

VOTER ASSISTANCE

2012–2013 Annual Report

April 2013



New York City Campaign Finance Board
Voter Assistance Advisory Committee



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 New York City Campaign Finance Board
Voter Assistance Advisory Committee

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Chyann Sapp

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VOTER ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VAAC advises the CFB on voter engagement and works to implement legislative and administrative changes to improve NYC elections.

The Voter Assistance Advisory Committee is made up of nine members:

- ◆ two members appointed by the mayor
- ◆ two members appointed by the speaker
- ◆ one member appointed by the comptroller
- ◆ one member appointed by the borough presidents
- ◆ the public advocate
- ◆ the executive director of the board of elections; and
- ◆ one member appointed by the mayor in consultation with the speaker to serve as chair.

The current members of VAAC are:

Art Chang, Chair

John Avlon

Bill de Blasio

Anthony Perez Cassino

Joan P. Gibbs

Jane Kalmus

Dawn Sandow

Virginia Wong

You can learn more about VAAC and its members at www.nyccfb.info/nycvotes.

A Letter from the Chair

New and emerging technologies have enabled a broad and public conversation about the way we relate to one another as residents of this great city. These conversations are everywhere; they move seamlessly from online social networks, to subways, to offices, to smartphones and back again. Many New Yorkers, especially young people, navigate between these platforms with ease.

But for citizens to formally participate in the political process, they are still required to navigate a system that lacks the accessibility and responsiveness they have grown accustomed to in their daily lives. If voters are the customers, our voter turnout rates suggest that our elections are failing to provide a positive customer experience.

With a crucial city election on the way, that simply must change. My colleagues and I on the Voter Assistance Advisory Committee (VAAC) are actively exploring new and innovative ways to engage New Yorkers and revolutionize our electoral process.

Our annual report for this year contains several widely supported, common sense proposals to finally bring our election laws into the 21st century. The report also details the important work of the Campaign Finance Board and its Voter Assistance Unit in conducting outreach, education, and programming to engage New York City voters.

In my capacity as Chair of VAAC, I have testified before the City Council to urge the wider adoption of technology in the administration of elections. Our advocacy helped to encourage the Board of Elections to conduct a more efficient and accurate count of votes on election night. We supported Governor Andrew Cuomo as he brought electronic voter registration to New York State through the Department of Motor Vehicles website.

Along the way, we participated in the creation of the first civic technology Meetup group for democracy (meetup.com/democracy) and helped foster other groups working to apply 21st century design and logic to our election process, including Pollwatch and FindMyBallot.

The CFB and VAAC were selected as a participant for the Code for Change hackathon at NYU's Wagner School of Public Affairs. Our proposal attracted a team of talented volunteers who built the Votescope app ([accessible at votescope.us](http://votescope.us)), which provided nearly 1,000 New Yorkers with voting information on their mobile phones in the days before the November election.

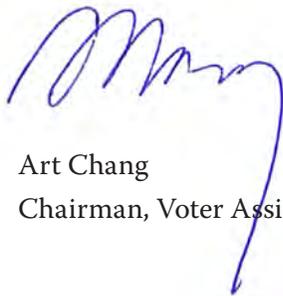


Art Chang,
Chair, Voter Assistance
Advisory Committee

Our Votescope team helped provide the proof of concept that helped build the foundation for our next endeavor. CFB and VAAC have gathered a remarkable group of partners in government and the private sector to create the NYC Votes mobile platform, a project that will employ technology and design to transform the voting experience for every New York City voter. From wherever you are, via web or mobile, the NYC Votes mobile platform will enable New Yorkers to register to vote, update their registration information, learn which candidates are running and what they stand for, get reminders about important voting dates, find their polling place, subscribe to news about the elections, share and show their support via social platforms, and even contribute to candidates.

This new interface for our local democracy will improve the relationships between candidates and the voters whose support they seek. This historic initiative will be introduced to the public early this summer.

Thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Report. Please let us know your thoughts! You can find us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycvotes, or @NYCVotes on Twitter. You can always email us at nycvotes@nycfb.info or give us a call at 212-306-7100. You'll be hearing from us!



Art Chang
Chairman, Voter Assistance Advisory Committee



NEW YORK CITY CAMPAIGN FINANCE BOARD 2012–2013 VOTER ASSISTANCE ANNUAL REPORT

The Voter Assistance Unit of the NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB), through its campaign NYC Votes promotes voter registration, voting, and civic engagement through community outreach and partnerships with public and private organizations.

The nonpartisan CFB is mandated to register, educate, and engage New York City voters. The Voter Assistance Advisory Committee (VAAC) advises the CFB on voter engagement and election reform, and takes the lead on utilizing technology to improve the voter experience.

Through our NYC Votes campaign, we work to increase voter registration and participation through multiple avenues:

Public outreach and engagement – We develop and coordinate voter education programs, voter registration drives, and get-out-the-vote campaigns in person, and via radio, television, social media, and the internet.

Agency-based voter engagement – We work with city agencies to develop and monitor their voter outreach efforts.

Public hearings and dialogue – We hold public meetings and public hearings throughout the year to learn about voters' experiences from individuals and groups. Testifiers provide insight and recommendations that inform our efforts to improve the election process.

Voting analysis – We publish reports and findings on the state of voter registration and participation in New York City.

Legislative recommendations – We make legislative and administrative recommendations to improve the voting experience for New Yorkers.

This report will:

- ◆ Describe our efforts to register and engage NYC voters over the last year.
- ◆ Provide data and information about the scope of our voter assistance activities.
- ◆ Provide analysis about voting registration and participation trends in relation to the previous primary, general, and special elections.
- ◆ Preview the NYC Votes campaign for the 2013 municipal elections.
- ◆ Make substantive recommendations for legislative and administrative changes to reform elections and improve the voter experience for New Yorkers.

A LOOK AT 2012: NEW YORK CITY IN A FEDERAL ELECTION SEASON

There were four elections in the city in 2012, but November's general election brought the most New Yorkers out to the polls, by far. New Yorkers helped select a President, a U.S. Senator, and scores of legislators and judges. Just one week before Election Day, as the city was making its final preparations for the general election, the northeast was hit by the deadliest, most destructive hurricane in recent history. Hurricane Sandy caused an enormous disruption to regular Election Day operations. Poll sites in the areas that bore the brunt of the storm were rendered inaccessible, and the city Board of Elections (BOE) had to locate new sites and alert the voters in a matter of days.

In the months leading up to the elections, the CFB joined forces with the BOE to recruit poll workers, inform voters about redistricting and poll site changes, and encourage New Yorkers to register and vote. It also published a comprehensive online Voter Guide for the primary and general elections, providing information about the candidates running for state and federal office. After the hurricane displaced the CFB from its offices, the agency offered its human resources to the city BOE, which was also displaced. CFB staff reported to BOE borough offices to prepare and mail absentee ballots and recruit and train additional poll workers. On Election Day, some CFB staff worked the polls while others traveled to the hardest hit neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens, including the Rockaways and Coney Island, to hang poll site closures signs and direct voters to new sites.

In an effort to help voters find the correct place to vote, NYC Votes partner Mobile Commons launched a free text message poll site locator. More than 25,000 voters texted "NYCVOTES" to 877-877, provided their address, and received up-to-date information on the location of their poll site right on their cell phone. To assist voters displaced by the storm, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a last-minute executive order allowing voters to cast affidavit ballots at any New York state poll site.

Despite these efforts, long lines and ill-prepared poll workers plagued the day. New Yorkers took to the web and social media to find information and document their experiences. Our NYC Votes Facebook and Twitter feeds helped hundreds of voters find their poll sites.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Our Voter Assistance Unit, led by the NYC Voter Coordinator/Director of Voter Assistance, serves the diverse population of New York City. We partner with community, government, educational, and private sector organizations throughout New York City to develop programs and activities to increase public participation, especially among under-represented and low voting populations. We provide training, tools, educational materials, and guidance to our NYC Votes partners to help them successfully engage their staff and constituents. Our NYC Votes electronic spotlights, which are posted on partner websites and intranet systems and emailed to constituents, alert voters to election dates and deadlines. Regular training sessions are offered by the Voter Assistance Unit at our offices, while personalized and train-the-trainer sessions are held in the field for larger audiences, supported by brochures, palm cards, posters, pledge cards, and other printed material that our partners can reproduce and share with their audience base.



Onida Coward Mayers,
NYC Voter Coordinator/
Director of Voter Assistance

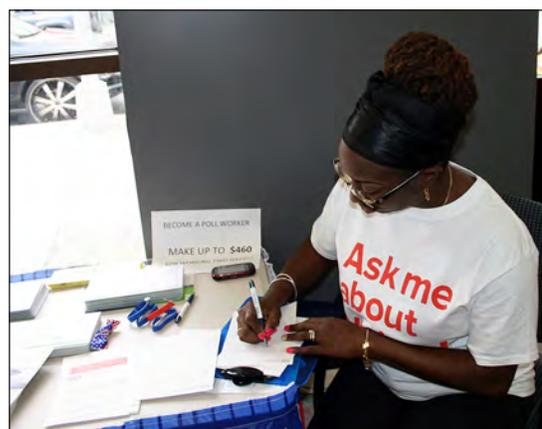
In the past year, we worked with hundreds of partners to increase voter education, registration, and participation. Understanding that citizens require several points of access before voter engagement is achieved, we set out to provide our assistance, election materials, and information about voting to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

NYC Votes took to the streets this summer asking New Yorkers to “Pledge to Vote” in the Primary and General Elections. Our Pledge to Vote cards allowed voters to show their sense of pride for voting, whether they already vote in every election, would be first-time voters, or were newly encouraged to participate by the pledge. The pledge cards each voter signed were mailed back to them within two weeks of the General Election as a reminder to get to the polls and vote. Over 1000 cards were collected, and voters who opted to provide their email address received email alerts about important election dates and deadlines as well.

NYC Votes Street Team

IN 2012, NYC Votes launch a grassroots program to help us expand our outreach into areas identified as having low voter participation by the Wagner NYU Study *Who Votes?* (discussed later in this report). The street team members were student interns trained to establish relationships with community based organizations (CBO) and register new voters.

In its pilot year, the street team’s presence allowed the CFB to introduce the NYC Votes brand and our mission to a much wider audience. The street team made it possible for NYC Votes to expand its partnerships in 2012, working with 62 new partners on dozens of voter registration drives and other voter engagement activities in our target areas and beyond.



In 2013, our street team will be expanded to allow for more on-site presence at the CBOs and to provide enhanced partner training, which will allow us to have a larger reach into communities with low voter participation, where the Street Team is most needed. In addition, we will implement benchmark accountability for team members to track their effectiveness and the efficacy of the program overall.

Your Votes Counts—Engaging Women

The NYC Commission on Women’s Issues and NYC Votes developed the *Your Vote Counts* campaign in an effort to increase participation by women voters in New York City. Working in partnership with NBC 4 New York/Telemundo 47 New York, *Your Vote Counts* was a yearlong multimedia and community outreach campaign launched by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg on March 6, 2012 at an event at Gracie Mansion.

NBC 4 New York/Telemundo 47 New York created public service announcements (PSAs) in English and Spanish featuring women stating why voting is important to them and urging all women to “make their voices heard.” These PSAs were aired regularly on popular NBC programs including *The Today Show* and played on all taxi TV screens in city cabs in the months before the fall elections. Print ads, bus shelter posters, and social media promoted the message Your Vote Counts. NYC Votes launched the campaign website, www.yourvotecountsnyc.com, which provided comprehensive voter information for the 2012 elections and was promoted on www.nyc.gov as well as all the partners’ websites.



1000 Voter Drive Registration Challenge

National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) is a single day of coordinated field, technology, and media efforts to create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities. Working with partners nationwide, the nonpartisan NVRD organization selects a date and mobilizes thousands of volunteers and organizations to host voter registration drives.

NYC Votes and partners used NVRD as a launching point for our first *1,000 Voter Registration Drive Challenge*. With the help of over 100 partners, this challenge yielded 1,130 voter registration drives, assisting New Yorkers to register and reaching tens of thousands of voters citywide with a pro-voting message.

Challenge participants included JP Morgan Chase, which registered over 500 employees; Barclays Center/Brooklyn Nets Experience bus, which invited us to register and engage voters at three community festivals attended by thousands of New Yorkers; New York City Public Libraries; New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation; and dozens of community and civic groups.



Engaging Active Military and Veterans

NYC Votes is committed to assisting NYC residents who serve, or have served, in the military. Active military stationed outside their home state or deployed overseas face unique challenges when it comes to registering and participating in elections. We partnered with the Mayor's Office of Veteran's Affairs (MOVA) and the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to increase our outreach to active and returning NYC military personnel. NYC Votes attended several military family days to help attendees register, answer their questions, and raise awareness about the 2012 elections.

FVAP's PSA based on the Rifleman's Creed, entitled "This is My Weapon", is a compelling call to action for military personnel to register and vote. It runs on military bases across the country and around the world. As an NYC Votes partner, FVAP reached out to the CFB to incorporate a screen promoting NYC Votes as a comprehensive source of information for military voters from NYC.

In May 2012 we were invited by MOVA to take part in the city's annual Fleet Week celebration on Memorial Day. This event includes activities for families and military personnel and an estimated 10,000 people attended. The NYC Votes Street Team and BOE staff manned a table near the Intrepid to register new voters, recruit poll workers, and encourage New Yorkers to sign up for election alerts via our newly launched Pledge to Vote initiative. Our media partner, HOT 97, drew crowds to the registration area with trivia, music, and giveaways, and over 50 new voters were registered, while hundreds more learned about the upcoming election and signed up for election alerts.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS:

Food Bank for New York City

Mission: To end hunger in New York City by organizing food, information and support for community survival and dignity.

Together we engaged voters:

- We conducted voter registration trainings with Food Bank staff.
- Food Bank for New York City participated in our 1,000 Voter Registration Challenge and held voter registration drives at Community Kitchens in Harlem.

New York Organ Donor Network

Mission: The New York Organ Donor Network is dedicated to the recovery of organs and tissues for people in need of life-saving and life-improving transplants.

Together we engaged voters:

- We partnered in several events across the city that registered nearly 3,000 New Yorkers.

Care for the Homeless (CFTH)

Mission: CFTH fights homelessness by delivering high-quality and client-centered healthcare, human services, and shelter to homeless individuals and families.

Together we engaged voters:

- CFTH utilized our tools as a template for creating its own PSA encouraging voter registration and participation among the homeless population.
- CFTH conducted voter registration outreach with its clients.

Energizing the Next Generation of Voters

Energizing the next generation of voters is a primary focus for NYC Votes. Our Youth Voter Coordinator, Chyann Sapp, educates and engages NYC youth and young adults through partnerships with agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and NYC Votes partners such as HOT 97 and Voto Latino.

As part of her efforts, Chyann recently participated in the 2nd annual Voto Latino Power Summit held in Washington, D.C. Serving on the panel “Activism — Know Your Turf: Field Operations for Beginners”, Chyann spoke about organizing and mobilizing volunteers to employ effective GOTV strategies before 200 young leaders from across the nation.



Chyann Sapp

New York City Youth Poet Laureate Program

New York City’s Youth Poet Laureate Program (YPL) was developed in 2008 in partnership with Urban Word NYC. YPL aims to engage young artists in voter awareness, civic engagement, and social responsibility. The program ignites democratic engagement among youth by encouraging students to “Vote with Voice” through creative exploration of our electoral process and the importance of voting via spoken word poetry.

The Youth Poet Laureate and semi-finalists from the program (called Youth Poet Ambassadors) perform and speak about the importance of civic engagement at student-oriented events around the city. The winner also has a collection of his or her poems published.

NYC Votes welcomes New York City’s new Youth Poet Laureate, Ashley August. Ms. August will serve for one year, including participating in a citywide library tour, hosting the annual “Poem in Your Pocket Day” festivities in Bryant Park, and performing at the NYC Teen Poetry Slam Finals at Harlem’s world famous Apollo Theater.



Ashley August

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation (HHC)



On September 4, 2012 we launched our partnership with HHC at the Council of Municipal Hospitals’ Community Advisory Board meeting. HHC joined NYC Votes’ 1,000 Voter Registration Drive challenge, with 21 hospitals signed up to coordinate voter registration drives. Medical facilities are a convenient place for people in the community to register to vote, and NYC Votes also had the opportunity to educate their constituents about absentee voting. Altogether, HHC was responsible for 46 voter registration drives in two weeks.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

City University of New York (CUNY)



CUNY enlisted as Youth Voter Registration Partner and supported the launch of our *Your Vote Counts* multimedia campaign by hosting 19 registration drives during school events in the month of March 2012. CUNY also supported Voter Awareness Month with 30 registration drives from late September through the registration deadline on October 11th. Drives were held on six campuses in multiple boroughs: BMCC, Bronx CC, Brooklyn CC, City College, John Jay, and Lehman College.

Youth Voter Registration Jam

NYC Votes first Youth Voter Registration Jam was an NRVD event that aimed to increase awareness about the upcoming presidential election among young voters. Nine partners joined NYC Votes to coordinate and promote the event: CUNY, HOT 97, Voto Latino, DYCD, DOE, NVRD, BOE, Rock the Vote, and Universal Records. While targeted to students, the event was open to all members of the community.

Celebrity guest host Rosario Dawson and HOT 97 DJs kept the crowd engaged. NYC Votes registered nearly 100 students at the event, making them eligible to cast their first presidential vote in the November election.



AGENCY-BASED VOTER ENGAGEMENT

NYC Votes has regular contact with all Local Law 29 (2000) agencies and continues to work to assist agencies in implementing their mandate by providing support and partnering with them to create and develop voter education programs. The coordination of registration efforts with citywide agencies begins with the establishment of a working relationship and development of their voter action plan for the year. Many agencies go beyond the mere distribution of registration forms, utilizing NYC Votes educational tools in their outreach. Numerous agencies posted Voter Spotlight graphics, alerting constituents to registration deadlines and election dates, on their websites and social media pages, and some sent NYC Votes email blasts to their own email lists.



Some highlights of our work with LL29 agencies for the 2012 election include:

Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC)— offered a new way for us to reach potential voters— Taxi TV. Taxi TV screens ran the *Your Vote Counts* PSA for a week prior to each election, reaching thousands of potential voters. NYC Votes developed a short onscreen survey that started running on Election Day to obtain feedback about whether riders voted and what improvements they would like to see in NYC elections. For voters who had not yet made it to the polls, seeing the survey on Election Day also served as a reminder to go vote. More than 8,000 riders took part in the surveys, and the results are provided in Appendix A.

City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) — assisted NYC Votes at naturalization ceremonies in Manhattan and Brooklyn, sending bilingual speakers when possible to provide language assistance. CFB and CCHR staff participated in 14 naturalization ceremonies this past year, registering over 1,300 new citizens and collecting more than 100 poll worker applications.

Department of Parks and Recreation — hosted NYC Youth Poet Laureate Ishmael Islam at the annual Adventures NYC summer event at Central Park— an annual event that provides free activities for New Yorkers to enjoy the great outdoors and is attended by up to 35,000 visitors. Ish performed his winning voting poem, “Daydreaming at the Voting Booth” and spoke about the importance of voting in the 2012 federal elections.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

HOT 97

NYC Votes partnered with HOT 97’s Hip Hop Votes campaign to increase voter registration and participation among HOT 97’s listener base.



Together we:

- Created an informational page on HOT 97’s popular website.
- Alerted the station’s audience about election deadlines and dates on air, via social media to its 400,000 followers, and via text alerts to over 113,000 subscribers.
- Participated as a panelist on “Street Soldiers”, a current events broadcast hosted by Lisa Evers on the topic “Does My Vote Really Matter?”
- Provided voter registration and poll worker recruitment at the annual Summer Jam Village and Push for Peace events.
- Co-hosted the first Youth Voter Registration Jam on National Voter Registration day with HOT 97 DJs.

Department of Homeless Services (DHS)—hosted NYC Votes twice at St. Mark’s Church in Greenwich Village to speak to youth and their parents on the importance of voting and participation in the electoral process during DHS’s presentation “Guess Who Signed the Constitution”. DHS also held registration drives and distributed voter information pamphlets at their shelters.

Department of Environmental Protection— held voter registration drives during the *1000 Voter Registration Drive challenge*.

Department of Citywide Administrative Services— invited Onida Coward Mayers to be a keynote speaker at its Women’s History Month Celebration and hosted an NYC Votes voter registration table at the event.

Department of Youth and Community Development— assisted in promoting the *Youth Voter Registration Jam*, and helped students in its after-school programs participate in the Jam.

Community Boards— Seven community boards hosted NYC Votes at monthly meetings to speak to community members about upcoming elections.

Department of Small Business Services— Ordered 1,000 voter registration forms to distribute in its offices, career centers, and business solutions centers.

Department of Corrections— To increase awareness of voter rights and election deadlines, the Department of Corrections created posters (including information about NYC Votes) which they placed throughout their facilities, reaching 12,000 inmates as well as thousands of visitors.

Department of Probation— Distributed voter registration forms at their facilities.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Popular Community Bank



THE HUMAN SIDE OF BANKING

Popular Community Bank partnered with NYC Votes to hold voter registrations for their customers at multiple branch locations in low voter turnout neighborhoods in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens.

We held a presentation with all branch managers to determine locations that had high traffic in each of the three low voting population boroughs, in order to engage the most New Yorkers.

We have also been working closely with the marketing department at Popular Community Bank to finalize ATM get-out-the-vote messages that will appear prior to the Primary and General elections.

Department of Finance — Made thousands of voter registration forms in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean available to their constituents.

Department of Transportation — Distributed nearly 13,000 voter registration forms in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean by mail with DOT literature and in its service centers throughout the five boroughs.

Administration for Children’s Services — in addition to distributing voter registration forms and helping clients register, ACS invited NYC Votes to talk to youth about the importance of voting at its Housing Works program.

See Appendix B for a breakdown of voter registration form distribution by agency.

Department of Education—NYC Votes works with the Department of Education under the LL34 Charter mandate entitled “Young Adult Voter Registration Act”. The Act calls for the distribution of voter registration forms to all graduating high school seniors. Last year an estimated **75,000** forms were sent to high schools for their graduating students. This year we are projecting similar numbers, and will additionally provide posters to each high school urging students of age to register to vote.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND DIALOGUE

Public hearings are a valuable mechanism for individual voters, public, and private groups, and elected officials to present their views. The hearings inform our voter outreach efforts and our recommendations for promoting voter registration and participation in New York City. We held three public meetings (April 2012, August 2012, and February 2013) and two public hearings — one on June 11, 2012 regarding the 2012 Annual Report and one following the November 2012 general election. To ensure maximum public participation, especially in the annual hearing, we:

- ◆ Choose physical locations accessible to persons with disabilities and in close proximity to public transportation.
- ◆ Post announcements on community calendars and social media.
- ◆ Distribute media advisories and send alerts to our followers on Twitter and Facebook.
- ◆ Provide detailed information to community and civic groups to disseminate in their newsletters and member communications.
- ◆ Send letters and flyers to CBOs and other NYC Votes partners.

The following groups testified at meetings and public hearing this past year:

April 2012

Alex Camarda (Citizens Union of the City of New York)

Kate Doran (League of Women’s Voters)

Nathaniel Niernan (Legislative Aide to Gale Brewer)

Marjorie Kelleher Shea (Women’s City Club of NYC)

June 2012

Rachael Fauss (Citizens Union of the City of New York)
Marjorie Kelleher Shea (Women's City Club of NYC)
Angelique Tyree (HOT 97)
Clarice Joynes (Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs)

August 2012

Neil Kleiman (NYU Wagner School of Public Affairs)
Jae Ko (NYU Wagner School of Public Affairs)
Marjorie Kelleher Shea (Women's City Club of NYC)
Joy Williams (NAACP)

November 2012 Annual Hearing (NYIT)

Ashley August, 2013 Youth Poet Laureate
Vote Scope staff
Mazeda A. Uddin, Alliance of South Asian American Labor (ASAAL)
Sherlly Pierre
Werner Gliebe & Susan Ludmer-Gliebe
Ki Chan
Ishmael Islam, 2012 Youth Poet Laureate
Neal Rosenstein, New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Janelle A. Young
Mary Pat Kane
Diane M. Sharon
Kathleen White, New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation (HHC)
Matthew Clark, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Chi-Ser Tran, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Alex Camarda, Citizens United of the City of New York
Kate Doran, League of Women Voters
Kimberleigh Smith, Harlem United
Marjorie Kelleher Shea, Women's City Club of NYC

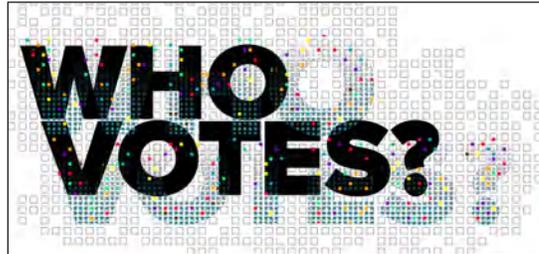
February 2013

Staff from Method
Marjorie Kelleher Shea (Women's City Club of NYC)

VOTER REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION TRENDS

The New York City Charter requires that the CFB, with the assistance of VAAC, identify groups of city residents “who are underrepresented among those registered to vote and those voting,” and recommend strategies to increase voting among these groups.

To that end, we commissioned a team of graduate students from New York University’s Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service to develop a profile of New York City’s non-voting population.



The students performed a demographic analysis of voter history rolls from the Board of Elections, looking at the 2008 and 2009 elections against data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2006–2010 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates. The study identified some key demographic factors that may impact voter turnout: gender, age, residential mobility, educational attainment, and country of birth. The report also identified geographic areas with low levels of voter participation in parts of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. These findings helped target our efforts and shape our programs. The report is available to the public on our website.

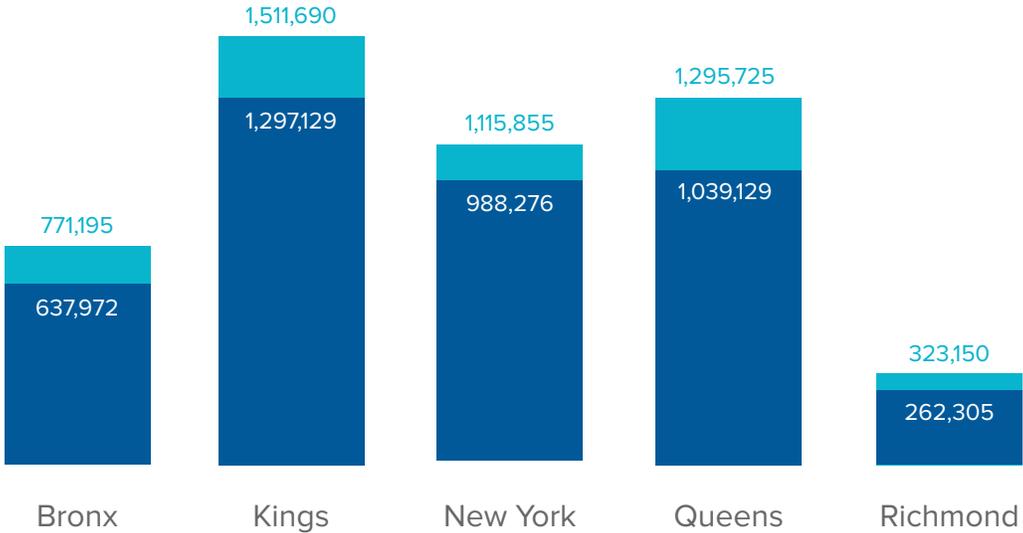
A look at the results of the 2012 elections can illustrate the challenges ahead. The analyses below cover primary and general elections between 2008 and 2012. A full report of voter turnout statistics from 2012 is included as Appendix C.

Voter Registration

An important piece of good news: an estimated 84 percent of eligible voters across the five boroughs are registered, active voters.¹ In no borough are fewer than 80 percent of eligible voters registered; borough-wide registration rates range from 80.2 percent in Queens, to as high as 88.6 percent in Manhattan. The U.S. Census estimates Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) as part of its regularly-compiled American Community Survey.

¹ Data from the NYS Board of Elections and the U.S. Census 2007–2011 Five-Year American Community Survey. CVAP numbers are estimates. The actual number of eligible voters may be smaller. New Yorkers who have been convicted of a felony and are serving time in jail, or are currently on parole, are not eligible to vote; those numbers are not reflected in the totals. Voters are moved to inactive status if a) they fail to respond to a residency confirmation notice or b) they fail to vote in two consecutive presidential elections.

ACTIVE VOTERS AND CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION BY COUNTY, 2012			
County	Citizen Voting Age Population	Active Voters (as of November 1, 2012)	Percentage Registered
Bronx	771,195	637,972	82.7%
Kings	1,511,690	1,297,129	85.8%
New York	1,115,855	988,276	88.6%
Queens	1,295,725	1,039,129	80.2%
Richmond	323,150	262,305	81.2%
Total	5,017,615	4,224,811	84.2%



The November 2012 active-voter registration numbers represent an increase of more than 100,000 citywide over four years. More than half the increase came from Brooklyn, which increased its active voter registration total by four percent from November 2008.

ACTIVE VOTER REGISTRATIONS BY COUNTY, 2008–2012			
County	November 2008	November 2012	Increase
Bronx	628,947	637,972	9,025
Kings	1,242,033	1,297,129	55,096
New York	980,201	988,276	8,075
Queens	1,017,125	1,039,129	22,004
Richmond	251,617	262,305	10,688
Total	4,119,923	4,224,811	104,888

Voter Participation

Some New Yorkers visited the polls as many as five times over the past 12 months: in addition to November’s general election, there were separate primary elections for President, Congress, and state offices. Special elections to fill vacant legislative seats were conducted in certain districts. While a presidential election is always the subject of intense focus, a review of the turnout rates show that many voters found it difficult to focus on the primaries.²

Republican Presidential Primary Election (April 24, 2012)

After a competitive presidential primary season for both parties in 2008 that kept the nominations in doubt until early summer, New York State rescheduled its primary election from February to April. With an incumbent Democrat in the White House, only the Republican Party had a scheduled primary election for president in 2012.

With the nomination essentially decided before New York cast its votes, turnout in the April 24, 2012 Republican presidential primary declined dramatically from its 2008 level—fewer than one-third as many votes were cast, and turnout dropped from about 17 percent to less than six percent.

REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS 2008-2012 NEW YORK CITY, VOTER PARTICIPATION*			
2008 Votes	Turnout	2012 Votes	Turnout
78,892	16.7%	25,250	5.7%
* Measured against number of voters registered with the Republican Party as of April 1, 2008 and April 1, 2012 respectively.			

² Please note that in this report, voter turnout rates are calculated against the population of registered voters.

Congressional Primary Elections (June 26, 2012)

In January 2012, a U.S. District Court ordered New York State's Congressional primary elections to be moved to the fourth Tuesday in June, to bring the state in compliance with federal legislation meant to guarantee voting rights for military personnel serving overseas.³ With redrawn Congressional boundaries imposed by a separate panel of federal judges in March 2012, the June primary election date represented a particular challenge for candidates and voters.

Turnout in Congressional primaries was low, barely above 11 percent in those districts with primary elections scheduled. It is unclear that either the date or the delays in redrawing district lines had any bearing on turnout, however; though more New Yorkers voted in primary elections in 2012, the turnout rate roughly matched that for Congressional primaries in 2008.

PRIMARY ELECTIONS FOR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 2008–2012 NEW YORK CITY, VOTER PARTICIPATION			
	Votes Cast	Active Voters	Turnout
2008	60,411	524,376	11.5%
2010	167,001	1,114,042	15.0%
2012	178,722	1,578,187	11.0%

PRIMARY ELECTIONS FOR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY DISTRICT, 2012* NEW YORK CITY, VOTER PARTICIPATION			
	Votes Cast	Active Voters	Turnout
5 th District (Queens)	13,946	233,799	6.0%
6 th District (Queens)	28,009	183,382	15.3%
7 th District (Brooklyn)	29,845	232,330	12.8%
8 th District (Brooklyn)	39,504	279,517	14.1%
9 th District (Brooklyn)	17,311	277,210	6.0%
13 th District (Manhattan)	43,269	282,108	15.3%
16 th District (Bronx)	6,838	89,841	7.6%

* All U.S. House primaries in 2012 were in the Democratic Party.

³ The Court had previously ruled that the existing September primary date was not compliant with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, because the timing of the primary made it impossible to certify the results, prepare absentee ballots, and transmit them to overseas voters in a timely manner.

Competitive, high-profile open-seat races in Queens’ 6th District (won by Grace Meng) and Brooklyn’s 8th (won by Hakeem Jeffries), as well as a spirited challenge to Congressman Charlie Rangel in Manhattan’s 13th District, saw relatively higher turnout — only then, slightly above 15 percent.

A Republican Party primary for U.S. Senate also failed to capture the attention of most eligible voters — only four percent of registered Republicans cast a vote to nominate a challenger to incumbent U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (who was running for her first full term). In 2010, Republican primaries nominated two candidates for Senate: one to challenge Gillibrand (who was running to serve the remainder of former-Sen. Hillary Clinton’s unexpired term) and another to oppose Sen. Chuck Schumer. Compared with 2010, Republican turnout for the June 2012 primary dipped by half.

General Election (November 6, 2012)

The competitive and historic 2008 Presidential election that put Barack Obama in the White House drove voter turnout to the highest level it had seen since 1992. But voter participation declined in every borough for the 2012 general election; more than 160,000 fewer votes were counted in 2012. With the modest increases in voter enrollment, as described earlier, voter turnout fell by more than five percentage points citywide.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2008–2012 NEW YORK CITY, BY BOROUGH, VOTER PARTICIPATION						
	2008			2012		
	Votes Cast	Active Voters	Turnout	Votes Cast	Active Voters	Turnout
Bronx	381,322	628,947	60.6%	370,938	637,972	58.1%
Brooklyn	759,848	1,242,033	61.2%	730,546	1,297,129	56.3%
Manhattan	667,594	980,201	68.1%	600,291	988,276	60.7%
Queens	640,137	1,017,125	62.9%	595,245	1,039,129	57.3%
Staten Island	166,578	251,617	66.2%	154,180	262,305	58.8%
Total	2,615,479	4,119,923	63.5%	2,451,200	4,224,811	58.0%

Certainly, the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy may have depressed voter turnout; the challenges wrought by the storm are presented in some detail earlier in the report. Some of the largest drops in voter turnout were in Staten Island, which was particularly hard-hit by the storm. In certain other areas where a significant number of poll sites were changed before the election as a result of storm-related damage, turnout was below the citywide average. Others exceeded the average. In all, the November 2012 elections still provide an illustration of New Yorkers’ resolve to participate in their elections even under the most challenging of circumstances.

ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS WITH SIGNIFICANT STORM-RELATED POLL SITE CLOSINGS VOTES CAST IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 2012					
AD	Borough	Neighborhood	Votes Cast	Active Voters	Turnout
23	Queens	Rockaways/Howard Beach	31,074	62,500	49.7%
31	Queens	Rockaways/South Ozone Park	31,599	56,942	55.5%
46	Brooklyn	Coney Island	32,482	65,692	49.4%
51	Brooklyn	Red Hook/Sunset Park	25,659	51,427	50.0%
59	Brooklyn	Gerritsen Beach/Canarsie/Mill Basin	41,153	66,853	61.6%
65	Manhattan	Lower Manhattan	37,277	74,230	50.2%
74	Manhattan	East Village	49,088	83,784	58.6%

Special Elections

Special elections always represent a particular challenge when it comes to engaging voters. There were three special elections held in New York City this past year, with varying levels of voter turnout.

- ◆ **Special Election – 27th Senate District (March 20, 2012)**

The special election to replace Carl Kruger in New York’s 27th Senate District was one of the closest in recent memory; out of a total of 22,259 ballots cast, the victor was decided by only 13 votes. Turnout reached 15.5 percent in this hotly-contested two-candidate race, which was relatively high for a special election.

- ◆ **Special Election – 12th City Council District (November 6, 2012)**

Because it was held the same day as the Presidential election, this special election in the Bronx to replace Larry Seabrook in the City Council district saw much higher turnout than most special elections. In all, 44,648 votes were counted, 54.5 percent of registered voters in the district.⁴

- ◆ **Special Election—31st City Council District (February 19, 2013)**

With City Councilmember James Sanders elected to State Senate in November 2012, a special election to fill the 31st District seat in Queens was held in February 2013. Just 9,091 votes were recorded, representing 11.8 percent of eligible voters in the district.

⁴ Voter enrollment totals for Council districts come from the NYC Board of Elections, as of July 27, 2012.

PREVIEW OF 2013–2014

We are in the final stages of planning our efforts for the citywide municipal elections this year. Many of the programs and activities described in this report will continue or expand for the upcoming election season. Some highlights of our efforts to come include:

- ◆ Publishing the official NYC Voter Guide which is available in print and online. There is a companion video edition. The print edition is mailed to registered voters citywide. 2013 Guide editions will provide written profiles and video statements from hundreds of candidates running in 59 races, allowing the voters to hear directly from the candidates about their campaigns and platforms.
- ◆ Televised debates amongst the candidates running for mayor, public advocate, and comptroller.
- ◆ The launch of our NYC Votes mobile voter tool, giving voters critical tools to participate in the electoral process from smartphones and other devices.
- ◆ The celebration of the fifth season of our Youth Poet Laureate program at the acclaimed Lincoln Center.
- ◆ Expanded National Voter Registration Day events with our partners in all five boroughs
- ◆ Mobilizing hundreds of NYC Votes partners to encourage citizens around our city to register to vote and vote.
- ◆ Working with our election advocacy peers to pursue legislative and election reform.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS: 21ST CENTURY LAWS FOR 21ST CENTURY VOTING

Many New Yorkers faced extreme hardships during the 2012 general election. Hurricane Sandy caused extraordinary obstacles, but voters across the city and around the state rose to the occasion. Determined to cast their ballots despite the circumstances, thousands of New Yorkers traveled to new poll sites. Many more stood in line for hours to do so. Unfortunately, the long lines were too common. Frustration with our election system is too widespread to be attributed solely to a natural disaster.

There are systemic issues that must be addressed. Poll sites were changed for many voters in the city, due both to redistricting and to changes in the number of voters per site. Despite efforts by the NYC Board of Elections (BOE), the Campaign Finance Board, and others, many voters still went to the wrong poll site, unaware that their district and/or their poll site had changed.

A truly modern system that makes the best use of available technology would ensure voters were notified about the new poll locations, or find a more flexible method for voters to cast their ballots. It is that more modern, agile voter experience that we believe should be the goal for New York.

The 2012 elections are clear evidence that it is time to begin a serious discussion of comprehensive election reform in New York.

In recent years, the Board has supported legislation aimed at updating the antiquated laws and regulations that raise obstacles to voting. Our focus has been on modernizing the outdated systems we use to run our elections — from the process of voter registration to tabulating the votes. Some of the more

arcane provisions of state Election Law have provided pathways for determined individuals to attempt to subvert the democratic process with corrupt schemes, as we have learned in recent weeks.

New York has made progress on some of these issues in recent years — notably, Governor Andrew Cuomo’s directive last year to introduce online voter registration to New York State. Others are under discussion. Yet, our recent experience shows that these changes are not enough. To build a truly modern and efficient voting experience in New York, we must think broadly and boldly.

As technology provides New Yorkers with greater choice, convenience, and connectivity in their everyday lives, our system of elections has not kept pace. Inflexible rules and regulations, unchanged for decades, are out of sync with new technologies. Those old laws are hindering the effort to give more voters access to the ballot.

We have changed the way we vote, but we have not fundamentally changed our laws. The needs of the voters must come first and foremost. Only systemic reform will allow us to build the modern, efficient voting system New Yorkers expect and deserve.

Establish Nonpartisan Election Administration in New York State

The independent, nonpartisan model for election administration is a proven way to avoid the gridlock and stagnation that characterize election administration in New York.

There are examples of successful nonpartisan elections boards we can follow. In 2007, the state of Wisconsin replaced its State Elections Board with the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board. The new Board, which oversees election administration statewide, is comprised of six former judges, who are nominated by a panel of current Appeals Court judges, appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the state legislature. Both the Board and its staff are nonpartisan; no member of the Board may be an officeholder, candidate, party official, lobbyist, or even a recent contributor to a candidate for office.⁵

All indications are that Wisconsin’s new, nonpartisan Board is more accountable and responsive to the needs of the voters than the previous body. Officials who fail to perform their duties do not have the protection of party officials, and key decisions are not delayed or deferred by partisan gridlock.

Closer to home, our own Campaign Finance Board is a clear model for independent, nonpartisan administration of a robust financing system for elections that is fair and accountable to the public.

In recent weeks, New York’s political system has been shocked by a wave of corruption charges involving lawmakers and party bosses. The most notable involved bribery charges against two top Republican Party officials in New York City, who attempted to collect bribes in exchange for access to the primary ballot.

The ballot-access scandal, in particular, calls into question whether the current bipartisan system puts too much power in the hands of the political parties. Voters cannot be blamed for reaching the conclusion that a system that puts party bosses in charge of elections is akin to putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. The system is broken, and it does not serve the voters well. It is time for systemic change.

⁵ <http://docs.legis.wi.gov/statutes/statutes/15/III/60>

Change the Date of the 2013 Runoff Election in New York City

In elections for the three citywide offices (mayor, public advocate, and comptroller) a runoff election is held if no candidate receives at least 40 percent of the vote in the primary election. For 2013 — the first citywide elections to be conducted with electronic ballot-scanning machines — the City BOE has maintained that it will be unable to conduct a potential runoff election two weeks after the primary, as required by state election law. The BOE argues that two weeks will not provide sufficient time to certify the primary election results, print new ballots for the runoff, and re-program and test the scanners.

In the absence of a better proposal to meet this certain challenge, we join the BOE in urging the state legislature to postpone the potential runoff election date by one week. A short postponement may provide some greater ability to ensure the results of the primary are accurate, and ensure a runoff election can be administered smoothly.

This solution is far from perfect. It will reduce the time available for candidates to campaign for the general election, and even the extra week provides no guarantee the BOE will be prepared to administer a runoff.

Still, more permanent responses would require major amendments to State Election Law. The obstacles that prevent the City BOE from reaching a simple, creative solution provide further evidence that election laws in New York State are simply out of date.

Adopt Instant Runoff Voting

Instant runoff voting (IRV) can make the issue of the runoff election date obsolete. With IRV, voters rank candidates in order of their preference. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated, and his votes are redistributed among the candidates who were chosen second on his ballots. The counting continues in rounds until one candidate wins a majority. Voters who rank all candidates on the ballot have their preference counted in every round of voting.

Instant runoff voting would eliminate the need for separate and costly runoff elections. The BOE estimates that it will cost \$20 million to hold a runoff election citywide.⁶ Additionally, candidates in the Campaign Finance Program are paid extra public funds for a runoff election. (In 2009, four candidates in runoff elections received a total of \$1.4 million.⁷) IRV would save the city millions of dollars.

Moreover, voter engagement is historically low for traditional runoff elections. In the 2009 elections for public advocate and comptroller, turnout dropped by more than a third from the primary to the runoff; 130,000 fewer New Yorkers voted in the runoff than did in the primary. Less than nine percent of registered Democrats voted on the candidates who ultimately represented the party for these city-

6 New York City Board of Elections meeting, January 3, 2013. <http://vote.nyc.ny.us/downloads/pdf/documents/boe/minutes/2013/010313meetSpecialCommMtg.pdf>

7 Candidates in runoff elections receive a payment equal 25 percent of the funds they received in the primary.

wide offices. Studies from large cities that have adopted IRV in recent years, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Berkeley, and Portland, Maine, show that it can reduce voter drop-off dramatically.⁸

IRV would also help ensure that absentee, military, and overseas voters could cast timely votes without being disenfranchised by a two-week runoff election timeline.

Legislation proposed by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh (D-Manhattan) would establish IRV for all five city offices — mayor, public advocate, comptroller, borough president and City Council.⁹ Current law does not require runoffs for borough presidents or City Council, which means that often, candidates win primary elections without a majority of votes. IRV can help maximize participation by all NYC voters in all elections, and ensure all elected officials have the legitimacy that comes with the expressed preference of a majority of voters.

Make Voter Registration Easier

The bulk of State Election Law was written more than 35 years ago, and has simply not kept pace with society. Today, New Yorkers pay their bills, get their news, purchase goods and services, and communicate with friends online. Our approach to voting should reflect the convenience voters expect in other areas of their lives.

Today, New Yorkers have two ways to register to vote — by mailing a paper form to the Board of Elections, or via the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles website. Governor Andrew Cuomo should be applauded for taking the initiative to enable online voter registration through the DMV. It was a significant step in the right direction, making it much easier for New Yorkers to register to vote and to change their voter registration information. However, only New Yorkers with a DMV-issued driver's license or non-driver's ID can use this service, and many New Yorkers, particularly in the city, do not have either.

The voter registration initiative on the DMV website proves that online voter registration is secure and reliable. Online voter registration should be available to every New Yorker. The Board supports Assembly Bill A00149, which will require the Board of Elections to accept voter registrations electronically through its website.¹⁰

8 "Instant Runoff Voting." FairVote—The Center for Voting and Democracy. <http://www.fairvote.org/instant-runoff-voting#UVsuXDccPIg>.

9 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A02109](#)

10 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A00149](#)

Allow Same Day Voter Registration

Same-day voter registration increases voter turnout. In 2012, voters in eight states and the District of Columbia were permitted to register on Election Day.¹¹ Voter turnout was nearly 20 percent higher than the national average in those states. Indeed, nearly 1.25 million voters in those states registered (or updated their information) and cast ballots on Election Day.¹²

Too many potential voters simply miss the voter registration deadline, which falls 25 days before an election. Many people become interested in an election just a few days prior to Election Day, far too late to register in New York.

The Board supports Assembly bill A00172, which will allow New Yorkers to register to vote on any day that the Board of Elections is open, including Election Day.¹³

Allow Voters to Change Party Enrollment

Voter choice and participation in our elections must be expanded. One pointless restriction on voting is the State Election Law requirement that voters wishing to change their enrollment to vote in a party primary must do so more than a year ahead of time. The Board agrees with Governor Cuomo's assessment that "current party enrollment laws are unnecessarily burdensome" for voters in New York City who simply want a say in who governs their city. No other state in the nation places such onerous restrictions on a voter's ability to choose his or her party affiliation. Moving the deadline to change party registration to three months before the primary election would bring New York more in line with other states that have similar restrictions. The Governor's proposal to do just that will enable more New Yorkers to make their voices heard at the polls, and it has the Board's support.

Pre-Register Youth Voters

Any effort to increase voter engagement should include forward-thinking efforts to engage young people. The earlier we get young people involved in the political process, the better chance those habits take root for a lifetime of voting. Pre-registering young people would be a good step in this direction. The Board supports Assembly bill A02042 by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh, which will allow those who are 16 years old to pre-register, and be automatically registered to vote when they turn 18.¹⁴ The bill also allows eligible 17 year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 by the general election.

11 "Same Day Voter Registration." National Conference of State Legislatures.
<http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/same-day-registration.aspx>

12 Michael P. McDonald. "2012 Presidential Nomination Contest Turnout Rates." United States Election Project.
http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2012P.html

13 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A00172](#)

14 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A02042](#)

Expand Voting Time and Locations

In 2012, early voting was available in 32 states — including Illinois, where President Obama cast his vote more than a week before Election Day. New Yorkers who cannot make it to the polls on Election Day must apply for an absentee ballot, but low awareness of the absentee-ballot deadline is another barrier to voting. Early voting would boost turnout further.

The Board strongly recommends early voting, and supports Assemblyman Karim Camara’s bill, A-3644, to establish a two-week early voting period in New York State.¹⁵ The bill calls for voting in Board of Elections offices or other voting locations during the two weeks before a primary or general election, excluding weekends and public holidays.

More voters than ever before opted to vote by absentee ballot in 2012 because it allows them to fit voting into their busy schedule.¹⁶ However, in New York absentee voters must complete an application and declare a reason they cannot vote at the polls. The Board supports two bills that will make absentee voting easier: Assemblymember Kavanaugh’s bill that would provide no-excuse absentee voting, and Assemblyman’s Thomas Abinati’s bill that would allow voters to electronically submit an application for an absentee ballot via the Board of Elections website.¹⁷

We should also provide voters the flexibility to cast ballots at more convenient locations. The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy left many New Yorkers displaced and unable to reach their assigned poll site. In a last-minute move, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order to allow any New Yorker displaced by the storm to vote at any poll site by affidavit ballot. New Yorkers cast more than 245,000 affidavit ballots — roughly 10 percent of all votes — on Election Day. Those ballots did not allow voters to cast votes in races other than President and U.S. Senate, however. The intelligent use of technology should enable New Yorkers to cast a vote for any candidates on their ballot from any polling location.

Improve the Ballot

Although they were introduced in 2010, the 2012 election was the first time many New Yorkers used paper ballots to vote. Despite efforts to improve them, the paper ballots proved hard to read with small fonts.¹⁸ The BOE has made efforts to use a larger, more readable font. Still, the provisions of State Election Law that govern the design of the ballot have not been significantly changed since the introduction of the ballot-scanning machines — despite the fact that the ballot is significantly smaller than before.¹⁹ The Board supports Assemblyman Kavanaugh’s Voter Friendly Ballot Act, which will allow for flexibility so that the best design principles can provide voters with a clear, understandable ballot.

15 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A03644](#)

16 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A02105](#)

17 2013 NY Assembly Bill [A01463](#)

18 Michael Grynbaum. “Voters Annoyed by Hard-to-Read Ballots.” *The New York Times*. September 17, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/18/nyregion/new-york-city-voters-annoyed-by-hard-to-read-ballots.html>

19 Carson Whitelemons. “Voter Friendly Ballot Act is Good for New York.” March 17, 2013. <http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/voter-friendly-ballot-act-good-ny>

Eliminate Wilson-Pakula

As noted earlier, the scandals uncovered by the U.S. Attorney earlier this spring included a brazen attempt by Republican party officials to solicit bribes in exchange for granting access to the party's primary ballot. This dispensation, called a "Wilson-Pakula" after the legislators who created it in 1947, must be obtained by candidates who wish to compete in the primary of a party in which they are not enrolled. Empowering the party leaders as gatekeepers to the ballot takes choices away from the voters. The allegations announced earlier this month have left the public with a clear impression that access to the ballot is literally for sale. The Board believes that eliminating the Wilson-Pakula provisions and allowing prospective candidate to petition a party's members for access to the primary ballot will increase voters' confidence in elections. New York election laws should protect the voters, not the party bosses.

CONCLUSION

These shortcomings in State Election Law are not new. They have been draining New Yorkers' confidence in their democracy for years. Legislation has been proposed to address them year in and year out. Making the legislative changes recommended above will begin to restore and repair New Yorkers' relationship with their democracy, and help more of us ensure our voices are heard on Election Day.

APPENDIX A:

TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION VOTER SURVEYS

Following the federal primary election on June 24 and the general election on November 6, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission partnered with the CFB to survey New Yorkers about their voting experiences via Taxi TV.

The survey we designed was available on Taxi TV June 26 – July 2, 2012 and November 6 – 12, 2012. It consisted of five questions with multiple choice answers, with the date of the election updated for the November run. More than 8,000 people participated in the survey altogether.

ANALYSIS

Question 1: Did you vote in the June 26 Federal Primary Election/November 6 General Election?

A smaller proportion of taxi riders reported having voted in the June primary than in the November general election. This was not a surprise; in June, the only citywide race was the Republican primary for U.S. Senate, while primaries for the U.S. House of Representatives covered only certain parts of the city. Slightly more than 40 percent of those who identified themselves as registered to vote in the June surveys reported voting, while nearly half of taxi riders who said they were registered reported voting in November.

Question 2: I didn't vote because ...

Of those who answered the question, the responses were fairly evenly spread among the four choices: "I don't know enough about the candidates," "Voting is inconvenient," "I believe my vote doesn't matter," and "I do not like the candidate selection."

Question 3: Pick the voting change you would most like to see

Respondents clearly want more convenience: online voter registration was the preferred answer for almost one-third of the respondents, and nearly as many want the ability to vote at any poll site. Same-day registration and early voting ("keep polls open for more than 1 day") received slightly less support.

Question 4: Rate your poll site (on service, accessibility and efficiency)

Many respondents said they were satisfied with their poll site. In each survey, more than 40 percent answered that they would rate their poll site either "very good" or "good."

Question 5: Where do you vote?

Since the bulk of medallion taxi trips originate in Manhattan, that borough's voters were over-represented in both surveys, accounting for nearly 40 percent of the respondents overall. (Citywide, 23 percent of all registered voters live in Manhattan.) Brooklyn and Queens, on the other hand, were substantially underrepresented in the taxi surveys.

NYC VOTES / TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION VOTER EXPERIENCE SURVEYS, 2012

	June 26–July 2		November 6–12		TOTALS	
Did you vote in the [June 26 Federal Primary Election / November 6 General Election]?						
I don't live in NYC	386	17.5%	894	15.1%	1,280	15.8%
I'm not eligible to vote	292	13.3%	1,062	18.0%	1,354	16.7%
No, I am not registered to vote	483	21.9%	1,082	18.3%	1,565	19.3%
No, but I am a registered voter	614	27.9%	1,470	24.9%	2,084	25.7%
Yes	428	19.4%	1,404	23.7%	1,832	22.6%
TOTAL	2,203	100.0%	5,912	100.0%	8,115	100.0%
I didn't vote because:						
I believe my vote doesn't matter	280	15.2%	872	16.4%	1,152	16.1%
I did not like the candidate selection	261	14.2%	938	17.6%	1,199	16.7%
I don't know enough about candidates	319	17.3%	886	16.6%	1,205	16.8%
Voting is too inconvenient	295	16.0%	773	14.5%	1,068	14.9%
Not applicable	685	37.2%	1,864	35.0%	2,549	35.5%
TOTAL	1,840	100.0%	5,333	100.0%	7,173	100.0%
Pick the voting change you would most like to see:						
Allow people to register/vote on the same day	284	18.3%	1,015	22.9%	1,299	21.7%
Keep polls open for more than 1 day	408	26.3%	901	20.3%	1,309	21.8%
Make it possible to vote from any poll site	396	25.5%	1,184	26.7%	1,580	26.4%
Online voter registration	466	30.0%	1,340	30.2%	1,806	30.1%
TOTAL	1,554	100.0%	4,440	100.0%	5,994	100.0%
Rate your poll site (on service, accessibility, and efficiency):						
Very good	293	21.7%	1,063	22.4%	1,356	22.3%
Good	251	18.6%	996	21.0%	1,247	20.5%
Acceptable	315	23.3%	879	18.5%	1,194	19.6%
Poor	164	12.1%	843	17.8%	1,007	16.5%
Not Applicable	328	24.3%	961	20.3%	1,289	21.2%
TOTAL	1,351	100.0%	4,742	100.0%	6,093	100.0%

NYC VOTES / TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION VOTER EXPERIENCE SURVEYS, 2012						
	June 26–July 2		November 6–12		TOTALS	
Where do you vote?						
Bronx	142	11.5%	631	14.1%	773	13.6%
Brooklyn	176	14.3%	774	17.3%	950	16.7%
Manhattan	568	46.1%	1,685	37.7%	2,253	39.5%
Queens	206	16.7%	655	14.7%	861	15.1%
Staten Island	140	11.4%	724	16.2%	864	15.2%
TOTAL	1,232	100.0%	4,469	100.0%	5,701	100.0%

APPENDIX B:

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS DISBURSED TO LL29 AGENCIES

Over the course of the year NYC Votes sends each LL29 agency updated voter information packets which include voter forms. While we always encourage agencies and organizations to order voter forms from the BOE we are happy to expedite the process. The table below reflects orders received by the BOE and NYC Votes.

Agency	English	Spanish	Chinese	Bengali	Korean	Total
Department of Small Business Services	2,250	750	—	—	—	3,000
Department of Parks and Recreation	4,000	2,000	1,000	—	1,000	8,000
Department of Youth and Community Development	1,000	1,000	1,000	—	1,000	4,000
Department of Homeless Services	15,000	—	—	—	—	15,000
Department of Transportation	6,750	3,100	2,050	—	2,050	13,950
Department of Probation	725	425	—	—	—	1,150
Department of Finance	8,000	5,000	5,000	—	2,000	20,000
Department of Corrections	250	3,050	—	—	—	3,300
Community Boards	9,350	375	100	—	100	9,925
Administration of Children's Services	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Civilian Complaint Review Board	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Commission on Human Rights	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Department of Consumer Affairs	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Department of Environmental Protection	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Department of Mental Health & Hygiene	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Department of Housing and Preservation Development	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Taxi and Limousine Commission	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Office of the City Clerk	600	200	75	50	75	1000
Department of Education	75,000	—	—	—	—	75,000
TOTAL	127,725	17,500	9,825	450	6,825	162,325

APPENDIX C: ELECTION RESULTS BY COUNTY, 2012

ACTIVE VOTERS BY COUNTY AND PARTY AFFILIATION

Party	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Citywide
Democrat	674,350	489,726	918,197	675,568	119,376	2,877,217
Republican	99,813	41,097	117,243	125,404	76,572	460,129
Conservative	1,851	3,018	4,650	5,727	4,262	19,508
Working Families	1,981	2,507	5,039	3,023	1,016	13,566
Independent	30,536	13,181	28,467	26,220	8,790	107,194
Green	1,696	341	2,178	1,131	255	5,601
Other	474	87	350	199	76	1,186
Blank	177,575	88,015	221,005	201,857	51,958	740,410
TOTAL	988,276	637,972	1,297,129	1,039,129	262,305	4,224,811

(Voters as of November 1, 2012)

VOTER TURNOUT OF FEDERAL RACES, GENERAL ELECTION

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
President and Vice President	600,291	370,938	730,546	595,245	154,180	2,451,200	4,224,811	58.0%
US Senate	561,636	345,227	681,447	556,899	148,316	2,293,525	4,224,811	54.3%
US Congress, 3 rd CD	—	—	—	37,302	—	37,302	68,967	54.1%
US Congress, 5 th CD	—	—	—	160,573	—	160,573	326,065	49.2%
US Congress, 6 th CD	—	—	—	164,374	—	164,374	333,055	49.4%
US Congress, 7 th CD	19,282	—	111,322	18,780	—	149,384	356,118	41.9%
US Congress, 8 th CD	—	—	194,986	9,221	—	204,207	401,577	50.9%
US Congress, 9 th CD	—	—	213,431	—	—	213,431	396,856	53.8%
US Congress, 10 th CD	158,540	—	46,809	—	—	205,349	392,085	52.4%
US Congress, 11 th CD	—	—	51,033	—	146,602	197,635	376,331	52.5%
US Congress, 12 th CD	188,632	—	21,712	31,082	—	241,426	428,075	56.4%
US Congress, 13 th CD	153,838	39,075	—	—	—	192,913	397,966	48.5%
US Congress, 14 th CD	—	54,959	—	90,231	—	145,190	293,832	49.4%
US Congress, 15 th CD	—	157,115	—	—	—	157,115	324,297	48.4%
US Congress, 16 th CD	—	76,531	—	—	—	76,531	129,587	59.1%
TOTAL (Congress)	—	—	—	—	—	2,145,430	4,224,811	50.8%

(Voters as of November 1, 2012)

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, PRIMARY ELECTION

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE SENATE								
10 th District	—	—	—	9,426	—	9,426	107,896	8.7%
15 th District	—	—	—	4,409	—	4,409	35,103	12.6%
16 th District	—	—	—	9,279	—	9,279	76,270	12.2%
17 th District	—	—	8,363	—	—	8,363	75,569	11.1%
18 th District	—	—	10,820	—	—	10,820	117,102	9.2%
27 th District	13,083	—	—	—	—	13,083	124,551	10.5%
31 st District	18,172	—	—	—	—	18,172	131,678	13.8%
33 rd District	—	7,207	—	—	—	7,207	90,232	8.0%
TOTAL	—	—	—	—	—	80,759	753,611	10.7%
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
25 th District	—	—	—	4,208	—	4,208	31,532	13.3%
33 rd District	—	—	—	4,993	—	4,993	52,588	9.5%
38 th District	—	—	—	2,147	—	2,147	28,536	7.5%
40 th District	—	—	—	4,885	—	4,885	32,873	14.9%
42 nd District	—	—	5,810	—	—	5,810	46,073	12.6%
45 th District	—	—	3,597	—	—	3,597	28,040	12.8%
46 th District	—	—	1,262	—	—	1,262	13,050	9.7%
48 th District	—	—	3,748	—	—	3,748	29,160	12.9%
54 th District	—	—	3,406	—	—	3,406	42,204	8.1%

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, PRIMARY ELECTION (continued)

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
55 th District	—	—	4,324	—	—	4,324	49,204	8.8%
57 th District	—	—	7,291	—	—	7,291	59,115	12.3%
58 th District	—	—	6,058	—	—	6,058	52,398	11.6%
60 th District	—	—	5,341	—	—	5,341	52,261	10.2%
61 st District	—	—	—	—	85	85	2,047	4.2%
72 nd District	7,056	—	—	—	—	7,056	50,714	13.9%
74 th District	4,530	—	—	—	—	4,530	51,331	8.8%
77 th District	—	3,409	—	—	—	3,409	38,508	8.9%
78 th District	—	2,343	—	—	—	2,343	32,215	7.3%
80 th District	—	5,025	—	—	—	5,025	34,370	14.6%
82 nd District	—	3,541	—	—	—	3,541	44,269	8.0%
84 th District	—	2,585	—	—	—	2,585	42,848	6.0%
86 th District	—	3,029	—	—	—	3,029	35,872	8.4%
87 th District	—	4,219	—	—	—	4,219	47,326	8.9%
TOTAL	—	—	—	—	—	92,892	896,531	10.4%

(Voters as of August 31, 2012)

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, GENERAL ELECTION

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE SENATE								
10 th District	—	—	—	67,567	—	67,567	151,213	45%
11 th District	—	—	—	88,372	—	88,372	167,923	53%
12 th District	—	—	—	71,661	—	71,661	142,615	50%
13 th District	—	—	—	49,976	—	49,976	115,736	43%
14 th District	—	—	—	86,521	—	86,521	171,023	51%
15 th District	—	—	—	73,278	—	73,278	156,568	47%
16 ^h District	—	—	—	57,535	—	57,535	134,051	43%
17 th District	—	—	59,287	—	—	59,287	132,059	45%
18 th District	—	—	73,837	—	—	73,837	168,295	44%
19 th District	—	—	87,419	—	—	87,419	167,600	52%
20 th District	—	—	84,769	—	—	84,769	164,468	52%
21 st District	—	—	98,103	—	—	98,103	179,210	55%
22 nd District	—	—	66,878	—	—	66,878	143,029	47%
23 rd District	—	—	26,296	—	39,434	65,730	150,196	44%
24 th District	—	—	—	—	105,386	105,386	189,926	55%
25 th District	—	—	105,928	—	—	105,928	195,617	54%
26 th District	48,768	—	32,438	—	—	81,206	184,961	44%
27 th District	93,775	—	—	—	—	93,775	205,853	46%
28 th District	112,980	—	—	—	—	112,980	201,258	56%
29 th District	35,292	42,016	—	—	—	77,308	160,859	48%
30 th District	98,279	—	—	—	—	98,279	202,889	48%

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, GENERAL ELECTION (continued)

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE SENATE								
31 st District	93,464	—	—	—	—	93,464	190,201	49%
32 nd District	—	75,156	—	—	—	75,156	155,033	48%
33 rd District	—	59,478	—	—	—	59,478	126,290	47%
34 th District	—	77,738	—	—	—	77,738	145,868	53%
36 th District	—	69,034	—	—	—	69,034	122,070	57%
TOTAL						2,080,665	4,224,811	49%
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
23 rd District	—	—	—	17,409	—	17,409	62,500	28%
24 th District	—	—	—	26,416	—	26,416	59,029	45%
25 th District	—	—	—	24,709	—	24,709	58,623	42%
26 th District	—	—	—	27,982	—	27,982	68,933	41%
27 th District	—	—	—	24,248	—	24,248	61,509	39%
28 th District	—	—	—	26,906	—	26,906	65,734	45%
29 th District	—	—	—	36,506	—	36,506	66,949	55%
30 th District	—	—	—	28,704	—	28,704	56,431	51%
31 st District	—	—	—	22,653	—	22,653	56,942	40%
32 nd District	—	—	—	34,434	—	34,434	65,222	53%
33 rd District	—	—	—	38,675	—	38,675	74,404	52%
34 th District	—	—	—	18,869	—	18,869	46,437	41%
35 th District	—	—	—	19,028	—	19,028	44,631	43%
36 th District	—	—	—	31,355	—	31,355	61,289	51%

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, GENERAL ELECTION (continued)

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
37 th District	—	—	—	27,748	—	27,748	54,847	51%
38 th District	—	—	—	19,844	—	19,844	49,817	40%
39 th District	—	—	—	14,694	—	14,694	38,679	38%
40 th District	—	—	—	19,905	—	19,905	47,153	42%
41 st District	—	—	32,969	—	—	32,969	65,950	50%
42 nd District	—	—	31,952	—	—	31,952	63,377	50%
43 rd District	—	—	36,413	—	—	36,413	69,260	53%
44 th District	—	—	33,759	—	—	33,759	64,888	52%
45 th District	—	—	21,559	—	—	21,559	53,417	40%
46 th District	—	—	26,152	—	—	26,152	65,692	40%
47 th District	—	—	19,331	—	—	19,331	48,678	40%
48 th District	—	—	20,525	—	—	20,525	50,541	41%
49 th District	—	—	13,552	—	—	13,552	41,281	33%
50 th District	—	—	28,538	—	—	28,538	68,553	42%
51 st District	—	—	21,588	—	—	21,588	51,427	42%
52 nd District	—	—	53,063	—	—	53,063	88,908	60%
53 rd District	—	—	29,101	—	—	29,101	65,979	44%
54 th District	—	—	25,117	—	—	25,117	59,706	42%
55 th District	—	—	32,653	—	—	32,653	65,240	50%
56 th District	—	—	37,419	—	—	37,419	72,819	51%
57 th District	—	—	47,888	—	—	47,888	82,946	58%

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, GENERAL ELECTION (continued)

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
58 th District	—	—	38,522	—	—	38,522	67,315	57%
59 th District	—	—	34,214	—	—	34,214	66,853	51%
60 th District	—	—	35,712	—	—	35,712	68,854	52%
61 st District	—	—	—	—	35,853	35,853	63,913	56%
62 nd District	—	—	—	—	42,006	42,006	74,985	56%
63 rd District	—	—	—	—	38,307	38,307	70,026	55%
64 th District	—	—	8,307	—	26,140	34,447	68,826	50%
65 th District	30,099	—	—	—	—	30,099	74,230	41%
66 th District	40,246	—	—	—	—	40,246	83,598	48%
67 th District	45,554	—	—	—	—	45,554	89,266	51%
68 th District	31,573	—	—	—	—	31,573	79,071	40%
69 th District	44,699	—	—	—	—	44,699	89,787	50%
70 th District	40,402	—	—	—	—	40,402	82,151	49%
71 st District	36,288	—	—	—	—	36,288	80,882	45%
72 nd District	30,936	—	—	—	—	30,936	71,526	43%
73 rd District	46,671	—	—	—	—	46,671	87,598	53%
74 th District	34,952	—	—	—	—	34,952	83,784	42%
75 th District	38,856	—	—	—	—	38,856	85,947	45%
76 th District	44,746	—	—	—	—	44,746	80,436	56%
77 th District	—	27,166	—	—	—	27,166	53,032	51%
78 th District	—	21,541	—	—	—	21,541	46,205	47%

VOTER TURNOUT FOR NEW YORK STATE RACES, GENERAL ELECTION (continued)

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY								
79 th District	—	29,108	—	—	—	29,108	61,862	47%
80 th District	—	28,323	—	—	—	28,323	53,553	53%
81 st District	—	34,721	—	—	—	34,721	64,396	54%
82 nd District	—	37,901	—	—	—	37,901	69,235	55%
83 rd District	—	35,243	—	—	—	35,243	60,736	58%
84 th District	—	25,931	—	—	—	25,931	58,103	45%
85 th District	—	26,065	—	—	—	26,065	56,422	46%
86 th District	—	23,933	—	—	—	23,933	50,011	48%
87 th District	—	29,711	—	—	—	29,711	64,417	46%
TOTAL						2,015,390	4,224,811	48%

(Voters as of November 1, 2012)

VOTER TURNOUT FOR FEDERAL PRIMARIES

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
US Senator (Republican)	3,133	1,059	5,771	6,542	2,657	19,162	441,233	4.3%
US Congress, 5 th District (Democrat)	—	—	—	13,946	—	13,946	233,799	6.0%
US Congress, 6 th District (Democrat)	—	—	—	28,009	—	28,009	183,382	15.3%
US Congress, 7 th District (Democrat)	4,151	—	24,279	1,415	—	29,845	232,330	12.8%
US Congress, 8 th District (Democrat)	—	—	38,640	864	—	39,504	279,517	14.1%
US Congress, 9 th District (Democrat)	—	—	17,311	—	—	17,311	277,210	6.2%
US Congress, 13 th District (Democrat)	37,883	5,386	—	—	—	43,269	282,108	15.3%
US Congress, 16 th District (Democrat)	—	6,838	—	—	—	6,838	89,841	7.6%
President (Republican)	6,472	1,647	5,357	7,166	4,608	25,250	441,233	5.7%

(Voters as of April 1, 2012)

VOTER TURNOUT FOR SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Office	New York	Bronx	Kings	Queens	Richmond	Total	Active Registered Voters	Turnout
NYS Senate, 27 th District (March 20, 2012)	—	—	22,259	—	—	22,259	143,915	15%
NYC Council, 12 th District (November 6, 2012)	—	44,648	—	—	—	44,648	81,965	54%
NYC Council, 31 st District (February 19, 2013)	—	—	—	9,091	—	9,091	76,866	12%

(Voters as of July 27, 2012)