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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, COUNCIL SPEAKER JOHNSON, COUNCIL MEMBER
TREYGER AND CITY COUNCIL EXPAND INTERPRETATION SERVICES FOR
ELECTION DAY 2018**

New Yorkers will have access to City interpreters at approximately 100 poll sites in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island, assisting voters who speak Russian, Haitian Creole, Italian, Arabic, Polish or Yiddish

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio, Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Council Member Mark Treyger and the City Council today announced additional efforts to make voting easier for limited English proficient voters. Building upon the 2017 poll site interpretation pilot, the Administration will provide interpretation services at approximately 100 poll sites throughout Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island this Election Day, November 6, 2018.

Currently, the Board of Elections provides interpretation services in certain poll sites in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Bangla, as required by the Voting Rights Act. The Administration will be filling a gap across communities by providing interpretation services in the additional six most commonly spoken languages among limited English proficient eligible voters at poll sites with the greatest concentrations of these individuals. These languages are Russian, Haitian Creole, Italian, Arabic, Polish and Yiddish.

Using Census data and to ensure nonpartisanship, the City took a scientific and statistical approach when identifying poll sites in election districts with the highest needs for these services. Led by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, this project complements efforts by the BOE to lower language barriers to voting.

"The language you speak and understand should not be a barrier to civic participation," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Voting should be an easy task, and we're upholding that truth by identifying and filling gaps in communities where translation services are needed. Whether it's Haitian Creole, Russian or Arabic, we're making sure that you'll be able to participate in our democracy no matter what language you speak."

"We want all New Yorkers to be a part of our democracy, which is why the Council along with the de Blasio Administration is increasing access to language interpreters at polling sites. Close to 40 percent of New York residents are foreign-born, so we know there is a need for these kinds

of services. I encourage all eligible New Yorkers to get out and vote this Election Day,” said **Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

“Our diversity is what makes New York City so unique and special,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Phillip Thompson**. “This investment in interpretation services will help ensure that the language you speak is not a factor in casting your ballot, and that our diversity is reflected in our elections and government.”

“No New Yorker should be prevented from exercising her constitutional right to vote because she cannot speak English,” said **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**. “By placing interpreters at select poll sites in languages beyond the minimum required by law, we are taking a momentous step towards full and true access to the polls for all voters, no matter how they say ‘I voted.’”

“Participating in elections is a fundamental right that we will continue protect, regardless of the language you speak,” said **Chief Democracy Officer Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune**. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio and the City Council for making interpretation services a priority and removing a critical barrier to voting so all New Yorkers can make their voice heard on November 6th.”

“Voting should be easy and accessible. We need to address our city’s low voter turnout and make our democracy more inclusive, particularly in communities where systemic barriers exist. I’m proud to have advocated for and secured funds for a pilot program to provide interpreters for Russian and Haitian Creole speakers at 20 poll sites in Brooklyn last year, and prouder still of working with Speaker Johnson and Mayor de Blasio to expand the program this year to include more languages, activating and empowering civic engagement amongst more New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger**.

This year, more New Yorkers from a diverse set of backgrounds will have additional tools to exercise their right to vote. The de Blasio Administration has invested \$640,000 to provide interpretation services at approximately 100 poll sites identified as having the highest need for these services in Russian, Haitian Creole, Italian, Arabic, Polish and Yiddish. This investment includes the hiring of personnel through Langlo Inc., a City-certified M/WBE language services vendor. MOIA partnered with Common Cause New York to provide training and is also assisting with additional supervision.

As part of this nonpartisan effort to limit barriers to voting, MOIA and the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit partnered to analyze detailed census data. This data helped identify the top 15 languages spoken by limited English proficient New Yorkers: Russian, Haitian Creole, Italian, Polish, Arabic, Yiddish, Greek, Albanian, Tagalog, Urdu and French, in addition to the languages covered by the Voting Rights Act.

MOIA and CAU further analyzed this census data to identify the percentage of people within these populations who are 18 years or older and eligible to vote to determine where the highest need for interpretation services at poll sites exist. MOIA then selected approximately the top 100 poll sites among the top six languages, based on the availability of resources for this project.

These services will be available entirely at a voter’s voluntary discretion. Staff will be provided with a four-hour training that mirrors the BOE’s own training, including non-electioneering

protocols, providing interpretation services, maintaining voter privacy, the voting process and New York City's Election Day operations. Poll site project staff will operate at a minimum of 101 feet outside of a poll site, per BOE's specifications, and will accompany voters into poll sites upon request. Staff will identify themselves by wearing pins with "interpreter" listed in English and the additional language they speak.

City interpreters will be available from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM on Election Day. In the lead up to Election Day, MOIA staff will educate communities about these services.

Last year's pilot program has outlined the City's work for Election Day 2018. In 2017, the poll site interpretation pilot provided interpretation services in Russian and Haitian Creole at 20 poll sites in Brooklyn.

"Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and giving people the opportunity to participate in the language they are most comfortable with makes for a more informed and inclusive electorate," said **Congressman Joe Crowley**. "This project will help voters who need assistance in a language other than English and will help elections officials better serve our diverse communities. I applaud the Office of Immigrant Affairs for this initiative which will help expand voter access across the city."

"Our election system needs to be accessible to all Americans and these steps will ensure more New Yorkers may exercise their right to vote. I applaud the Mayor for working to expand interpretation services for voters who speak languages like Yiddish, Arabic, Polish and others," said **Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez**.

"We as a nation are more democratic when more Americans contribute their voice and vote. Making poll sites more accessible to American citizens with limited English or who feel more comfortable in their native tongue provides a service that will bring more of our city's diverse community into the democratic process. I commend the Mayor's Office for providing this valuable service in our community," said **Congressman Gregory W. Meeks**.

"Voting is the crown jewel of our democracy. We should be making it easier to vote, not harder. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for this important initiative and encourage all citizens to exercise their right to vote on November 6th. It is, after all, our civic duty," said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke**.

"Voting is one of the hallmarks of our democracy and increasing interpretation services will improve voting access for limited English proficient New Yorkers. All voters must have equal access to the polls so that they can make their voices heard. I applaud this critical initiative and I look forward to this project benefiting many New Yorkers on Election Day," said **Congresswoman Grace Meng**.

"In our global borough alone, over 1.3 million people speak a language other than English at home, and we view this as an asset and source of pride. To vote is a precious right, and in an international city like New York, language must not be an impediment to exercising that right. Government has a responsibility to make voting as painless and accessible as possible. This is a boon for democracy, and Queens lauds the Mayor and City Council for this necessary expansion

of interpretation services at poll sites across the City of New York,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**.

“I welcome the introduction of interpreters at 100 of our City polling sites. I support all steps that will help ensure New Yorkers can fully participate in the electoral process, regardless of their fluency in English,” said **Assembly Member Helene Weinstein**.

“Voting is a civic responsibility that many immigrants are eager to fulfill but often the language barrier makes it impossible,” said **Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz**. “Thank you to the Mayor and the Board of Elections for working to remove an unfair and unnecessary barrier and provide a pathway to equal representation for all New Yorkers.”

“I would like to commend Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and Councilman Treyger for breaking down barriers when it comes to broadening the access to voting for people of diverse backgrounds who have English as a second language,” said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte**. “Like the Mayor, I have also been trying to push similar legislation, such as A00312, to make voting materials and interpreters accessible to people fluent in Haitian Creole. We look forward to working with the Mayor and the Board of Elections Department in rolling out these pole site interpretation pilots.

“One’s language should never be a barrier to civic participation in the capital of the world,” said **Assembly Member David I. Weprin**. “As the Assembly Member who represents one of the most diverse districts in the city, I thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and Council Speaker Corey Johnson for making these efforts to ensure all New Yorkers, regardless of the language they speak, can cast a vote on Election Day.”

“The more accessible we make the democratic process, the more participation we witness,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the Committee on Immigration**. “Given that voting is the most important power the people have to hold their elected officials accountable, providing interpretation at every poll site should be one of our top priorities. I commend MOIA and BOE for moving us further to this goal and plugging many of the gaps that exist.”

“Every citizen deserves the access to exercise their right to vote,” said **Council Member Chaim Deutsch**. “A language barrier should never prevent someone from being able to engage in their most fundamental civic duty. Inclusivity goes beyond words, it’s about really practicing what we preach and putting our money where our mouth is. Kudos to Mayor de Blasio, Council Speaker Corey Johnson and Councilman Mark Treyger for ensuring that interpretation services will be available at key poll sites throughout New York City.”

“In a state and a country where many try to make it harder to vote, language cannot be another barrier. New York City recognizes this need, and we are taking positive, proactive steps to further inform the electorate and enable participation in this all-important election,” said **Council Member Jumaane D. Williams**.

“I want to commend Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, Council Member Mark Treyger and my colleagues on the City Council for their advocacy on behalf of our non-English speaking residents. The ability to vote is an essential part of our democracy, and it is not right when

registered voters are unable to participate due to language barriers at their polling sites. The expansion of interpretation services is a necessary step in New York City’s efforts to increase voter turnout, and I applaud our leadership for their commitment to this worthy cause,” said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

“Providing language access at poll sites increases participation from our vibrant immigrant communities, which will lead to higher voter turnout and greater civic engagement. This will benefit all New Yorkers, no matter what language they speak,” said **Council Member Justin Brannan**.

"Citizens Union applauds the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs for taking steps to protect and expand the right to vote by increasing the number of language interpreters at polling sites throughout the city. All voting-eligible New Yorkers should be able to have their voices heard, regardless of their proficiency in English. These efforts to ensure New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds are included in the electoral process will make our democracy stronger," said **Betsy Gotbaum, Executive Director of Citizens Union**.

"Kudos to the Mayor for realizing that in a diverse city like New York, many voters can use help navigating complicated poll sites and ballots. There's no good reason that any voter shouldn't get the assistance they need at poll sites. This program builds on the Board of Elections existing translator program to help ensure that more voters get the help they need to cast their ballots. We're looking forward to a successful ramping up of this pilot and its expansion across the city," said **NYPIRG Government Reform Coordinator Neal Rosenstein**.

The full list of poll sites where the City is providing interpretation services can be found [here](#) and below:

Staten Island: 1 site

| Poll Site Name | Poll Site Address | Language(s) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| PS 39 Francis J. Murphy Jr. | 71 Sand Lane | Russian |

Queens: 14 sites

| Poll Site Name | Poll Site Address | Language(s) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| JHS 157-Stephen A Halsey | 63-55 102 Street | Russian |
| PS 175-Lynn Gross Discovery School | 64-35 102 Street | Russian |

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| PS 206-Horace Harding School | 61-02 98 Street | Russian |
| PS 139-Rego Park | 93-06 63 Drive | Russian |
| PS 220-Edward Mandel | 62-10 108 Street | Russian |
| PS 99-Kew Gardens | 82-37 Kew Gardens Road | Russian |
| Evelyn & Lou Grn Res | 19-15 Seagirt Blvd | Russian |
| PS 154-Queens | 75-02 162 Street | Russian |
| PS 165-Edith K. Bergtraum | 70-35 150 Street | Russian |
| PS 117-J.Keld / Briarwood School | 85-15 143 Street | Russian |
| JHS 217-Robert A. Van Wyck | 85-05 144 Street | Russian |
| Forest Hills HS | 67-01 110 Street | Russian |
| PS 34-John Harvard | 104-12 Springfield Boulevard | Haitian Creole |
| PS 207-Rockwood Park | 159-15 88 Street | Italian |

Brooklyn: 86 Sites

| Poll Site Name | Poll Site Address | Language(s) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Shorefront YM-YWHA | 3300 Coney Island Avenue | Russian |
| PS 234 IS | 1875 East 17 Street | Russian |
| PS 52 | 2675 East 29 Street | Russian |
| PS 128 | 2075 84 Street | Russian |

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| PS 206 | 2200 Gravesend Neck Road | Russian |
| Bay Academy- IS 98 | 1401 Emmons Avenue | Russian |
| PS 226 | 6006 23 Avenue | Russian |
| PS 209 | 2609 East 7 Street | Russian |
| Trump Village Bldg 7A | 2942 West 5 Street | Russian |
| Marlboro Memorial Post | 300 Avenue X | Russian |
| IS 96 | 99 Avenue P | Russian |
| St. Marks School | 2602 East 19th Street | Russian |
| Seacoast Towers | 1311 Brightwater Avenue | Russian |
| PS 682 | 50 Avenue P | Russian |
| PS 90 | 2840 West 12 Street | Russian |
| PS 254 | 1801 Avenue Y | Russian |
| PS 216 | 350 Avenue X | Russian |
| PS 153 | 1970 Homecrest Avenue | Russian & Arabic |
| PS 197 | 1599 East 22 Street | Russian |
| PS 62 JHS | 700 Cortelyou Road | Russian |
| PS 99 | 1120 East 10 Street | Russian |
| William E. Grady CTE High School | 25 Brighton 4 Road | Russian |
| PS 238 | 1633 East 8 Street | Russian |
| Ed R Murrow HS | 1600 Avenue L | Russian |
| PS 177 | 346 Avenue P | Russian |
| Agudath Sr Ctr | 817 Avenue H | Russian |
| PS 346 | 1400 Pennsylvania Avenue | Russian |

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|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| PS 188 | 3314 Neptune Avenue | Russian |
| PS 286 | 2525 Haring Street | Russian |
| Trump Village Bldg 3A | 444 Neptune Avenue | Russian |
| St. Brendan Senior Apartments L.P. | 1215 Avenue O | Russian |
| PS 195 | 131 Irwin Street | Russian |
| Kings Highway Public Library | 2115 Ocean Avenue | Russian |
| JASA Comm Ctr | 161 Corbin Place | Russian |
| Vandalia Ctr | 47 Vandalia Avenue | Russian |
| PS 217 | 1100 Newkirk Avenue | Russian |
| East Midwood Jewish Center | 1625 Ocean Avenue | Russian |
| James Madison HS | 3787 Bedford Avenue | Russian |
| Merkaz Community Center | 1739 Ocean Avenue | Russian |
| PS 329 | 2929 West 30 Street | Russian |
| Marien Heim Community Center | 870 Ocean Parkway | Russian |
| Haber House | 3024 West 24 Street | Russian |
| PS 179 | 202 Avenue C | Russian |
| IS 14 | 2424 Batchelder Street | Russian |
| Sephardic Comm Ctr | 1901 Ocean Parkway | Russian |
| PS 186 | 7601 19 Avenue | Russian |
| Kings Bay YM-YWHA | 3495 Nostrand Avenue | Russian |

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|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| PS 97 | 1855 Stillwell Avenue | Russian |
| O'Dwyer Community Center | 2945 West 33 Street | Russian |
| Brightwater's Comm Room | 501 Surf Avenue | Russian |
| IS 228 | 228 Avenue S | Russian |
| Regina Pacis Housing | 2424 Cropsey Avenue | Russian |
| Flatbush Park Jewish Center | 6363 Avenue U | Russian |
| PS 95 | 345 Van Sicklen Street | Russian |
| Youth Center | 2739 Harway Avenue | Russian |
| PS 194 | 3117 Avenue W | Russian |
| Harway Terrace | 2475 West 16 Street | Russian |
| New Utrecht HS | 1601 80 Street | Russian |
| Roosevelt Hall | 2946 Bedford Avenue | Haitian Creole |
| PS 269 | 1957 Nostrand Avenue | Haitian Creole |
| PS 152/PS 315 | 725 East 23 Street | Haitian Creole |
| PS 68 JHS | 956 East 82 Street | Haitian Creole |
| Canarsie HS | 1600 Rockaway Parkway | Haitian Creole |
| PS 276 | 1070 East 83 Street | Haitian Creole |
| PS 249 | 18 Marlborough Road | Haitian Creole |
| F.Bennett American Leg. Post | 5601 Avenue N | Haitian Creole |
| PS 251 | 1037 East 54 Street | Haitian Creole |

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| PS 115 | 1500 East 92 Street | Haitian Creole |
| The Joan Snow Pre-K Center | 3610 Glenwood Road | Haitian Creole |
| Flatbush YMCA | 1401 Flatbush Avenue | Haitian Creole |
| PS 203 | 5101 Avenue M | Haitian Creole |
| IS 395/PS 109 | 1001 East 45 Street | Haitian Creole |
| PS 114 | 1077 Remsen Avenue | Haitian Creole |
| IS 246 | 72 Veronica Place | Haitian Creole |
| IS 71 -Juan Morel Campos | 215 Heyward Street | Yiddish |
| Independence Towers Senior Center | 114 Taylor Street | Yiddish |
| PS/IS 180 | 5601 16 Avenue | Yiddish |
| Boro Park YM-YWHA | 4912 14 Avenue | Yiddish |
| PS 223 IS | 4200 16th Avenue | Yiddish |
| PS 131 | 4305 Ft Hamilton Parkway | Yiddish |
| PS 192 | 4715 18 Avenue | Yiddish |
| McGuinness Sr Ctr | 715 Leonard Street | Polish |
| Polish Slavic Culture Center | 177 Kent Street | Polish |
| JHS 126 | 424 Leonard Street | Polish |
| St. Cecilia | 24 North Henry Street | Polish |
| PS 227 JHS | 6500 16 Avenue | Italian |

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