SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony - voting access problems - Frank Welte

I am a registered voter in Alameda County, California, and I also happen to be blind. Ever since the county began making accessible electronic voting machines available in elections, I have taken advantage of this voting method whenever I could, first at the county elections office in Oakland, CA and later in my local precinct in San Leandro, CA.

The voting machine works well for me. However, on at least three occasions, the accessible voting machine at my precinct was not set up and operating when the polls opened at 7:00 AM, which is the time when I prefer to vote. I have ended up waiting for quite some time, a half hour to an hour, for the poll workers to figure out how to activate the voting machine. I believe the poll workers in my precinct are not receiving sufficient training in the operation of accessible voting machines prior to election day, so they are unprepared to accommodate blind and visually impaired voters.

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From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Hi this is Brian Colfer from Sterling Heights Michigan. I'm a totally blind voter. I wish to have my comments submitted in to the public record. There are two issues that we as blind voters face. First, the voting machines need to be accessible for blind voters to use to vote secretly and independently. Second, absentee voters who are blind or disabled in some way need to vote secretly on line without having to rely on assistance from anybody. Please read these comments at the hearing next wednesday. I won't be able to attend, but I hope I can listen to the hearing at a later date. Thank you.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Hello!

I'm sending this a second time from a different email account because I got a message that said my original email delivery was delayed. Hopefully this time you will receive this message.

Anyhow; it's my understanding that you are seeking testimony from disabled voters with regards to improving voting accessibility for differently abled people. Having the Black Lab Golden Cross Registered Seeing Eye Dog shown in a training video put together by the Sussex County Board of Elections for its volunteer poll workers here in Newton New Jersey; I figured I just might be able to provide you with the kind of input you are looking for. So, "Here we go!"

In a nut shell; having the talking voting machines has been a huge improvement. When voting using one of these devices; it's rather nice to know that I can vote without any chance of other folks listening in. In years past, before the existence of talking voting machines, I would usually end up having to bring someone along with me just so I could vote.

Now, since I'm able to listen to the voting machine read it out for me, the voting process is a bit more simplified. I can visit my designated polling site at a time of my choosing, which is usually at an off peak period; doing my thing without having to worry about my schedule lining up with someone else's just so I could vote. Obviously, too, if I want to keep my voting choices to myself; talking machines equipped with headphones make it possible.

It would be nice if a blind person like myself could use the write in part of the ballot like everyone else. However, if I could I'd probably be voting for Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse rather than some of the other politicians out there during election time. So maybe the lack of write in functionality is a good thing; keeping me in line.

"True!" In places like Sussex County NJ a bit more public education with regard to disabilities would go a long way towards making the voting process go more smoothly for everyone.

My biggest difficulty when voting is other people's reaction to my Registered Seeing Eye Dog. "However," I'm hoping that the training video I helped Marge McCabe and her staff put together makes things easier on everyone going forward.

Over all though; devices I can independently use certainly do make it a lot easier and more comfortable for me to vote. "And," for that alone I am grateful.

"Thank you!"

Hope this helps.

In God we can always trust,

Brian, KC2KFD

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting experience

Hello,

I wanted to share my voting experience as a voter with a disability in Monroe County. This is the second time I've attempted to vote and the workers were not aware of how to operate the accessible Ballot Marking Device (BMD). Also, I was NOT given a private vote as other voters were surrounding the area of the BMD. I have expressed multiple times to the Board of Elections that this was an issue and I feel it is not taken seriously. The voting process took thirty minutes between setting up the BMD, voting, and asking for assistance inserting the ballot. This was much longer than the time an able bodied person took to vote.

Thank you,

Ericka Jones
Systems Advocate
Center for Disability Rights
497 State Street
Rochester, New York 14608

(585) 546-7510 (Voice)
(585) 546-5643 (Fax)

www.cdrnys.org
www.facebook.com/rochestercdr
www.twitter.com/cdrnys

Have you signed up for the NY Disability Vote Network?
www.NYDVN.org

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Hi this is Brian Colfer from Sterling Heights Michigan. I'm a totally blind voter. I wish to have my comments submitted in to the public record. There are two issues that we as blind voters face. First, the voting machines need to be accessible for blind voters to use to vote secretly and independently. Second, absentee voters who are blind or disabled in some way need to vote secretly on line without having to rely on assistance from anybody. Please read these comments at the hearing next wednesday. I won't be able to attend, but I hope I can listen to the hearing at a later date. Thank you.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

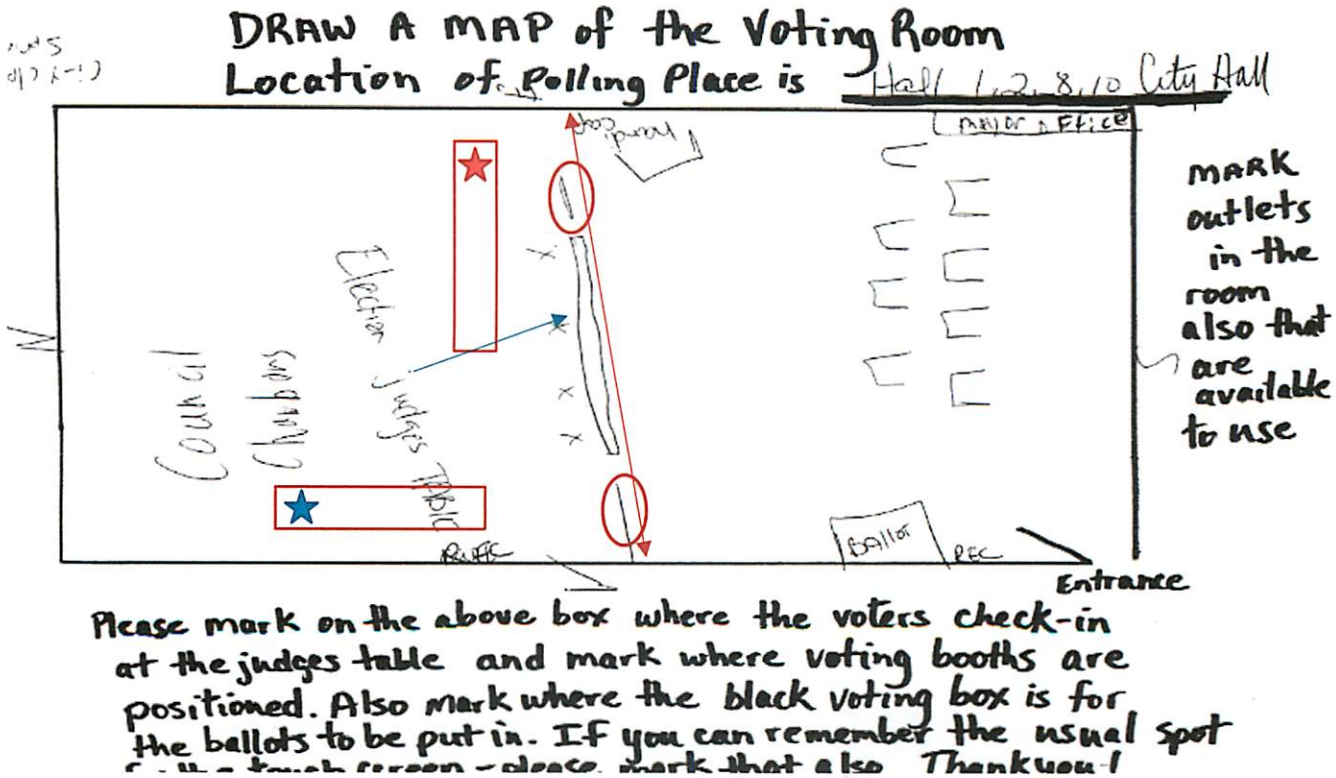
My name is Larry Johnson and I am totally blind. I live in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.
I vote in every election at the polls and use the audible assistive system provided by our County.
In general, it works very well. I have encountered two problems.
Some of the election officials at the polling site are somewhat unfamiliar as to how to set it up which causes a delay.
The other problem is that sometimes the headset offered is very uncomfortable, broken or fits very poorly.
Nevertheless, the election officials are always eager to see me and willing to help.
I appreciate very much being able to independently and secretly cast my ballot.
Thank you.

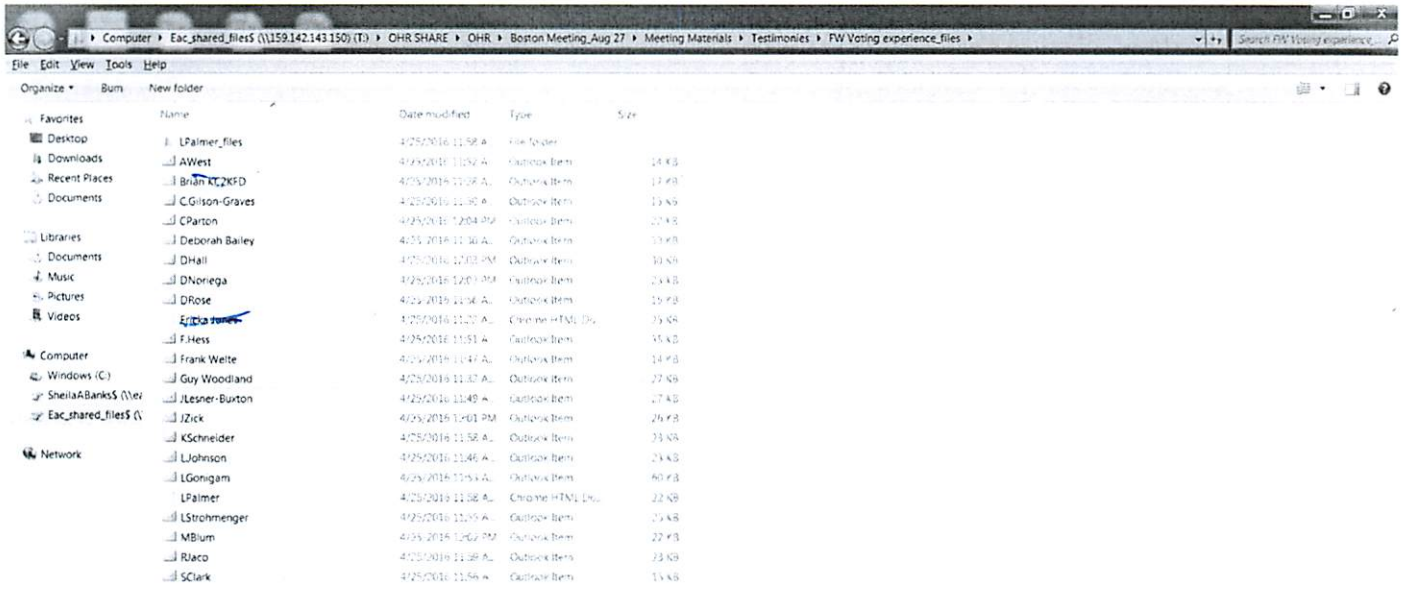
Report on Marla's experience during the Primary March 15, 2016

I have been working with Equip for Equality on Accessibility at my polling station. We got an agreement with our County Clerk to fix certain things. The County Clerk did some things, but things were still not good at my polling station. When I got to my polling station, I checked the room against what I saw on the map we received prior to the election for accessibility. I noticed that there was not an accessible voting booth set up at all in the location they had on the map. I asked to use the electronic voting machine and was told it was sitting at the end of a table through the gate into the area where the election judges were sitting in the City Hall Council Chamber. I asked about the accessible voting booth and she said they just use one of the voter's booths and lower it. I explained that there is supposed to be an accessible voter's booth that is lower and wider to accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair. She said they didn't have one. She showed me to the electronic voting machine which was positioned at the end of the table away from people, but didn't have a privacy barrier. When I finished voting, that same election judge came back to me and reported to me that she found out the voter's booths do not lower and she looked but they didn't have an accessible voting booth. She told me that they would have those that need one vote at a table through the gate and asked me if that was okay. I asked about privacy and she said they would just take one of the privacy barriers off of one of the voting booths and set it up. I said that would work. I then asked who the judge was that is in charge of accessibility and she said they all were. I explained that there should be one person and she again said they all were. I said "Okay, thank you" and left.

On the map below, I added the red tables and the stars. The blue star is where the electronic voting machine was located that I voted at, and the red star is were they proposed to have folks needing an accessible voting booth vote. I circled the gates with red. The election judges table is behind the railing which I have marked with a red line with arrows that the gates are attached to. The railing is wall to wall. There are other tables in the council chamber and it is generally crowded feeling.

Marla Michalak, IVCIL Youth Advocate





B Colfer

L Johnson

M Blum

J Lesner

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Letter in Support RE:AB2252

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Jacob Lesner-Buxton and I am community organizer who works at the Independent Living Resource Center, in Santa Barbara. I am also a member of the Secretary of State 's Voting Advisory Committee. I am writing to you in support of AB2252 . This bill would allow people with disabilities like me the option to vote by mail and cast our ballots privately and independently like many other California voters.

As a person with limited motor dexterity, it is a challenge for me to fill out a paper ballot. While accessible voting machines are helpful to me, they aren't always available for use. When living in Alameda County I voted at a polling that was consistently inaccessible. I struggled to enter down a small steep staircase without accommodation or an accessible entrance. And then once inside the polling place, at least three times the accessible voting machine was either broken or not set up to be used.

One such occasion was during the November 2012 General Election. I was recovering from surgery because of cancer which further compromised my strength and mobility. However, I wanted to vote. So, I went to my polling place at St. Andrews Baptist Church in Oakland. I entered through the only and inaccessible entrance to find that there was not a working accessible voting machine being provided that day. My only choice was to vote with a pen on a paper ballot. However, the polling place only had four voting booths for privacy and not knowing how long my strength would hold out I voted on a table in the open with privacy.

I have also tried voting by mail, but had to rely on friends or family to mark the correct choice. Luckily, I can see well enough to double check how my friend marked, but many do not have that ability. And once in when voting by mail in Santa Barbara my ballot was disqualified because of the irregularity of my signature – a common problem for people with my disability. As an advocate I have also heard of cases in which people with disabilities were not told about their ballot arriving in the mail, and they were not able to vote in that election

In the end, no matter how I vote I am often denied my right to cast a private and independent ballot or disenfranchised from voting. AB2262 would help ensure that everyone in California has a right to a free an independent vote. Additionally, it would also improve civic participation among people with disabilities is rural counties such as Santa Barbara who have difficulty traveling to polling places.

Thank you for working to increase access to democracy for all Americans.
Respectfully,
Jacob Lesner-Buxton

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

To Whomever It May Concern:

I am totally blind and have voted using accessible equipment in two locations in Pennsylvania: Bethlehem (College Hill Moravian Church) and Greenwich Township in Berks County.

My experiences in Bethlehem (from August of 2008 to September of 2014) were mixed. The talking voting machine at that polling place often had problems. The audio connection between the machine and the headphones they supplied often had static or was shorting out. This happened several times in a row. Also, the election officials seemed to find my request to use the audio equipment taxing. They were very willing to help me, but several of them had to work on setting up the unit. They seemed to be intimidated by the set up process each time I voted. And, I voted in the general, primary, and state/local elections between August of 2008 and October of 2014.

My experience voting in Greenwich Township of Berks County, Pennsylvania has been nothing but positive. Though I have only voted there once so far, the officials knew how to set up the audio equipment right away. They even thanked me for using the equipment.
Their demeanor was calm and provessional.

Thank you for your attention to my testimony.

Sincerely,
Christie

--
Christie Gilson-Graves

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

I am a member of the DVC (disability voting coalition) I am also a poll worker who uses a wheelchair. As the advocacy coordinator for Disability Options Network I have done a large amount of accessible voting surveys in the 4 counties that we serve (Beaver Butler Mercer and Lawrence counties in PA. I have found an unusually high amount of polling places that are not accusable. There needs to be more work on getting all polling places up to standards.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Fred C Hess
Advocacy Coordinator
Disability Options Network
831 Harrison St
New Castle, PA 16101
724-652-5144

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

I began voting independently several years ago when the telephone voting system arrived in Connecticut. Those of us who are visually impaired (I am totally blind) were thrilled. I actually had tears in my eyes upon completing my first ballot.

There were two instances with problems. The first time I voted via the telephone system, the polling place moderators had no clew as to how to activate it. Prior to the election, there was a practice system available which I accessed and learned how to use it. I had to tell the moderators what to do. Training for the moderators was lacking. The second instance was a technical glitch. The passcode didn't work and it took several phone calls to get a phone line for me to use. I realize things happen and received apologies in both cases.

The moderators at my polling place know what to do now and they know me. The sad thing is that I am the only person in Southington taking advantage of the telephone.

I feel blessed to live in a time when technology enables me to vote independently. There was a time that I thought it would never happen.

Thank you for listening.

Anne West

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Dear EAC,
The following is my testimony about my voting experience in the Primary in the State of Illinois, Bureau County, Village of Tiskilwa. But first, some background information: I am the Associate Director at Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living in LaSalle, IL. Because two of our staff members discovered disability rights violations in a previous election in Bureau County, they filed a complaint with Equip for Equality. Equip for Equality wrote to the County Clerk and laid down conditions the county would have to abide by in order for no legal action to take place. One of those conditions was to invite our staff to conduct a training for the election judges on disability etiquette, what it means to be accessible, and how to set up and use the accessible booth and accessible voting machine. I and two other staff members held two trainings; one in the early afternoon and the other in the early evening. I attended both.

With that being said I will now continue with my experience. The first issue: I live in a very small town where just about everybody knows everybody else. Our voting facility is in a side room of the fire station. There was no accessible parking available; no signage, no yellow space marked, no access aisle striping. The three parking spots that are in front of the building are flanked by a dirt driveway and the fire station driveway. There are no other parking spaces. People park across the street in the grass, which is where I had to park. The second issue: After receiving my ballot I looked for the accessible voting booth. It was nowhere to be found. I have severe arthritis in my knees, use crutches, and cannot stand for any length of time. The male election judge told me I could sit in a chair and pull it up to the table. I recognized the judge from the accessibility training we had conducted just last week. I told him I am supposed to have a privacy screen. He replied, "You are?" I stated that he was at the training and should have known that. So he took the privacy screen from the last voting booth on the end and placed it on the table. In that position people could have walked behind me and seen my ballot. So I told him that my back should be to the wall so no one could see what I was marking. He then pulled the chair around to the end of the table and moved the privacy screen also to the end of the table. I still felt people could walk from the voting booths and see my ballot. But since that was the only accommodation they offered, I acquiesced. The male judge then pointed out that they had the accessible voting booth but it was still in the box. No one bothered to set it up.
While I was voting I heard a female judge say, in a fairly loud voice, for everyone else present to hear, "She's going to raise hell about this." So, as I was leaving, I walked up to her and told her that I was going to raise hell because I heard what she said.
I know there are others in the community who have disabilities and need accommodations when voting. The election judges did not do their job to prepare the polling place for people with disabilities. But I blame the County Clerk because she has demonstrated that accessibility accommodations are not a priority with her and, therefore, not a priority for the county.

Lesley A. Gonigam, Associate Director
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LaSalle, IL 61301
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"Striving to enlighten the path and enrich the journey for persons with disabilities..."

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SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

I require the use of a wheelchair. I few years ago I had moved to a new apartment in Indianapolis. When I went to vote I was shocked to see a step into the polling place. Luckily I can do a wheelie in my wheelchair and pull myself into through a doorway but I was shocked there was no ramp. Andre Carson was shaking hands with people right outside the office and had I used a power wheelchair I would not have been able to get in w/o further inconvenience.

I've voted there again since and there was a little ramp put up, but I do remember having trouble parking- as I do everywhere I go in Indianapolis- there were no handicap spots available. And if there were they were any handicap spots even at the site they must have been taken. Handicap parking is terrible in Indianapolis. Handicap parking is treated as a privilege, or as an entitlement, but it's a NEED for people who require extra space next to the vehicle for a mobility device. Handicap parking needs to be enforced and checked - it should be easy revenue for the city to bust people using other people's placards.

Handicap placards that say "No Expiration" should not exist. The No EXP placards are passed on to friends and family and that is why I can't shop at a mall during the holiday seasons.

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SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: Testimony

I recently voted in the Missouri 2016 Presidential Primaries.
I am 43 years old and totally blind.

I went inside the voting location and someone helped me over to the table to check in and receive a ballot. I was asked for identification and gave the worker my Missouri State ID. The worker searched in their system using an I pad and then asked me to verbally verify my home address. I didn't think about this at the time but realized later that nobody else checking in was required to verbally verify their home address. So I and my Wife who is also blind were the only ones checking in at the time who were required to announce our home address to all who were there to vote.

We asked about accessible voting and were told "The person who operates the machine called in sick today" by one of the workers at the voting location.

Our only option was to have someone read and mark the ballots for us along with a witness to verify the correct choices were made.

We called the Platte County Missouri Board Of Elections the next day and were told there was a roaming person who could have been there in about
10 minutes if the poll workers had called. Nobody offered, mentioned, or even suggested that when were voting.
Steven Clark

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

Greetings,

I am writing to express my experience with the Automark Voting Machine which is at all voting precincts in Michigan. I am totally blind. Prior to the accessible talking voting machine I always had to either get an absentee ballot, or attend the polls and have someone assist me with voting. The first year the accessible process was available I visited my polling place and voted independently for the first time in my life! It seems like such a simple thing, but it was really important to me to get to do it myself, and still is. I was confident that the candidates I chose were listed on my ballot, and no one, but me, knew for whom I voted. I felt like a full-fledged citizen.

The process at my polling place is pretty easy. Occasionally the staff aren't very familiar with the machine and they forget to switch from "test"
mode, and the machine spoils my ballot by running through its test.
Eventually we all figure it out and then my voting can progress normally.
For the upcoming Presidential election, I will be inquiring ahead of time with my city clerk to make sure those at my polling place are aware of how the machine works as not to hold up other voters.

I am grateful that I can vote independently. My State's website has a copy of the ballot that people can review in advance of voting, and this has been very helpful.

I think we should make voting easier for everyone. I think it would be wise to hold elections on Saturdays, and/or figure a system out whereby people could vote by phone. I also feel that the Electoral College was meant for an era when we had a lot of farmers and America was more rural. For this reason I would like our system to switch to the popular vote instead of the Electoral College.

Thank you,
Donna Rose

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: testimony

The first time I voted independently using the "handicapped" machine, I cried. To me a secret ballot is part of what being an American is all about. Before that because I'm blind, I had to have a friend help me or polling officials. By the time you get one Democrat official, one Republican official, one Seeing Eye dog and me in the booth, it doesn't feel like secret ballot. I'm sure it was, but voting by myself is much better! About half the time the officials have had problems with the machines. I wonder if in the training they could make each official try turning on the machine and setting it up for audio voting. Currently they seem to have a set of instructions, but they've not done it. HAVA is one of my favorite laws.

Katherine Schneider, Ph.D.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Accessible Voting

To Whom It May Concern:

I have voted for the last two years using the accessible voting machine. I am able to do it independently and successfully. I would like to encourage others to vote this way by allowing support groups to have a speaker to explain how to use the machine and let them use it for a mock vote.

Linda Palmer

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

My name is Robert Jaco. I had a problem voting in our March primary in Missouri. I have voted in the same location several times; that is why this seems so frustrating. The same official who tried to help me vote several times couldn't get the audible ballot to work, so I had to have my wife and officials from each party present.

I hope this helps with the needed information.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

As New York prepares for its primary election April 19 and the general election in November, the topic of voting has become more pronounced within the disability community.

Certainly, improvements have been made to the voting experience for people with disabilities. More polling sites are accessible, and more poll volunteers are cognizant of voters with disabilities. But, in general, far more education and training is needed to ensure all polling sites are accessible to voters with disabilities. An example:

Last month, AIM Independent Living Center was asked to evaluate a new polling site in New York's Southern Tier. While we were pleased that the local board of elections (BOE) reached out to us for consultation – the BOE was, at least, being proactive – we were surprised by the condition of the polling site. Prior to our inspection, the BOE informed us that it viewed the site as accessible, but we found several troubling issues.

First, the site had 26-50 parking spaces, but it did not have a single accessible parking space. Second, the "accessible entrance" had a threshold with an elevation difference of almost 4 inches. Third, the door to enter the polling site was very heavy and did not have a handle that could be used by someone with low grip strength.

Fortunately, we worked with the BOE to implement remedies, but it was disappointing to learn that what the BOE considered accessible was foundationally inaccessible.

More education and training for BOEs will help make sure more voters with disabilities can cast their ballots during elections.

Thank you.

John Zick

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Voting-Access

Hello,

I don't know if this is useful or not, but I am currently in the middle of a needs assessment for a grant that I'm working on , the intent of which is to improve access to services for individuals with disabilities who are experiencing domestic violence. During the course of this assessment, two people with disabilities brought up the polling place in the village of Mohawk, NY as being difficult to access. One said they know people other than themselves who do not vote because of the difficulty in accessing the building. I am familiar with this building, because it is also my polling place. There are several steps to get into the building from the front entrance. There is an accessible entrance in the back, but you would never know it from the street. This is not something that I've experienced personally, but has indirectly come my way, so I thought I'd pass it along. Lisa

Lisa Mastracco, OVW Project Coordinator

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH
64 N. Main St., Suite 2, Concord, NH 03301-4913 • advocacy@drcnh.org • drcnh.org
(603) 228-0432 • (800) 834-1721 voice or TTY • FAX: (603) 225-2077

Presidential Primary February 9, 2016
Voter input on election accessibility
(Some may duplicate Surveymonkey responses)

The following comments were received by the Disability Rights Center – NH by email and telephone from individuals with disabilities who had voted in the 2016 NH Presidential primary. These comments reflect their experiences with the NH All4One voting system, pollworker training, and other issues with access and the ability to vote privately and independently.

I did vote using the machine. I had no trouble with the machine but issues with the poll workers. Nothing to big though.
Some were not sure what to do with me and others were too clingy giving me no privacy.
The machine worked like a dream. It was quick and easy. It would be good for anyone who forgot to bring their reading glasses.
I would still prefer to have a ballet that looks like everyone elses and that I could put in the same slot. Having to put it in a different slot makes me wonder how private my vote really is. So I asked the poll worker how many people used this machine today and he told me that they had the poll workers use the machine to vote. So mine was not the only vote in the slot.

I did my voting. I attempted to use the machine, however they were not possible to do independently on my own. They wanted you to touch a screen or a keyboard which I cannot do either, so I had to have assistance could not vote privately, so wanted to let you know that it didn't work in my case. I couldn't independently vote on my own.

I did get to vote but it took 3 of us to figure it out and I could have never done it privately. It included a keyboard I could not see, a touch screen that didn't work and a paper ballot that I had to put into a machine I couldn't figure out. We knew the moderator in Pembroke and he tried his best but even he said he didn't understand how it worked.

There was a headset but it was telling me to hit the enter key on a keyboard I couldn't see. It told me to touch the screen which wouldn't work and it said nothing about the blue paper that needed to be used instead of the normal ballot. Even the person checking me in knew I needed the accessible voting and still gave me the wrong ballot.

I would suggest better directions in the head set and the voting booth be set up before you enter. The moderator had to go in first and key in some information like polling number and get the system started.

Machine voice didn't work, keyboard wasn't out, machine couldn't find a printer, had to have moderator help

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I did not have any trouble and the poll worker did great actually!
Other than that.. yes, the voice is as horrible as it probably gets and does leave it open to possible errors. In fact, I had to sit and go through the names twice to make absolutely sure I understood each one before I dared to hit the enter key on a choice. I guess I will take it a step further to say that I truly find it insulting that after the last 18 years or so that some of our groups have tryed to assist in developing a system, that it is still in the stage where we not only can not, vote on a universal style ballot, but that the input from the blind community is undoubtedly always overlooked and.. this is still the "status quo" in 2016!

I just voted in xxx and had a good experience. The poll worker was great and entered the necessary information and then I was on my own. I had no trouble voting and my ballot was printed successfully. I do admit the speech could be better and I was disappointed that my ballot was different than the regular ones.

I checked in at my polling booth using my passport as my photo ID. This was not fully valid as it does not show an address. I had to have a polling worker , who knows me, verify my address. I than proceeded to the tent enclosure where the new "ONE in ALL" tablet was set up. A sheet of pink paper was placed in the printer for a Republican ballot to be completed. It took (4) attempts for the polling booth worker to enter the republican ballot and polling booth number. The were (30) names on the ballot. I had great difficulty understanding the names. The quality of the headphones and speech was terrible. Knowing that at least 50% of seniors have a hearing limitation this makes the system open to a person voting for someone in error. The quality of the tablet system was not up to the telephone/fax system, when working, and both systems fail to produce a secret ballot. Fourteen years after the Help America Vote Act we are still waiting to have equal access to voting. In my opinion the new system has many barriers and should not be recommended to municipalities. Here is a novel idea, empower persons who are blind and organizations for the blind to resolve the problems. Of course we should be reimbursed and recognized as a partner.

I voted today and had a mixed experience. The speed of the speech was very slow. Not real slow but too slow for me. I could not get it to go faster even with help. Lots of the

names on the democratic ballot were missed pronounced. Even the familiar ones. If one does not know how to listen to computer speech it is very hard and listening should not be a chore. We should have this figured out or someone should let the blind community figure it out by now. A secret ballot is not an option. It is our right.

Xxx also expressed his anger at the SOS office rolling out a "half assed" system rather than delaying the roll out until it was working right. He said, "we had a half-assed system for all of the those years and now, instead of waiting until they had it right, they decided to roll out another half-assed system".

My experience with primary 2016 voting was unbelievable! I live in Northern NH and am no stranger to lack of accessibility, whether it be transportation, public knowledge, assistant programs etc. While I was hoping to avoid any surprises or confusion at the voting booths, I phoned the City Clerks office on Thurs. Feb. 4th to be sure this system was in place and ready for use. She assured me it was to be in place, and also stated they had only themselves received the tablets three days prior to my inquiry. Staff members at city hall had a crash test on Wed. and found them to be visually impaired non-friendly. Let's face it has anyone ever had a tablet with tactile prompts?
I made a totally blind member aware of the likelihood of needing assistance in casting their vote, (again). After quite a lengthy conversation with the City Clerk, whom was very concerned and understanding of my concerns. She stated "Well at least they are trying to make it accessible". As I think of this statement I can't help but wonder what if the government handed out faulty ballots and wrote the instructions in chinese, would anyone still state well at least they are trying to make voting private and independent in the US?
Now for the actual primary voting process. Arriving at a late afternoon hour so as to avoid lunch hour rush and by City Clerks advice not in early am as the moderator would need time to set up and acquaint themselves with the system. (Excuse me the day of training?) Announcement you are voting what affiliation? Ok not so private affiliation, not really a problem I am not ashamed. Step into the booth, ok, first we'll place this ballot in the printer tray, now here is the tablet, oh yes there is a yellow large print keyboard sitting next to tablet and connected. Moderator with written instructions in hand attempts first connect. Not a go, let's shut off (reboot) and attempt again. Hmm, can you hear anything? No where are the headphones? Oh yes right here, ok here on the touch screen do you want to use headphones? Yes, after several attempts to access, and my inquiry as to can't we use the key pad on keyboard such as arrows and enter key? Oh well, let's call City Clerk. Hallelujah she's here. Now the three of us in booth eventually have it accessed. Moderator continues to be apologetic and eventually leaves the booth. Now the speech having gone through several names on the ballot continues. Why, the system does not have a auditory introduction to the system is one I don't understand. Apparently there is no way to skip to next candidate. Once the trying process was complete, printed ballot arrives quite quickly. Then to the drop box, odd ballot out, it needs to be slid into side slot to be counted later. Private

ballot indeed, as my husband was told only I have accessed the assistive voting system.
The telephone and fax system was easily utilized by me in the past. I have been told though that the connecting process for moderators has been a challenge and time consuming. Personally I believe there are several bus that need to be addressed if this system is to become common and truly functional. Come on America, do you have voting ballots available in Spanish? Can't we be treated as equal citizens as we do pay taxes, contribute to the communities whether it be through our employment, and or volunteerism.
Yes, this voting process could have been so simplified had I only requested my husbands assistance. But, then I would never have had first hand opportunity in having my American right to voice my opinion. Sorry this is so negative but, it was a fiasco! Very poorly planned out.
Maybe one or more of our candidates will get word of this and voice their position!!! After all they will be very interested in how the polls went for their placements....
Very disappointed.

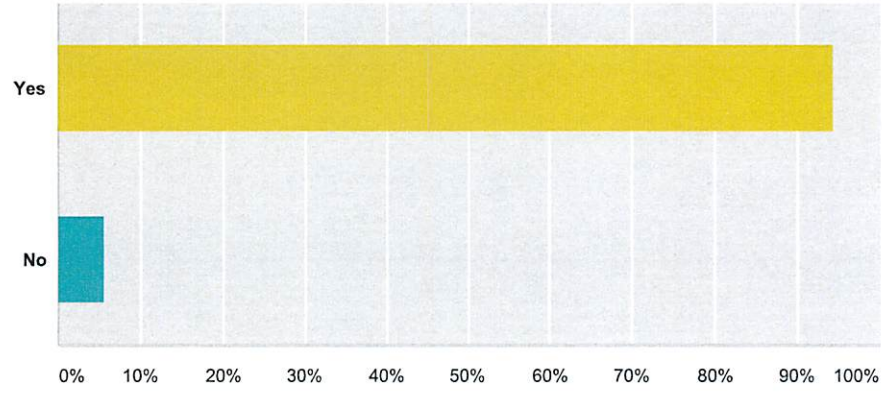
Voted this morning, here's the feedback.

- Checked in. Was handed a ballot. asked to use accessible booth. was told I could not do that since I already had a ballot. Understandable, but wouldn't it have been better to ask me, rather than putting the burden on the voter? Not everyone has a visible disability...
- Did get feedback from town clerk in Campton. She likes it for the following reasons.
  - Set up time prior to voting is much quicker.
  - Device is volume adjustable, making it easier for the hard of hearing.
  - Ballot prints immediately, no waiting.

(phone call) He used to use the telephone system and it worked nicely. With the All4One It took him several tries to hit the little blue dot, but he could do it with the headphones and keypad. He had to listen carefully, the voice was not good. The ballot spit back with only one name on it. He couldn't read it to see if was correct. The ballot went in a separate slot and was counted by hand, unlike the other ballots. While he didn't have a problem with the keypad, he knows some people who are completely blind did have problems, their spouses had to vote for them. As nice as the pollworker was, she freely admitted she had only been trained the morning of the primary.

Q1 Did you vote in the 2016 Presidential primary on February 9?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	94.34%	50
No	5.66%	3
Total		53

Q2 What town or ward did you vote in?

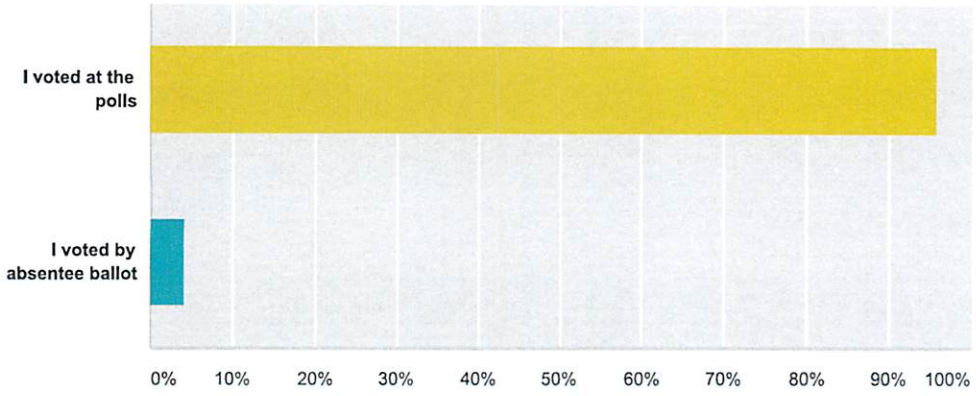
Answered: 51 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	lancaster	4/1/2016 6:46 AM
2	Ward #3 Rochester, NH	3/24/2016 12:34 PM
3	Berlin	3/3/2016 3:45 PM
4	Manchester	3/3/2016 12:55 PM
5	Sugar Hill	3/1/2016 1:43 PM
6	Hooksett	2/29/2016 8:38 AM
7	Concord, Ward 7	2/26/2016 12:54 PM
8	derry	2/25/2016 1:38 AM
9	Manchester	2/24/2016 3:33 PM
10	Concord, Ward 1	2/23/2016 6:42 PM
11	Londonderry,nh	2/23/2016 4:55 AM
12	Newton	2/22/2016 9:52 AM
13	merrimack	2/21/2016 2:49 PM
14	Would've been Loudon	2/18/2016 10:30 PM
15	Weare	2/18/2016 6:47 PM
16	Manchester ward 1	2/18/2016 6:25 PM
17	Salem North Salem grammar school	2/18/2016 2:57 PM
18	Franklin, Ward 3	2/18/2016 1:46 PM
19	Lee	2/18/2016 1:22 PM
20	Keene Ward 5	2/18/2016 12:23 PM
21	Ward 5 Manchester, NH	2/18/2016 8:55 AM
22	8	2/17/2016 6:43 PM
23	Hudson	2/17/2016 6:36 PM
24	keene	2/17/2016 5:06 PM
25	Concord ward 7	2/17/2016 3:36 PM
26	Derry ward 4	2/17/2016 1:51 PM
27	hooksett	2/14/2016 7:12 AM
28	Portsmouth	2/13/2016 12:42 PM
29	Dover. Word 1	2/12/2016 8:24 PM
30	Concord	2/12/2016 2:29 PM
31	Derry	2/12/2016 2:29 PM
32	Bow	2/12/2016 9:26 AM
33	Hampton	2/12/2016 9:24 AM
34	Concord Ward 10	2/12/2016 8:12 AM
35	Canterb	2/11/2016 8:26 PM

36	Exeter	2/11/2016 7:37 PM
37	Concord	2/11/2016 5:05 PM
38	Goffstown	2/11/2016 3:52 PM
39	Hooksett	2/11/2016 2:10 PM
40	Berlin District 2-3	2/11/2016 12:24 PM
41	Dover	2/11/2016 7:44 AM
42	Hooksett	2/11/2016 6:56 AM
43	Epping	2/11/2016 3:15 AM
44	Prefer not to say	2/10/2016 4:42 PM
45	Exeter	2/10/2016 4:41 PM
46	Concord Ward 7	2/10/2016 1:21 PM
47	Portsmouth	2/10/2016 1:02 PM
48	Pembroke	2/10/2016 10:15 AM
49	Concord Ward 5	2/10/2016 9:36 AM
50	Ward 7 concord	2/10/2016 12:31 AM
51	Plaistow	2/9/2016 7:26 PM

Q3 Did you vote at the polls or by absentee ballot in the primary?

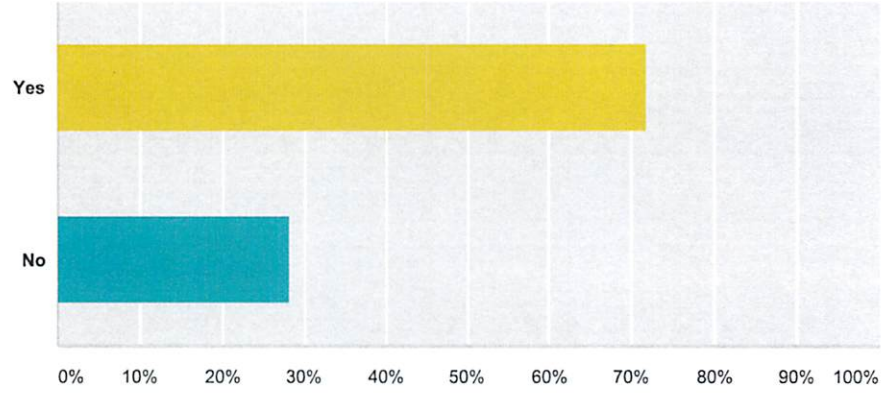
Answered: 49 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	
I voted at the polls	95.92%	47
I voted by absentee ballot	4.08%	2
Total		49

Q4 Were you able to vote privately and independently?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8



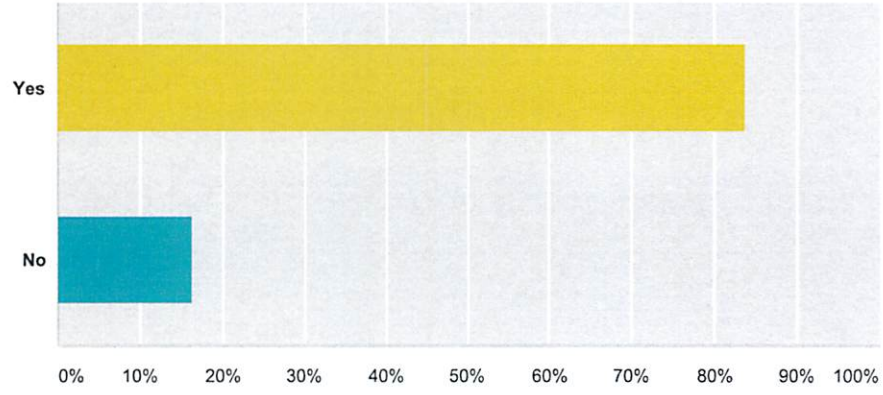
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**71.74%**	33
No	**28.26%**	13
Total		**46**

#	If you were not able to vote privately and independently, tell us what the problems were:	Date
1	could not read the ballot when it came out to verify it recorded the right candidate. Had to put ballot in a side slot, so not as private. That doesn't bother me a much but it does bother other people.	3/3/2016 4:01 PM
2	My husband needed to go in with our son to vote because he has cognitive disabilities and needs help with finding the place to put his check mark with accuracy. When he tried to go in with our son, someone working at the polls called out angrily, even though she knows our son and situation from the neighborhood, and was quite rude to my husband. Finally, he was able to go in with our son so he could vote properly.	3/1/2016 1:46 PM
3	poll worker said all4one was not working so it takes longer with magnifier to read and find circle to black in	2/25/2016 1:43 AM
4	I have a difficulty filling in the dots with the tiny pen	2/18/2016 3:00 PM
5	My mom have to help me set up with a pen and move chairs to get in a booth.	2/18/2016 12:27 PM
6	I can't write	2/17/2016 6:43 PM
7	The device did not work.	2/12/2016 8:28 PM
8	I had my support person with me to help me fill out the ballot.	2/12/2016 9:28 AM
9	I did vote independently but question how private it was. The polling assistant stood right behind me and did not draw the curtain. When I asked if he was going to stay standing there he said he would turn around. As a blind person I was not sure of my privacy.	2/12/2016 8:17 AM
10	1.) Odd ballot 2.) Moderators not fully familiar with tablets 3.) No auditory instructions on voting system 4.) Synthesized voice very distorted	2/11/2016 12:30 PM
11	The new accessible set up was very difficult to manage. The microphone headset did not work, the system was incredibly slow when I had to page back, and it just seems astounding that in this era the whole thing was not much more intuitive, eg, I could not figure out how to have the system read the name of a candidate to me.	2/10/2016 4:45 PM

12	P OLLING STAFF REQUIRE TRAINING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: ORIENTATION TO BLINDNESS AND SIGHTED GUIDE. POLLING STAFF REQUIRE TRAINING ON THE NEW VOTING TABLET FOR PRINT HANDICAPPED PERSONS. THE AUDIO SPEECH WAS EXTREMELY POOR AND NAMES NAMES WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND. THE PRINTED BALLOT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE PUBLIC BALLOT THE NEW TABLET SYSTEM WAS OF POOR QUALITY	2/10/2016 3:20 PM
13	the head set didn't work and they didn't call the number for tech support provided by the state. The city thought the head set wasn't going to be working, when in fact the boom mic on the head set was what would not be working. Communication and follow up errors	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
14	I wsa going to use the devices fore the visually impaired, however, it included a keyboard I can not see, a touch screen that didn't work correctly and a voting sheet that was difficult to understand where it was to go before I made my selection. Even the personnel at the poles didn't quite understand what to do but was doing his best.	2/10/2016 10:20 AM
15	I did notice my paper was all blue copy paper , unlike everyone's white, I am not sure if I chose a different party if the color would have been different	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q5 Was the polling site fully accessible?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 11

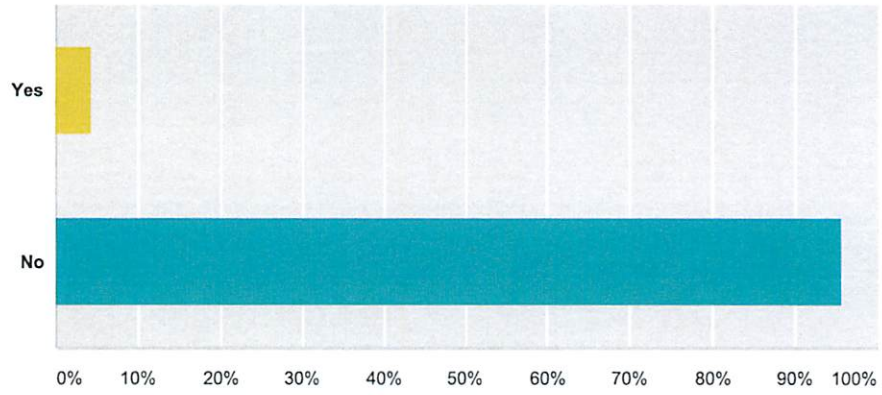


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**83.72%**	36
No	**16.28%**	7
Total		**43**

#	If the polling place was not fully accessible, tell us what the problems were.	Date
1	had to go through office area to get to polling place. Long w/c ride	4/1/2016 6:47 AM
2	I can't comment on the tablet voting system since I didn't ask to use it because I was in a hurry.	2/18/2016 1:49 PM
3	The exit doorway was very narrow. Thresholds were difficult and none of the multiple volunteers helped open doors. They just stared at me.	2/18/2016 12:27 PM
4	At the Beech St. School there is no real accessibility to female bathroom. Only one Male bathroom accessible.	2/18/2016 8:58 AM
5	I say no, because even though they had the One for All system in the larger booth, it didn't work. So that is not accessible.	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
6	The voices quality was very poor. If I was hard ofor hearing I would have been difficult.	2/10/2016 12:33 AM
7	The voice was poor quality and very difficult to understand	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q6 Did anyone challenge your right to vote?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8

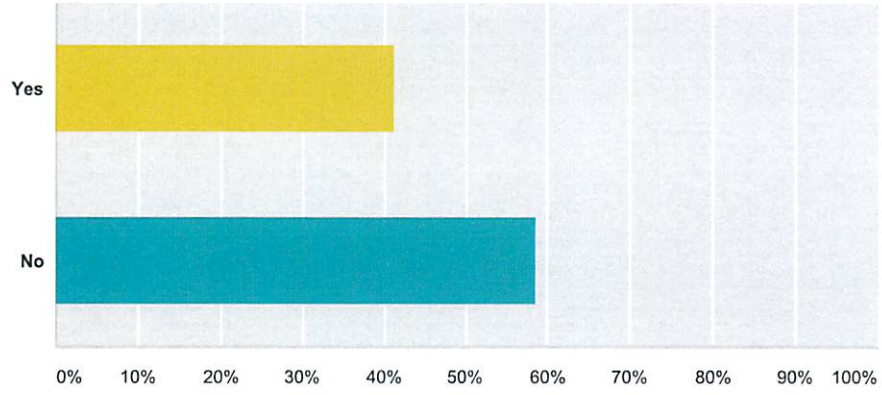


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	4.35%	2
No	95.65%	44
Total		46

#	If your right to vote was challenged, tell us what happened	Date
1	Again, I was delayed for a while because the women would not give me a ballot because I did not say my name. I am deaf. I had to stand there while they checked the rules and showed me the rules. It was crowded and I was embarrassed. Eventually I showed them my hearing aids and started signing at them. This is the second time it's happened...	2/18/2016 6:51 PM
2	I had to sign an affidavit and multiple forms	2/18/2016 1:23 PM
3	MY PHOTO ID DID NOT HAVE AN ADDRESS	2/10/2016 3:20 PM

Q7 Did you ask a poll worker for assistance related to a disability?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 8



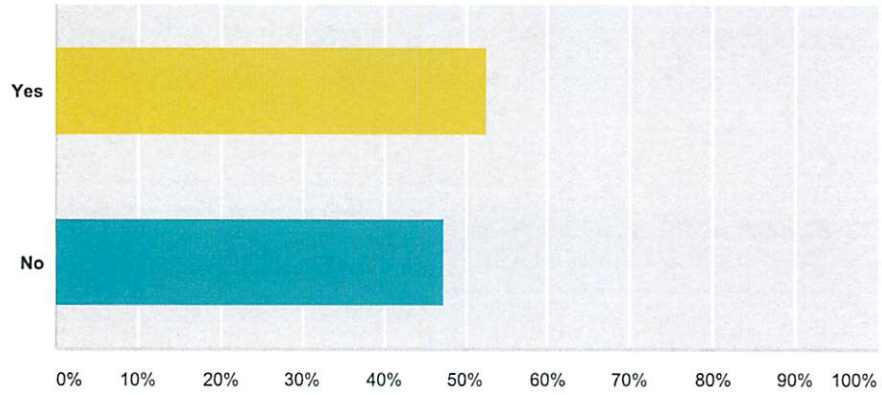
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	41.30%	19
No	58.70%	27
Total		46

#	What help did you ask for, and did you get the help you needed?	Date
1	I let them know I'm visually impaired and ask someone to help me out.	3/3/2016 4:01 PM
2	My husband didn't know that he needed to alert someone about our unique situation.	3/1/2016 1:46 PM
3	asked for all 4 one voting tablet and told it was not working	2/25/2016 1:43 AM
4	I needed help filling in the ballot	2/18/2016 3:00 PM
5	I asked for her to speak more slowly and loudly because I am hard of hearing. She was very nice but I did feel uncomfortable having to ask since my vote was challenged.	2/18/2016 1:23 PM
6	Directed to only true accessible "Male" bathroom	2/18/2016 8:58 AM
7	I asked for help to move a chair in the accessible voting booth and to remove the cap from the pen to mark my ballot.	2/17/2016 6:37 PM
8	When I got there I had to ask for an accessible voting machine.	2/17/2016 3:36 PM
9	When I went in and registered I said I wanted to use the accessible voting, they sent me over to a person who came in with me, added the info and then left and I was on my own.	2/17/2016 1:55 PM
10	I asked about new machine for blind, was told they had it, but no one seemed able or willing to show me how to use it.	2/13/2016 12:46 PM
11	The moderater helped me do my balet.	2/12/2016 8:28 PM
12	Where the booth was for the disabled. I got the typical "its over there." which does not work for the blind.	2/12/2016 8:17 AM
13	I did not ask, but a poll worker volunteered to enter the necessary code for Exeter. The poll worker also loaded paper for the necessary party onto the printer for my ballot to be printed.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
14	I asked to use the new tablet and keyboard and the poll worker set it up perfectly, he pressed the keys to start it and left me to vote in private.	2/11/2016 5:10 PM
15	Assistance to have tablet for visually impaired started. They truly tried, and eventually my vote was cast.	2/11/2016 12:30 PM
16	I needed help accessing the ballot. I needed to get started with the speech and the city clerk was very helpful.	2/10/2016 4:45 PM

17	I REQUESTED ASSISTANCE TO USE THE NEW TABLET TO ASSIST IN VOTING. AFTER FOUR TRYS BY THE POLL WORKER I WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS AND PRINT A BALLOT	2/10/2016 3:20 PM
18	I asked to use the One for All accessible voting. They attempted to help me, but as I mentioned the head set didn't work, which they didn't know how to fix, nor did they call the number provided by the state I found out about after the fact. It is their responsibility to make sure it is all set up and working properly.	2/10/2016 1:07 PM
19	As described earlier, I did seek help but the helper didn't quite understand what to do and couldn't do anything to make the experience private or independent. He had to do most of it for me.	2/10/2016 10:20 AM
20	Guidance from the sign in table to the voting booth, assistance with the preliminary steps of using the accessible voting machine (choosing the ballot and entering the code), and guidance from the voting booth to the ballot box, and assistance undeclaring myself after I voted. I received all assistance.	2/10/2016 9:39 AM
21	I asked how to enlarge the screen which I new could be done from watching the video on social media. I was told however that they didn't think that you could enlarge the print which told me they did not have proper training. I did eventually figure it out but would not have if I didn't watch the video	2/9/2016 7:36 PM

Q8 Did you know about the one4all accessible system before you arrived at your polling place?

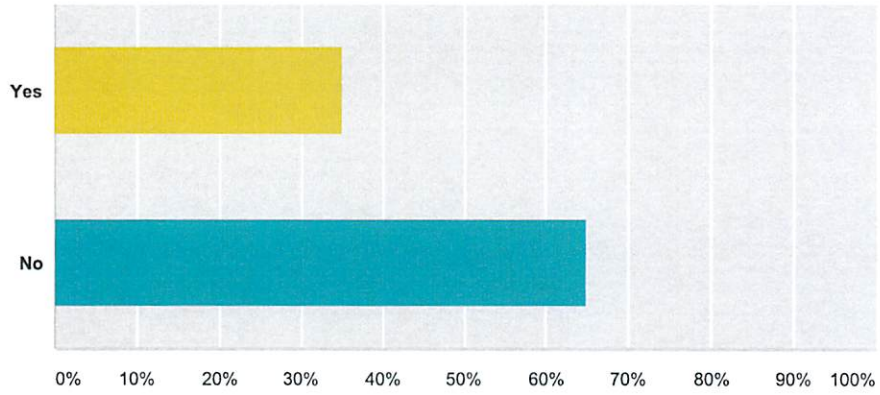
Answered: 38 Skipped: 16



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	52.63%	20
No	47.37%	18
Total		38

Q9 Did you receive training on the one4all accessible system before you arrived at your polling place?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 17



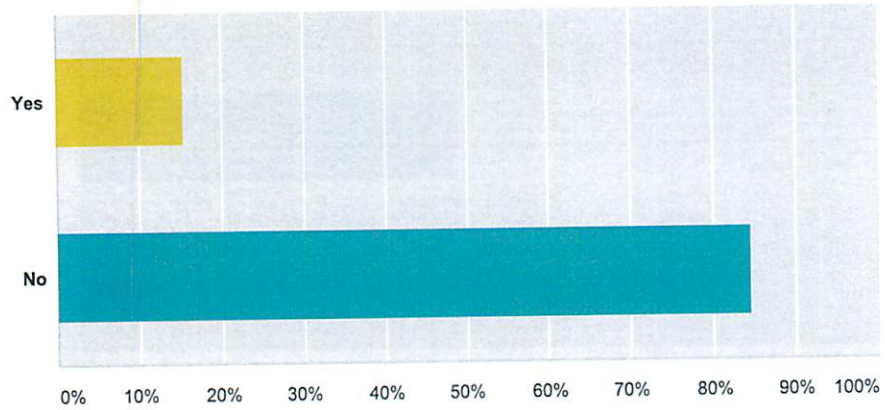
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	35.14%	13
No	64.86%	24
Total		37

#	Who provided the training? When and where was it? Please tell us more!	Date
1	NH Association for the Blind 25 walker street concord,nh	2/25/2016 1:47 AM
2	Tom Manning came into the tech users group. Did a demonstration. People do need to be trained in advance - every blind person who tried it crashed it during the demo - If you picked "average speed" it crashed and had to be rebooted because it was already set on average.	2/17/2016 3:39 PM
3	NHAB with Nancy Druke	2/17/2016 1:56 PM
4	New Hampshire Association for the Blind.	2/12/2016 8:32 PM
5	Nancy Druke at the NH Assoc for the Blind	2/12/2016 2:49 PM
6	Nancy Druke, NHAB	2/12/2016 2:45 PM
7	we had a quick demo at the advocacy committee meeting at the NH Association for the Blind	2/12/2016 8:20 AM
8	NHAB invited a trainer to a regularly scheduled peer support meeting in Portsmouth at the Community Campus on 1/26/16. As a member of the NHAB peer technology group, I was invited one day prior to join the peer support group and attend the demonstration/training.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
9	Disability Rights Center	2/11/2016 6:58 AM
10	The New Hampshire Assoc. For The blind along with Tom Manning gave us the training at Community Campus, Portsmouth.	2/10/2016 4:50 PM
11	TRAINING PROVIDED BY NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND. THIS WAS LAST MINUTE PRIOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION. THE SYSTEM WAS NOT VOICE ATTIVITATED, HAD A VERY QUALITY SPEECH AND PRODUCED A BALLOT THAT WAS NOT UNIVERSAL. APRODUCT THAT REQUIRED MORE TESTING	2/10/2016 3:30 PM
12	Tom Manning demonstrated it and let us try it at a peer support group meeting on the Seacoast of the NH Assoc. for the Blind. It was great. I then saw it again at the NHAB Advocacy committee I am on. I also watched Nancy Druke's You tube video from our staff that she put out how to use it.	2/10/2016 1:12 PM
13	New Hampshire Association for the Blind, Monday February 8	2/10/2016 9:41 AM

14	Facebook post from NHAB	2/9/2016 7:38 PM

Q10 If you are blind or visually impaired, when you got to the polls, did a pollworker tell you that an accessible voting system was available?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 28



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	15.38%	4
No	84.62%	22
Total		26

#	Tell us more!	Date
1	I am not blind; I have a physical disability	2/18/2016 1:50 PM
2	It was because it was so crowded, I made them aware.	2/17/2016 3:39 PM
3	...because I knew it was	2/17/2016 1:56 PM
4	When they realized I was with my husband, they said he should fill out a form and it should sign it allowing him to complete my paper ballot	2/13/2016 12:49 PM
5	I had to ask for the system and it did not work.	2/12/2016 8:32 PM
6	I had to ask where it was.	2/12/2016 8:20 AM
7	As with other times that I have voted, when I have arrived either with my guide dog or white cane, poll workers checking voters in attempted to hand me a regular ballot. They did not even recognize that they should ask me if I am aware of an accessible machine as an option.	2/11/2016 7:38 PM
8	I am a regular voter at the polls and they are familiar with me requiring whatever assistive voting system they have available. I had even phoned City Clerks office prior to make sure system was in place.	2/11/2016 12:33 PM
9	I knew about it; and I mentioned it. It seemed the person at the check list really did not know what to do so I asked to be taken to the accessible booth. I am known so I was helped. If I was not known I am not sure of the assistance I would have been given. Pole workers need more training.	2/10/2016 4:50 PM
10	THE POLLING BOOTH WORKER WAS A NIGHBOR AND BROUGHT THIS TO MY ATTENTION. HOWEVER IT WAS EVIDENT THAT HE HAD NOT HAD ANY TRAINING.	2/10/2016 3:30 PM
11	I already knew to ask for it, so they didn't need to bring it up as I did.	2/10/2016 1:12 PM
12	I asked for, I am sure they didn't know of my VI	2/9/2016 7:38 PM

Testimony for Inclusion in the record
of the Public Hearing on Accessible Voting -
The United States Election Assistance Commission

Suffolk University Law School
120 Tremont Street
Sergeant Function Hall 1st Floor;
Boston, MA 02108

Testimony submitted to listen@eac.gov
April 27, 2016

Dear fellow EAC members, staff, and voting advocates:

On behalf of the Florida Council of the Blind (FCB) and thousands of citizens of Florida who have print impairments, we wish to enter into the record the following testimony and information for your consideration. We thank you for this opportunity to participate.

By "print-impaired", we are referring to people who are blind or visually impaired, those who are unable or have difficulty voting in a conventional manner for physical reasons, or those who have learning disabilities, all of whom wish to vote independently and in secret.

When many of us first began voting, we were forced to rely on a sighted person to cast our ballots for us. However, here in Florida, after the 2000 elections controversy, the state quickly responded and mandated certification and use of electronic voting equipment which enabled those of us who are print-impaired to finally exercise our rights and responsibilities as citizens and vote independently and in secret.

Unfortunately, a group of pro-paper advocates quickly lobbied the Legislature to require an auditable paper trail and forbid the use of the previously certified direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting machine. In response, a decision was made to make the use of paperless electronic voting machines illegal — the use of which was thereby legislatively forbidden by the vast majority of Florida's voters — except, that people who were print-impaired would have to continue using these inappropriate and illegal voting systems for a few additional years. In 2007, when the legislature outlawed the use of electronic DRE equipment, it set 2012, five years later, as the deadline for certifying and converting to the use of non-DRE, paper trail and auditable equipment for its voters who

were print impaired. Notwithstanding the mandates of the ADA, HAVA and Florida's earlier legislation, the state thereby sanctioned Florida's print-impaired population to vote on separate and unequal equipment — equipment that in fact had been deemed unworthy and illegal for the vast majority of Florida's voters. In 2010 the Legislature delayed the deadline for change until 2016. In 2013 it again postponed the deadline until 2020. Thus, for as long as thirteen years, Florida voters who are print-impaired may have been forced to vote on electronic DRE voting machines which were deemed illegal and inappropriate for the rest of Florida's voters.

Each county in the state of Florida has separate and somewhat independent departments of election, but state law mandates that all counties must abide by minimum standards that are set by the state's Division of Elections. For several years, members of FCB and other voters with disabilities have repeatedly complained about separate and unequal standards, especially since the old equipment was poorly maintained and often inoperable. An unacceptable response to complaints was to say that a sighted person could cast the vote for the person with a disability.

In 2014 the Florida Council of the Blind developed a fairly brief survey to measure the experiences of voters with disabilities. Results from that survey, which was posted on the FCB web page, indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the machines being used, as well as the inability of poll workers to properly serve voters with disabilities. During the 2014 elections print-impaired voters from multiple counties, including Palm Beach and Volusia were disenfranchised as a result of machine failures and/or insufficient poll worker training. Complaints were filed at the state and local levels. These complaints eventually led to investigations by the Department of Justice.

In May 2015, responding to continued pressure from leaders of the Florida Council of the Blind and other advocates in the state, the Florida Division of Elections finally certified two accessible units, the ExpressVote® UVS from Election Systems and Software (ES&S) and the ImageCast Evolution (ICE) from Dominion Systems. Additionally, in August of 2015, after more than three years of complaints, the owner of the Dominion Edge was finally forced to bring about a fix to their Edge system, which addressed repeated failures and voter disenfranchisement in Palm Beach County.

At this point, nine years following the Florida Legislature's decision to outlaw DRE equipment, Florida's voters who are print-impaired encounter vast differences in the availability of independent and secret use of voting equipment. Some counties have chosen to purchase the recently certified voting equipment. Some have chosen to continue use of the Automark machines. The majority of counties indicate that they will

continue with their existing "illegal" and less-accessible systems until the 2020 deadline. In all cases, accessible voting choices in Florida remain segregated.

FCB leaders continue to advocate for more accessible paper-based electronic voting systems throughout Florida and have revised the previously mentioned voting survey, so that up-to-date feedback can be obtained from voters who are print-impaired. The revised survey is found on fcb.org, the organization's website. Preliminary results, which are taken from Florida's closed presidential primary in March 2016, indicate that the people who voted generally liked the new equipment, but were quite unhappy at the continued lack of awareness and training of poll workers in various counties. It appeared that poll workers were not familiar with the machines and did not receive adequate training about how to interact with people with disabilities. Further, it seemed that poll workers were told to not tell people about the availability of the new machines. Even though both ES&S and Dominion salespeople clearly indicated that the machines could be used by all voters, it is our understanding that county and state officials generally believe and indicate that these newly certified optical scan machines are only for use by people with disabilities. Therefore, the legislature and state election officials must be forced to require county officials to mandate that optical scan machines, including the ExpressVote and ICE are to be available for use by all voters and that poll workers should be directed to explain that the machines are available for use by any voter.

As strongly urged at our Secretary of State's Task Force on voter accessibility in the early 2000's and at the HAVA Working Group public hearings, training of poll workers must include hands-on instruction about the use of the equipment and sensitivity training for interacting with people with disabilities. It is unconscionable that for up to thirteen years, Florida's voters who are print-impaired have been forced to vote on equipment that was declared to be illegal for the rest of Florida's voters, to say nothing of the fact that it is old, failing, and in many instances, not properly maintained or operable. Florida's legislature must be compelled to rectify a behavior of discriminatory treatment of voters who are print impaired. Following nine years of an unacceptable delay, the 2020 deadline for compliance should be rolled backed to 2018. The State of Florida and its counties should be compelled to buy and use the newly certified equipment by 2018. Given that appropriate equipment is now certified and available, there is simply no justifiable reason to delay any further. It is time that all voters in this state be placed on an even playing field! The State of Florida should immediately direct all counties to comply with accessibility requirements, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Respectfully Submitted

by Florida Council of the Blind

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April 21, 2016

Voters with disabilities have long been disenfranchised from the voting process. Thankfully, with the Passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), all State and Federal elections have adopted a universally accessible voting system and all polling places now have access to a Ballot Marking Device which allows people with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

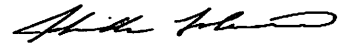
Unfortunately, New York State has allowed local elections additional time to comply, and the use of lever machines in local elections has continued for years. People with disabilities also continue to encounter individuals in charge of the polls being completely oblivious and inefficient regarding their voting needs. This leads to feelings of uneasiness on the part of the individual who may then become dissuaded from voting in the future. As in my case where being visually impaired makes it very difficult to read small text, I was discouraged from voting for many years as I attempted to convince myself that voting was not important, that I did not care, that it did not bother me and that my vote did not matter all as a means to mask my shame of being different.

As New Yorkers were gathering to cast their votes for the 2016 Presidential Primaries, Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc. sent representatives, including myself, to inspect various voting sites throughout the communities of lower Westchester County to ensure their accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Some major features being inspected included: accessible parking, ramps, door handles, doorways and entrance ways wide enough for wheelchair users, and the availability of the ballot marking device. The results were mixed with negatives mostly revolving around the limited availability of accessible parking and in one case a locked entrance door at the ramp. It was definitely uplifting to observe that no lever voting machines were being utilized at any site and the ballot marking device was available for individuals with disabilities in all locations.

As I went to cast my vote in this year's Primary Presidential Election, I again encountered individuals who were unsure of not only how to assist a person with a visual impairment who does not require the use of the ballot marking device but how to explain the voting process outright. Although pleasant, the vibe of uneasiness and panic from unpreparedness was apparent from the representatives at the poll as they stumbled over their words while looking towards eachother for help, prolonging what should have been a simple explanation of the voting process.

Although we are heading in the right direction we must continue to educate society as a whole regarding accommodating the needs of individuals with disabilities. We must also take responsibility for the continued ignorance which still exists in society. It is normal to feel uneasy around individuals whom are different and instances which we do not encounter often. Therefore we must make it a point to get involved within the community and never choose not to participate due to feelings of fear or shame. Taking part in the voting process is a perfect example as we not only exercise our civil rights but we also exercise our duty to educate.

The State Board of Elections (SBOE) has issued a report offering guidance to counties and municipalities offering pragmatic suggestions on how to move all local elections to the same accessible voting system in a cost effective manner which is being used in State and Federal elections and is already being used in many counties in local elections. Elected officials should continue to work to ensure this transition is prompt, thorough, and results in the accessible, reliable, and uniform election system that New Yorkers deserve.



Achille Iolascon M.A. / MHC
Systems Advocate
Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc.

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Testomony

Good afternoon,

Thank you for allowing written testimony, prior to your hearing on April 27, 2016 in Boston on Accessible Voting.

I am blind and have voted in federal/state elections since 2008 using accessible voting systems in the State of New Hampshire. My first experience was with the telephone/fax voting system used prior to 2016 in New Hampshire. On several occasions the system was not functioning properly. When working the telephone/fax voting system allowed me to vote independently, privately and it produced a faxed ballot different than the ballot used by the general public and could not be counted in secret. The ballot was kept in a separate box and counted manually at the end of the day. This could not be considered a secret ballot. This system never met the requirements of the HAVA or the ADA guidelines.

In the 2016 New Hampshire primary election the Secretary of State used the "all4one" system.This system was not ready for prime time. The access by voice command was shut off, the speech program was very, very poor and a problem for most. Like the telephone/fax system the "all4one" voting system printed out a ballot that had to be recorded manually and cannot be considered a secret ballot.

After a decade, with a 16.5 million grant, the State of New Hampshire has failed to put in place a voting system that produces a means for a person who is blind to vote independently. privately and secure a secret ballot. The Secretary of State's goal is to have the "all4one" voting system programmed to do this by September 2016. This has been their goal since 2006. This begs the question of why have they failed their citizens who are blind? The technology is here in 2016 to make it happen. The funding is there to make it right!

In addition, the Secretary of State's, is unwilling to share their accessible voting system with cities and towns in local elections. There has been little awareness of the "all4one" voting system, a lack of training for consumers and election workers.

I became an American citizen in 2007 and it was stated that my most important right as a citizen was to vote. I will be turning 69 this year. Will I live long enough to be able to vote independently, privately and have a truly secret ballot in my life time?

Thank you for caring,

Guy M. Woodland

SheilaABanks

From: Listen@eac.gov
Subject: FW: Accessible Voting

Minnesota is a beautiful state with many wonderful qualities. I am proud to call it home. However, there are a few things I would like to see improved. One is the experience of Minnesota voters with disabilities. I describe my own experience in the following essay, written after I voted in a local election in November, 2015.

Voting Rights, Right?

Every year, as Election Day approaches, at least one of my caregivers urges me to get an absentee ballot. "It's so much more convenient," they insist. "You can take as much time as you need. And you don't have to worry about transportation. And besides, as a person with a disability, you're entitled to vote absentee." (I finally realized this year, they're probably thinking, *"And we won't have to listen to you complain about the election judges."* So this year I'm trying a different approach to venting my frustrations.) Every year, I refuse their pleas. "No," I insist, "I want to vote on Election Day. At the polls. Like everybody else. As a disabled person, that is also my right. And I want to exercise it. Besides, *use it or lose it*, right?"

Voting at the polls on Election Day is even more important to me since I learned I have a right to use the AutoMARK device, located at every polling place in Minnesota, to make it easier for me to vote independently. The device scans my ballot; displays it on a screen, one race at a time, in large print; and reads the ballot out loud to me. I can use a keypad or a touchscreen to make my selections. The device then reviews my selections and prints them on my ballot. What could be simpler? No more getting overwhelmed by the number of items on the page. No more worrying about whether or not I have correctly joined the little arrows or colored in the correct circle. No more relying on someone else to help me with the ballot. I can vote independently. Just like everybody else. I LOVE it! The election judges have a rather different opinion.

As I have been a registered voter in the same precinct for several years, everything goes smoothly until I pick up my ballot. "I would like to use the AutoMARK device," I request. The reaction is immediate. And either amusing or annoying depending on my mood. (I don't think I could cause any greater stir if I said, "I have a bomb in my purse with my finger on the detonator." If I didn't think a criminal court judge would be even less amused than the election judges by such a claim, I might be tempted to try it.)

The two election judges distributing the ballots look at each other with expressions ranging from confusion to panic. One of them starts out, "But we have these wonderful voting booths right over here. And over there is a lower one where you can sit if you like. We'll even get you a chair. Or there is a table across the room. You could sit there. Your friend could help you with your ballot. Or we can get one of the other election judges to read and mark your ballot for you. Which would you prefer?" Their thoughts are so loud, I can almost hear them. *"Oh, no! Not that infernal machine! It's just like a computer. It has a screen. And buttons. And it talks! And if you push the wrong button, it might... EXPLODE... or something."* I smile politely and repeat, "I would prefer to use the AutoMARK device." Finally, they locate someone willing to risk life, limb, and

reputation by approaching the device. (I am actually very comfortable using the machine, and could use it independently if such were permitted. But the one time I attempted it without first receiving permission, I was physically stopped. "That's a machine for blind people," I was told "you need to go use the voting booths over there.")

The reality is the election judges don't know what to do with me. I don't fit into any of their known categories of disabled people. I am clearly not Blind, Deaf, Wheelchair-bound, Elderly, or Mentally Retarded. I am too independent to fit into the Poor Handicapped People Who Need Our Help category. Since I have no obvious physical deformities or revolting mannerisms, I don't fit the Disgusting Disabled People Who Should Be Hidden from Polite Society category. As I arrive with a cane and a caregiver, it is difficult to consign me to the Perfectly Capable People Who Are Pretending to Be Disabled category. And my age of over 40 years makes me at least slightly too old for the Young People These Days Don't Know Their Place category.

So what do you do with someone who doesn't fit into any of the pre-defined categories, who is too foolish to heed the advice to just vote at home, who refuses the helpful offer of another person to read the ballot, and who insists on using that Infernal Machine?!

Usually, they cluster around like a flock of mother hens until someone finally escorts me to the AutoMARK device and "helps" me get started with it. Once I have finished voting and am putting my ballot into the box (like everybody else), the person manning the ballot box gushes, "Thank you SO MUCH for coming!" I am never quite sure whether that means, *"Thank you so much for making the extreme sacrifice of coming to vote in person despite the great hardship involved,"* or *"Thank you so much for leaving now so we can get back to dealing with NORMAL people."*

Sometimes I think more training would help. I consider suggesting a mandatory information session – or at least a memo that would be sent out to all election judges – detailing how to treat (and not treat) voters with disabilities. But then I realize it would be a mostly futile effort. Most of them have had 60 or more years to develop their cultural attitudes about disability. There is virtually no chance they will change those attitudes because of one 15-minute presentation. I can only demonstrate to them, and to succeeding generations, that it IS possible to be both disabled and independent. And hope that eventually cultural change will catch up with even the election judges.

Deborah Bailey
Chaska, Minnesota