

# **Board of Elections in the City of New York**

## **Overview of the Public Education Program**

### **City Council Governmental Operations Committee Hearing**

September 7, 2010

**Valerie Vazquez-Rivera**

**Director, Communications and Public Affairs**



# Outline

- **Compliance with Federal and State Election Laws**
- **Activity Since State Certification**
- **Mark it. Scan it. Vote the New Way.**
- **Overview of Public Education Program**
- **Question and Answer**



# Compliance with Federal and State Laws

- 2002 – Help America Vote Act passed by Congress
- 2005 – Election Reform and Modernization Act passed by New York State
- 2008 – ES&S AutoMARK BMD's used in elections at all poll sites for first time
- 2009 – Two voting systems certified by NYS BOE in December
- 2010 – ES&S optical scanner selected by BOE NYC in January
- 2010 – Primary and General Elections

**Evaluation:** Thorough evaluation including the voting process, system security and privacy, voter's experience and more.

**Public Input:** Public demonstrations/hearings were held throughout the City to gather input from voters on the potential voting systems. The Board also continues to work closely with various stakeholders, including CIDNY.

**Testing:** Before Election Day, the voting system must pass three rounds of testing.





# Activities Since State Certification

- **Poll Worker Procedures**
  - Revised and enhanced poll worker procedures to assist poll workers with the transition to paper ballots and optical scanners
- **New Poll Worker Training Program**
  - Revamped and modernized the poll worker program; increased Lead and Adjunct Trainer training to five days; poll worker training increased from four to six hours
  - New focus on “hands on” training and practical exercises
  - Poll workers will be tested and assessed on capabilities
- **Public Education and Outreach**
  - Retained a nationally recognized communications firm (Burson-Marsteller) that has run three statewide HAVA campaigns (Texas, South Carolina and Ohio)
  - Launched a comprehensive public outreach campaign
    - Program discussed in further detail in following section





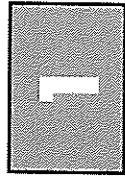
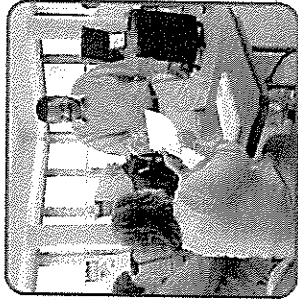
# Activities Since State Certification

- **Voter Security**
  - The Board has established a variety of processes and internal controls to ensure that each vote cast is safe, secure and counted accurately.
  - **Poll Worker Procedures**
    - Election Day procedures require a bi-partisan approach to all key tasks, including opening and closing the polls
    - There are strict accounting protocols in place not only for ballots, but also for scanner Portable Memory Devices (PMDs)
    - All equipment, including the ballots, is delivered to a poll site securely sealed
    - Election results are transported by NYPD Officers
  - **Testing**
    - The voting system has been extensively tested by an independent testing authority and has been certified as meeting all Federal and State requirements
  - **Election Management System**
    - Election Management System is on a closed, stand alone network
    - Ballots are designed by one department and proofed by a different department



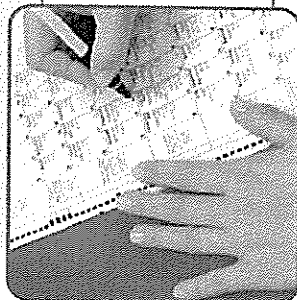
# Mark it. Scan it. Vote the New Way.

- Beginning with the 2010 Primary Election, New Yorkers will vote using a paper ballot that is scanned and counted at the poll site.



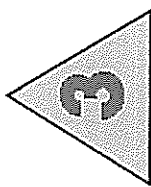
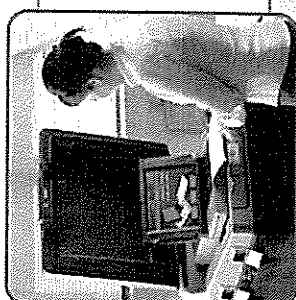
## Get Your Paper Ballot

Obtenga Su Papeleta • 領取紙票 • 투표용지를 받으십시오



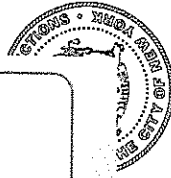
## Mark Your Paper Ballot

Marque Su Papeleta • 填寫紙票 • 투표용지에 표기 하십시오



## Scan Your Paper Ballot

Escanee Su Papeleta • 掃描紙票 • 투표용지를 스캔 하십시오



# Overview of Public Education Program

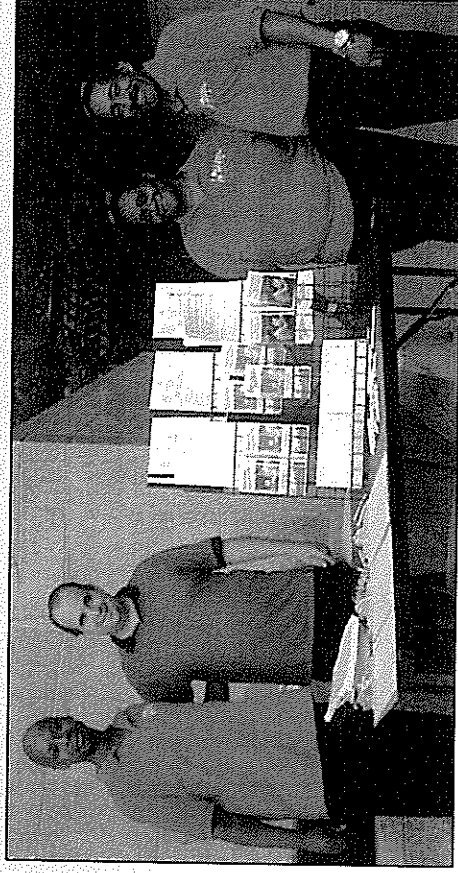
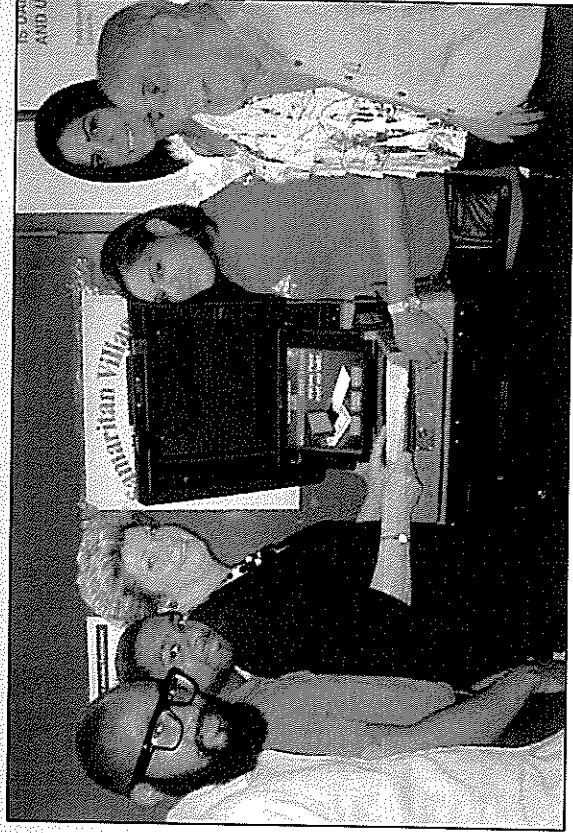
- **The Board is conducting a comprehensive voter education program throughout the five boroughs to inform voters they will vote using paper ballots beginning with the 2010 Primary Election.**
- **We are using a surround-sound approach to deliver and reinforce messages to drive awareness, increase understanding and make voters more comfortable with using the new system on Election Day.**
  - Mobile Outreach
  - Advertising
  - Public Service Announcement
  - Website and Social Media
  - Learning Centers
  - Direct Mail to Voters
  - Earned Media and Community Outreach





# Mobile Outreach

- To date, 275 public demonstrations of the new voting system have been conducted since mid-May, reaching approximately 16,385 people across the City
  - New requests daily – 254 events are being scheduled, and counting...
- Requests for demonstrations: [Demo@boe.nyc.ny.us](mailto:Demo@boe.nyc.ny.us)
- The demonstration schedule is updated at [www.vote.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us)



# Mobile Outreach

- Five trucks transport the voting system and staff to demonstrations.
- Trucks and the Board's five vans, used in daily Board business, have been wrapped and serve as moving billboards.






# Mobile Outreach – Voter Education Materials


**MARK IT. SCAN IT.  
VOTE THE NEW WAY.**


Márquelo. Escanee. Voto de la manera nueva.  
 環好景。掃描。新法投票。  
 표기하시오. 스캔하십시오. 투표하십시오.

**IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3.**

Es fácil como 1-2-3 · 步驟簡單如同 1-2-3 · 1-2-3 같이 쉽습니다

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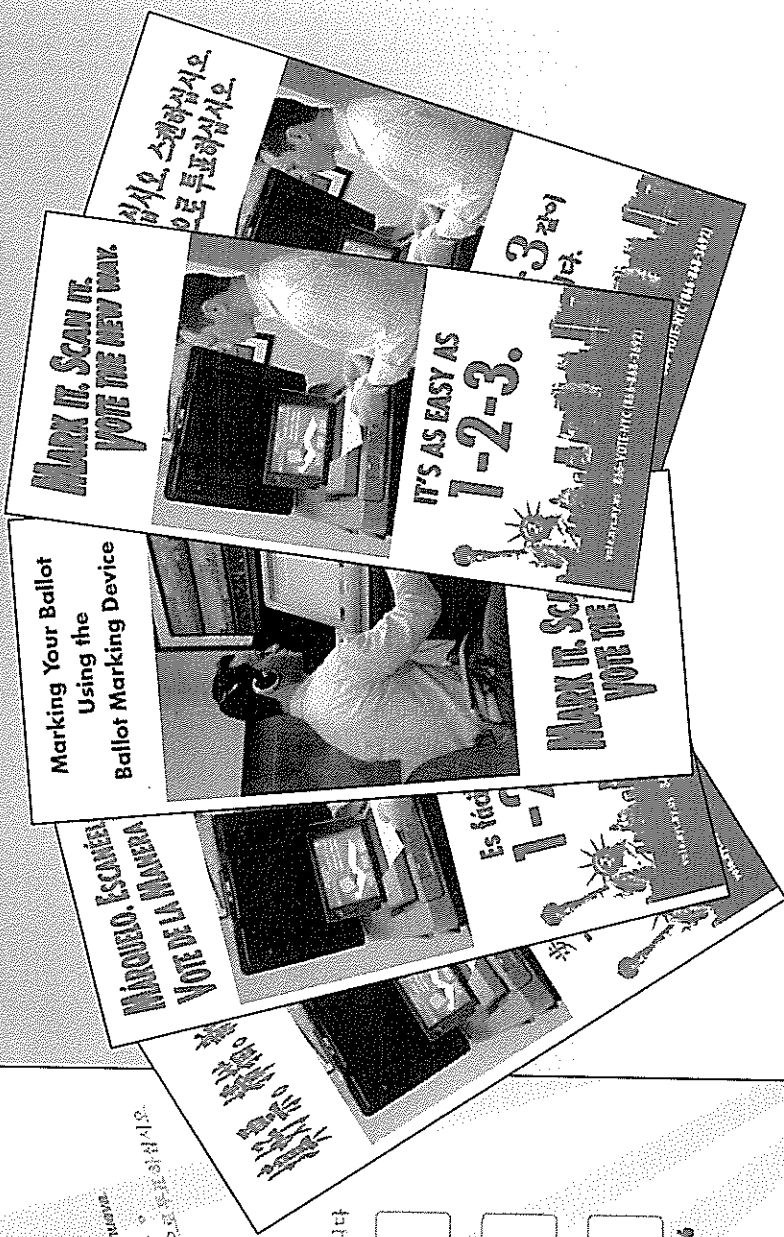
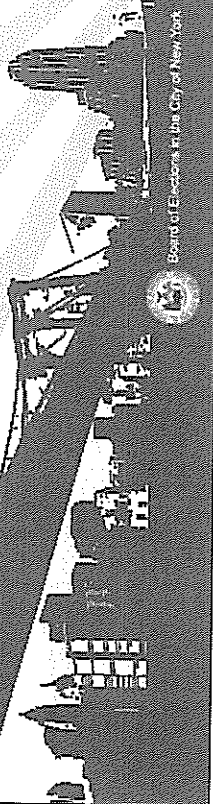
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 Obtenga Su Papelito · 領取紙票 · 투표용지를 받으십시오
- 

**2 Mark Your Paper Ballot**  
 Marque Su Papelito · 填寫紙票 · 투표용지에 표기하십시오
- 

**3 Scan Your Paper Ballot**  
 Escanee Su Papelito · 掃描紙票 · 투표용지를 스캔하십시오

**vot@nyc.gov 866-VOTE-NYC (866-869-3692) TTY 212-607-5495**  
 To practice voting on a paper ballot before Election Day, visit a Learning Center at your local Board Office or request a demonstration for your organization at [www.vote.nyc.gov](http://www.vote.nyc.gov)

Primary Election: Tuesday, September 14, 2010  
 General Election: Tuesday, November 2, 2010



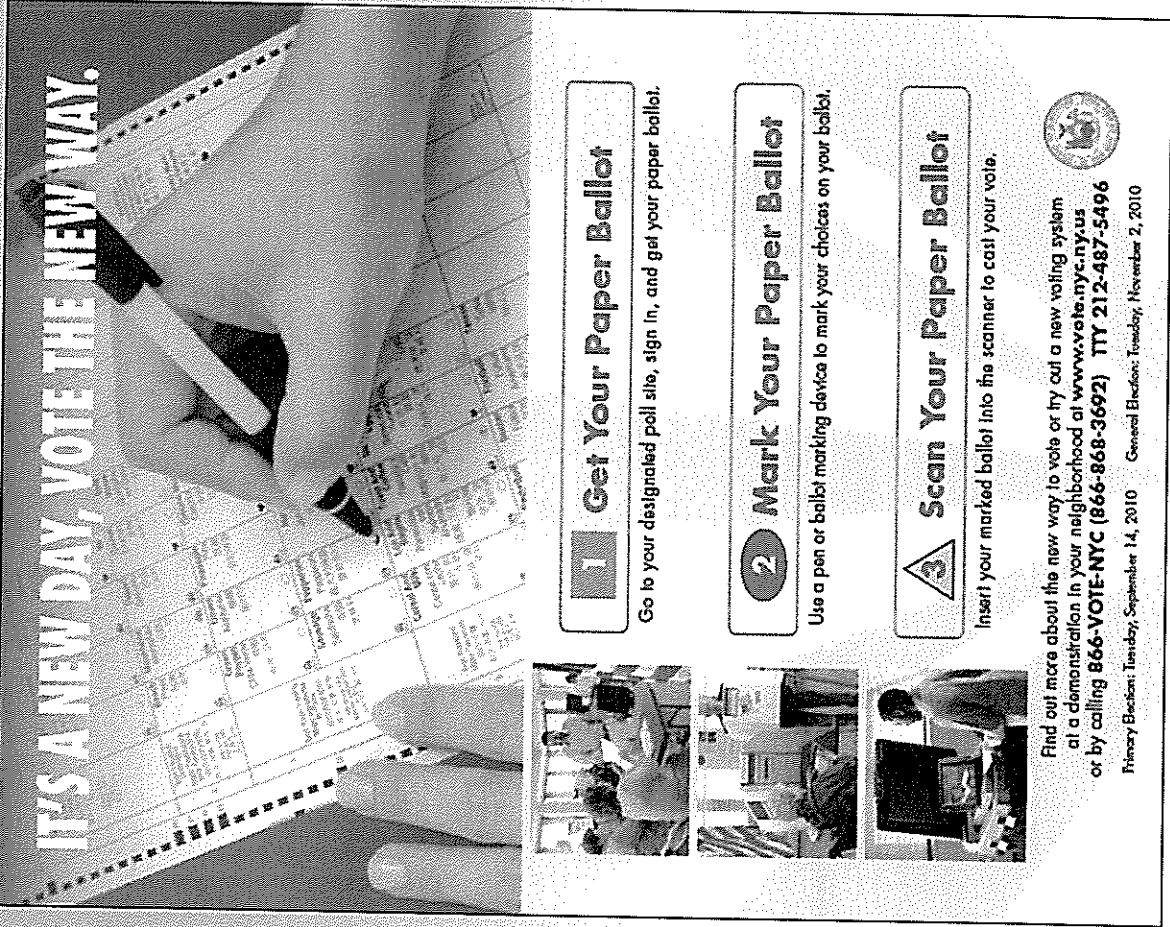
- We have distributed thousands of pieces of educational material.





# Advertising and PSA

## • Advertisements began running in July.




**IT'S A NEW DAY, VOTE THE NEW WAY.**

- 1 Get Your Paper Ballot**  
Go to your designated poll site, sign in, and get your paper ballot.
- 2 Mark Your Paper Ballot**  
Use a pen or ballot marking device to mark your choices on your ballot.
- 3 Scan Your Paper Ballot**  
Insert your marked ballot into the scanner to cast your vote.

Find out more about the new way to vote or try out a new voting system at a demonstration in your neighborhood at [www.vote.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us) or by calling **866-VOTE-NYC (866-868-3692)** TTY **212-487-5496**


Primary Election: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 General Election: Tuesday, November 2, 2010



- As of Aug 30<sup>th</sup> ads have launched in Subway cars, subway stations, and on busses.
- Throughout the fall until Election Day, ads will appear in 88 community newspapers, 5 daily papers, and a variety of online outlets.
- Ads were purchased at reduced PSA rates with additional discounts.
- Developing TV and radio spots to help reach voters with visual or literacy impairments.



# Website: [www.vote.nyc.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.nyc.ny.us)


**IT'S A NEW DAY, VOTE THE NEW WAY**  
 USING THE NEW VOTING SYSTEM ABOUT US FAQs COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEDIA CENTER

HOME CONTACT US PRIVACY  
 English Español 中文 한국어 Text

**MARK IT. SCAN IT. VOTE THE NEW WAY.**

**IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3.**

- 1 Get Your Paper Ballot
- 2 Mark Your Paper Ballot
- 3 Scan Your Paper Ballot

**Did you know that New Yorkers will be using a new voting system this fall?**

Voters will mark their choices on a paper ballot using a pen or ballot marking device, and will insert their marked ballot into a scanner. The scanner will then tabulate the votes after the polls close on Election Day. The new poll site voting system provides a verifiable paper record and allows all voters - including voters with disabilities - to vote privately and independently at their poll site.

- View a video showing how to vote using a paper ballot and the scanner
- View a video showing how to use the ballot marking device

**In the Community**

Lorem ipsum sit amet  
 July 21, 2010 - At vero accumsan et  
 odio dignissim est. Maecenas  
 praesentium volutpat Read more...

Dolor sit amet consectetur  
 July 20, 2010 - Accipit est, sed diam  
 nunc. Read more...

**Photogallery**

Eos accu  
 amris digni  
 smas diam  
 Galley

**Calendar of Events**

For an opportunity to try out the new voting poll site voting system, visit our calendar of events to find a demonstration near you.

- Jul 20 Brooklyn Chinese American Association
- Jul 20 International Center for the Disabled
- Jul 20 83rd Precinct Community Council
- Complete List of Demos

**Find a Demo Near You**

Enter your ZIP code to find a demo near you

Find

**Request a Demo**

To request a demonstration of the voting system for your organization, please

Request a Demo

**Become a Poll Worker**

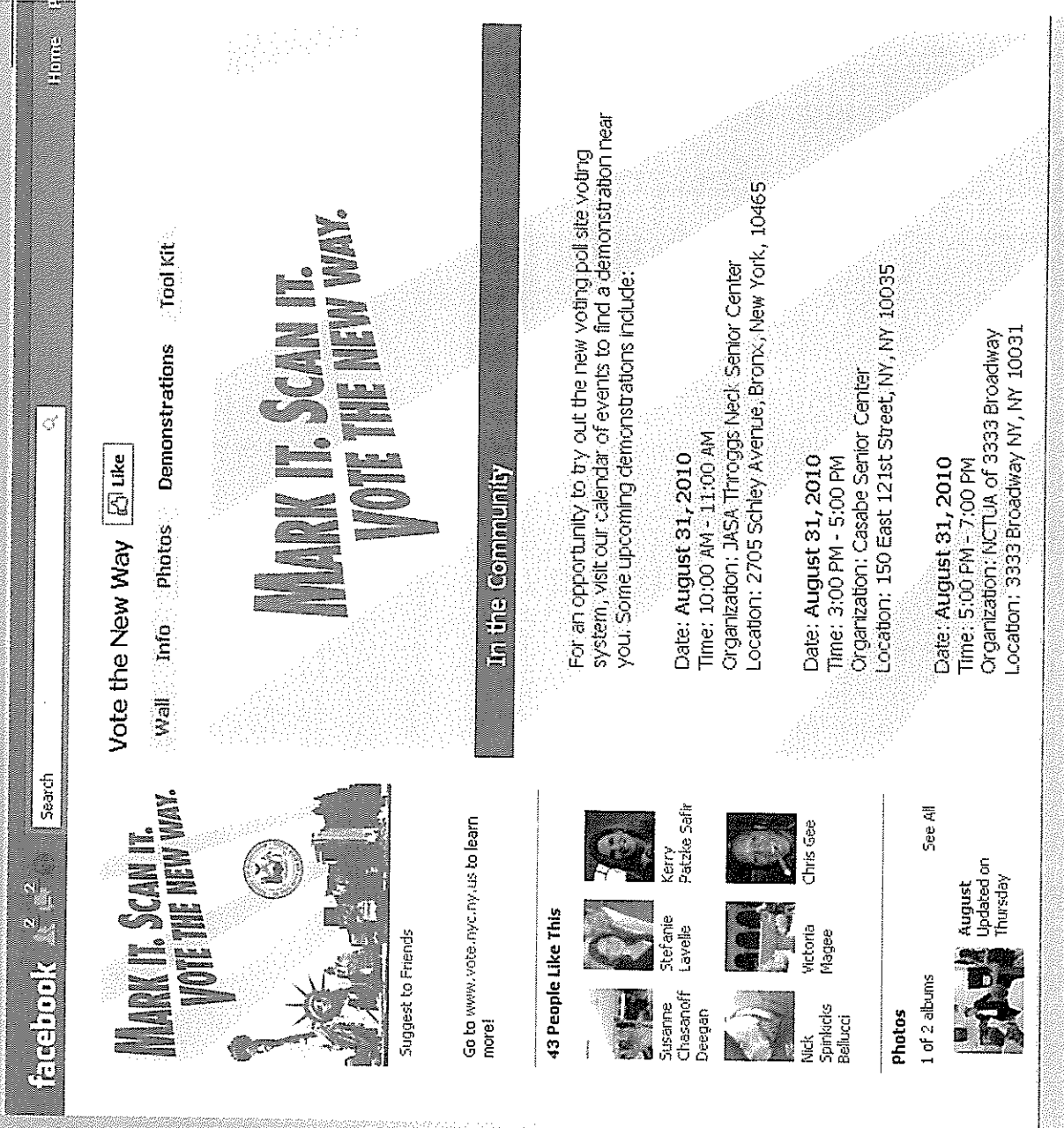
If you are interested in becoming a poll-worker, please visit [www.vote.nyc.nyc.ny.us/pollworkers](http://www.vote.nyc.nyc.ny.us/pollworkers)

- A dedicated multi-language voter education site
- Developed using accessibility guidelines from WebAIM and Lighthouse International.
- New features launched in August:
  - Zip code look-up for new voting system demonstrations
  - Online demo request form
  - Downloadable voter education materials



# Facebook

- Initiated a Facebook page providing information about the new PVS and ways to get more information
- Allows the opportunity for visitors to become “friends” of the Board.





# Learning Centers

- The Board has established Learning Centers in each Borough Office.
- Learning Centers offer voters an on-going opportunity to experience the new way of voting at their own pace.
- Learning Centers are open:
  - All normal business hours
  - One evening per week (each Borough has a different evening)
  - One weekend day per month (rotating Saturdays and Sundays)



# Mailing to Voters

The Board redesigned the legally mandated Voter Information Notice to provide information on the new voting system

- Information Notice was mailed to all New York City registered voters during the first week of August
- The Board is planning an additional Citywide mailing to all voters prior to the November General Election

<p><b>MARK IT, SCAN IT, VOTE THE NEW WAY.</b> IT IS EASY! 1-2-3</p> <p><b>Get Your Paper Ballot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get your ballot early to give you more time to think about your choices.</li> <li>Fill out your ballot carefully and mark it clearly.</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mark Your Paper Ballot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mark your ballot early to give you more time to think about your choices.</li> <li>Fill out your ballot carefully and mark it clearly.</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scan Your Paper Ballot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make sure your ballot is scanned correctly, follow these steps:</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> <li>Put your ballot in the envelope and seal it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thank you for voting!</b></p> <p>WWW.VOTE.NYC.GOV/US 866-VOTE-NYC (866-434-3377) TTY: 212-437-5116</p>
<p><b>MARQUELO, ESCANIELO, VOTE DE LA MANERA NUEVA.</b> ¡Fácil como 1-2-3.</p> <p><b>Obtenga Su Papeleta</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtenga su papeleta con tiempo para tener más tiempo de pensar en sus elecciones.</li> <li>Complete su papeleta cuidadosamente y marque sus elecciones con claridad.</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Marque Su Papeleta</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marque su papeleta con tiempo para tener más tiempo de pensar en sus elecciones.</li> <li>Complete su papeleta cuidadosamente y marque sus elecciones con claridad.</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Escane su Papeleta</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Para asegurarse de que su papeleta sea escaneada correctamente, siga estos pasos:</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> <li>Envuelva su papeleta en el sobre y sellelo.</li> </ul>	<p><b>¡Gracias por votar!</b></p> <p>WWW.VOTE.NYC.GOV/US 866-VOTE-NYC (866-434-3377) TTY: 212-437-5116</p>
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# Ongoing Community Input

- **The Board has opened an on-going dialogue with a variety of good government groups and disability community organizations:**

- Arab American Family Support Center
- Arab American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Baruch Computer Center for Visually Impaired People
- Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled
- Chhaya Community Development
- CIDNY
- Citizen's Union
- Common Cause
- Emerald Isle Immigration Center
- Food Bank NYC
- Helen Keller Services for the Blind
- Korean American Voters' Council
- League of Women Voters of the City of New York
- Lighthouse International
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- NYPIRG
- Public Advocate's Office
- Reading for Life Radio
- Red Hook Initiative
- Self-Advocacy Network of NYS
- Southern Queens Park Association
- Visions
- Voter's Assistance Council
- Women's City Club of NY

- **These groups help the Board spread our messages through their own networks and provide feedback and input to the Board on how to best reach communities throughout the City**



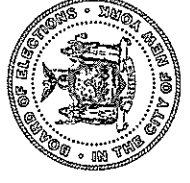


# Fast Facts – Implementing the New Voting System

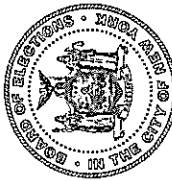
- The implementation of the new Poll Site Voting System (PVS) in New York City requires:
  - Training more than 36,000 poll workers on the new scanners, Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) and poll worker procedures
  - Performing city acceptance testing on more than 5,700 optical scanners and BMDs
  - Evaluating approximately 1,300 poll sites for suitability for the new PVS
  - Coordinating with more than 4,500 NYPD officers on Election Day
  - Procuring more than \$100 million in capital assets and services
  - Renovating more than 150,000 square feet of voting machine facility space to store the new PVS
  - Programming more than 10,000 portable memory devices for the optical scanners
  - Printing more than 4.8 million poll site ballots
  - Providing 16,000 privacy booths at all poll sites



# Question and Answer

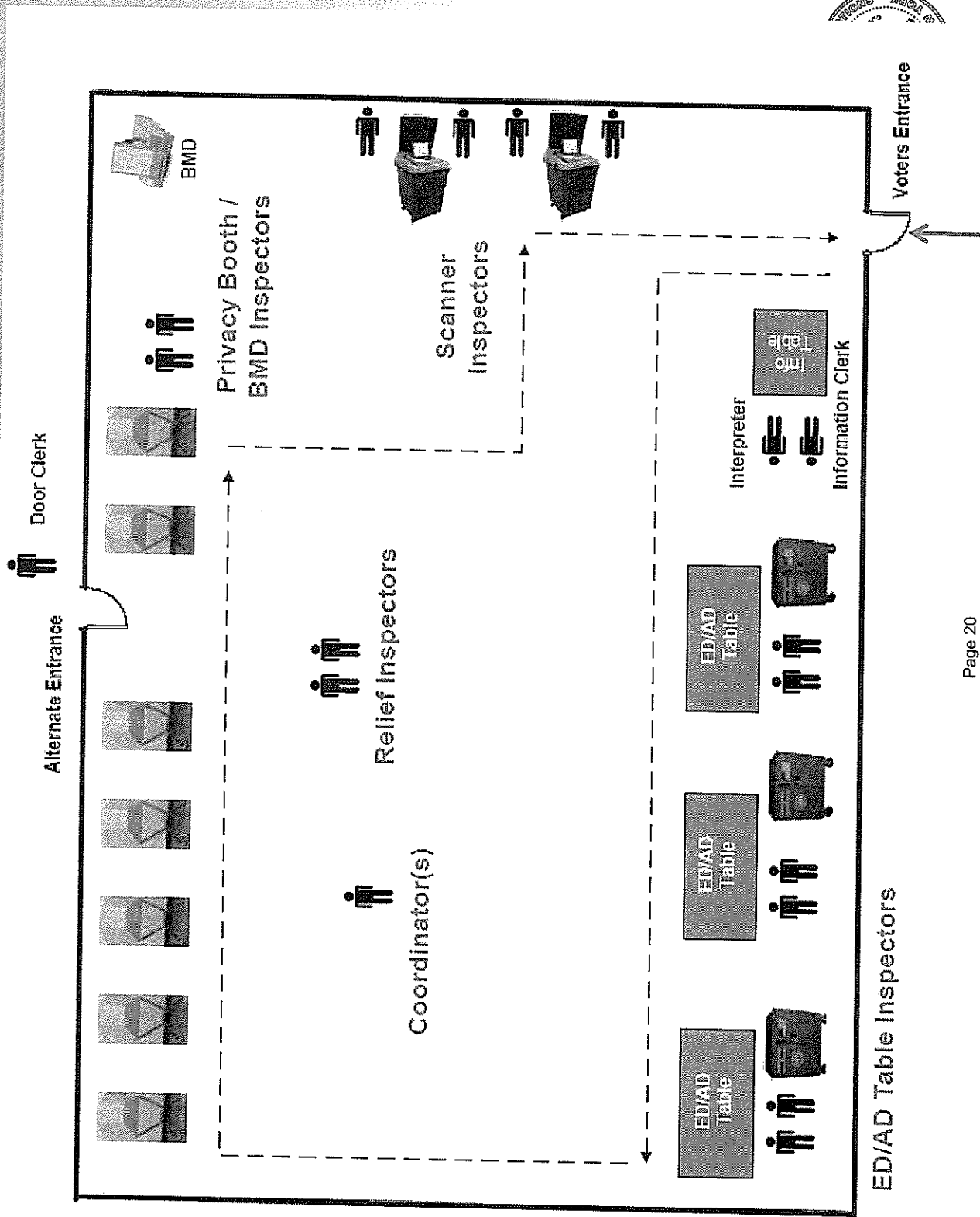


# NEW YORK CITY'S NEW WAY TO VOTE



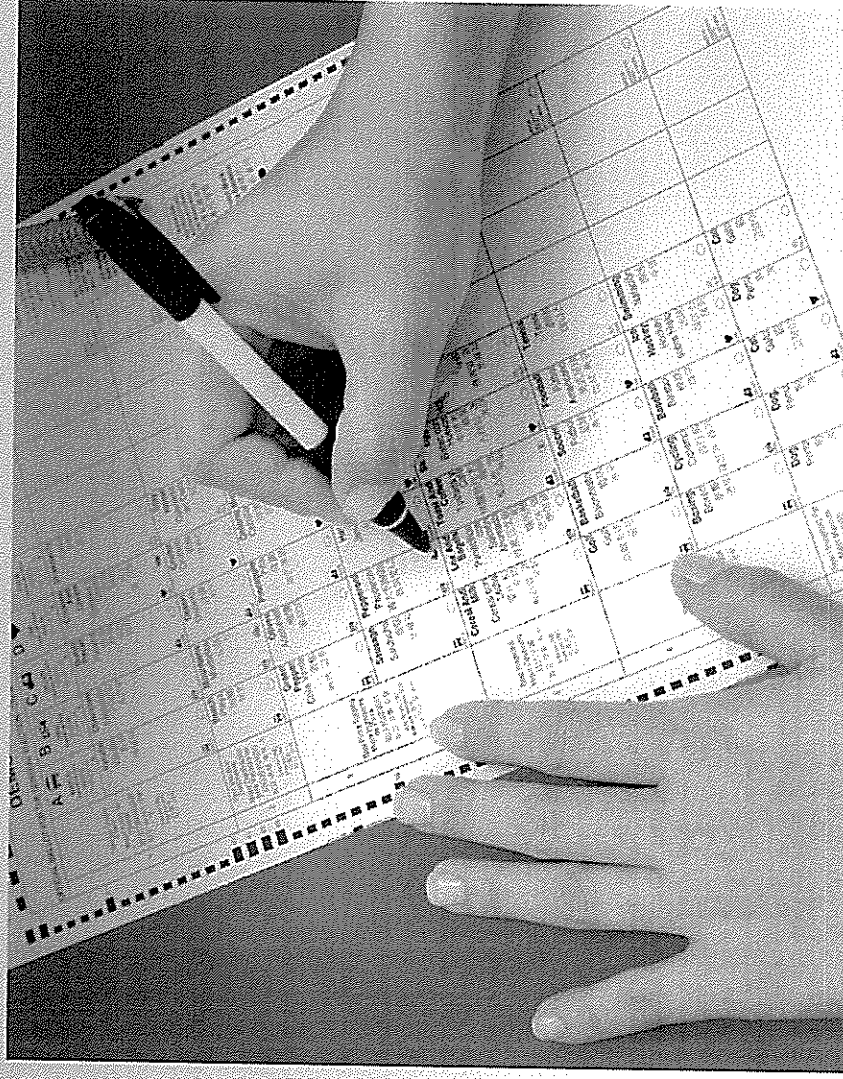


# Poll Site Layout and Poll Worker Roles

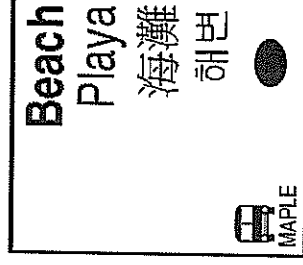


# Marking Your Paper Ballot

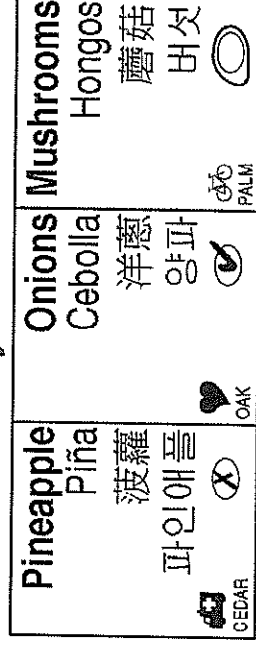
- The paper ballot has all contests and candidates on one side, ballot propositions on the other.



Correctly marked oval

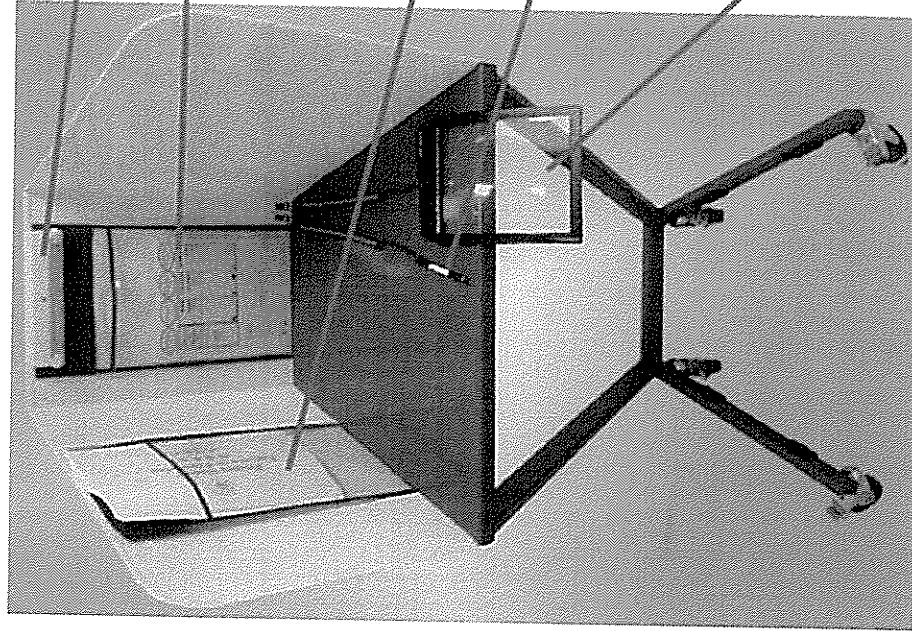


Incorrectly marked ovals



# Marking Your Paper Ballot

- Voters will mark their paper ballot using a pen in a privacy booth, or using a Ballot Marking Device (BMD).



LED Light

Plastic Sleeve (to place instructions on how to mark a ballot) on the center panel

Plastic Sleeve for Privacy Sleeves

Tether for Pen

Tether for Magnifying Sheet

## Standard and ADA Accessible Privacy Booths



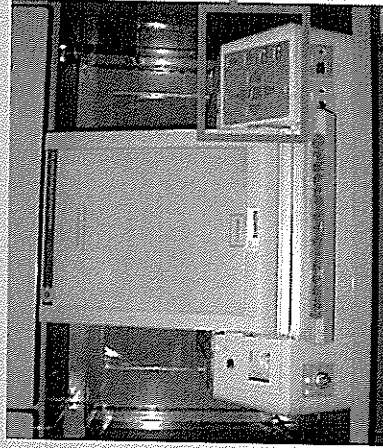


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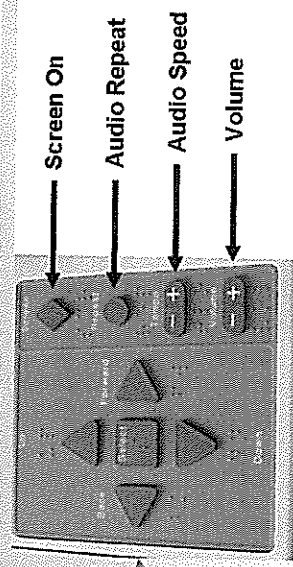
The Ballot Marking Device allows all voters, including voters with disabilities, to mark their ballot privately and independently at their poll site.



## ES&S AutoMARK Touch Screen



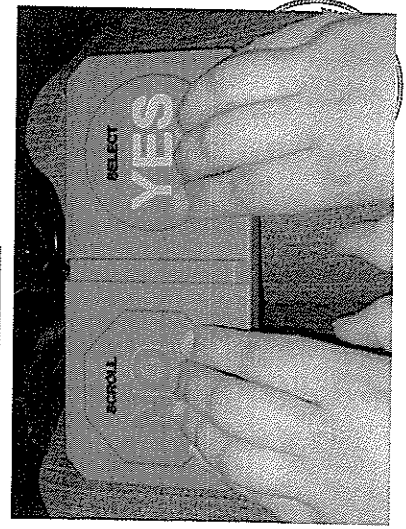
## Key Pad and Audio Controls



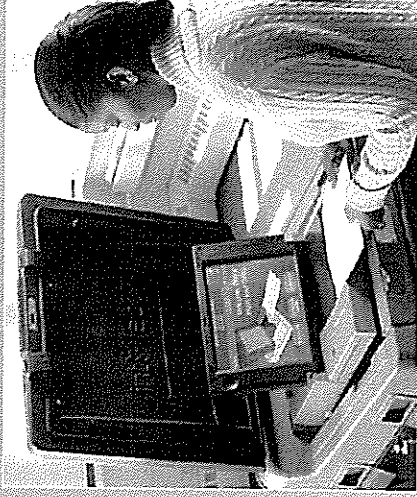
## Sip & Puff Device



## Two-position Rocker Paddle



# Scanning Your Paper Ballot



- Voters simply insert their paper ballot into the optical scanner to cast their vote.
- Typical Voter Questions:
  - What if I want to make changes to my ballot after marking it?
    - You may request a new ballot from a poll worker at any time before inserting it into the scanner (up to 3 ballots total).
  - What if I have difficulty seeing or marking the paper ballot?
    - A magnifying sheet will be provided in the privacy booth. Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) are available to assist any voter in marking the ballot by using an adjustable touch screen, audio headphones, Braille keypad, rocker paddle or sip and puff device.
  - What if I insert my ballot upside down or backwards?
    - The scanner accepts ballots in any direction and reads both sides of the ballot. The scanner will notify you that your vote has been cast successfully. Your vote, along with all other votes on the scanner, will be tallied at the poll site on election night.
  - What if I need assistance in the poll site?
    - Bi-partisan teams of poll workers are available to provide assistance. Interpreters are also available where required for Spanish, Chinese-Mandarin, Chinese-Cantonese and Korean.



# Overvotes

Voters are cautioned against overvotes in three ways.

## 1. In the Instructions on the Ballot

### GENERAL ELECTION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mark only with a pen using blue or black ink or with a pencil having black lead.
2. To vote for a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, completely fill in the voting oval under the name of the candidate.
3. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write or stamp his or her name and fill in the oval in the blank space at the right end of the row in which appears the title of the office.
4. To vote Yes or No on a proposal completely fill in the Yes or No oval.
5. Any other mark or writing, or any erasure made on this ballot outside the voting ovals or blank spaces provided for voting will void this entire ballot.
6. Do not overvote. If you select a greater number of candidates than there are vacancies to be filled, your ballot will be void for that public office or party position.
7. If you tear, or deface, or wrongly mark this ballot, return it and obtain another. Do not attempt to correct mistakes on the ballot by making erasures and cross outs. Erasures and cross outs may invalidate all or part of your ballot. Prior to submitting your ballot, if you make a mistake in completing your ballot or wish to change your ballot choices, you may obtain and complete a new ballot. You have a right to a replacement ballot upon return of an original ballot.

## 2. In the Voter Instructions posted prominently inside the privacy booth

### OVER VOTES

Beetle Green Flycatcher Hatchling	Maple Fruit Hatchling	Vanilla Fruit Hatchling	Chocolate Fruit Hatchling	Butter Pecan Hatchling
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do not overvote. Casting more votes than the maximum numbered allowed in any contest will void your votes for that contest only

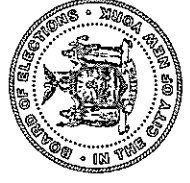
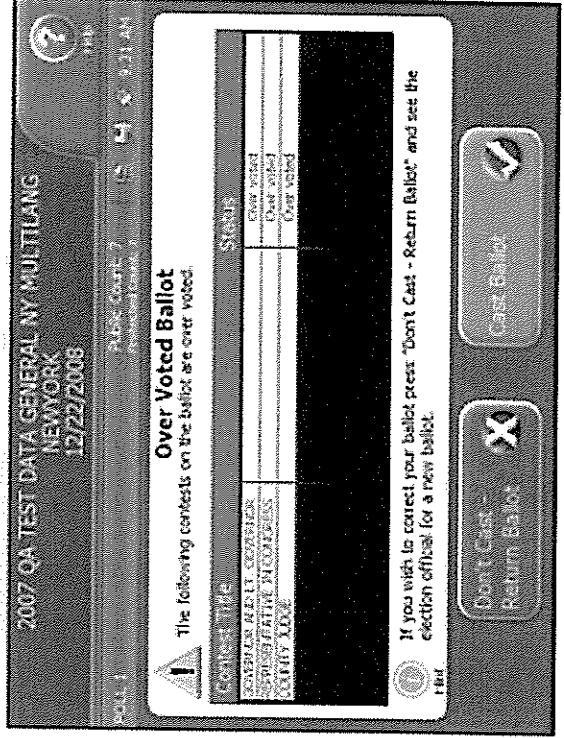
*Spanish Translation Here*

*Chinese Translation Here*

*Korean Translation Here*

## 3. At the Scanner

The scanner lists all overvoted contests and gives voter an opportunity to return the ballot, or cast as is.





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**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Testimony to the City Council Government Operations Committee**  
**on the Public Education and Implementation of New Voting Machines**  
**September 8, 2010**

Good afternoon Chair Brewer and members of the Council Government Operations Committee. My name is Alex Camarda, and I am the Director for Public Policy and Advocacy for Citizens Union of the City of New York. Citizens Union is an independent, non-partisan, civic organization of New Yorkers who promote good government and advance political reform in our city and state. For more than a century, Citizens Union has served as a watchdog for the public interest and an advocate for the common good.

We thank you for holding this public hearing on assessing voting machine implementation and outreach efforts by the Board of Elections in the City of New York (the Board) and giving Citizens Union the opportunity to present its views on this matter.

Citizens Union has, over the last several years, monitored the Board's efforts to implement the provisions of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, providing guidance and advice to this Committee, the Board itself, and the Voter Assistance Commission. During that time, Citizens Union has suggested criteria for the selection of new voting machines, advocated for increased funding to implement HAVA, and issued opinions on the training of poll workers and educating the public about the new machines. Citizens Union Foundation, our sister organization, worked in 2001 and from 2004 to 2008 to recruit poll workers for the City and reported on the experiences of some of those applicants, in training or while working on election day.

One week from today, the voters of New York City will experience the most dramatic change in voting in over 50 years, with votes being cast on paper ballots and run through an electronic scanner rather than via the traditional mechanical lever machines or "Shoup" machines. It is a change that was set in motion by the issues arising from the controversial 2000 election, and a change that every other state and locality in the country has already experienced given New York's dubious distinction of being the last state to implement the Help America Vote Act.

The Board has made efforts to prepare the public for this watershed election day, and deserves credit for the outreach it has done. Through some creative programs, particularly the demonstrations of the new machines across the City, it has provided the opportunity for some voters to become familiar with the new machines by casting mock votes on them prior to election day. The Board, since the program's beginning in May, has conducted over 200 of these demonstrations in collaboration with organizations and elected officials and scheduled over 270 more. Demonstrations are prominently posted on a section of Board's website devoted to the new machines, which is accessible from the home page, so that members of the public wishing to attend them can easily find one locally through the site's

useful zip code search function. Citizens Union will be holding such a demonstration this Friday evening in partnership with the Board and St. Francis College. Additionally, the Board has made its Learning Centers widely available, including on weekends, in each of the five boroughs to members of the public who wish to walk in and try out the new machines. While this program is an innovative collaborative initiative to educate voters about the new machines during tight fiscal times, its impact should not be overstated. According to the Board's Executive Director, 10,000 people have attended these demonstrations, but this is a small proportion of the 330,659 residents who voted in the Democratic primary for mayor last year and a miniscule proportion of the 1.1 million people who turned out to vote in last year's general election for mayor.

The demonstration of the new voting machines is part of larger public education effort by the Board, which it is carrying out through a \$6.7 million contract with Burson Marsteller, a public relations firm. The public education effort also involves an advertising campaign incorporating ads on city buses and subway cars, mobile billboards, in addition to placements in daily and community newspapers, radio stations, and TV spots. Citizens Union commends the Board for these needed promotions about the new machines but notes that the ad campaign only began on August 31st, just one week ago. While there is much debate for any campaign seeking to reach voters as to the optimal time to expend its resources, particularly given the diminished attention during summer months, Citizens Union believes two weeks of advertisements to alert primary voters to the changes in the voting process is likely insufficient to resonate. The larger pool of voters should, however, be better prepared for participating in the general election.

The Board also sent a multi-language mailer in August to all of the City's 4.3 million registered voters about the new voting machines, which Citizens Union participated in providing feedback on as to the messaging and presentation. We appreciate the Board's efforts in collaborating with our organization and others on that mailing, and believe it resulted in a higher quality product which was of great importance given that it was the only mailer done by the Board on the new machines given the \$2.5 million expense.

It is evident that the Board's public education efforts regarding new voting machines can only be evaluated in light of the amount of available funds, something the new Executive Director George Gonzalez has stated publicly has been inadequate during his entire 22 years of service to the Board. Yet the Board's belief that it is underfunded to robustly conduct needed education campaigns like this one is, in part, the result of its own failure to be more transparent and accountable for its spending. While Citizens Union has advocated several times to this Committee and others that the Board needed adequate funds to implement the requirements of HAVA, it has also been reluctant to be a forceful voice for the Board on this matter because the Board fails to report details of its operations to the Mayor's Preliminary and Final Management Report. Disclosures, like those made possible through the creation of the Comptroller's CheckbookNYC initiative, reveal that the Board spent nearly a half million dollars on car expenses for staff during a six month period ending in June 2010. This, in addition to the Board's spending opaqueness, raises questions about how the Board spends taxpayer dollars.

Citizens Union is aware that the Board is not a mayoral agency: Their funding comes from city dollars and for this reason we believe that reporting should be standard among bodies that receive city taxpayer money. The Board should go beyond what is included in its annual report which highlights voter registration totals, and also provide information on the number



of affidavit ballots cast, the number of those deemed invalid, the traffic received by the Board website, the number of calls received by the voter hotline, comprehensive poll worker statistics and other information that would help the public understand how the Board operates. This disclosure will assist with future budget requests and create the confidence that may allow the City to allocate more funding so the Board can more robustly wage education campaigns like preparing the public for new voting machines.

The Board's own archaic two-party structure also continues to hamper its ability to effectively conduct operations that would adequately prepare voters for the use of new machines. It is the two-party structure which caused an extended vacancy only just filled for Executive Director. It is hard to imagine any company or organization embarking on its most significant changes in over 50 years while leaving a top position vacant for six months. Only in a system that appoints its entire staff based on party affiliation and patronage rather than merit and qualifications is this possible - to the detriment of its operations. While a State matter, the City's residents continue to face the negative consequences that come from the structure of a Board that is more antiquated than the old lever voting machines. It is only one of two states in the nation with an even-numbered bipartisan Board.

The Board also missed the opportunity to take simple measures that would better prepare the public for use of the new voting machines. The Board could, for example, post sample ballots on its website educating the public on the new machines, something long requested by Citizens Union and other good government organizations, and done by numerous other elections bodies throughout the country. The Board should also create a dynamic online application form for the public to apply to become poll workers, instead of the static pdf download, thereby reducing the obstacles to applying to work at the polls and the time and effort needed to process hand-written requests. We urge this committee to pass legislation requiring these simple but important measures.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity for Citizens Union to provide its thoughts on matters related to the new voting machines and the campaign to prepare the public for their use.

I am happy to answer any questions you might have.



**Testimony to the Government Operations Committee  
Of the New York City Council  
Board of Elections Outreach and Implementation of  
the Paper Ballot Optical Scan Voting System  
Wednesday, September 8, 2010**

Good Morning. My name is Kate Doran and I am the City Affairs Chair of the New York City League of Women Voters. We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Board of Elections' outreach and implementation of the new voting system for the 2010 Primary and General Elections.

The League of Women Voters is a multi-issue, non-partisan political organization which encourages informed and active citizen participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through advocacy and education.

For 90 years the League has been in the forefront of promoting voter education. At no time is voter education more vital than when a whole new way of voting is being introduced to the public, as is now happening with the replacement of lever machines with paper ballots and optical scanners. The New York City Board of Elections has developed and implemented an extensive outreach and education program, including well-designed hands-on demonstrations which they are taking to community and civic organizations around the city. The League hosted one of these public demonstrations where over 100 voters had an opportunity to fill out sample ballots and feed them into the scanners. They were also able to use the AutoMark ballot marking device. For those who participated, their fears were allayed and their comfort with the new system increased. These demonstrations are reaching thousands of voters. However, we have millions of voters, many of whom were confused by the configuration of our ballot even back when they confronted it on the lever machine.

We believe that the Board of Elections could greatly improve service to voters by adding to its web site samples of the actual ballots that voters will see when they go to the polls. Voters should not be surprised or confused on Election Day. Confusion leads to disengagement and erodes turnout. Ballots could be linked to the BOE's current Poll Site Locator allowing voters to see just who is running for what office. We understand that the Board's Poll Site Locator was developed with the assistance of the city's Department of Information, Technology and Telecommunications and we would hope that DOITT could help with a sample ballot initiative as well.

Governor Paterson signed an amendment to New York State Election Law effective March 16, 2010 authorizing the BOE to employ election inspectors to work half day

shifts. The new law requires county boards of election to prescribe rules and procedures to ensure proper poll site operation.

We have heard concerns that half day shifts would mean training twice as many workers. That may be so, but training time could be halved inasmuch as early shift workers would be trained in opening procedures, and late shift workers in closing procedures. All poll workers would continue to be trained in voter service procedures.

Expanding the pool, and training more poll workers is a critical component of outreach. While we are disappointed that the BOE hasn't written rules in time for the September 14<sup>th</sup> primary, we do understand that this has been a busy and difficult year. We suggest however, that a pilot project be designed for certain select poll sites that could be run on November 2, 2010.

We believe that the 16 hour day has long been an insurmountable disincentive to civic minded individuals who might otherwise appreciate the opportunity for public service. Furthermore, we predict that recruiting and retaining competent, professionally minded workers will become much easier for the BOE when they begin to advertise an 8 hour work day. We urge the BOE to design a pilot project for the November election.

Mindful that this committee has an interest in increasing efficiency and accountability in the delivery of government services, we suggest that the Board of Elections be encouraged and assisted in exploring initiatives which are used in other municipalities and may be possible and desirable now that we are using paper ballots and optical scanners. In addition to online sample ballots, the Board should look into the feasibility of onsite printing of individual ballots, which in the long run would radically reduce printing and transportation costs. In some localities electronic poll books are used so that voters can go to any poll site to vote and have their names and identities verified. Of course, any new initiative can only be introduced after rigorous testing and assurances that all procedures are secure and protect the voter and the ballot. On-line and real time voter records would entail a significant commitment to upgrading technology, but we believe that this is an appropriate use of the Board of Elections' and the city's resources.

While this is the first time voters in New York City will be using this new voting system, voters in 18 other states use the system and voters in more than 40 upstate counties used paper ballots, optical scanners and ballot markers in the 2009 elections. Exit surveys conducted by the New York State League of Women Voters found that there were few problems and for most voters it was a good experience. We hope it will go as smoothly in New York City. We will be monitoring the elections and urge you to do so, as well.

Thank you



**Oversight – Board of Elections:**  
**Assessing Voting Machine Implementation & Outreach Efforts**

Chair Brewer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marjorie Kelleher Shea, and I am the Elections Specialist for the Women's City Club of New York, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, multi-issue organization founded in 1915. Our mission is to improve the lives of New Yorkers by helping to shape public policy and promote responsible government.

Thank you for this oversight hearing to assess voting machine implementation and outreach efforts. The NYC Board of Elections (BOE) is conducting an excellent public education program under the leadership of Communications Director Valerie Vazquez and the public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller. It has been a cooperative effort involving the BOE Commissioners' Education Committee, Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, other mayoral agencies and civic advocacy organizations.

**Accountability** – The purchase and testing of new equipment appears on schedule as reported by Executive Director Gonzalez in his weekly updates to the ten commissioners on the delivery and testing of scanners, ballot marking devices, privacy booths and supply carts. However, there is little or no reporting on the number of people who have been called to attend poll worker training classes, the number who have attended and those who have passed the required practical and written tests.

**Long term problem** – The Women's City Club has testified for a decade as to the need for a better program to recruit and train the 30,000 temporary workers who operate our neighborhood poll sites. There are indications that many experienced poll workers will opt out of the system this fall, as it requires a six-hour training class and a 5:00 a.m. reporting time on election days. Another possible deterrent is an Internal Revenue Service requirement that all poll workers are now considered employees of the Board of Elections for tax purposes and must complete the W-4 Tax withholding certificate.

The quantity and quality of election-day workers has been considered by past City Councils, and cooperative planning needs to be done. The Women's City Club asks that a special poll worker taskforce be instituted and modeled on that of 2002 and 2003. At that time, the Women's City Club, along with six other civic organizations and BOE staff, sat on a special working committee to provide input for revisions to the Poll Worker Manual and the training video and suggested sensitivity training so that workers could better serve voters. We realize that this could not be started until December 1<sup>st</sup> and would therefore begin after the general election.

**Short term solutions** – In the short term, the Women's City Club makes the following recommendations:

- o Provide statistics on "Election Day Operations/Poll Site Management" per the 2008 Annual Report showing "Worker Coverage Analysis"—number of workers in these categories: Assembly District Monitors, Coordinators, Inspectors, Poll Clerks, Information Clerks, Door Clerks, Interpreters (Spanish, Chinese, Korean). Also include the number of poll worker no-shows by poll site.
- o Use the six weeks between September 14<sup>th</sup> and November 2<sup>nd</sup> to train new workers and provide remedial classes for those who failed the practical and written tests.
- o Increase efforts to include college students in the standby pools and provide special training schedules that will accommodate their study schedules.
- o Provide a user guide to the 196-page Poll Worker Manual as the present form is lengthy and cumbersome.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the recommendations of the Women's City Club on the subject of elections, which is an essential part of public participation in democracy.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/8/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: George Gonzalez

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I represent: NYC Board of Elections

Address: 42 BAWY

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/8/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Valerie Vazquez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Board of Elections

Address: 42 BAWY

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/8/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alex Camacho

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Citizens Union

Address: 299 Broadway Suite 700

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Marjorie Shea

Address: 55 CPW, NY

I represent: Women's City Club of NYC

Address: 507 4th Ave, NY

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Date: 9/8/10

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Kate Doran

Address: 4 West 43rd Street NY, NY

I represent: League of Women Voters

Address: as above

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: JANE KALMUS VAC. Commissioner

Address: 100 Gold St

I represent: NYC VOTER ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Address: 100 Gold St.

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