until 1am! Long lines aren't just an inconvenience; they disenfranchise voters who cannot wait. And it

didn't have to be that way. It is clear that there was no planning for an adequate distribution of polling sites, especially given the need to consolidate sites. (See discussion of voting irregularities.) Voters need a rational, thoughtful allocation of scarce resources.

8. Transparency and Accountability—Westchester voters need transparency and accountability from the BOE. The last time the BOE communicated in public to a governmental body was to various committees of the BOL on June 1, 2020, a little more than 3 weeks before the election and 12 days before the commencement of early voting. What was the subject of that discussion? The BOE claimed that it needed 400 (and later in the discussion only 189) new voting machines in order to conduct the June primary! This demand defies common sense. Taken at its word, the BOE was announcing its incompetence in advance. Or was it simply just toying with the people's elected representatives, the BOL?

In addition, the voting machines in question that were discussed then were the Dominion ImageCast Evolution machines (Dominion ICE). Voting advocates have asserted that the Dominion ICE machines have a serious security flaw. What a curious time to start a discussion about a controversial machine! We note that in Scarsdale and in other polling sites on election day voters did actually use the Dominion ICE machines. Were these recently purchased? Or were these from the BOE's current inventory? If recently purchased, where did the money come from, since the BOL did not agree to bond monies on June 1, 2020 to purchase additional Dominion ICE machines?

The BOE has indicated continually that it never has enough money to adequately do its job. Yet, in the 2020 budget, the BOE received a 25% increase. There is a constant cry of pleading poverty. Where did the money go? The BOE has received a series of state grants in the last few years to fund early voting initiatives. Where did that money go? When the focus of the election shifted to absentee ballots, what did the BOE do then? The BOL indicated in the 2020 budget that it intended to hire a chief technology officer. Was such a person ever hired? What are the credentials of this person? Does that person know anything about election law? Election security?

The BOE appears to report to no one. Even if the legal authority is not as robust as it should be, our elected officials—both the legislative and executive-- need to make sure that the BOE acts with transparency and accountability for the sake of the vibrancy and continuity of our democracy.

Addendum

1. Election Law Violations

Per Elections Law 8-600 (4)(e), the Board is to communicate to the electorate early polling sites 45 days prior to the primary. The Board failed to make that deadline. Notification of polling sites was made within days of early voting, if not after early voting commenced.

Per Elections Law 4-117, voters must be given at least 65 days', but no more than 70 days', notice of a change of election day polling sites. In addition, this change must be prominently communicated as a change. Many polling sites were changed on election day. The Board is permitted to communicate polling site changes on the same notice regarding early voting information, which it did. However, the postcard was not timely and did not prominently alert the voter that his/her site may have changed.

This lack of notice effectively disenfranchised at least 5 (and probably more) elderly voters who had not applied for an absentee ballot on the assumption that their traditional polling site in their apartment building would be available on primary day. When this change was made without adequate notice, they had to scramble to make alternative arrangements, which all could not secure on election day. (With respect to these 5 voters, we are referring to the last minute change from 289 Nepperhan in Yonkers to the Yonkers Middle School and from 405 Walnut in Yonkers to Saunders High School.)

Per Elections Law 8-600(5), the Board was tasked with creating a communications plan to inform eligible voters of early voting, early voting hours and early voting sites. That communication was inadequate---a postcard. In addition, many of the postcards had the wrong information. Additional cards were sent to correct those

postcards, but many of these cards also contained incorrect information and were received after the start of early voting.

Per Elections Law 8-600(3), all early voting sites must be "voting centers" if the county has the necessary equipment. Voting centers permit any voter in the county to vote at any early voting site; the BOE purchased the necessary equipment in the fall of 2019. On June 1, 2020, the Board commissioners, appearing before several committees of the BOL, announced that they had no intention of informing voters that the early voting sites would be voting centers. The BOE's postcards referred to "assigned" polling sites. The BOE's website was clear on this matter. In essence then, we had a situation where tax money was used to purchase equipment to permit voting centers and then was not used for the very purpose for which it was bought!

Some voters did cast their ballots at polling locations which were not "assigned". This policy of permitting a "voting center" was inconsistently applied depending on the knowledge and consent of the election inspector. A voter from Scarsdale was permitted to vote in Yonkers (after the poll inspector called the BOE to confirm the voter's rights), while voters from Mt. Kisco were turned away in Valhalla.

Per Elections Law 4-104, the Board shall designate appropriate places as polling sites. Under the law, public schools and certain other entities are required to make their spaces available as polling sites. In light of the requirement to socially distant during a pandemic, one or more places established by the BOE were unsuitable, such as the Dobbs Ferry early voting location. The New York Lawyers Democratic Council (NYDLC) also received a complaint that the Mamaroneck Town Center site did not offer adequate social distancing. The Board should have designated appropriate sites considering we are in a pandemic.

Per Elections Law 7-120, if there are machine breakdowns, emergency ballots shall be made available to voters. At at least one polling site on election day (Greenburgh), we have been informed that no emergency ballots were made available to election inspectors. When the printers on demand broke down, there were no other ballots made available to voters. It is unclear whether any voters left without voting. In such circumstances, election inspectors are to use sample ballots as

emergency ballots or are to create emergency ballots—one supposes by mutual agreement of a Republican and a Democrat poll inspector—presumably from affidavit ballots. The fact that election inspectors were not aware of these alternatives speaks of their poor training.

It is our understanding that printers on demand broke down in or did not work properly in several locations. For instance, the Greenburgh polling site was temporarily shut down because of printer issues and the Harrison early voting location printer on demand was printing ballots in Spanish for English speaking voters. At the Scarsdale Eastchester early voting location, the printers were also printing Spanish language ballots for English speaking voters. The NYDLC also received a complaint that printers were down at the Rye Middle School on primary day.

With respect to Greenburgh, polling sites should never shut down for any mechanical difficulties.

Per Election Law 8-104(5), voters who are on line at the time of the close of the polls may still vote. Because of logistical failures (see below regarding misallocation of resources), many voters were forced to stand in line (often in the heat) for hours at their appointed polling place. Long lines were evident at many polling sites. The last voter cast his/her ballot at 1am at Mamaroneck Town Center. Many Yonkers voters at the Nepperhan Community Center were still in line at 9:30pm. Many voters at Yonkers High School waited on line for hours to vote. NYDLC received complaints that the last voters at Van Cortlandtville Elementary School voted after midnight and that there was a two hour wait at New Rochelle High School. Videos of some of these locations were posted to social media.

Per Election Law 8-400 and Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, all voters were permitted to vote by absentee ballot on the basis of temporary illness. However, assuming that the application for such ballot was timely received by the BOE, many of these ballots were never received in time to vote, effectively disenfranchising voters who may have believed that they could not vote safely in person or did not know that they had the ability to vote in person after submitting an absentee application.

Per Election Law 8-312, once a voter verifies his/her registration, a ballot is to be delivered to the voter. In some instances, this plainly did not happen. Kristen Browde, a candidate for Assembly, was denied a ballot for congressional, state and county offices when she went to vote. The poll inspectors were not aware that there were two ballots—one presidential and one for other offices. While Ms. Browde was eventually given the correct ballots, several people voted prior to her at her location. It is unclear whether the BOE made any attempt to investigate who these voters were and made an attempt to permit them to vote for offices other than the presidential ballot. And, equally important, did the BOE investigate whether this was prevalent throughout the county? Again, this incident speaks of the poor training received by poll inspectors.

Voters who cast absentee ballots have a right to cast an in person vote. The rule is that the last vote 'counts'. Poll workers are not suppose to question voters who appear in person as to why they are voting in person if they had cast an absentee ballot. Yet, there were numerous instances of poll inspectors questioning voters who fit these circumstances. Many inspectors also called the BOE to check whether a voter was permitted to vote, which slowed lines. It is our understanding that State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins was questioned by the poll inspector on this very point. (See also experience of voter from Scarsdale in Yonkers with respect to voting centers.)

2. Irregularities

Misallocation of Resources

A key feature of primary day voting was long lines. Long lines are a serious problem, because voters may not be able to wait and are effectively disenfranchised. We have received a letter from a voter in Mamaroneck who left the polling site after waiting in line for two hours. She probably speaks for others as well.

We acknowledge that polling sites would be contracted during the pandemic. But misallocation of resources exacerbated the situation.

The following are the names of the localities in Westchester where there were polling sites, their approximate population and the number of polling locations per locality:

Bedford	Approx. 17,000	1
Cortlandt	Approx. 42,000	3
Eastchester	Approx. 33,000	2
Greenburgh	Approx. 91,000	5
Harrison	Approx. 28,000	2
Lewisboro	Approx. 13,000	1
Mamaroneck	Approx. 30,000	1
Mt. Kisco	Approx. 11,000	1
Mt. Pleasant	Approx. 45,000	3
Mt. Vernon	Approx. 68,000	11
New Castle	Approx. 18,000	2
New Rochelle	Approx. 79,000	4
North Castle	Approx. 12,000	2
North Salem	Approx. 5,000	1
Ossining	Approx. 38,000	2
Peekskill	Approx. 24,000	1
Pelham	Approx. 12,000	1
Pound Ridge	Approx. 5,000	1
Rye City	Approx. 16,000	2
Rye Town	Approx. 46,000	3
Scarsdale	Approx. 18,000	3
Somers	Approx. 22,000	1
White Plains	Approx. 58,000	3
Yonkers	Approx. 200,000	9
Yorktown	Approx. 36,000	3

It is clear that certain localities were shortchanged with respect to polling sites. On the other hand, certain localities had more polling sites relative to their populations than others.

Yonkers is the largest locality in Westchester and had 9 polling sites. Mt. Vernon, which has about one third of the population of Yonkers, had more polling locations than Yonkers. Greenburgh, the second largest locality, had 5 sites.

Scarsdale, with a population of about 18,000, had 3 polling sites. One was a dedicated site that encompassed about 70% of its EDs. Neighboring New Rochelle, with a population roughly about 4 times as large as Scarsdale, had only 4 sites, one of which was shared by some Scarsdale EDs.

Electronic Poll Books

In order to use electronic poll books at polling sites, the election inspectors must comply with the SBOE "NYS County Minimum Security Standards for Electronic Poll Book Systems (EPBS) Checklist". Number 8 of such checklist indicates that the "Network Used by EPBS is dedicated to this business function, and is appropriately segmented from all other traffic." In other words, the internet connection used to power the electronic poll books must not be publically accessible, because it does not satisfy security concerns.

Yet, a voter from Scarsdale was told by a poll inspector at the Will Library in Yonkers that the electronic poll books were using "library wifi". A voter in New Rochelle also reported that public wifi was used to power electronic poll books. Those sites are public and do not satisfy security concerns.

Lack of Poll Workers

Despite the onset of the pandemic, several poll inspectors who wanted to work at the polls on election day reported on social media that they were told that their services were not needed.

In addition, with the recession, there were numerous persons who would have wanted such employment if the BOE had made the attempt to recruit additional workers.

Myra Saul
Scarsdale, New York 10583
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Carin Horowitz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:11 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Comments

While I did speak, I thought I would also send my comments.

I am an election inspector

I think overall, the new technology made things go a lot more smoothly and more quickly than if we had the old books. That being said, there were other issues that created the long lines. My site was a half of a gym and we had only 3 privacy booths. We could only keep one of the 4 spots open in each booth to socially distance so that left only 3 spaces for people to work on their ballot.

The two registration stations had a lot of wait time where we could not let people in because of the space issues inside. Had we had the full gym and at least double the amount of privacy booths, we would have been able to get people in and checked in much more quickly. To me, this was the biggest reason for the line. I would rather be busy at that table and I had too much time waiting while people waited outside.

I would recommend some educational community campaigns. People need prompts and instructions on how to make sure they are registered in time, how to check on whether or not they are affiliated with a party (for primary days), how to make sure they are going to the right polling site. They also need a campaign to promote early voting. At my home site, on a weekend day in early voting we had about 15 voters all day yet lines on primary day.

A large number of voters requested and received absentee, then decided to come in person to vote. This created a backlog as we had to call in every time, which was often. A few hours into the day the BOE told us to stop calling because they were so overwhelmed. We were then able to just clear them to vote. Maybe the BOE didn't expect so many people to actually show up based on how many absenteers were requested? Maybe they didn't anticipate so many would change their minds?

A number of voters were very concerned as they reported to us at the table that they had received several poll site notices to their address with names of people who did not live there, one reported getting 12. They were worried about fraud and thought these other people were trying to use their address. I alone got about 7 complaints of this. I am sure it was a widespread error. I don't know what happened or how it happened but it put a lot of fear into the community.

Thank you!
Carin Horowitz

Ford, David

From: Hersh, Caleb
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 12:04 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Vanderberg, Sunday
Subject: FW: Comment for 7/8/2020 Public Hearing on Elections

Hi Sunday,

We received this from a constituent late last evening. With her permission, I am forwarding to you via the public comment submission address so she can submit her email as her written comment.

Thanks,
Caleb

Caleb Hersh, MPA
Legislative Aide, 9th District
Office of Legislator Catherine Borgia
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Ave, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
Pronouns: he/him/his
calebh@westchesterlegislators.com
O: 914.995.2819 C: 914.907.3505
District 9 on the [Web](#) & on [Facebook](#)

Learn more about [Census 2020](#) and how to get counted



From: Anne Jaffe Holmes
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 10:07 PM
To: Borgia, Catherine
Cc: Shimsky, MaryJane ; Boykin, Benjamin
Subject: Comment for 7/8/2020 Public Hearing on Elections

Hello, Catherine--

I am so sorry that somehow my technological ignorance meant that although I was on-line for the public hearing tonight, I did not know how to register that I wanted to make a statement. I will educate myself tomorrow!

I wanted to first thank the Board for holding this critically important hearing in such a timely way to take

advantage of the fresh learnings from the June elections to ensure that the November 2020 elections are conducted as smoothly as possible and with integrity.---Very wise of our County BOL--Much thanks to you and your colleagues!

Even from the hearing tonight, it seems to me that **Voter Education as well as more effective Poll Worker Education seem to both be needed.**

Addressing Voter Education:

When voters are not clear on what their voting options are, and what exactly to do to perform the option they choose correctly, it "gums up the works".

There's unnecessary anxiety. Polls get slowed, People get tense and angry.

For myself: I voted absentee this June for the first time in my life. With no confirmation that my vote counted for this June election, I know I for one will wonder how I should cast my vote in November????

It would be a wise investment by the County to **commission the creation of a short (3-4 minute?) "engaging" video of [basically] a "How to" for "Your Voting Options for the Nov. 2020 Elections"** (proper packaging and title need to be found, obviously)

A short, clear, engaging, County Board of Elections-Sanctioned instructional video should be sent to **all municipall managers, supervisors, mayors and boards, as well at to all registered non-profits, the Westchester Library System, civic organizations, (Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, YMCA's, JCC's, faith-based organizations, colleges in Westchester, school districts, Sunrise, WLCV, etc. etc.**

The **BOL could instruct the company that creates the voter instructional video** to consult the minutes of tonight's hearing, and also with organizations like the local League of Women Voters, as well as the organizations who spoke tonight--- like Allegra Dengler's.

Short, well-designed videos are the most efficient and effective educational tools we can use right now-- Hopefully the County will create one that will GO VIRAL in our County!

I know that FCWC will enthusiastically post and promote any such video the County creates, and will support whatever voter education efforts the BOL undertakes.

I hope you and the BOL will consider this idea carefully and decide to follow through on it.

Many thanks to you and your colleagues for your great dedication and foresight!

Best wishes,
Anne Jaffe Holmes
[REDACTED]

*"Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed— / Let it be that great strong land of love / Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme / That any man be crushed by one above." —
Langston Hughes*

Ford, David

From: Elizabeth Bradley [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 8:24 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Town of Mamaroneck polling place comment

My husband and I are both working from home during the pandemic, and raising our daughter with no childcare support. We were able to find 2 windows of time, about an hour and a half each, to go to the TOM center to vote in the primaries this year. Each time we attempted this, the line to GET INSIDE the building wrapped around the property and all the way down Boston Post Road to the high school. We had to abandon the effort to vote altogether because it was clear we'd be waiting in the heat for hours and might still not be guaranteed the opportunity to cast our ballots.

In a year when so much was at stake, to be effectively denied the vote was profoundly disappointing and upsetting. We were outraged to later learn that this was the only polling place for the whole community. Is our democracy coming apart at the seams? Surely the BOE can do better, and must do better, if November is to be a free and fair election.

Dr. Elizabeth Bradley and Dr. Eric Lai
[REDACTED]
Larchmont NY 10538

Ford, David

From: Merton, Prof. Vanessa H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 11:43 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Comment to the Westchester County Board of Legislators Elections Working Group
Attachments: Comment to the Westchester County Board of Legislators Election Working Group.docx;
Appel & Stark - Evidence-Based Elections--Paper Trail and Audit - 2020.pdf

To the Westchester County Board of Legislators Working Group on Elections, please find attached 1) a Comment with specific suggestions; and 2) a reasonably succinct article on one of the key issues you confront. Thank you, again, for your consideration of these materials and your work on behalf of election integrity and efficiency.

Vanessa Merton, Esq.

[REDACTED]
Hastings-on-Hudson
New York 10706
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Merton, Prof. Vanessa H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 8:08 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Problems -- invest in personnel not machines -- and use outside consultants to exercise oversight if problematic for BoL staff to perform that role
Attachments: Westchester Party Bosses Continue to Profit from Perks.docx

Listening to the testimony at the Board's open meeting, an obvious question: Why on earth should pollworkers have to work a fifteen-hour shift? That is a recipe for error, conflict, and the inefficiencies of fatigue. There are THOUSANDS of unemployed and underemployed college students and recent grads who would welcome being part of the process, earning some much needed money, and could bring energy, greater resistance to COVID, and greater computer savvy. It would be easy to recruit them through the career and placement offices of all the Westchester (and environs) higher education institutions. Advertise on social media – costs nothing – and you'd have an army to pick from. The Board's resistance to recruiting and training pollworkers online is one of its most blatant and easily correctable problems. There can be a shift change at mid-day and the whole process will be the better for it. Don't spend our taxpayer dollars on unnecessary hackable ICE machines that enrich distant vendors, put the dollars back into our own communities and invest in our youth. This should be a key imperative in the BoL report.

The same goes for hiring staff at the Board of Elections itself – may not be able to immediately replace the Commissioners with nonpartisan professionals until State law changes, but can demand that staff are NOT recruited from the ranks of party faithful but on the basis of merit. If the only tools available to the BoL are public shame and embarrassment building on public outcry, well then those are the tools you will have to use. Your report should say that the BoL, in the absence of available staff to dedicate to this, may need to hire a consultant to provide the Board of Elections with a blueprint to set up and monitor a new hiring system, because there is much reason to doubt the Commissioners have the wherewithal to do so, either in terms of knowledge about how to recruit on a merit system or genuine inclination to make it work.

The same is probably necessary to create an efficient, high-quality online training program that includes a final few hours of (physically distanced, etc.) on-site hands-on training with the machines and poll books. It is not apparent that the Board of Elections have personnel equipped – and again, inclined -- to handle this basic management function. The Board of Legislators simply has to insist on, in essence, the equivalent of receivership/oversight for some of the most important Board operations – and take the funds out of the BoE budget if necessary.

Sadly, the Board of Legislators cannot assume ANY basic management skills on the part of the Board of Elections. The Commissioners were not selected for management skills, they have no formal training in the basics of running a business, and they have amply demonstrated that management of complex systems is not part of their skill set. There may be, must be, some very competent people at the Board of Elections, but – again, sadly – there is no reason to believe that the Commissioners are among them. One was an insurance company actuary – a long time ago -- before getting into politics full-time and the other appears to have a printing business largely sustained by non-competitive sweetheart campaign contracts. The attached LoHud article and editorial are worth re-reading, nothing has changed. It is, frankly, a scandal that a government function at least as fundamental as clean water and safe roads is the exclusive province of people who profit from what can only be described as legalized political bribery – even as they are paid salaries close to or more than the County Executive's. The Board of Legislators needs to do all that is within its power to bring some modicum of professionalism to the crucial task of election administration, and restore some degree of public faith that our elections are run fairly and accurately.

Thank you for undertaking this very difficult but so essential work.

Vanessa Merton

[REDACTED]
Hastings-on-Hudson
New York 10706
[REDACTED]

Westchester party bosses' perks continue

Clarice Silber

The Journal News July 17, 2015

Not much has changed for Westchester County's political party bosses, newly released New York State Board of Elections records show.

The GOP leader, Doug Colety, and Democratic leader, Reginald LaFayette, are still cashing in from their dual roles as Westchester's elections commissioners, according to new financial disclosure reports made public this week.

The records show that between January and July, LaFayette's personal campaign committee, The Chairman's Circle, has collected an additional \$10,000 in donations. Colety's lucrative side business, Executive Star, received \$59,788 in printing work from various GOP campaigns, including \$8,895 from Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino's campaign committee.

The Journal News reported June 20 that The Chairman's Circle spent \$183,449 between 2008 and the end of last year to pay for meals at ritzy restaurants, make lease payments and pay for other expenses from his luxury SUV. Nearly \$60,000 of the money given to the committee came from developers and other firms doing business in the county.

The recent financial disclosure bring the Chairman's Circle's total expenditures since 2008 to \$186,932.

Westchester: Dual posts, perks for political bosses

Rockland: Democratic chair wears 2 hats

Editorial: Time for reform

In all, LaFayette's committee has accrued \$112,831 in donations over that time span. The recent donations were \$5,000 each from Joel Mounty, founder and president of Mountco Construction and Development Corp., a major developer in LaFayette's hometown of Mount Vernon, and from developer Joseph Simone.

LaFayette did not return calls seeking comment.

Executive Star, which operates out of a Mamaroneck post office box, has made more than \$6.6 million dollars in work from different GOP campaigns since the start of 2008. Though Executive Star has a lucrative hold over GOP campaigns, it does not actually print materials. Rather Colety's company acts as a liaison and passes the work to other local printers, while incurring its own fee.

"None of this is taxpayer money," Colety said Thursday. "This is all Republican and Republican candidate money, and most of which is postage sales tax and cost of goods sold."

Both LaFayette and Colety are each paid \$155,245 as county elections commissioners, who are charged with overseeing local elections, certifying nominating petitions and verifying ballot results.

Party chairs are volunteer positions selected by party members. They assist in choosing which candidates the party endorses, and work on fundraising for candidates and campaigns.

New York does not have a law barring political leaders from holding additional official roles.

Editorial: Political power, magnified

A Journal News editorial

How can someone be impartial in one job, when their key role in another is to be partisan?



That's what is expected of the elections commissioners in Westchester and Rockland, where three out of four mirror their day jobs as county elections watchdog with their posts as county party chairs. Doug Colety is Westchester's GOP Elections Commissioner and head of the county's Republicans. Westchester Democratic Elections Commissioner is Reginald LaFayette, who heads up the county's Democrats.

In Rockland, Elections Commissioner Kristen Stavisky represents the Democrats in the county's New City Board of Elections offices, and also chairs the county's Democratic Committee. Her Republican counterpart in the county post is Lou Babcock, who heads the Haverstraw GOP.

As our report, "Party Favors: Dual posts, perks for political bosses," demonstrates, there's a lot of power there. And with power comes money. Colety, for example, is also a very successful printing broker who has proven to be quite popular with Republican candidates. If you were a Republican candidate or local town party boss and you needed mailers printed up, who would you hire?

And LaFayette has the Chairman's Circle, a personal campaign committee that gladly accepts donations from developers, contractors and others. Most of the money goes

toward meals at nice restaurants, vehicle leases and always popular unitemized deductions. Interestingly, the committee spent a lot of cash – \$25,018 – on one local election in recent years, Port Chester's village elections in 2013. Republicans were trying to take control of their village board and weren't playing nice with G&S Investors, which developed the Port Chester waterfront and whose partners had recently given \$22,500 to the Chairman's Circle.

LaFayette's "Chairman's Circle" is aptly named: A powerful post in the party system leads to a powerful county job, which leads to more power.

Such conflict is codified in state election law. In New York, county election commissioners are nominated by the two top vote-getting parties' committees – the Republicans and the Democrats – and those nominations are approved by the county's legislative bodies. The state Senate passed a bill several years ago to ban election commissioners from serving as a party chair or co-chair, but the Assembly didn't match the legislation, so it went nowhere.

The intent of the system is to provide political balance; the result is patronage.

As NYPIRG'S Blair Horner told The Journal News, such a setup is "party control of elections on steroids." As Horner explained, "There's an inherent conflict of interest allowing the political parties to control the elections for all New Yorkers, particularly since a large percentage of New York voters are not enrolled in either the Democratic or the Republican party."

It's time to change the prescription.

Many municipalities have "two hats" laws that ban certain officeholders from taking other official roles that would create conflicts of interest. New York needs to revisit how many hats county Board of Elections chairs can wear. After all, they are supposed to be determining *fairness* in elections, not enriching themselves.

Ford, David

From: Carolyn Clyne [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:54 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: My experience

Hello, I wanted to let you know that I received my requested absentee ballot in plenty of time to vote. I understand some didnt but thought I'd share my experience too.

Thank you,
Carolyn clyne

Sent from my iPhone; please excuse typing errors.

Ford, David

From: Hillary Short [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:08 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: My experience on June 23

Dear Legislators

Thank you for holding public hearings because of the primary voting issues. I am a district leader in the town of Mamaroneck. I voted early and had no issues.

However Eliot Engel's campaign manager asked me to go down to the town of Mamaroneck's voting site at 9pm due to the long line and to talk to voters.

I spent over an hour talking to voters waiting and heard stories that they had come earlier in the day but saw a long line and decided to wait until after dinner. Many had gone to the wrong polling site because they hadn't seen or read the mailed card. Many had requested absentee ballots but hadn't received them. I do know my neighbor got on line at 8:15pm and voted at 1:10am. Several people left the line after a couple of hours and went home.

After that night there has been outrage on our local Nextdoor group. Many similar tales to what I posted above. Unfortunately we live in a time where many people use social media instead of emailing the officials.

Best

Geraldine Hillary Short

I reside in the Village of Mamaroneck. But also vote for town electeds too.

Ford, David

From: Concerned Voters Of Westchester [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:12 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voters wait 2 1/2 Hours @ Yonkers HS Poll Site 6/23

 062320 Yonkers HS - Voters Wait 2 1:2 Hours.mp4

Ford, David

From: Elaine [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 10:41 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: comments on Election day

I served as a poll watcher on Election day at White Plains High School and I observed:

* Long lines on a hot day

* confusion with the affidavit ballots. Poll workers didn't realize that there were 2 different ballots that should be given out. One poll worker told me that she mistakenly gave only one of the ballots to a voter because she didn't realize that there were two. Better training for poll workers needed.

* In the 3 hours I watched, there was an incredible amount of voided ballots. Many people seemed to be confused by the ballot and filled out their ballots incorrectly and needed new ballots. I commented to one of the poll workers about it, and he said he'd never seen anything like it, having worked at the polls for many years. Other poll watchers I spoke to commented that they had noticed many voided ballots as well. The ballots must be re-designed and made clearer and more simple.

I would like to point out though, the poll workers at WP High School did a great overall job in very difficult circumstances.

In addition I went to Greenburgh Village Hall volunteering for one of the candidates. I spoke to several people waiting on a very long line and asked them why they didn't take advantage of the early voting. Many told me they didn't know about it or know where to go while they stood on a long line on a very hot day. This is an outrage. I voted at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall on the first day of early voting and was in and out in 5 minutes! There needs to be a large scale advertising campaign (TV & radio PSA's as well as mail and social media) of dates and locations of early voting. Many more people would take advantage I'm sure.

We also need to heavily recruit young people to be poll workers. Many young people will not be going away to college this year and would love to make some money I'm sure. Thought should also be given to splitting shifts, especially on Election Day proper. The day is way too long for the same people to work 12, 13, 18 hrs.

We must work this out now so that these problems are worked out before the November election. Our democracy is literally at stake.

Thank you for looking into this matter and for creating this task force.

Elaine Trader
Dobbs Ferry, NY

Ford, David

From: Virginia Stillman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 9:45 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Kate Ray; Gail Sasso; Daria Gregg
Subject: Comments on the June Primary for the 7/8/2020 Webex Hearing

I attended the webex session tonight, but wasn't prepared to speak. I think there was a lot of useful information shared by so many people, and hope the BOL and BOE will share with us not only their final report of recommendations, but also their plan for the November elections.

Just three things I would add. I am a 75 year old resident of Ossining and voted by absentee ballot.

First - I think the absentee ballots were confusing to many of us in Ossining who voted in both CD 17 or SD 38 elections.

I had asked for an absentee ballot very early, based on info from Sandy Galef, and recieved one just for the Democratic primary candidates, all 8 of them. I later asked for an absentee ballot for the NYS Senate (SD38) and Congressional CD17 election and received a second ballot in time to vote. I sent both ballots well before they were due. I have no way of knowing if my two ballots were counted. Will this be addressed in the future, as I heard many others express the same concern.

Second - I know several people who never received their absentee ballots in time for the election. By the time they asked for one, I don't know if they would have gotten two (like I did at separate times), or if there was one that combined both the Democratic Primary AND the CD17 and SD28, and other local elections on ONE ballot. This was confusing for many people.

Third - I have read much about the insecurity of the Dominion ICE voting machines and am concerned about any issues surrounding them. (1) How many were used and where? (2) Were poll-workers adequately trained. (3) Is there now anyway to audit the votes where they were used to check for any potential hacking. These machines were mentioned by Lulu Friesdat of Smart Elections, as being risky and insecure. (4) Is the Westchester BOT or BOE going to replace all voting machines with the Dominion ICE voting machine and at what cost, when the NY State BOE opposed purchasing these machines.

Fourth - When will we be informed of the Task Force's report of recommendations and plans. It is imperative that Westchester County has effective, secure, health-safe plans for voting in November.

Thank you,
Virginia Stillman

Ford, David

From: Pressley Memorial [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 8:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input

Hello my name is Wanda Edwards. I was at 4 sights on June 23rd handing out palm cards 20 ft away from the sign and entrance.

Suggestions:

- 1) Measuring is crucial to assure accuracy of 20 ft. At Cross Road School in Yonkers N Y the teams were marked and placed 30 ft. away vs. 20'.
- 2) Must leave open the same early voting site.
- 3) provide a walking distance site for voters in District 1 and 3 of Yonkers.
- 4) provide more than 2 machines at each site.
- 5) provide more sites than what we had on 6/23/20 to reduce long Lines of voters waiting in the heat or cold.

Thank you,

WME

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: J Chung [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 5:35 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Observations made as a poll watcher on June 23

Hello,

I was a poll watcher at Yonkers Middle/High School (150 Rockland Ave) for two hours in the afternoon of June 23. I have been trained as a poll watcher by the New York Democratic Lawyer's Council. I am also an experienced election inspector, although I was not working the polls on that day.

I witnessed the following:

1. only two tables/machines serving multiple districts. I don't recall how many districts, but I had brought 6 copies of my poll watcher certificate and there were more districts than that.
2. One of the vote reading machines was jammed when I arrived, which is not unusual, but what was new was that the on-demand ballot printers frequently jammed as well. So there was only a short period when both tables were fully operational.
3. At one table, only a single inspector seemed to be working, simultaneously checking in voters, printing out the ballots, and providing instructions to voters. The other inspectors did not provide him with assistance, and as a result this table was very slow.
4. At that same table, the inspectors waited until voters had reached the head of the line before explaining the ballot to them. As a result, this slowed down processing. Several voters overvoted anyway, resulting in an error and the need to reprint ballots. The other table sensibly had an inspector explaining sample ballots, but she was also the Spanish translator so she was frequently busy.
5. I tried to suggest to an inspector that they explain the sample ballots to voters standing in line to save time. I was yelled at and told that I was not allowed to speak to the inspectors. At this point I left the premises and called the Rocah campaign to alert them to the situation.
6. voters were processed at this location at about the rate of 1 voter every 10 or 15 minutes.
7. As a result, the line stretched out along the length of the school, and voters had to wait in the heat for over two hours. As I left my shift, I saw the same people standing in line as I saw when I began. Voters told me that they had seen others leaving the line without voting.

I also heard the following:

- seniors in Yonkers were unaware of the change in their polling location, which had formerly been in their building lobby. As a result, many were not able to find a ride to their new location in time to vote.

My personal experience in Mamaroneck was as follows:

- The Vote by Mail ballot arrived a couple of days before the end of voting, but I was able to fill it in and send it off without trouble.

- My husband was surprised to find that our voting location had changed, so instead of walking two blocks, he had to drive. This change could have prevented a person without a car from voting. Unexpected roadwork meant that it took him 45 minutes to find a detour to take him to the correct location and vote.

Recommendations:

1. For safety, instead of decreasing the number of polling locations, recruit and train election inspectors who are not at risk. You can even ask people to volunteer, if there aren't enough funds.
2. Go back to preprinted ballots. Save the on-demand printer for people who are in the wrong polling location, speak an unusual language, etc. If there is ever a place for paper, it is in the polls!
3. Make sure that inspectors are adequately trained for using the machines. Trainings should involve dry runs (they don't). Or at least require inspectors to work a short shift in early voting to make sure they know what they are doing.
- 4 and 5. Again, inspectors should be better trained on how to deal with long lines and make use of their time. There should be a lot of outreach to train voters how to deal with "pick 8" type ballots, or two-ballot elections.
6. There needs to be a big public campaign "Know before you Go" where people can call, go to the internet, or check text messages so they can plan ahead for changes to their polling location.

Thank you!

Jean Chung

Ford, David

From: J Chung [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 7:59 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Observations made as a poll watcher on June 23

One more point: this long wait was apparently very hard on the seniors... the people that I heard of who did not get to vote (who left the line, or who did not get to their polling place at all) were seniors. It might be a good idea to have earlier senior hours, like at the grocery store.

I'm watching the meeting... thank you so much for listening.

On Wed7/8/20 5:34 PM, J Chung wrote:

Hello,

I was a poll watcher at Yonkers Middle/High School (150 Rockland Ave) for two hours in the afternoon of June 23. I have been trained as a poll watcher by the New York Democratic Lawyer's Council. I am also an experienced election inspector, although I was not working the polls on that day.

I witnessed the following:

1. only two tables/machines serving multiple districts. I don't recall how many districts, but I had brought 6 copies of my poll watcher certificate and there were more districts than that.
2. One of the vote reading machines was jammed when I arrived, which is not unusual, but what was new was that the on-demand ballot printers frequently jammed as well. So there was only a short period when both tables were fully operational.
3. At one table, only a single inspector seemed to be working, simultaneously checking in voters, printing out the ballots, and providing instructions to voters. The other inspectors did not provide him with assistance, and as a result this table was very slow.
4. At that same table, the inspectors waited until voters had reached the head of the line before explaining the ballot to them. As a result, this slowed down processing. Several voters overvoted anyway, resulting in an error and the need to reprint ballots. The other table sensibly had an inspector explaining sample ballots, but she was also the Spanish translator so she was frequently busy.
5. I tried to suggest to an inspector that they explain the sample ballots to voters standing in line to save time. I was yelled at and told that I was not allowed to speak to the inspectors. At this point I left the premises and called the Rocah campaign to alert them to the situation.
6. voters were processed at this location at about the rate of 1 voter every 10 or 15 minutes.

7. As a result, the line stretched out along the length of the school, and voters had to wait in the heat for over two hours. As I left my shift, I saw the same people standing in line as I saw when I began. Voters told me that they had seen others leaving the line without voting.

I also heard the following:

- seniors in Yonkers were unaware of the change in their polling location, which had formerly been in their building lobby. As a result, many were not able to find a ride to their new location in time to vote.

My personal experience in Mamaroneck was as follows:

- The Vote by Mail ballot arrived a couple of days before the end of voting, but I was able to fill it in and send it off without trouble.

- My husband was surprised to find that our voting location had changed, so instead of walking two blocks, he had to drive. This change could have prevented a person without a car from voting. Unexpected roadwork meant that it took him 45 minutes to find a detour to take him to the correct location and vote.

Recommendations:

1. For safety, instead of decreasing the number of polling locations, recruit and train election inspectors who are not at risk. You can even ask people to volunteer, if there aren't enough funds.

2. Go back to preprinted ballots. Save the on-demand printer for people who are in the wrong polling location, speak an unusual language, etc. If there is ever a place for paper, it is in the polls!

3. Make sure that inspectors are adequately trained for using the machines. Trainings should involve dry runs (they don't). Or at least require inspectors to work a short shift in early voting to make sure they know what they are doing.

- 4 and 5. Again, inspectors should be better trained on how to deal with long lines and make use of their time. There should be a lot of outreach to train voters how to deal with "pick 8" type ballots, or two-ballot elections.

6. There needs to be a big public campaign "Know before you Go" where people can call, go to the internet, or check text messages so they can plan ahead for changes to their polling location.

Thank you!

Jean Chung

Ford, David

From: Liza Abraham [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 7:51 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Attn: Election Information Gathering Task Force; NYDLC Testimony re: Westchester BOE
Attachments: NYDLC Testimony Re_ June 2020 Westchester Elections.pdf

Dear Westchester Board of Legislators:

Please find attached the testimony of the New York Democratic Lawyers Council, submitted to your Election Information Gathering Task Force.

Please feel free to contact me via this email, or by calling [REDACTED] if there are questions, or if you believe that NYDLC can further assist the Task Force in its inquiry.

Thank you for this initiative, which gives Westchester voters a long-needed opportunity to be heard about the voting experience in their county.

Kind regards,

Liza Abraham
Executive Director
New York Democratic Lawyers Council
The voter protection arm of NY Dems.

[REDACTED] 866-NYDLC-01 | [@NYDLC](#) | Visit our [website here](#).

Help NYDLC protect the vote in 2020 by contributing [here](#).
NYers can confirm voter registration [here](#).

To: Westchester County Board of Legislators
Via email to BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com
Transmitted July 8, 2020

Re: Election Information Gathering Task Force

Dear Board of Legislators:

The New York Democratic Lawyers Council (NYDLC) is the voter protection arm of the New York State Democratic Committee, and the longest continuously-operating Democratic voter protection organization in the country.

For most major election cycles of the past eight years, NYDLC has conducted voter protection operations in Westchester County. The scope of the incident information collected over this time is much larger than the topic of the present hearing, which focuses on the June 23, 2020 primary election event.

NYDLC welcomes the opportunity to speak with Westchester law- and policy-makers about the broader scope of our observations in Westchester over time. We are also willing to make our incident records available to you for any time period specified. Additionally, our historical context informs how we view what happened in June 2020.

With regard to the June 23, 2020 primary specifically: we have already made our incident data available to activist groups within Westchester County, who are testifying under separate cover, and combining that incident information with that from other sources, in order to paint a more thorough picture of how the primary unfolded in Westchester. Our incident information is compiled primarily from the voter helpline we operated from June 13th through the week after the election, to assist voters with absentee balloting, as well as forms of in-person voting.

However, there is one element of Westchester's June 2020 operations that NYDLC itself would like to highlight, which would not necessarily be reflected in voter-generated incident reports: On June 16, 2020, I, the undersigned Liza Abraham, Executive Director of NYDLC, requested from the State Board of Elections (SBOE) a comprehensive list of all poll sites in New York state that would be operating on June 23, 2020 (along with their assigned election districts, etc).

SBOE promptly provided this information on the same day. One June 22, 2020, I contacted SBOE again, asking for any pollsite changes or updated locations that they may have received since our last correspondence on June 16th. I was promptly informed that Rockland County was the only county to turn in such changes, and was provided the corresponding updated list.

After the June 23rd election, I received a report from a Westchester voter that she received notification of her Election Day poll site change via postcard a mere four dates prior to voting. I therefore decided to take a deeper look into what pollsite change information was available in

what form, and when.

It came to my attention through this examination that the list I was provided by SBOE on June 16th - which, per my correspondence with them, remained current, to their knowledge, through June 22, 2020 - did not reflect the actual Westchester poll sites operative on June 23rd.

I am seeking further clarification about where this breakdown in communications may have happened; as it stands, I have no indication that, as of June 22nd, Westchester BOE had updated SBOE with their actual poll site plan for the 23rd.

This oversight has compounding consequences: The State Democratic Committee's data staff uses the same report from SBOE to provide an update to www.iwillvote.com - a popular, user-friendly resource for folks to find their pollsite information. Moreover, in operating our own voter helpline, we often refer to sources such as iwillvote.com. We can say with certainty that there is a universe of voters who were provided with out-of-date poll site information.

Based on my own research, it does seem that Westchester County's own online poll locator - <https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/find-polling-place> - was, at some point, updated with the correct, current poll sites.

However, from what I can tell, this was the exclusive online source for correct poll site location information. Furthermore: I invite Legislators to experiment with actually using this portal. It asks for an excruciating degree of exactitude from the user when they enter their address, and has lengthy instructions to that effect (one must enter "Rd," but not "Road," "road," "RD," or "Rd." for instance). Below the signature line of this letter, I have added a screenshot of these rules, taken today, July 8, 2020, in the event the website is altered.

What does this amount to? As far as I can tell, on Election Day, the current Westchester poll site plan was available, if at all, only through their own poll site locator - which itself, locks information behind an exacting user interface that would easily deter voters.

In addition, because SBOE may not have been updated, more user-friendly websites like www.iwillvote.com did not have current information - and may have given voters contrary/inaccurate results regarding where to vote.

Finally, I make one additional point pertaining to the 2019 election cycle, when NYDLC clocked another major logistical failure within Westchester. On Election Day that November, a number of Westchester pollsites failed to receive the paper-printout list of those who had voted during early voting by the time polls opened on Election Day. This had a detrimental effect on the check-in process by increasing waiting times and sowing voter confusion. I spoke with Tajian Jones at the Westchester BOE at that time who assured me that lists were on their way and that voters were still able to vote. In general, it seems that most poll sites did have lists by 7:30 am.

However, I still feel the incident is notable as we verified it affected at least three pollsites. It is also one of several indicators that a more robust investment in e-poll books - versus less critical election infrastructure needs - would greatly simplify several aspects of the operations in Westchester. Moreover, taken with the incidents in June, 2020, the 2019 incident points to a growing pattern of disorganization within the Westchester BOE that must be remedied before November.

Please feel free to contact me directly at [REDACTED] if you have questions regarding the content of this letter.

Sincerely,

LA

Liza Abraham

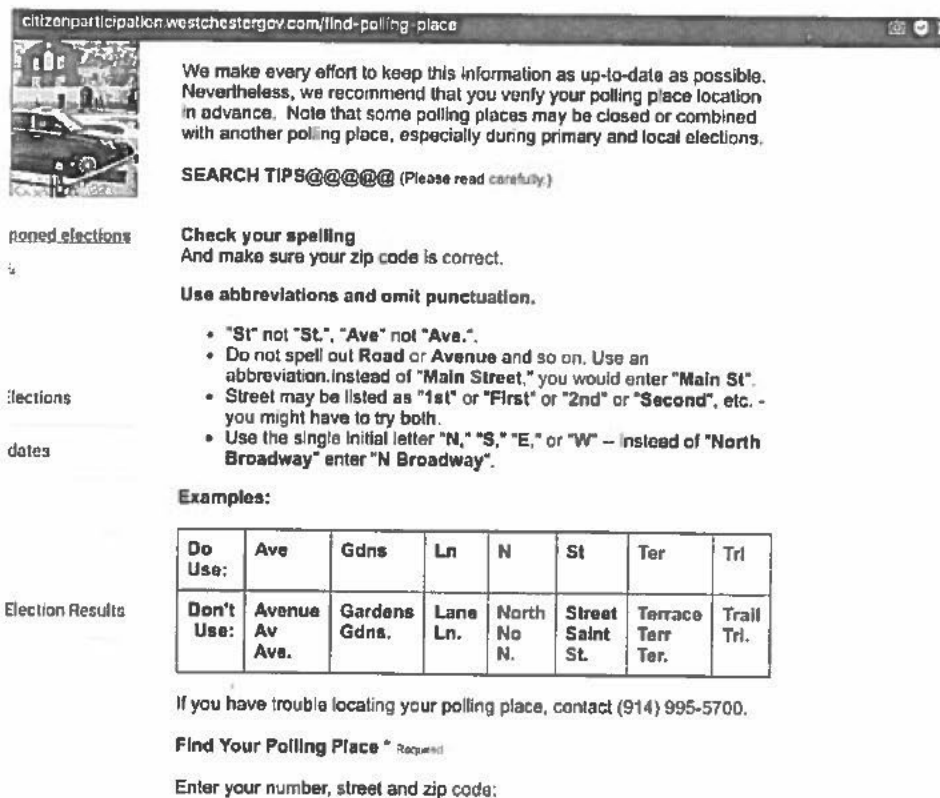
Executive Director

NYDLC

Obo NYDLC membership

Addendum: Screenshot of Westchester County Pollsite Locator language and data-entry rules.

citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/find-polling-place



We make every effort to keep this information as up-to-date as possible. Nevertheless, we recommend that you verify your polling place location in advance. Note that some polling places may be closed or combined with another polling place, especially during primary and local elections.

SEARCH TIPS (Please read carefully)

Check your spelling
And make sure your zip code is correct.

Use abbreviations and omit punctuation.

- "St" not "St.", "Ave" not "Ave.".
- Do not spell out Road or Avenue and so on. Use an abbreviation. Instead of "Main Street," you would enter "Main St".
- Street may be listed as "1st" or "First" or "2nd" or "Second", etc. - you might have to try both.
- Use the single initial letter "N," "S," "E," or "W" - instead of "North Broadway" enter "N Broadway".

Examples:

Do Use:	Ave	Gdns	Ln	N	St	Ter	Trl
Don't Use:	Avenue Av Ave.	Gardens Gdns.	Lane Ln.	North No N.	Street Saint St.	Terrace Terr Ter.	Trail Tri.

If you have trouble locating your polling place, contact (914) 995-5700.

Find Your Polling Place Required

Enter your number, street and zip code:

Ford, David

From: M Otten [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 7:43 PM
To: BOL Public Comments; Gomez, Dayana
Cc: Mike O
Subject: Input to the Westchester Legislature Election Information Gathering Task Force
Attachments: Otten Input to Westchester County Legislators v2b.docx

Thank you for providing for public input this evening on how to make our November election run as smoothly as possible. Attached is the input I provided on the call. I do not anticipate that Westchester will be the cause of the scenario I suggested as possible, but I hope you are in a position to alert both NY State and other more precarious jurisdictions of the potential problem with enough lead time to act proactively.

Cordially,

Michael Otten
Scarsdale, NY
[REDACTED]

**Statement to the Westchester “*Election Information Gathering Task Force*”
of the Westchester County Legislature**

by Michael Otten, Scarsdale, NY [REDACTED] – July 8, 2020

Good evening, and thank you for anticipating the challenges of the 2020 election.

New York’s experience with Absentee Ballots in the 2018 elections and June 2020 primaries has taught us that NY is not well positioned for the November 3rd election. Few of us realize the significant danger of a scenario playing out for this election that could invalidate our votes for Congressional and Presidential candidates. If there are delays, due to legal or administrative challenges to the November votes, which call in question the final count, we are likely to be in a position where we cannot declare a Presidential outcome by **December 8**, which, according to the National Conference of State Legislators, is the “*Deadline for Resolving Election Disputes*, [by which time] All state recounts and court contests over presidential election results must be completed...”^{*} With a president warning of electoral fraud, and NY having very little experience with Vote-by-Mail, we might easily miss that date.

The impact occurs when a new Congress takes office on January 6, when the President of the Senate, Michael Pence, tabulates the Electoral votes. If no candidate has the requisite 270 electoral votes, the **US Constitution 12th Amendment** dictates that the President is elected by the House of Representatives with **one vote per state**. There are currently 26 states with Republican majorities. If New York, and other states, like Pennsylvania, have not yet finalized their votes by then, the election might no longer be based on popular or electoral vote.

There are things we can do to avoid this for Westchester, NY State and other jurisdictions that are not prepared for the onslaught of absentee ballots:

1. We should work now to improve the local **Registration Roles** to reduce related challenges.
2. We should enlarge the **Early Voting** period to two weeks, as is already the case for some states. This might require the NY Legislature being called back into session.

3. We should **process** ballots as soon as they are received, resolving administrative or interpretation issues in advance of counting votes.
4. Although we might want to start **counting the ballots when received**, there are concerns that this can result in double counting if an individual votes in person after having submitted an absentee ballot. I hope **you** can find a way to resolve this potential issue by law or administrative directive.
5. We should put in place a process to resolve any challenges in the allowed **five weeks from November 3 to December 8.*** We cannot afford several months delay in results that have already been experienced in previous Congressional elections.

The bottom line is that if we do not take action now, there is a reasonable chance that our voters' votes will not count at all and the election of the President will be made by a probably partisan vote of 26 to 24 in the House of Representatives.

=====

Respectfully submitted by Michael Otten, Scarsdale, NY, based on research done in conjunction with an association of graduate school alumni. More information on our work can be found at reformelectionsnow.org .

Dr. Otten is a former President of the Scarsdale School Board, international business executive and graduate school educator, as well as a cofounder of Reform Elections Now.

[My comments are based on an analysis by a non-partisan group of mostly Harvard business and law school alumni, who have been studying for the past couple of years the polarization and increasing ineffectiveness of government. One of the first things we learned was how changes of election rules by state, county or local government can have an enormous impact on government at all levels.]

* <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/the-electoral-college.aspx>

[P.S. And what if Russia decides to invade the Baltics in November?]

Ford, David

From: Tara Herman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 6:50 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: 6/23/20 @ Ardsley Middle School @ 8pm
Attachments: 062320 Ardsley Middle School at 8PM.mp4

I shot this video - i counted over 130 people waiting in line at 8pm. afterwards i talked to voters leaving the polls that said they waited up to 2 hours to vote. at 9pm, after no more voters were allowed to get in line, i counted 160 voters waiting to vote.

Ford, David

From: Linda L. Bryant [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 6:48 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Ballots

Dear Board of Legislators,

I hope my email is not too late for tonight's BOE discussion. As a District Leader and somewhat knowledgeable of the Democratic Primary, I personally found my ballot problematic. So I can certainly understand the problems that are on the table for discussion. The print (font) is way too SMALL! Huge document with the smallest print imaginable. The layout was ridiculous! Without columns and structure it was extremely difficult to make sure you were selecting the correct candidate.

Too many problems to list but oh so happy this is being reviewed for improvement!

Linda Bryant

--

Linda L. Bryant
"Be the Change You Are Trying to Create" Mahatma Gandhi

Ford, David

From: Concerned Voters Of Westchester [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 6:41 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: White Plains on June 23rd

View the video from this tweet...<https://twitter.com/i/status/1275597422803247104>

"There are 60,000 people that live in White Plains, NY. Two polls were open today. This is the line after 9pm when polls close. The wait to vote is over an hour long. There are children, elderly and infirm people that are tired and sore from standing up for the right to vote."

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1275597422803247104>

My name is Deborah Porder. I have lived in Scarsdale for 26 years. These are my written comments for the public hearing held by the Westchester County Board of Legislators on July 8, 2020, from 7 to 9 p.m. The topic of the hearing is the primary election held on June 23, 2020.

I am providing a first hand account Election Law (EL) violations committed by the Westchester County Board of Elections (BOE) during the 2020 primary.

When the Governor signed the Executive Order permitting absentee voting on the ground of temporary illness during the pandemic, I requested an absentee ballot. I received two ballots at separate times and mailed them back to the BOE.

Afterwards, I decided to vote early instead. It was June 18, five days AFTER early voting (EV) began. The BOE had not sent me a notice of where I could vote early. That was a violation of EL 8-600 (4)(e), which requires that voters be told of EV sites 45 days before a primary or general election. This must not happen in the Fall. For the November 3, 2020 election, the BOE must designate early voting sites 45 days in advance.

I went to the WBOE website to see where I could vote early. It said that voters could vote early in one or two designated sites in the County, and that for Scarsdale, Eastchester Library was designated. The BOE website was not user-friendly. Try it and see for yourself. It required me to click on several links to FAQs and pdfs, that were not on the home page, to figure out my one designated EV site.

The BOE violated EL 8-600(3) by not providing voters with a choice of voting early anywhere in the County. Once a board of elections has the equipment to print all necessary ballots and to check whether voters have already voted, they must provide vote centers, where voters can vote at any early voting site in the County. We, the taxpayers, paid for that equipment - epollbooks, ballot on demand printers and Dominion ICE machines, which the BOE said they needed for EV, yet the BOE still designated sites by town or city. It was required to provide and publicize vote centers. It must do so for the November 2020 election.

At a June 1, 2020 Budget and Appropriations Committee meeting of the BOL, BOE Commissioner Lafayette stated that, "no voter will be turned away" if they tried to vote early at a site not designated for their town or city. He said that he didn't publicize vote centers because he didn't want too many people voting in White Plains. That is not legal and it's on tape!

I decided to take the Commissioner at his word and try voting early at the Will Library in Yonkers, instead of the Eastchester Library. I was not turned away. I have heard that other voters were not so lucky when they tried to vote outside of their designated site.

When I got to the Will Library, a poll inspector looked up my registration and said, you sent in an absentee ballot. I replied, "Wow, do you have the BOE registration records right on that laptop?" The answer was yes. I asked, "Is it connected to the Library wifi?" Again, the answer was yes. I said, "It's nice of them to let you use their wifi." The poll inspector agreed. I asked the same questions and got the same answers when I voted early at the Eastchester Library in 2019.

It is a violation of the State Board of Elections' security requirements for epollbooks to use public wifi.
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=246ef976d4&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg->

[f:1670955753369799519&th=17306d6793008b5f&view=att&disp=inline&realattid=f_kc2brq4k0](https://www.governor.ny.gov/record-1670955753369799519&th=17306d6793008b5f&view=att&disp=inline&realattid=f_kc2brq4k0)

More importantly, we know from the Mueller report that, in 2016, the Russians tried to, and succeeded in, hacking voter registration records. They tried to hack into the voter registration systems in all 50 states. The BOE's use of public wifi would be a shocking security risk. It is up to you to make sure that the BOE protects our voter registration records.

After our wifi exchange, the poll inspector said you cannot vote until I call the Board of Elections in White Plains. This was a violation of EL 8-300. It says that once a poll inspector finds that a voter is entitled to vote, the voter must be permitted to vote on the machine. Under EL 9-209, if a voter casts an absentee ballot and then votes in person, the absentee ballot is not counted. The rule is that the last vote counts.

The next day, Friday June 19, 4 days before the primary, I received a postcard from the BOE saying that my EV poll site was Eastchester Library and my primary day poll site was the Davis School in New Rochelle. The Davis School was a change from my poll at the Heathcote School in Scarsdale, where I have voted for 26 years. There was no notice on the postcard that my polling place was changed.

The postcard violated the EL in two ways. EL 4-117 says voters must be mailed a notice of where they can vote in a primary at least 65 days, but no more than 70 days, before an election. I got my postcard 4 days before. In addition, the mailing must note a notice of a change of polling place in bold type. My postcard had no notice that my polling place had changed. These are not small matters. There are many disabled, elderly and non-driving voters. They may need to plan a ride, or request an absentee ballot, when their polling place is changed. They need adequate notice to do that. November 2020 is around the corner. The BOE must decide on polling sites and send out the information at least 65 days in advance of the election.

It is the duty of our County Executive, as stated in the County Charter, to see that State law pertaining to the affairs and government of the County is faithfully executed, and that County boards and officers faithfully perform their duties. Charter, 110.11 (5) & (6). Under the Charter, both the County Executive and the Board of Legislators have broad powers of investigation. Charter, 107.21(12) & 110.11(7)-(9). Please do your jobs and make sure that the BOE follows the law in future elections. Please complain loudly to the Governor and the State Board of Elections about how the primary was mishandled by the BOE. The voters are counting on you.

Yours respectfully,

Deborah Porder

Scarsdale, NY 10583

Ford, David

From: Karen DiMicelli [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 5:02 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23rd Primary

I want to register my complaint about the June 23rd Democratic Primary - I was on a line for 2 1/2 hours and still had another hour to go to be able to cast my vote! I was not able to stand anymore (I have arthritic knees) so I left the line without voting! I was very upset that night (I entered the line at 7:40PM and left about 10:10PM). It was my usual polling place (The Mamaroneck Town Center) where it has never taken more than 10 minutes to vote in the 20 or so years that I have voted there. This was an unimaginable situation in Westchester! This cannot happen again!!!
Thank you, Karen DiMicelli

Ford, David

From: Ann Berlstein [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 4:23 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: County Executive (WEB)
Subject: Absentee ballot problems (NY June 23 Primary)

To Whom it May Concern,

My husband and I mailed in our request for absentee ballots well before the deadline. They were sent to the wrong address (our home address) instead of the address where we are currently residing, despite our having filled out the request correctly. We found the ballots in our mail at home - - two weeks after the primary election. This was a very disappointing experience.

Ann Berlstein
[REDACTED]
Larchmont NY

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Gerald Kolbert [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:56 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Comments on Election procedures

In the June 23rd primary there was one polling place for the entire Town of Mamaroneck on the actual day of voting. Fortunately, I had voted absentee. However, those who voted waited in a line that went from the Town offices, down the driveway to the Boston Post Road. This is unconscionable. On Election Day in November, there have to be more polling places. And people have to be informed well in advance exactly where they will be voting. Waiting for hours to vote is one way of depriving people of their right to vote. This needs to be fixed. Our democracy depends on it. Thank you for your attention in this matter

Marlene Kolbert
[REDACTED] Larchmont, NY 10538

Sent from Marlene's iPad

Ford, David

From: Sonita Bennitt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:34 PM
To: Latimer, George; Parker, Catherine; concernedvotersofwestchester@gmail.com
Subject: Democratic Primary

I recently switched my registration and was looking forward to voting in my first primary as a Democrat - I waited in line for almost two hours at Mamaroneck Town Center, and, after ascertaining that I still had at least an hour to go, I left without voting. My cell phone had died and I had pressing work matters to attend to--and it was getting late.

I sincerely hope that the county learns from this terrible voting situation for the November election - we can't afford to have people not vote due to this kind of administrative/logistical mess.

Thank you,
Sonita Bennitt
Larchmont, NY

Ford, David

From: Jarret Berg [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 7:42 PM
To: Allison Fine
Subject: NYS Open Meetings Law and County BOE non-compliance

Dear Allison,

Thanks again for organizing our discussion earlier this week regarding the persistent election administration irregularities that have plagued Westchester County for several election cycles. We eagerly look forward to working with any and all stakeholders who are genuinely interested in remediating what all persons of goodwill surely recognize to be an untenable and persistent situation.

With respect to the discussion as to the general applicability of the NYS Open Meetings Law (OML) to NYS' County Boards of Elections, I wanted to follow up with basic information and relevant citations to primary sources of law, as we have been made aware that there is confusion among the public and community leaders as to its intended breadth and perhaps even its purpose and relevance to election administration.

For situational awareness, I'll be sharing a copy of this with OAG, Westchester BOL, County Counsel's office, and a few colleagues who share these concerns.

To avoid getting too bogged down in the legal weeds of what I believe to be a public policy question with an obvious answer, here are three potential options we can pursue to make tangible progress on this issue and improve access to civil rights for all eligible voters:

- **Option 1:** We can look at the actual law (excerpts/links below) and any relevant written opinions and stipulate with all stakeholders that County Boards of Elections clearly fall within the language of the NYS OML and must come into compliance by developing new formal (compliant) procedures and assuring the public that the past violations will not be repeated in the future, beginning immediately;
- **Option 2:** Even if a hypertechnical legal analysis is persuasive enough to convince some policymakers and stakeholders that a County Board is not strictly covered by the NYS OML, a County Board could and should still voluntarily choose to follow the tenets and practices included in the NYS OML anyway, and should be called upon to do so.
 - It is a better public policy for public officials to adhere to the OML as closely as possible than to disregard it, since fostering public trust around elections in a democratic society that adheres to justice as fairness under law compels the basic procedural transparency encompassed in the OML. In any case, per below, the Election Law places independent documentation and reporting requirements on County Boards that would make it nearly impossible to comply without adherence to several general hallmarks of Open Public Meetings under the statute, like maintaining minutes, votes of decisions taken by majority of the Board, and routine statutory reporting requirements (*infra*).
 - To credibly oppose this, someone must provide a compelling public policy rationale to distinguish County BOEs from the other public entities bound by the OML (Of relevance here, please see the OML § 100 "Legislative Declaration" that lays out the object and purpose the law, included below).

- **Option 3:** If there is genuine disagreement among policymakers as to whether the NYS OML extends to cover County Boards, Westchester's state lawmakers and legislative Leadership should be asked to make it a top reform priority to slightly amend the NYS OML to clarify that of course, a County Board should be covered, given the critical Government functions they administer and the core fundamental rights of citizens at stake. Putting aside any perceived ambiguity in the existing OML (which we reject *prima facie*), the impetus for reform and necessary additional safeguards is the dismal track record of accountability for Board decisionmaking and the poor administration at certain County BOEs that is demonstrated and documented repeatedly. There is also the increasing primacy of the public interest in safeguarding civil rights in our modern society.

Advisory Opinion of the Committee on Open Government (<https://docs.dos.ny.gov/coog/otext/o2646.htm>):

An Advisory Opinion of the Committee on Open Government authored by Fmr. Executive Director Robert Freeman concludes that "although a board of elections might deliberate in private, . . . the act of voting or taking action must in my view occur during an open a meeting." Robert Freeman, NYS Committee on Open Government, *Advisory Opinion 2646*, Aug. 9, 1996, <https://docs.dos.ny.gov/coog/otext/o2646.htm>.

There, Executive Director Freeman counseled that: "Based on the terms of the definition, as well as §3-200 of the Election Law, I believe that a county board of elections constitutes a "public body" subject to the Open Meetings Law" and that "as a general matter, meetings of public bodies must be conducted open to the public" with limited statutory exception for a defined 'executive session' or exemptions like 'judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings'.

With regard to certain types of agency action falling within the 'exemptions', there could be outer bounds of the OML that remain ambiguous, but this may be conclusive to this very basic question before us here--whether the OML applies at all to County Boards of Election.

We should be able to quickly clarify whether any interested party in Westchester County (or anywhere else in the state) actually disputes the foundations or conclusions of this longstanding Advisory Opinion. However, we need not rely solely on this Advisory Opinion, persuasive, directly on point, and probative as it may be.

Here are excerpts of the blackletter law of the NYS Open Meetings Law (Public Officers Law, Article 7) (emphasis added):

- **§ 100 Legislative Declaration:** It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that the public business be performed in an open and public manner and that the citizens of this state be fully aware of and able to observe the performance of public officials and attend and listen to the deliberations and decisions that go into the making of public policy. The people must be able to remain informed if they are to retain control over those who are their public servants. It is the only climate under which the commonweal [sic] will prosper and enable the governmental process to operate for the benefit of those who created it;
- **§ 102(1):** "Meeting" means the official convening of a public body *for the purpose of conducting public business*, including the use of videoconferencing for attendance and participation by the members of the public body.
- **§ 102(2)** "Public body" means any entity, for which a quorum is required in order to conduct public business and which consists of two or more members, performing a governmental function for the state or for an agency or department thereof;

- §102(3) "Executive session" means that portion of a meeting not open to the general public.
- § 103(a): *Every meeting of a public body shall be open to the general public*, except that an executive session of such body may be called and business transacted thereat in accordance with section one hundred five of this article.;
- (d) Public bodies shall make or cause to be made all reasonable efforts to ensure that meetings are held in an appropriate facility which can adequately accommodate members of the public who wish to attend such meetings.
- §103(d)(1): *Any meeting of a public body that is open to the public shall be open to being photographed, broadcast, webcast, or otherwise recorded and/or transmitted by audio or video means.*
- §103(e): *Agency records available to the public pursuant to article six of this chapter, as well as any proposed resolution, law, rule, regulation, policy or any amendment thereto, that is scheduled to be the subject of discussion by a public body during an open meeting shall be made available, upon request therefor, to the extent practicable as determined by the agency or the department, prior to or at the meeting during which the records will be discussed;*
- §104(1): *Public notice of the time and place of a meeting scheduled at least one week prior thereto shall be given or electronically transmitted to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted . . . at least seventy-two hours before such meeting.*
- §104 (6). When a public body has the ability to do so, notice of the time and place of a meeting given in accordance with subdivision one or two of this section, shall also be conspicuously posted on the public body's internet website.
- §105(1). *Conduct of executive sessions. Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting pursuant to a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered, a public body may conduct an executive session for the below enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys;*
- §106(1)-(3): **Minutes**
 - 1. Minutes shall be taken at all open meetings of a public body which shall consist of a record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any other matter formally voted upon and the vote thereon.
 - 2. Minutes shall be taken at executive sessions of any action that is taken by formal vote which shall consist of a record or summary of the final determination of such action, and the date and vote thereon;
 - 3. Minutes of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the freedom of information law within two weeks from the date of such meeting;
- §110. **Construction with other laws.** 1. Any provision of a charter, administrative code, local law, ordinance, or rule or regulation affecting a public body which is more restrictive with respect to public access than this article shall be deemed superseded hereby to the extent that such provision is more restrictive than this article. 2. Any provision of general, special or local law or charter, administrative code, ordinance, or rule or regulation less restrictive with respect to public access than this article shall not be deemed superseded hereby.

Moreover the NYS Election Law independently prescribes:

- **Election Law § 3-212(2):** All actions of the board shall require a majority vote of the commissioners prescribed by law for such board.
- **Election Law § 3-212(3):** The records of the board, and all papers and books filed in its office are public records. Minutes of all meetings shall show how each commissioner voted upon any resolution or motion. The board shall keep a record of its proceedings, of the number of voters registered and enrolled with each party for that year in each political subdivision or part thereof, data relating to the expenses connected with registration, enrollments and elections within the county or city and such other information relating to elections as this chapter or the state board of elections may prescribe.
- **Election Law § 3-212(4)(a)** Each board of elections shall make an annual report of its affairs and proceedings to its local legislative body once every twelve months and no later than the last day of January in any year. A copy of said annual report shall be filed with the state board of elections. (b) Said annual report, as required by paragraph (a) of this subdivision, shall include a detailed description of existing programs designed to enhance voter registration. [...].

Also of relevance in light of various questions that have been raised recently:

- **Election Law § 3-200(2) Commissioners:** Each board shall consist of two election commissioners, except that the county legislative body of a county having a population of more than one hundred and twenty thousand may, by local law, increase the number of commissioners to four, to be appointed as provided in this title;
- **Election Law § 3-202(1):** The term of office of an election commissioner shall be two years beginning January first of each odd numbered year . . . Such determination may be rescinded by a subsequent action of the county legislative body which shall take effect at the expiration of the terms of the commissioners then in office.
- **Election Law § 3-208:** Each election commissioner in the same county shall receive an equal salary. The salary shall be an annual salary to be fixed by the county legislative body . . .

For early voting purposes: Election Law § 8-600 and relevant Regs. requires the County Board to make public designations of early voting locations and hours, and, if voters are not permitted to use any early voting site in their county, any access restrictions, at least 45 days prior to a Primary Election, and by May 1 for a General Election. Relevant provisions below:

- **Election Law § 8-600(3) provides:** *"Any voter may vote at any polling place for early voting established pursuant to subdivision two of this section in the county where such voter is registered to vote; provided, however, if it is impractical to provide each polling place for early voting all of the election district ballots or if early voting at any such polling place makes ensuring that no voter has not previously voted early during such election, the board of elections may assign election districts to a particular early voting poll site. All voters in each county shall have one or more polling places at which they are eligible to vote throughout the early voting period on a substantially equal basis. If the board of elections does not agree by majority vote to plan to assign election districts to early voting poll sites, all voters in the county must be able to vote at any poll site for early voting in the county."*

- **§ 8-600(4)(e) requires:** *Early voting polling places and their hours of operation for early voting at a general election shall be designated by May first of each year pursuant to subdivision one of section 4-104 of this chapter. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision one of section 4-104 of this chapter early voting polling places and their hours of operation for early voting for: (i) a primary or special election shall be made not later than forty-five days before such primary or special election.* (Also, SBOE Regulation § 6211.1(a))
- **EL 8-600(5) requires that** *"Each board of elections shall create a communication plan to inform eligible voters of the opportunity to vote early. Such plan may utilize any and all media outlets, including social media, and shall publicize: the location and dates and hours of operation of all polling places for early voting; an indication of whether each polling place is accessible to voters with physical disabilities; a clear and unambiguous notice to voters that if they cast a ballot during the early voting period they will not be allowed to vote election day; and if polling places for early voting are limited to voters from certain areas pursuant to subdivision three of this section, the location of the polling places for early voting serving the voters of each particular city, town or other political subdivision.*
- **NYS BOE Regulation 6211.6(e):** Not later than the 7th day after a primary or special election or the 10th day after a general election, by 5:00 p.m. on such day, *the Board of Elections shall prepare a list, including data elements prescribed by the Board of Elections and in the format specified by the State Board of Elections, of all persons who submitted an affidavit ballot.* Such list shall be provided to the State Board of Elections, and the State Board of Elections shall provide a combined list of all affidavit ballots submitted statewide to the boards of elections.
 - Given the irregularities and confusion about whether all voters could use all sites or whether voters were restricted, this provision may be important to see whether voters were blocked from voting a regular ballot if they appeared somewhere other than where they were assigned.
- **NYS BOE Regulation § 6211.7. Early voting communications plan**
 - **6211.7(a) Early voting information.** *The Board of Elections shall provide at least the following information to media outlets within the county: (1) the location of early voting sites and their dates and hours of operation; (2) a statement that all early voting sites are accessible to voters with physical disabilities; (3) a clear statement that if a voter casts a ballot during early voting the voter will not be allowed to vote on Election Day or on a subsequent day of early voting;*
 - **(4) if early voting sites are specific to particular cities, towns or other political subdivisions, a statement describing the area served by each early voting site**
 - **(c) Filing communications plan with State Board of Elections.** *The Board of Elections shall annually file a copy of the communications plan on or before June 1st, except in the first year of early voting, on or before the 1st day of July.*

"Next steps" Questions: In light of the foregoing, has anyone at Westchester BOL or Westchester County Executive's office requested the required annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or the Early Voting communication plans for 2019 and 2020? Are they on file with the State BOE as required, along with other required reports? If not, has State BOE taken any action to encourage (compel) the County BOE to comply with the law? These are merely a few basic non-rhetorical questions with knowable answers intended to gauge Westchester's BOE compliance with basic precepts of NYS law.

Finally, the following may provide useful guidance as we begin to remediate the situation at Westchester Board of Elections and bring them into compliance with the various statutes they've persistently violated.

The Committee on Open Government Model Rules for Compliance by Public Bodies provides
(https://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/modelregs_photo_record_broadcast.html)

- "The people's right to witness and observe the governmental decision-making process in action is basic to our society. Access to public portions of meetings of public bodies must be protected and maintained."
- "There is no privacy interest in statements made during public portions of meetings of public bodies. Distaste or embarrassment shall not constitute a basis for prohibiting or limiting the photographing, recording or broadcasting of those present at a meeting."

In light of the foregoing and the extremely wide gulf between the Election and Open Meetings Laws as written and local election administration in practice, I submit that many of the persistent election irregularities that have plagued Westchester County for several election cycles are attributable to, *inter alia*, the failure to conduct County BOE business in a transparent and professional manner, as prescribed by the above.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you or any interested stakeholders would like to discuss further.

Regards,

Jarret Berg, Esq.
Co-Founder

VoteEarlyNY
Early Voting Is Your Right. Use It!

██████████ | @VoteEarlyNY | <http://www.voteearlyny.org>

New Yorkers can confirm voter registration [here](#).

Ford, David

From: Lisa Tannenbaum [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 8:11 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Fwd: Post-Primary Recap

Hi Catherine -

I'm glad Suki forwarded this to me. Thank you for leading the charge into an investigation. Please let me know if you want any data, like the number of people that voted in the September '18 primary by city/town, which should have been used to forecast the number of people voting per city/town. I didn't know until yesterday that some people from Scarsdale had to go to White Plains to vote and some had to go to New Rochelle. This was an unmitigated disaster.

Although no one's fault other than Andrew Yang and Bernie Sanders, the presidential ballot took forever for people to understand, the concept of voting for a candidate and delegates then filling in 9 different choices!

As much as I would like to say voting by mail went well, we heard all day from people who never received their ballots. It was a perfect storm, issues with the BoE and postal service. We have to ask people to have their absentee ballot applications in sooner, postmarking it by the 16th didn't leave enough time for the ballots to get back to people, given current post office performance.

I'm still in recovery mode, so please excuse any ranting and rambling. Is it okay if I forward this to Tommy Meier? I talked to him post primary day and he had a ton of insight, ie poll workers who were not utilized, offering of polling sites that were refused, etc.

Best,

Lisa

Begin forwarded message:

From: Suki van Dijk [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Post-Primary Recap
Date: June 28, 2020 at 7:47:39 PM EDT
To: Suki van Dijk [REDACTED]

Just wanted to make sure you all saw this very important email from Catherine Parker. Please respond to her if you have any comments/concerns about the voting process this time around. We must get this right for Nov.

From: Catherine Parker <parker@westchesterlegislators.com>
Date: June 25, 2020 at 10:57:06 AM EDT
To: Catherine Parker [REDACTED]
Subject: Post-Primary Recap
Reply-To: Parker@westchesterlegislators.com

Ford, David

From: Nancy Seligson [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 1:51 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Fwd: Fwd: Post-Primary Recap

Dear Catherine:

I'm forwarding to you the email my friend Alison Lowy wrote in response to your request for anecdotes regarding June 23rd voting. She sent it to me after I mentioned to her that you were collecting information.

I'm very interested in improving the voting situation and would appreciate the opportunity to talk about it.

Thank you.

Nancy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: lowy1 [REDACTED]
Date: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 6:55 PM
Subject: RE: Fwd: Post-Primary Recap
To: Nancy Seligson [REDACTED]

Thank you for asking us to respond with our voting experiences from Tuesday. I was meant to vote at the town of Mamaroneck office. I went at 4:20 and ran into a friend online who said she had been waiting 40 minutes and when she showed me where she had started it turned out she'd only moved 20 feet. The line went on for at least another 50 yards although I'm a terrible judge of distance. My daughter and I went home and I went back at 8 only to find that the line was longer. I applaud all of those people who waited. I didn't have it in me. I felt terrible. I still feel terrible and very disappointed in the process. Thank you.

Alison Lowy

Sent on the run

----- Original message -----

From: Nancy Seligson [REDACTED]
Date: 6/25/20 11:00 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: Alison Lowy [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Post-Primary Recap

Dear Alison:

Please see Catherine Parker's newsletter here. She will meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections and needs to hear from people about their voting experience. Please share your experience so she can add that information to the story.

Thanks.

Love,
NS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Catherine Parker** <Parker@westchesterlegislators.com>

Date: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 10:57 AM

Subject: Post-Primary Recap

To: Nancy Seligson [REDACTED]



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes by absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that some people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

My colleagues at the Board of Legislators are looking to meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections once all the absentee ballots have been counted (as you can see from my note attached below). If you had a difficult experience with voting in the primary I would like to hear from you. If you had offered

Ford, David

From: Robin Gibbs [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 6:56 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Never received mail in ballot

Ms Parker,
I never received my absentee ballot for the recent primary election.
Thank you,
Robin Gibbs
[REDACTED]
Scarsdale

Robin Gibbs, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
[REDACTED]
RobinGibbsPhD.com

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Webmaster
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Filiberti, John; Parker, Catherine
Subject: District 7 user comments

Hello,
Clarice Curry has submitted the following message:

Subject: Town of Mamaroneck polling place and voting

I am a democratic Inspector who was available to work on 6/23. I was told I wasn't needed as they had limited the polling places. I had voted by absentee ballot myself. Knowing I was an inspector, neighbors in my apartment building told me they went 4 TIMES to vote but the lines were so long they gave up. I wrote an e-mail to the Board of Elections letting them know and saying that this was a disgrace. I asked if we were in South Carolina?! Please have an inquiry into this. Thanks Clarice Spica Curry [REDACTED]

User Details:

Name	Clarice Curry
Email Address	[REDACTED]
Confirm Email Address	[REDACTED]
Street Address	[REDACTED]
City	Mamaroneck
Zip Code	10543
Email Subject	Town of Mamaroneck polling place and voting
Comments	I am a democratic Inspector who was available to work on 6/23. I was told I wasn't needed as they had limited the polling places. I had voted by absentee ballot myself. Knowing I was an inspector, neighbors in my apartment building told me they went 4 TIMES to vote but the lines were so long they gave up. I wrote an e-mail to the Board of Elections letting them know and saying that this was a disgrace. I asked if we were in South Carolina?! Please have an inquiry into this. Thanks Clarice Spica Curry [REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Allegra Dengler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 8:58 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Cc: Allegra Dengler
Subject: Voting machines responsible for lines?

Hi Catherine-

Thanks for your interest in and concern about election integrity in Westchester. And thanks for running for Congress and getting your important ideas out there during the early debates. (In the good old days when we had in-person debates.)

Given the problems with this election, is the Election Reform Committee still meeting? I urge an investigation into what part voting machines played in creating the lines. Were the breakdowns among the 40 new Dominion ICE machines? The election commissioners went ahead and bought them after the Board of Legislators rejected their request for a multi-million dollar bond last year. They put so much time and attention into getting more this year that it apparently distracted them from preparing for and running a good primary.

There were multiple complaints about other issues that voters should not have had to deal with. The BOE website is not user-friendly and when a voter finally navigated to information, it gave incorrect information. I went online to see what my early voting site was and was directed to my regular poll site, which I don't think was open even on election day. I voted absentee and am only hoping that my vote gets counted in the absence of any tracking system to reassure me.

The problems that came up must be addressed and remedied before November!

Thanks-

Allegra

Allegra Dengler
[REDACTED]
Tarrytown, NY 10591
[REDACTED]

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/06/23/primary-election-lines-polling-sites/3240830001/>

Primary results: Voters face long lines, waits as leaders emerge in key races

It's likely winners won't be crowned when polls close at 9 p.m. tonight.

Mike Dougherty

Mark Lungariello

Rockland/Westchester Journal News

One polling site at Greenburgh Town Hall temporarily closed down due to problems with both machines

there. The line moved slowly and voters were told to fill out affidavit ballots.

...Mimi Rocah, running in a Democratic Party primary for Westchester County District attorney, had witnessed the logjam at the polling site. Elections officials have been under scrutiny and Rocah said there have been enough problems to warrant a look at how things were handled.

"It seemed like they weren't prepared," she said. She said confusion and the problems were a form of voter suppression, even if the issues were unintentional.

But Westchester election co-commissioner Reggie Lafayette said officials were doing the best under unprecedented circumstances. The Greenburgh site was an unavoidable, temporary glitch, he said.

"Whenever you're dealing with electronics things will happen," he said. The commissioner confirmed there were long lines outside his office at the Board of Elections, which served as a polling site in downtown White Plains.

Ford, David

From: Molly Greece [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 12:03 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Election issues

I'd like to add this thought

... if the polling places were cut because there weren't enough poll workers because of covid why were we the only County with the problem? Rockland was fine I think the city even was ok - but god forbid you have to vote in ... Mamaroneck? ! It makes no sense. Someone somehow made a really bad call on which polling places to cut out. They must not have looked at numbers or trends. It seems it was random and haphazard.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jun 25, 2020, at 10:02 PM, Parker, Catherine <cfp7@westchestergov.com> wrote:

>

> Voters are not to blame. I am so glad that you added your story.

> Thank you.

> Catherine

>

>

> Catherine Parker

> County Legislator, 7th District

> Westchester County Board of Legislators

> 800 Michaelian Office Building

> 148 Martine Avenue

> White Plains, NY 10601

>

> phone: 914-995-2802/fax: 914-995-3884

>

> Email: parker@westchesterlegislators.com

>

> Visit Us On The Web: www.westchesterlegislators.com

> Join our Facebook fanpage at <http://www.facebook.com/westchestercountyBOL>

> Follow us on Twitter at @westchesterBOL

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Molly Greece [REDACTED]

> Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:40 PM

> To: Parker, Catherine <cfp7@westchestergov.com>

> Subject: Election issues

>

> Hi Catherine

> You may have seen my complaints already. I'm in Croton on Hudson.

> We had one polling place for the village that normally has more than three I believe. Also our one spot including some in the zip code but not the village. One polling place with only two check in tables and two machines (I think four or five workers). For a village of 8,000 plus. It took me an hour in total to vote.

> People keep saying stuff like I should have voted by mail or voted early. Voting early is in Peekskill (can't there be one in each town?) and while I could have - its out of the way. I wasn't sure who I was going to vote for so I decided not to do absentee. I never had an issue voting before and with mask wearing I am not scared of being in public (covid) so voted in person as usual. If supermarkets are open shouldn't polls be in same amount as usual? If we can go to work can't we vote in person? It seems they were unnecessarily closed down. No other County had the problems we did. I heard on the radio (97.1) it referred to as voter suppression (to protect Engel). I witnessed one older gentleman leave the line giving up his right to vote. I never thought I would see this in NY - in Croton. If there were issues with not enough poll workers it should have been communicated to the voters so we could help make the process work. Were senior citizens not allowed to work the polls? Were there really not enough workers? Why did they consolidate the polls and who exactly decided that? Did the county BOE decide this on their own? Did the state approve it?

> Some body screwed up.

> And all these ppl blaming voters for going out and voting as if we are clueless about the virus.

> It's too much.

>

> Thanks

> Molly Greece

>

>

> Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Molly Greece [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:40 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Election issues

Hi Catherine

You may have seen my complaints already. I'm in Croton on Hudson.

We had one polling place for the village that normally has more than three I believe. Also our one spot including some in the zip code but not the village. One polling place with only two check in tables and two machines (I think four or five workers). For a village of 8,000 plus. It took me an hour in total to vote.

People keep saying stuff like I should have voted by mail or voted early. Voting early is in Peekskill (can't there be one in each town?) and while I could have - its out of the way. I wasn't sure who I was going to vote for so I decided not to do absentee. I never had an issue voting before and with mask wearing I am not scared of being in public (covid) so voted in person as usual. If supermarkets are open shouldn't polls be in same amount as usual? If we can go to work can't we vote in person? It seems they were unnecessarily closed down. No other County had the problems we did. I heard on the radio (97.1) it referred to as voter suppression (to protect Engel). I witnessed one older gentleman leave the line giving up his right to vote. I never thought I would see this in NY - in Croton. If there were issues with not enough poll workers it should have been communicated to the voters so we could help make the process work. Were senior citizens not allowed to work the polls? Were there really not enough workers? Why did they consolidate the polls and who exactly decided that? Did the county BOE decide this on their own? Did the state approve it?

Some body screwed up.

And all these ppl blaming voters for going out and voting as if we are clueless about the virus.

It's too much.

Thanks
Molly Greece

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Gina Perino [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 7:15 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Universal mail-in ballots

Hello, I noticed that for the primary we had to fill out paperwork requesting an absentee ballot. Because my family didn't get to the paperwork in time, we had to vote in person at New Roc HS instead of our usual polling place Daniel Webster Elementary.

The woman at the front desk, while wearing a mask, was coughing. The lines were long, it was hot indoors, and after waiting about an hour I honestly started worrying about the lack of fresh air and I left out of paranoia.

I commend all of the people who showed up to work at the polling place but the process was much much slower than how it usually goes at Daniel Webster. In a pandemic with a young asthmatic child at home I just didn't want to further risk contracting covid by sticking around another hour for a process that has never taken more than 10 mins at my usual polling place.

Why can't Westchester do for general elections what they did for the school budget ballot - send them out universally to everyone. Don't make us jump through a multi step process for requesting mail-in ballots.

Anything to avoid the long lines and not so safe conditions. Not just for the voters but for the volunteers as well. I feel bad for everyone working there that day.

Thank you for listening!

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Maureen Leblanc [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 6:20 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

I would add my voice to the list of people who found themselves unable to vote on Tuesday. I recognize that I should have voted early or should have gotten an absentee ballot; however, since the polls were still open on Tuesday, I figured that is when I would vote. I tried 4 separate times to go to the Town Center in Mamaroneck, and each time, encountered a line that extended down Boston Post Road. At 8:45, I went one last time, determined to cast my ballot, but after waiting a while and seeing the line move extremely slowly, I gave up. In all of the years that I have voted (which is many since I am 55), I have never seen anything like the situation I encountered on Tuesday. It was extremely troubling and did not reflect well on our democratic process.

Maureen LeBlanc
Larchmont

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

From: Catherine Parker
To: MAUREEN LEBLANC
Sent: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 10:56 am
Subject: Post-Primary Recap



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes by absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that some people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

My colleagues at the Board of Legislators are looking to meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections once all the absentee ballots have been counted (as you can see from my note attached below). If you had a difficult experience with voting in the primary I would like to hear from you. If you had offered

Ford, David

From: D L COLEMAN [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 5:56 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

Hi

I'd like to report some polling sites did not have air conditioning. Thomas Edison school on Port Chester is one. As hot as it is there should have been air conditioning. Hope there is heat in November

Sent from my Verizon LG Smartphone

----- Original message-----

From: Catherine Parker
Date: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 10:56 AM
To: donna l seward;
Cc:
Subject: Post-Primary Recap



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes by absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that some people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

My colleagues at the Board of Legislators are looking to meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections once all the absentee ballots have been counted (as you can see from my note attached below). If you had a difficult experience with voting in the primary I would like to hear from you. If you had offered

Ford, David

From: Lui Villa [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 5:20 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

Hello Legislator Parker,

Thank you for the update email to constituents. I would like to participate in the post-primary recap meeting to be scheduled with the Board of Legislators and Commissioners of the Board of Elections so we as a community may recap the post-primary and discuss areas needing development for future elections. When should we expect an announcement email circulated to confirm the meeting date/time? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Lui

On Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 10:57 AM Catherine Parker <Parker@westchesterlegislators.com> wrote:



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that some people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

My colleagues at the Board of Legislators are looking to meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections once all the absentee ballots have been counted (as you can see from my note attached below, you had a difficult experience with voting in the primary I would like to hear from you. If you had offered

Ford, David

From: barrywep [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 5:15 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: RE: Post-Primary Recap

My wife and I both sent in ballot applications at the same time. I got one. She did not.
Barry Weprin
Mamaroneck

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Catherine Parker
Date: 6/25/20 10:57 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: BARRY WEPRIN
Subject: Post-Primary Recap



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes by absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that some people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

Ford, David

From: Montalto, Melanie
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 4:46 PM
To: Alvarado, Jose; Barr, Nancy; Borgia, Catherine; Boykin, Benjamin; Clements, Terry; Covill, Kitley; Gashi, Vedat; Johnson, Christopher; Maher, Damon; Parker, Catherine; Shimsky, MaryJane; Smith, Colin; Tubiolo, David; Walter, Ruth; Williams, Alfreda; Williams, Lyndon; Stevens, Carolyn; Stevens, Carolyn; Chervokas, Jason; Jason Chervokas; Alfreda Willaims [REDACTED] Boykin, Ben [REDACTED] Catherine Borgia [REDACTED] Catherine Parker; Colin Smith [REDACTED] Damon Maher [REDACTED] David Tubiolo [REDACTED] Johnson, Christopher; Jose Alvarado [REDACTED] Kitley Covill [REDACTED] Lyndon Williams [REDACTED] Nancy Barr [REDACTED] Ruth Walter; Shimsky, MaryJane [REDACTED] Terry Clements; Vedat Gashi [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Worrying about November voting.....

Please see below from Nancy for tomorrow's caucus discussion.

Melanie Montalto, MSW
Legislative Director
Westchester County Board of Legislators
148 Martine Avenue 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
(914) 995-8620

From: Amy Lindsay [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 1:29 PM
To: Barr, Nancy <neb7@westchestergov.com>
Subject: Worrying about November voting.....

Ms. Barr—

I understand that you are the Representative to the Westchester County Board of Elections.

Just wanted to share my experiences to date with the absentee process.

- It has been my experience that the phone has always answered promptly and politely, for which I am most appreciative, and I am also most appreciative for the chance to participate in early voting for the first time.
- The website needs someone to go through it with the user in mind. Figuring out how/which form one needs for an absentee ballot is in no way intuitive
- **2016 Presidential Election:**
 - My college age daughter applied for an absentee ballot and only received one on the very last day her ballot could be mailed, notwithstanding having requested one months earlier. She almost considered applying for a same day registration/voting in New Haven, or having me drive to New Haven, miss an entire day of classes/practice to drive and vote in Harrison, and then have me drive her back to New Haven.

- At one point when I suggested that perhaps she just not vote, since likely her absentee ballot would not change the outcome of the highly democratic State of New York, it was she who reminded me of my family's story. My great grandparents emigrated to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, expressly to participate in a democracy. When women got the vote in New York State in 1917, a full two years prior to Congress passing the 19th amendment, my great-grandfather encouraged his wife, for whom I am named, to learn English expressly so that she could pass the citizenship exam in order to vote. Suffice it to say, the women of my family take voting extremely seriously.
- **2020 Presidential Primary/Westchester Primary 2020:**
 - My daughter, who is currently in the UK, applied for an absentee ballot in March of this year and received it only to find out she had to RE-apply for another form due to the Covid changes. She had to do so expanding sufficient monies to receive the new absentee ballot in sufficient time to receive it/return it
 - If you are living abroad, it is up to you to realize that you must fill out the military form; this makes NO sense
 - I applied for an absentee ballot the first week of the NY State lock-down, on or about March 25
 - I received my PRESIDENTIAL absentee ballot approximately 10 days later, without notification that there would be a separate ballot mailed for the remaining primaries.
 - Having not received the second ballot for non-presidential primaries, I called the Westchester office for absentee ballots on Friday, June 12 only to be told there was "plenty of time" for me to still receive one
 - Having still not received the second ballot for non-presidential primaries, I call the Westchester office for absentee ballots AGAIN on Thursday, June 18th, and was told another one would be put in the mail
 - I did, in fact, receive the ballot on Saturday, June 20. It needed to be postmarked by Monday, June 22nd.
 - Finally, let me suggest that the section of the absentee ballot for DA was completely easy to bypass. A bold line was required to ensure that it was clear that there was a 3rd primary election to vote in.
 - Finally, I was distressed to hear how very difficult it was for folks to vote in both in both White Plains and Yonkers.

I am most concerned that Westchester County will be woefully unprepared for the November elections under ordinary circumstances, notwithstanding the added complications due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please let me know how I can be of constructive help in rectifying this situation. Seriously, please let me know if and how I can be of help.

Thanks ever so for "listening". Hope you and yours are well. Stay smart/stay safe.

◆Amy Lindsay◆

Ford, David

From: Joanne Hickey [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:34 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Election Issues

Hi

I saw your Tweet on this subject, and am responding.

I requested an absentee ballot for the first time ever. The pre-printed return address on my ballot envelope had my correct name and street address, but wrong town and zip code. I have lived at and voted from the same address for 18 years. I simply crossed out the wrong info, and wrote in the correct town and zip.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Joanne Hickey

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: Lulu Friesdat [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:12 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: ICE machine purchases

From Myra Saul - of Scarsdale Indivisible.

"We are currently trying to verify whether ICE machines were already purchased by the WBOE. We know they were used at many locations on Primary Day, besides being used for early voting... I was a poll watcher in Scarsdale. ICE machines were in use there."

Kind Regards,
Lulu

@LuluFriesdat
Co-Founder, SMART Elections
Elevating election reform to an urgent national priority

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

Subject: RE: Westchester Election Commissioners
From: "Lulu Friesdat" [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, June 22, 2020 5:52 pm
To: "Parker, Catherine" <cfp7@westchestergov.com>

Thursday would be preferable.
Could you do 11am?
Thank you.

Kind Regards,
Lulu

@LuluFriesdat
Co-Founder, SMART Elections
Elevating election reform to an urgent national priority

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

Subject: RE: Westchester Election Commissioners
From: "Parker, Catherine" <cfp7@westchestergov.com>
Date: Mon, June 22, 2020 5:36 pm
To: Lulu Friesdat [REDACTED]

Sure. I can probably schedule time for you on either Thursday or Friday morning.
Catherine Parker
County Legislator, 7th District
Westchester County Board of Legislators
800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, NY 10601

phone: 914-995-2802/fax: 914-995-3884

Email: parker@westchesterlegislators.com



Visit Us On The Web: www.westchesterlegislators.com



Join our Facebook fanpage at <http://www.facebook.com/westchestercountyBOL>



Follow us on Twitter at [@westchesterBOL](https://twitter.com/@westchesterBOL)

From: Lulu Friesdat [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 22, 2020 5:33 PM

To: Parker, Catherine <cfp7@westchestergov.com>

Subject: Westchester Election Commissioners

Hello Catherine,

Would you be available this week to do a Zoom call with me? I would like to film a follow up interview with you about the ICE machines, and the Westchester election commissioners.

I am concerned that they are deliberately sabotaging the election process in order to say that they "need" the ICE machines to make Early Voting go smoothly, and reduce absentee voting in the fall.

The information I've received about mistakes on absentee ballots, candidates left off ballots, pollworkers told not to come in... it is concerning. I know this is a difficult time for election officials, but based on the comments of the commissioners at the June 1st budget meeting, I am apprehensive about their strategy.

I would like to get an interview on tape discussing their poor performance and establishing that it has nothing to do with the ICE machines - to try and get out ahead of that potential narrative.

Kind Regards,

Lulu

@LuluFriesdat

Co-Founder, SMART Elections

Elevating election reform to an urgent national priority

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

Subject: Colety is not accurate

From: "Lulu Friesdat" [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, June 01, 2020 2:31 pm

To: "parker@westchesterlegislators.com"

<parker@westchesterlegislators.com>

I believe that Colety said that the older machines that you have cannot print multiple ballot styles - but they can.

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

Subject: Some responses to Reggie

From: "Lulu Friesdat" [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, June 01, 2020 2:30 pm

To: "parker@westchesterlegislators.com"

<parker@westchesterlegislators.com>

Why are the ICE machines more of a security concern than the old machines?

- Because they have the ability to print on the paper ballot after the voter casts their vote. That hack would not be able to be detected.

With the current machines, you can always go back to the paper ballot if there is concern.

The need for a machine that prints multiple ballot styles.

- The simplest and least expensive way of doing this is with ballot on demand machines. That is how many other states and counties, are doing this.

Kind Regards,

Lulu

@LuluFriesdat

Co-Founder, SMART Elections

Elevating election reform to an urgent national priority

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

Subject: KnowInk poll books - Problems & Connections to Republican Party

From: "Lulu Friesdat" [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, June 01, 2020 11:32 am

To: "parker@westchesterlegislators.com"

<parker@westchesterlegislators.com>

Hi Catherine,

This morning I was informed that the board is also considering purchasing Knowink epollbooks. I'd like to alert you to information that was recently published about very serious **"catastrophic" problems with these pollbooks connecting to voting machines.**

Are you able to forward this information to your board members?

It is from Jennifer Cohn's recent article. She is a very reliable researcher and advocate for election security.

<https://whowhatwhy.org/2020/05/27/touchscreen-voting-makes-everything-easy-including-hacking/>

The managing director of KnowInc, Scott Leiendecker, is a former Republican election commissioner who was involved in some very contentious politics in Missouri.

https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/st-louis-election-board-wracked-with-turmoil/article_0b52f1ad-46ec-50ba-a65f-54f60d65bfe2.html

Here is more information about Knowink's failures from Cohn's article:

"In a test run conducted in Georgia in January, electronic poll books from a company called Knowink failed in four out of six counties, preventing activation of the BMDs. ... Similarly catastrophic connectivity issues with Knowink e-poll books wreaked havoc in Los Angeles County, CA, during its recent primary."

Here is the article about the Georgia incident:

<https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/problem-with-new-election-equipment-delays-voting-georgia->

Nov 05, 2019

A glitch with Georgia's new voter check-in computers caused delays in most of the six counties testing it, causing some precincts to stay open late to accommodate voters who left without casting their ballots.

The problem occurred in at least four of the six counties where the new voting system was being tested Tuesday before it's rolled out statewide to 7.4 million registered voters during the March 24 presidential primary. Most Georgia voters were still using the state's 17-year-old voting technology Tuesday.

Poll workers weren't able to create voter access cards on new voting check-in computers manufactured by KnowInk. Those cards activate touchscreen voting machines so that they display the ballot associated with the jurisdictions where voters are registered.

In Decatur County, near the Florida border, some voters waited 45 minutes for the problem to be fixed. Decatur election officials decided to keep precincts open an hour later, until 8 p.m.

"Let's get these kinks resolved now, before March 24," said Carol Heard, chief elections officer for Decatur County. "My hair was red before today. Now it's gray."

The same issue also occurred in Bartow, Carroll, Paulding and Lowndes counties...

Poll workers couldn't complete the check-in process on the computers, called Poll Pads, said Carroll County Elections Supervisor Greg Rigby. Voter information came up on the screen, but the Poll Pads wouldn't advance to the final step of encoding voter access cards.

Here is the link to an article about the LA disastrous experience with their epollbooks, which Cohn says are from KnowInc.

<https://prospect.org/civil-rights/iowa-style-voting-disaster-in-los-angeles/>

"Perhaps the biggest disaster involved the e-poll books, which were supposed to connect to a central database in Sacramento, so poll workers could find a voter's file and give them the correct ballot. (In the new system, Angelenos could vote in any voting center in the county; previously, they'd voted in the precinct where they were registered.) With parts of 18 Congressional districts and 24 state assembly districts in Los Angeles County, this was a critical step; you could not run the election without it. And the system malfunctioned, not just in L.A. but the other counties that had abandoned precinct-only voting, too. Delays in checking-in voters produced longer and longer lines. The county registrar's office cited the check-in process as the source of "the main issues that occurred on Election Day."

Cohn says the Philadelphia also had problems with the Knowinc epollbooks - and was unable to use them:

"And the city of Philadelphia recently had to shelve Knowink electronic poll books after the machines failed to connect to ES&S's printers and proved inadequate when it came to election night reporting."

Kind Regards,
Lulu

@LuluFriesdat

Co-Founder, SMART Elections

Elevating election reform to an urgent national priority

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

Subject: Dominion ICE

From: "Lulu Friesdat" [REDACTED]

Date: Thu, May 28, 2020 12:14 pm

To: "parker@westchesterlegislators.com"

<parker@westchesterlegislators.com>

Hello Catherine,

Good speaking to you this morning. I really appreciate your taking the time to call.

Below are the documents and links we discussed.

Thank you for your offer to enter these documents into the record.

UPCOMING PAPER

Here is a link to an upcoming paper that will appear in the Georgetown Law Technology Review later this year by Professors Appel (Princeton) and Stark (UC Berkeley.)

<https://www.stat.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/appelStark20.pdf>

I have attached the complete paper as well. Here is what they say about hybrids, like the Dominion ICE.

"All-in-one BMDs combine the ballot-marking functionality of "pure" BMDs with the scanning/tabulating functionality of optical scanners. In various configurations sold by different manufacturers, the "all-in-one" or "hybrid" BMD may eject the ballot for the voter to inspect before feeding it back into the slot from which it was ejected, or the BMD may display the ballot under glass for voter

inspection before retracting it past a scanner.

These machines are even less secure—and less acceptable for use in public elections—than pure BMDs. The same paper path contains both the printer (for marking ballots) and the optical scanner (for scanning ballots). The legitimate software (installed by the manufacturer) presumably will not print additional votes onto the ballot after the voter has inspected it, but hacked software could. The software installed on the BMD has complete control over all the physical functions of the paper path: printing, scanning, and paper transport. Therefore, the hacked computer can print votes on the ballot after the voter's last opportunity to inspect the paper."

ADDITIONAL AUDITS REQUIRED FOR THE ICE
I have additionally attached the updated audit procedures from the state board of elections regarding the ICE.

Look at page 24 for the new auditing requirements for the Dominion ICE. The fact that these checks are needed indicates that the possibility of the voting machines running malware is a serious one. However, checking one machine per election will not really protect the county if multiple machines are in service. Machines that had been breached could be counting votes for years and it might never be discovered. As we discussed, if it's determined that the machine may have been breached, the only recourse is to hold a new election, because the machine has the ability to change the paper ballots.

From personal experience dealing with forensic computer scientists, I will also say that the process of trying to determine if a machine has been breached is time consuming and expensive. One standard laptop review can cost thousands of dollars. So the cost of doing forensic examination on multiple voting machines if some type of malware is suspected could be quite high.

Here are the new auditing procedures that are mandated for the ICE. I've also attached a screenshot that has a table that makes it easier to understand what is required.

23 e) Dominion ICE Only Counter Review

If a Dominion ICE machine is selected as part of the random selection an additional audit step must be performed. If no ICE machine is selected in the random selection process one ICE machine must be selected at random and the following audit step must be performed.

1. From the zero tape:

Record the "Printer Protective Counter" total and verify that the "Number of Print Request" total is 0 (zero) and record that total.

2. From the result tape:

Record the "Printer Protective Counter" total and the

"Number of Print Request" total.

3. Calculate the difference between the Results Tape and Zero Tape "Printer Protective Counter" and compare that number to the ending total from the results tape of the "Number of Print Request" total. Both totals should be the same.

If a discrepancy is found (difference between the two totals), please perform the Counter Review process on an additional machine to ensure that the discrepancy is isolated to one machine. Provide a report to the State Board of Elections indicating the two totals along with the machine serial number. If a second machine is found to have a difference in the totals all ICE machines must have the audit performed and the State Board of Elections must be notified immediately.

BETTER WAYS TO SPEND MONEY FOR COVID19 ELECTIONS

Here are some better ways that Westchester could spend COVID19 election funding:

- Technology that can help voters with disabilities and other voters vote from home, such as this product from Five Cedars Group, which was highly recommended by one of our technical advisors. <http://fivecedarsgroup.com/>
It allows voters with disabilities and other voters to download and mail in their ballots.
- High speed scanners to count an increased number of absentee ballots.
- Dropboxes that are monitored with cameras to accept absentee ballots.
- Better privacy spaces for voters to fill out their ballots.
- Technology to allow poll watchers, voters and candidate representatives to monitor procedures like signature verification remotely.
- A tracking system for absentee voting applications and ballots.

This is the link to SMART Elections best practices for COVID19 voting that we developed with national vote-by-mail and auditing experts.

<https://smartelections.us/public-oversight-of-funds>

BETTER EQUIPMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

Better equipment is in development. DARPA - the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is developing secure hardware technology that will be available for voting machines.

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/yw84q7/darpa-is-building-a-dollar10-million-open-source-secure-voting-system

I spoke with the head of the project last year and he said that there will be a hand-marked paper ballot design and a design for voters with disabilities.

Ford, David

From: Marjorie Lindblom [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Cc: Nancy Anderson
Subject: Westchester voting information

Dear Ms. Parker –

I am one of your constituents and saw your call for information about voting problems in Westchester County. I suggest that you connect with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, as they were taking calls on Tuesday about voting problems through the Election Protection hotline (1-866 OUR VOTE) and may have useful data. I have been actively involved with this effort for many years, although I did not participate in the hotline for this election. I am copying Nancy Anderson of the Lawyers' Committee staff, as she can point you to the right person or sources to get more information about calls from Westchester County. (Thank you, Nancy, for any help you can give Catherine Parker, who is my representative on the Westchester County (NY) Board of Legislators.)

Marjorie Lindblom
Larchmont NY

Ford, David

From: Marie Hickman [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 12:33 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: HORRIBLE SITUATION FOR VOTING AT MAMARONECK TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY
_NEEDS TO BE FIXED

Dear Catherine Parker,

I **never** got my absentee ballot. I was **not** the only one on line that that happened to!

I applied way in advance.

I had to wait 3 1/2 hours on line at Mamaroneck Town Center to vote, got out at 10:30 PM, and people were still at **beginning of line on Boston Post Rd.** which meant they would vote at **2 AM.** NOT TO MENTION the people that sat 3 hours on line during the day in the scorching sun and heat.

I felt this situation was horrible.

This means that in the Presidential election we may have to wait **7 hours** to vote as both Democrats and Republicans will be on line. Potentially in a snow storm or rain storm, and cold.

This concern was re-iterated by people working with the voting. **THERE WERE VERY FEW VOTING MACHINES AT TOWN HALL.** They too were shocked by the situation!

Totally unfair to us. Seemed like a conspiracy to me!

The electoral system at it's worst.

Good news I met a lot of determined voters, despite some people **collapsing** from standing so long!

In the past it has taken me just a few minutes to vote for a primary!

If this is our future, we as SENIOR CITIZENS and regular citizens have a problem!

Government at its' worst!

Marie Hickman
[REDACTED]

Marie

Ford, David

From: Lois Fenton [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 12:17 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

FYI: Re: Primary recap and upcoming election:

I have worked for many years as an election inspector. Like many, if not most, other election inspectors, I am a senior who is staying at home, as recommended. I called in quite early to say that i would NOT be working at the polls this year. I realized that most other poll workers would also do this, and was pretty certain that there was going to be a huge log jam at the polls, even when I did not know there would also be fewer places to vote.

This should have been anticipated. I cannot understand why it is even legal to have so few polling places.

Long-time Democrat voter,

Lois Fenton
[REDACTED]

Mamaroneck, NY 10543'

NOTE:

I requested a vote-by-mail ballot. When mine arrived in the mail, part of it was stuck to the envelope flap. Having worked at the polls for so many years, I knew that this might make my ballot invalid, and so I requested and received another/replacement ballot. I voted by mail.

On Thursday, June 25, 2020, 10:56:27 AM EDT, Catherine Parker wrote:



Dear Neighbor,

Ford, David

From: Carol McMillan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 12:05 PM
To: Parker, Catherine; Barr, Nancy
Subject: RE: Post-Primary Recap

Hi Catherine and also copying Nancy,

I am so sorry to hear about the challenges on Tuesday. I had voted early in Harrison and that was running smoothly. Early voting is an excellent addition to the process. I did hear from a couple of workers who were helping count Port Chester school votes and had been to training that it did not go smoothly.

As a frequent worker at the King Street Elementary site in Port Chester, I was surprised not to be contacted (but had sat out the November election in 2019 as I had knee surgery just a few days before). Obviously this is a topic of critical importance and I thank you for looking into what can be done before November.

Carol McMillan

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Catherine Parker
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 10:56 AM
To: Carol McMillan
Subject: Post-Primary Recap



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their votes by absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's executive order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another option, many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well.

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you my frustration that the Board of

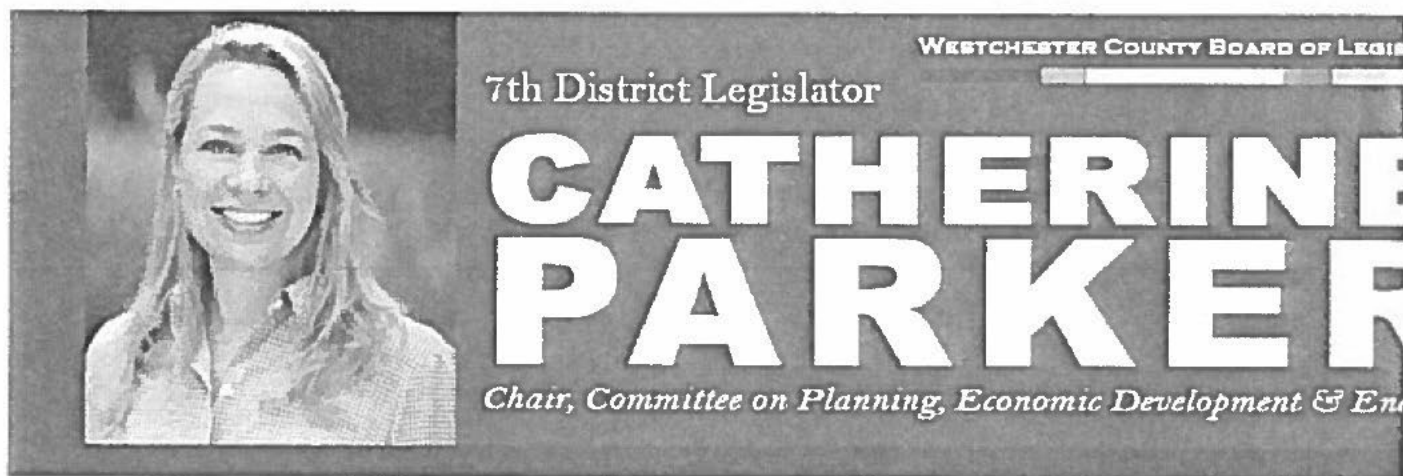
Ford, David

From: Gerald Kolbert [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 11:38 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

Thank you. One polling place for the TOM was ridiculous
Marlene

Sent from Marlene's iPad

On Jun 25, 2020, at 10:57 AM, Catherine Parker wrote:



Dear Neighbor,

Last night Westchester had its first election where it appears that the majority of voters cast their absentee ballot. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for health, Governor Cuomo's order allowing voting by mail was a safe and efficient way to be heard in the primary. As another many of you chose to participate in early voting which in my legislative district seemed to go well

However, Tuesday's Election Day seemed to be fraught with long lines and confusion for many who wanted to cast their ballot. To those that voted at the Mamaroneck Town Center, I share with you frustration that the Board of Elections appears to not have planned well. It is absurd to think that people who arrived by 9 PM did not cast their votes until well after midnight.

My colleagues at the Board of Legislators are looking to meet with the Commissioners of the Board of Elections once all the absentee ballots have been counted (as you can see from my note attached to this email). If you had a difficult experience with voting in the primary I would like to hear from you. If you had to work as a poll worker I would like to hear from you. If you left your polling place because the lines were too long I would like to hear from you.

Ford, David

From: Jenny Geer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Re: Post-Primary Recap

Thank you so much Catherine for following up on the awful experience by many during Tuesday's election.

I voted early on Friday with no problem. There was no line and I have heard the same from others who voted early. However, it seems that the message did not get out to the majority of voters that early voting would be a preferred way to vote in person, rather than waiting until Election Day, given the reduced number of polling sites.

There were lots of communications from different sources (including County legislators!) about the three ways to vote, but with no push to use one method over another. And the communications from the BOE were barely adequate and in some cases actually inaccurate -- even the early voting notification implied strongly that people needed to vote early in their town, when they could actually vote at any early voting site (and at least one NYS election law expert has stated that our BOE was violating the law in this case).

The absentee ballot process was also incredibly confusing, with no helpful communications from the BOE. I received two Presidential ballots dated April 28 with no explanation of the incorrect date (I know why but I'm paying attention), and no indication that there would be a second ballot coming and when. I received lots of questions from people who were confused about the process. The mix of postage-paid and no postage envelopes was also confusing -- could you combine the ballots into one envelope or not? How much postage would be required? And so on...

There are so many things that could be done to help with this situation but at a minimum a robust education program to inform voters is definitely in order.

Thanks again!

Jenny

Jenny Geer
[REDACTED]

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

From: Catherine Parker
To: JENNIFER Geer BILBAO
Sent: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 10:56 am
Subject: Post-Primary Recap

Ford, David

From: Andrew Gerringer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 11:27 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Cc: Karen Gerringer
Subject: Voting issues

This is much more than just a mamaronneck issue...this has wide implications for ALL voting nationally in the main presidential election in November.... this has to be fixed now or Trump might have good reason to call the election a sham..... many many people didn't even receive their absentee ballot....how can this be?.. a really bad and unfortunate situation that I'm sure isn't just indicative of our area

Andrew Gerringer
The Marketing Directors
[REDACTED]

New York, NY 10022
[REDACTED]

Ford, David

From: Catherine Parker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 5:32 PM
To: Boykin, Benjamin
Cc: Catherine Borgia; Borgia, Catherine; Gashi, Vedat; Vedat Gashi; Alvarado, Jose; Barr, Nancy; Clements, Terry; Covill, Kitley; Cunzio, Margaret; Johnson, Christopher; Maher, Damon; Parker, Catherine; Shimsky, MaryJane; Smith, Colin; Tubiolo, David; Walter, Ruth; Williams, Alfreda; Williams, Lyndon; Alfreda Williams; Ben Boykin; Christopher Johnson; Colin Smith; Damon Maher; David Tubilio; Jose Alvarado; Kitley Covill; Lyndon Williams; Margaret Cunzio; MaryJane Shimsky; Nancy Barr; Ruth Walter; Terry Clements; Stevens, Carolyn; Casciato, Gregory; Montalto, Melanie; Hochman, Lisa; Vanderberg, Sunday; Restiano, Alessandra; Silverberg, James; Filiberti, John
Subject: Re: Memo to Legislators re: BOE meeting

Dear Chairman Boykin,

I appreciate your attention to the issues regarding the Board of Elections. That being said, every legislative district has had reports of issues related to the primary. For that reason, I request that a Committee of the Whole is convened. I would anticipate that we plan for a day where we have no other committee meetings, and start at our usual 10 AM time with the understanding that it may take the better part of a day to even get a framework for further questioning for additional meetings.

When a quasi-autonomous agency of county government casts doubt on the abilities of county government as a whole, we as the oversight body and Board of Legislators must do the work that we were all elected to perform. This work should be done with full transparency allowing for the public to participate as interested parties and listeners.

In addition, I request the appropriate representatives from Gov. Cuomo's office, as well as the Chair of the New York State Board of Elections join our meetings by Webex to advance any actions deemed necessary to correcting the issues that plagued this primary before the general election this fall.

Sincerely,
Catherine Parker
Legislator, District 7

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 24, 2020, at 3:46 PM, Boykin, Benjamin wrote:

Dear Colleagues and selected Board Staff,

After the Primary Election on Tuesday, June 23, 2020, we must have a conversation with the Board of Elections (BOE). I am requesting the Legislator Catherine Borgia, Chairwoman of the B&A Committee, which has oversight responsibilities for the BOE, and Legislator Vedat Gashi, Chairman of the Public Works & Transportation Committee convene a meeting with the BOE immediately after all absentee ballots are counted. We need to:

- Get an update on the problems that plagued the June 23rd Primary Election. What went right and what went wrong with:
 - The absentee ballot process;
 - Post cards mailed with incorrect voting locations;

- Early voting problems;
- The causes of the meltdown on Primary Day producing long lines and long waits, e.g. Mamaroneck with voters waiting until 1:00AM to cast a ballot
- Update on poll worker training:
 - Proper procedures for dealing with voters who have applied for and received an absentee ballot
 - Proper use of provisional ballots
- Communications from BOE with public:
 - Update of BOE website
 - Increase use of social media
 - Providing all information in Spanish
 - Consider a communications consultant
- Procedures for preparing for the November General Election
 - Polling sites for early voting: expanding dates, locations, times of operation
 - Polling sites for the General Election Day
 - Hiring and training of Poll Workers
- Voting machines and poll books– What, if anything, is needed
- Other issues

This is a time for all of us to work together to ensure that all Westchester County voters can cast their ballots in the most efficient manner.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Ford, David

From: Polly Schneck [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Covill, Kitley; BOL Public Comments
Subject: Re: New Election Information Gathering Task Force Announced; Public Input Session Set For July 8, 7 P.M.

Dear Ms. Covill -- Thank you for all of your excellent communication as a District Legislator. I truly enjoy your well-crafted, informative, and easy-to-read emails.

Last night, I joined the public input session for the Election Information Gathering Task Force. I had not registered to make a comment, but I should have.

Three points:

- 1) I was struck by the number and variety of logistical problems, errors, and (I believe inadvertently) illegal actions taken by the BoE in NY that were encountered by voters. Some of the comments in the mtg last night were certainly eye-opening for me and served to underscore how labyrinthian election laws and procedures are in every locale. I'd love to do what I can to improve the voting process in NY -- even if it's just simplifying the execution of the election laws (some of which the BoE seems not even to be aware of).
- 2) I was among those who encountered snafus related to the June 23 elections -- including receiving my requested mail-in ballot on the day that it was due (my husband never received his) and receiving a postcard from the BoE that listing an erroneous location for early voting (the postcard listed an address in Valhalla instead of in Mt. Kisco). At a time when it is essential that everyone who wants to vote is able to so, we should ensure that the process of voting is as easy and painless as possible. What are the necessary changes that we must make to the election systems to allow for easy voting? Is it a financial problem (i.e., does the BoE need more money to be able to run a better process?)
- 3) I'm not sure whether the BoL and/ or the BoE are aware of an organization called Democracy Works ([Democracy Works](#))?



Democracy Works

They are a nonpartisan nonprofit that provides tools for voters to make voting easier and tools to support election officials, including one that ameliorates processing mail in ballots. Perhaps they can be of assistance?

Thank you and take care,

Polly Schneck Goldman
[REDACTED]

On Thursday, July 2, 2020, 04:50:29 PM EDT, Kitley Covill wrote:



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

A new Election Information Gathering Task Force has been established by Board Chairman Ben Boykirk. The Task Force will obtain public input about the June 23 Primary Election and about pro-active steps that can be taken for the November 3 General Election. It will provide a report to the Board of Legislators by August 7, 2020.

The Task Force will hold a public input session on Wednesday, July 8 at 7 p.m.

In order to ensure public health safety, **the session will be conducted remotely**, rather than in-person, per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1 as extended.

The public will have **multiple ways to participate**:

- **Online:** To register to speak via the Board's Webex online teleconferencing system, please click <https://westchestergov.webex.com/westchestergov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e544cf7dd60ae8922a64>. Speakers will be called in the order of registration.

Ford, David

From: Bobbi M. Bittker, Esq. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 1:16 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 2020 Primary election-affidavit ballots

Good morning. I plan to attend the public forum but am also sending my comments.

I am a Bedford town board member, an attorney, a trained poll watcher and active in local politics. Residents sometimes contact me when they have problems registering to vote, or at the polls.

In this most recent election, I heard from voters who were not offered affidavit ballots when they were absent from the rolls at the Bedford Town House polling location.

Most voters do not know this is an option and so they leave, upset and exasperated. One is a senior whom I'd heard from late in the day and I let her know she could vote by affidavit, but I don't know if she returned to the polling site. The others I'd heard from were after election day. One was told by a poll worker not to bother filling out an affidavit ballot because 'it's not going to count anyway.'

If I heard about these few at just one site, there were likely more at that site and very possibly at other sites. We can't even quantify how many voters were disenfranchised because of this, alone.

Thanks for your help trying to address this,
Bobbi Bittker

--

Bobbi M. Bittker
Bedford Hills, NY
(pronouns she, her, hers)

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION

E-mails from this sender normally contain confidential and privileged material, and are for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). Use or distribution by an unintended recipient is prohibited, and may be a violation of law. If you believe that you received this e-mail in error, please do not read this e-mail or any attached items. Please delete the e-mail and all attachments, including any copies thereof, and inform the sender that you have deleted the e-mail, all attachments and any copies thereof. Thank you.

Ford, David

From: Bruce R [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 12:38 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Absentee Ballots

Dear Board of Legislators,

Absentee ballots are the safest, but we need assurance that they will be counted! In past elections, the loser concedes BEFORE the absentee votes are counted. Please legislate that "concessions" do not cancel the need to count ALL votes.

Respectfully,

Bruce

Bruce Reidenberg, MD, FAAP, FCP

Ford, David

From: David Hood [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 12:27 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Mil in voting redux

As we are all we aware, Govoner Cuomo along w/other states have cleared the way for mail in Voting due to Covid-19 concerns.

Dispute President Donald J Trumps opinion that it will lead to wide spread voter fraud, there are checks and balances we can incorporate such as certified mail.

The real issue is the sheer volume of mail in votes coupled w/a larger participation rate. As I type this not all the mail in ballots from the primary's are counted and it's been almost a month. These are relatively small races such as State Legislator.

Can you imagine the carnage Jan. 20, 2021 and we're still counting votes. God forbid we then have to have a recount. on top of that.

I'm sorry but mail in voting is not going to work. We need to resort to the time honored system for the good of the institution

Ford, David

From: David Hood [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 12:24 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Mail in Voting

As we are all we aware, Govoner Cuomo along w/other states have cleared the way for mail in Voting due to Covid-19 concerns.

Dispute President Donald J Trumps opinion that it will lead to wide spread voter fraud, there are checks and balances we can incorporate such as certified mail.

The real issue is the sheer volume of mail in votes coupled w/a larger participation rate. As I type this not all the mail in ballots from the primary's are counted and it's been almost a month. These are relatively small races such as State Legislator.

Can you imagine the carnage Jan. 20, 2021 and we're still counting votes. God forbid we then have to have a recount. on top of that.

I'm sorry but mail in voting is not going to work. We need to resort to the time honored system for the good of the institution

Ford, David

From: Ellen Kearns [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 12:00 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Comments on the June 23 Primary

Hi,

Thanks for taking public comments. I have a lot of faith in Commissioner Reginald Lafayette and the Westchester County Board of Elections.

We have a problem in Pound Ridge, and probably other places as well, with not enough local people serving as Election Inspectors. In the June 23 Primary, we had 12 people serving as inspectors, techs, and bilingual coordinators but only 3 of those people were the regular, local Pound Ridge inspectors and they were all Democrats. That's 75% of the people travelling a long way to a place they do not know. One Republican Election Inspector showed no concern for the voters and refused to wear her mask.

Local inspectors know and respect their community and give the voters more confidence that someone they know cares and is doing the job right. I would suggest urging local party chairs to actively recruit local inspectors. Not sure why we stopped doing this.

I would also suggest what I'm sure Commissioner Lafayette is already doing, to look at States such as Washington State which have developed mail-in voting over the last 10 years and have experimented with security features. Apparently, their ballots have embedded security information in the way that \$20 bills have. I suspect that mail-in voting would save the State a lot of money which is now spent on staffing and machines and it might save lives.

Don't need to tell you that confidence and security are the top priorities.

Thank you. I realize you are all under a lot of pressure, and I appreciate the hard and unrecognized work that you do.

Sincerely,
Ellen V Kearns
Certified Election Inspector

Sent from my Windows 10 device

Ford, David

From: Joseph Carvin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 8:35 AM
To: Barr, Nancy; Barr, Nancy; BOL Public Comments
Subject: Vote Count Procedures Port Chester's BOE Election

Dear Nancy and Westchester BOL

I want to thank you again for looking into this issue. I am forwarding the formal results we received from Port Chester.

One thing I want to make very, very clear and that is that Port Chester, in particular, the District Clerk and her team did a wonderful job. They were supportive throughout the process.

The error has to do with the faulty design of the interior envelope.

Best regards

Joe

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Cathy Maggi [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Jun 22, 2020 at 8:31 PM
Subject: RE: Vote Count Procedures
To: Joseph Carvin [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Carvin:

As a follow-up to the emails you sent last week, the District processed approximately 3,892 outer return envelopes. The number of ballots counted was 3,128. There were approximately 732 oath/ballot envelopes that were not opened (and therefore not counted), most because the required oath was unsigned and some of which the required signature could not be verified. It is noted that out of the oath/ballot envelopes that were opened a few contained no ballots, a few were wholly void, at least one contained an oath envelope for another school district election and a few contained Westchester County applications for absentee ballots for the primary election to be held on June 23, 2020.

Thank you.

Cathy Maggi

From: Joseph Carvin [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2020 6:24 AM
To: Cathy Maggi [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Vote Count Procedures

Thanks very much Ms. Maggi

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 19, 2020, at 5:11 PM, Cathy Maggi [REDACTED] wrote:

Mr. Carvin:

I am in receipt of your emails of June 19, 2020 and I expect to be able to respond to your request by the end of the day, Monday, June 22, 2020.

Thank you.

Cathy Maggi

From: Joseph Carvin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2020 1:46 PM
To: Cathy Maggi [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Vote Count Procedures

Dear Ms. Maggi

Thank you for your prompt reply. I understand that the boxes are closed but you clearly have a record of the number of ballots received. You also clearly have a record of the ballots disqualified and you have a record of the number of ballots counted. There is no need to open the boxes.

I am not asking you to open the boxes I am asking you to make public the same information that Mr. Oconor shared with me privately. My expectation is that it is better for the school district to make this information public in a formal way.

I want to go on record as making clear I believe it is a mistake for the School District not to make any formal statement in this regard. As mentioned in my previous email I have already received a number of complaints relative to the high number of ballots disqualified in this election. I think transparency is always the best policy as it relates to these kinds of issues and will, therefore, pursue that path using the informal numbers shared with me by Mr. Oconor.

I also agree and understand that the boxes will not be opened except pursuant to an Order of the Commissioner of Education. I will, therefore, take up this matter with the Commissioner of Education based on the numbers Mr. Oconor informally shared with me.

Thank you again for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Joe

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 1:24 PM Cathy Maggi [REDACTED] wrote:

Mr. Carvin:

I understand after emailing me on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 with questions concerning the election, you spoke to the Chairman of the School District's Election, Michael O'Connor. I understand he addressed your questions. Please note, after the counting of the ballots concluded on June 16, 2020, all unopened oath envelopes (including all unsigned oath envelopes) and all ballots from the oath envelopes that were opened were placed in boxes that were sealed by Mr. O'Connor and Philip Silano, Assistant Superintendent for Business of the School District. Per the Education Law of NYS, these boxes will be maintained by the School District for at least one year and will not be opened during that time except pursuant to an Order of the Commissioner of Education.

Thank you.

Cathy Maggi

Ford, David

From: Joseph Carvin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 8:25 AM
To: BOL Public Comments; Barr, Nancy; Barr, Nancy
Subject: Voting Feedback
Attachments: westmore news post election v2.docx

Dear Nancy and Westchester Gov

Thanks very much for organizing tonight's forum. I am writing to share my experience with the recent BOE election in Port Chester.

I will try and make tonight's event but am teaching a class at 7:30 pm so it is unlikely I will be able to provide my feedback there.

I am in the process of preparing a formal petition of complaint to be sent to the Commissioner of Education to ask them to study the results of our Board of Education election in Port Chester whereas much as 20% of voters were disenfranchised.

I am particularly concerned that Port Chester's Latino voters were disenfranchised. As the only Spanish speaking candidate in the election we spent a considerable amount of time reaching out to first-time voters in the Latino community.

As new voters, my worry is that many of our voters did not properly fill out the interior envelope which was quite confusing. That is, one was supposed to put their name and address on the front of the envelope and then sign the back of the envelope. The only problem is that it was not at all clear or obvious that one was supposed to sign the back of the envelope as a result 18.8% of voters were disenfranchised on this point alone.

During the campaign we cautioned people to fill out the envelope properly. One elderly couple approached us and explained they were worried that they had forgotten to sign the envelope. They tried to redress that oversight but were not able to do it.

I think it is imperative that someone from Westchester County look into why so many votes were disenfranchised in Port Chester. Were we an outlier? If so why? In order to find that out, you will need to get the same numbers Port Chester provided us from other communities. How many votes were counted vs how many ballots received?

I also think that where the results of the election could be changed as a result of the recount the ballots that were not counted should in fact be counted. If indeed after a recount the election results would be changed the next step would be to contact all voters whose ballots were not counted and have them go sign an affidavit confirming that the vote in possession of the District Clerk was indeed their votes. This is all possible and certainly will give much better credence to what can only be described as a failed electoral process when 20% of people's votes were simply not counted because of the faulty design of the interior envelope.

I have included below a brief summary of the election and have attached a letter I sent to the Westmore News that was published on this point as well.

Thank you again for making this happen.

Best regards,

Joe

[REDACTED] Election Summary

There was one very big positive to come out of this 100% mail-in election, we saw a dramatic increase in voter participation. In the past 9 elections voter turnout has averaged about 11.5% or 1.621 voters. In this election 3,892 voters took the time to mail-in ballots. That means we saw a 140% increase in voter participation or that 2,271 more

people voted in this election. Indeed the election increase alone of 2,271 voters was 40% higher than normal turnout of 1,621!

Unfortunately there was also one very big negative associated with our 100% mail-in election. 764 voters submitted ballots that were not counted. That means 20% of voters were effectively disenfranchised. Why? It seems as if about 18.8% of the ballots or 732 were rejected without being counted primarily because people did not know they had to sign the back of the interior envelope.

I want to be clear, the fact that close to 20% of the votes cast were disenfranchised had absolutely nothing to do with the wonderful work done here in Port Chester by the district clerk and her team. They did absolutely everything they were supposed to do by the book.

It seems that the primary reason so many of the ballots were not counted is because of faulty design of the interior envelope such that 18.8% of voters or 732 people did not understand they needed to sign the interior envelope. 732 votes in a normal election would constitute 45.2% of the vote. That means in normal times 45% of voters would have been disenfranchised.

Clearly in an environment where COVID persists we need to urgently rectify this glaring fault. I shudder to think what would happen in a hotly contested November election if 20% of the votes are simply cast aside?

As this is a matter for New York State we will be making the Commissioner of Education aware of the negative impact their ballot design had on our community. . To be clear, I do not believe that if all of the ballots were counted the election results would change; however, I do think it is imperative that New York State be made aware of this challenge and make a determination as to what should be done next. .

Ford, David

From: capco [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 7:15 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Walter, Ruth
Subject: My experiences as an Election Poll Worker at the June 23rd Primary

Hello Legislators:

My name is Frank Ninivaggi, and I worked as an Election Worker for the June 23rd Primary. I have worked several past elections/primaries, on the Plan B machine. Tom Meier asked me to go to the Montessori/Mark Twain school in Yonkers. I was given 2 hours of special training on the new machines on the Saturday before the Primary. I understand that due to COVID, the number of polling places were vastly reduced. I myself voted by mail, as my normal polling place was not opened for the primary. The alternative place was not practical for me. Bear in mind, as you know, this also turned out to be a dual local/presidential primary. We had about 700 people, if my tally of votes on both machines are correct. This means 1400 ballots were submitted into the machines. We had a very good, knowledgeable, and efficient group of about six poll workers. In general, I would say the new-style machines were much better than what we have had in recent elections. Due to the dual primaries, and the excitement in the country about having valid elections, and the much lower amount of polling places, we had a steady stream of voters, and long, long lines at the end of the night. Probably, more workers, and more actual voting machines should have been allotted: we only had two voting machines at our location. This slowed us down. The voters were cooperative, well-behaved, and seemed eager to participate. There were a few incidents of rejected ballots, which led to voters have to vote again. Also some people came who were unsure of where they should be voting, or even what party they were registered with. As the clock approached 9PM, we still had lines out the door, and the length of the outdoor parking lot that led to the door. It stretched to the end of school property, to the sidewalk on Hyatt Avenue. Reasons for the delays: 1) People were very cautious due to COVID. Masks, sanitizer, gloves, were much in evidence, both provided by us, and the voters themselves. 2) Less workers, less machines, less polling places. 3) The fact that voters had to vote for both presidential choice, and a set of local offices, including judges. This led to Double Work as each voter had to submit TWO ballots into the machine. A certain percentage, as is normal, were slightly confused. Voting for 3 of 5 judges also confused people. Especially confusing was the voting for Electors for president. This had to be explained to several people. So, that is my feeling, and I was happy to participate. By the time I left Montessori, it was well after 10PM. I brought the ballots to Palmer Road, as usual, and was lucky there was still someone there to let me in, which took a while.

Thank you,

Frank Ninivaggi.

Ford, David

From: Anne Barschall [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 5:23 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: primary comments

I was distressed at the long lines at polling places. Some people were apparently not trusting early voting or absentee voting. There must be some way to do better outreach, so that you don't end up with these lines.

Anne Barschall

July 3, 2020

Judith E. Sage

Mount Kisco, New York 10549-1127

Westchester County Board of Legislators
Election Gathering Task Force
The Honorable Ben Boykin
The Honorable Alfreda Williams
The Honorable MaryJane Shimsky
The Honorable Catherine Borgia
The Honorable Vedar Gashi

Hello

I want to thank the Board of Legislators for creating an Election Information Gathering Task Force. I think it is unlikely that elected officials in Westchester County would intentionally seek to suppress the vote of any voting group. At the same time, I believe that disproportionate voter suppression, intentional or otherwise, is a problem in my Town. I believe this is the case because of the blindness that privilege creates, historically, and to this day, in Mount Kisco.

Before I describe specifically what happened regarding voting in Mount Kisco, I will try to explain the environment wherein Mount Kisco voters could have been easily disenfranchised during the recent primaries. I thank you ahead of time for your patience.

I am a retired resident of Mount Kisco, New York. I am also a Democratic District Leader in my Town representing the northernmost area of Town where I myself reside. During the past few years, prior to Covid19, I had the opportunity to knock on many doors, and came to know my District, and its residents, well. I have also continued to get to know registered voters from all over Westchester County during the recent primary when I phone banked for several candidates.

As you may be aware, Mount Kisco is a diverse Town, economically, and otherwise. Mount Kisco is home to many recent arrival families in the United States; and also, to second and third generation children of immigrant families. Estimates of Mount Kisco's Latino population range up to 55% of the town's population. At the same time, access to information from Town Government for those Latino citizens and voters in Mount Kisco who speak primarily Spanish, is, to some extent, restricted. The Latino community is not represented on the Village Board. There does not seem to be a concerted effort to get important information out to the Latino community, by the Village government. To my knowledge there are no full time Spanish

lower income, essential workers, would have difficulty voting if they didn't own a car. The Mayor responded that "If any voters feel disenfranchised, they can call" me for transportation. The idea that lower income voters, some of whom may not speak or read English well, some of whom have jobs as essential workers during a pandemic, who might be confused as to where to vote, would say to themselves "I feel disenfranchised. I will call the Mayor", frankly struck me as a good example of privilege.

I understand that the stated reason for having only one voting location, so far from our most densely populated residential areas, including for Primary Day June 23, 2020, was explained as related to creating safe distances for voting as relates to Covid19. I do question that, however, as I believe that early and absentee voting reduced the flow of traffic on Primary Day in Mount Kisco.

2. Lack of outreach and communication with the community, including the Latino community, regarding changes in voting location, and general voting information for the primaries.

On June 12, 2020 I posted information regarding voting in a Mount Kisco Latino Facebook Group. A Mount Kisco Latino Citizen commented, in Spanish (translation-best I can do): "Hello good morning I live in Mount Kisco and where the votes will be, I am registered and received a letter by mail. I can vote sending it by mail, or where do I have to go?"

I immediately started looking at official Mount Kisco Village Facebook Page to see if there was any voting information in Spanish language.

I found a Spanish language video posted regarding the importance of completing the census.

And I found voting information posted in English.

So, in frustration, I posted a comment: "Please post a Spanish language video with voting information for the upcoming primary election. Voting rights and access are equally important as collecting money based upon accurate population counts."

The response from "The Village of Mount Kisco government" Facebook poster was "Those who speak Spanish, or other language, use the translation tool on Facebook and other applications."

I continued between June 12, 2020 and June 23, Primary Day, to post my concerns on the Village government Facebook Page. Finally, on June 13, 2020, the Village posted a

photo of the voting site at Leonard Park with the "Vote Here" signs provided by the County. These are in English and Spanish. "Votacion anticipado aqui."

The problem would be, however, that if someone went to the voting locations where they had always walked to vote, there would be no signs in English or Spanish directing them to the Leonard Park voting location.

We talk a lot about inclusion and voting rights here in Westchester County. But that doesn't mean that we are actually investing in ensuring that every citizen who is registered to vote knows where to vote. Or that each citizen can get to a voting location without losing their job or walking two plus miles. Or that each citizen is provided with not just important voting information they can easily access; but that they are provided with ALL important information from their government.

Given my concerns about the situation in Mount Kisco, I have filed a complaint with the New York State Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Division. I was contacted by a Deputy, who indicated there would be a discussion about whether or not to open an investigation.

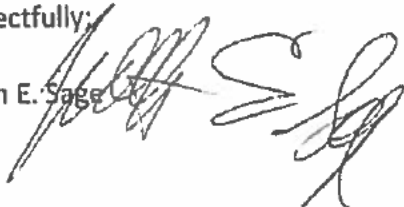
3. Absentee ballots requested, but not arriving in time. In various locations throughout the County.

I continued to phone bank on Primary election day, primarily because I was concerned that people might be confused about where, or how, to vote. I learned from several people that their absentee ballots had not arrived. One couple in their eighties, from White Plains, answered their phone at 8:15. I gave them voting location information, and since they were determined to vote, that they left to go vote in person.

Again, I want to thank the Board of Elections for forming this task force.

Respectfully;

Judith E. Sage



Ford, David

From: David Imamura [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:29 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Verity Van Tassel Richards; MaryJane Shimsky
Subject: Postmark Ballot Issue

Dear Legislators,

At MaryJane Shimsky's request, please see below an article about how the Post Office does not necessarily always postmark business reply mail (which was used for absentee ballots this year), potentially leading to the invalidation of ballots through no fault of the voter since ballots must be postmarked on or before Primary Day. Verity Van Tassel Richards (cc'ed) and I had flagged this issue for the Westchester Board of Elections prior to the Primary but received no response. One question we have is whether the Westchester BOE has invalidated any ballots for this reason.

<https://gothamist.com/news/heres-what-could-invalidate-your-absentee-ballot-and-its-beyond-your-control>

Let us know if you have any questions,

David Imamura
Co-Chair, Irvington Democratic Committee

Ford, David

From: Margot Clark-Junkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:55 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Election comment

A Suggestion, and one so basic that it seems obvious...but it doesn't seem to have been implemented:

When I mailed in my absentee ballot, I had no way of knowing that my ballot was received, let alone counted. I felt ineffective as a voter. I would like to receive an electronic receipt. This would inspire confidence that the system "worked."

Thank you,
Margot Clark-Junkins

Ford, David

From: Gerald Kolbert [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:56 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Cc: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Comments on Election procedures

In the June 23rd primary there was one polling place for the entire Town of Mamaroneck on the actual day of voting. Fortunately, I had voted absentee. However, those who voted waited in a line that went from the Town offices, down the driveway to the Boston Post Road. This is unconscionable. On Election Day in November, there have to be more polling places. And people have to be informed well in advance exactly where they will be voting. Waiting for hours to vote is one way of depriving people of their right to vote. This needs to be fixed. Our democracy depends on it. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Marlene Kolbert

[REDACTED] Larchmont, NY 10538

Sent from Marlene's iPad

Ford, David

From: Anne Avenius [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 3:37 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Elections

Could we please have Vote by Mail. It is safe and should be the way to go.
Thank you
Anne Avenius

Ford, David

From: Kathy Meany [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 3:34 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary Election Input Statement - League of Women Voters of Westchester
Attachments: LWWV Statement Primary Election Input_070820.pdf


Greetings,

Please find attached the statement that the League of Women Voters of Westchester will present at the July 8 Primary Election Input Meeting.

Any questions, please advise.

Best regards,
Kathy

Kathy Meany, President
League of Women Voters of Westchester
[REDACTED]

 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WESTCHESTER

Ford, David

From: TYMERA JACKSON [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:35 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting Concerns

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to inform you that I did not get a chance to vote in the Democratic Primary race due to extremely long lines. I went twice to my polling location (Greenburgh Town Hall). The first time I went, was right after my dental appointment. I arrived approximately around 12:30 - 1:15 p.m. It was very hot and the line went from the front of the door to the back of the parking lot. I just received stitches in my mouth from the dentist and wasn't feeling my best and now I could not endure standing in the hot sun for that long of a period. I went back the second time around 8 p.m. after picking up my medication (antibiotics and pain pills) for my dental procedure. I just knew that this time the line should not be long as the polls close at 9 p.m., and I should be able to vote. Unfortunately, no! The line this time was even longer and wrapped around to Hillside Ave.

I wish I had taken advantage of the early voting opportunity, but I had not researched the candidates thoroughly and had not made up my mind as to whom I would vote for. I did not make up my mind until the Sunday before the voting day. I share this story only to hopefully make you aware of the issue and to hopefully never experience the inability to vote again!

Sincerely,

Tymera Jackson

Ford, David

From: Eileen O'Connor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:23 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Experience with voting on Primary Day 6/23/20

Hi, I am a Co-Ward leader in Ward 4 in Yonkers.

My concerns are around the educational aspect of letting people know what their voting options are. A postcard from the BOE is not enough. Targeted outreach to seniors and others who did not know about the logistics of the absentee voting and early voting are important in keeping people franchised. Assuming that most people would vote via absentee ballot or early voting was mistaken.

My direct experience:

Most of our ED's (except for 4-1) were assigned to vote at the Chavez School on Cedar Place/South Broadway.

Firstly, there are many very functional seniors that I spoke with who were planning to vote at PS27, which is an easy walk from Valentine Gardens. They did not recall seeing the poll reassignment list; had never completed an absentee ballot application; were shocked that they would have to get themselves a mile north in order to vote. One woman said: "it will be the first time in 50 years that I have not voted." She declined a ride from me, her District Leader, because she didn't feel safe during the pandemic.

My own experience with Early Voting was excellent. The staff at the Riverfront Library were helpful, wore the right PPE and offered hand sanitizer. The problem seems to be that not enough people KNEW about the early voting option. For seniors and folks without cars, it was a difficult call because of the safety issues with transportation.

On Election Day, I was shocked to see a line around the block at the Chavez school. One woman from our neighborhood tried to go into the Cedar Place entrance (since that was the address posted) and was met by a person NOT WEARING A MASK. She left and did not vote. First election she's missed in >10 years. People waited for 1-3 hours to vote. Many left when they saw the line. There were just 2 machines working in a limited space.

I witnessed a senior who lives 2 blocks from the school try to vote but had been assigned to the Yonkers Middle High. She had no transportation. Tash Diaz tried to help her vote but was rebuffed and yelled at by the person running that poll station, despite having the BOE person on the phone saying it was ok to fill out a provisional ballot.

The poll shut down at 10:30. I salute the staff there who had a very long day. I hope they all remained healthy with the prolonged indoor time they had exposed to thousands of voters.

Thanks for listening.

Best Regards,
Eileen O'Connor

Ford, David

From: Marion Wolk [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 10:10 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting

I got an absentee ballot and mailed it
in. This is THE MOST democratic
and fair way to run elections.

Sent from my iPhone

Ford, David

From: ywright27 [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 9:55 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Election on June 23rd

Good Morning,

I am writing this email to inform you of my experience at the polling site on June 23rd at Van Cortlandtville Elementary School. I was on line for about 3 hours. I arrived at 7pm and didn't leave until about 10pm. There were only two ipads to print ballots and two machines to cast your votes. Only one was working when I arrived. So the staff had to assist voters from both lines (alternating). As I got closer (which took a quite a long time), the printer stopped working. So the entire voting process was at a halt (it was already 9pm and there was still a long line inside and outside). It was not the employees fault. They were trying to do everything on their end to help but the equipment they were provided with was not great. I HIGHLY suggest more stations to print out ballots and more machines to cast votes. There were too many people in the gym. The line had to keep turning around the left side of the gym. Many people were not comfortable with that given the virus. When I left (again at about 10pm), there were so many people in the gym and lined up outside. I have never experienced that before. I did not feel comfortable standing around for so long given the virus. In addition, we deserve to exercise our voting rights without putting our lives at risk.

I thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Best Regards,
Yolanda Wright
Resident of Cortlandt Manor

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S8.

Ford, David

From: Brigitte Dix [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 9:47 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting Issues

Hello,

I'm writing regarding voting issues in Port Chester. I had applied for absentee voting due to Covid and was sent several mail in ballots. The envelopes were completely stuck together by humidity and impossible to open then seal so I taped them together afterwards. I was told this meant my ballots were likely not counted, I know 700 ballots were not accepted in the PC school board elections, which is an extremely large percentage of ballots cast. I was told I was able to go in person to the voting booth for primary day and negate my mail in primary ballot, when I arrived the poll workers were not knowledgeable about this procedure but did call in and let me vote in person after checking my ID, I could see several other people showing ID as well. There was very little signage at Edison elementary, even less in Spanish and there is 0 parking available aside from street parking, which is for the most part taken up by the houses surrounding the school.

Thank you,
Brigitte Dix

Ford, David

From: mielthree [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 7:39 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Voting by mail ballot.

I wasn't sure about a witness's signature and the ballot came without a statement to it. Also I sent mine in before the Governor's cabash, then sent in another when I received another from the CBOElections. I filled it out again having contacted a NY delegate for the fact of voter witness or not, since once again no info was apparent or research able on line. I did not call the Elections office.
Michelle Babian

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

Ford, David

From: NICOLE RIOS [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:41 AM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: June 23rd Primary-- YONKERS

Thank you for the opportunity to address my concerns regarding the recent primary election.

I have been a registered Democrat for over 30 years. From my very first vote until this June's primary, I voted blocks away from my apartment at the grammar school I attended as a child and walked there.

I was so used to voting at the same place, in literally same area of the cafeteria/gym and seeing familiar faces year after year that it was something not only did I take pride in as a voter but enjoyed doing with my mom and children in tow. It took minutes to cast and we had time to greet and thank neighbor volunteers after.

First, the majestic curtain and red metal arm was lost to the ink pen, scantron -circle paper and three-partitioned table. That was a hard adjustment to bear.

Now, our polling place has been changed and is no longer in walking distance. I had not expected the change at all until a coworker mentioned her place had changed. I received the card, and she was right. I choose to vote in person on the day of the election so I see "ballot cast" and later watch the results.

On June 23rd, we could barely get a space in the lot. Then, we had to walk to the back of the building, down several cement stairs and waited on line for over an hour just to get a ballot. As much as the change jarred the experience for me personally, what upset me more was how many people chose not to participate and cast their vote because they could not manage to walk down the stairs or wait in the heat on line outside or in the gym of Cross Hill Academy. I saw five people leave the line while I was inside the gym and several leave before entering the gym. There was little direction, information or instruction once inside. People were heated in both temperature and in mood. It was a horrible experience and a bit unnerving. I thought a fight was going to break out over the speed of movement in a competing line, and we went in the afternoon.

Although I realize the pandemic may have caused some of the poll closures, I believe asking the communities before the decision to close neighborhood locations was made might have worked better. There may have been additional solutions.. Perhaps new volunteers would have enlisted to help? Perhaps someone might have thought about how the elderly, infirm and handicap who chose to vote in person would manage the stairs to gain entry? And those who don't have a ride? Perhaps sending Warburton Avenue voters to Cross Hill was too much as there are hundreds of voters within the multi-family apartment buildings which line the street vs. the single-family homes near Cross Hill.

I do not believe all eligible voters who wanted to vote did because of the congestion at the changed site. That caused voter suppression. Those who normally walked now had to find transportation and chose not to and may not have mailed in an absentee ballot either.

It is my sincere hope that my polling place, Museum School 25, will be reopened and utilized for elections going forward.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.
Thank you.

Ford, David

From: Victor Lipshutz [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 9:02 PM
To: BOL Public Comments
Subject: Primary voting experiences the wisest waye

My wife Gabrielle and I decided that until we get vaccinated for this be corona virus, we are avoiding leaving our home, except under the most dire circumstances.

I am almost 90 and my wife will be 85. Since we are both retired, it's not a problem. We both voted via absentee ballots. We are awaiting receipt of similar ballots for the presidential election.

Vic and Gaby lipshutz

