New Yorkers for Verified Voting

Accessible Voting and Paper Ballot/Ballot Marker/Optical Scan Systems

New Yorkers for Verified Voting (NYVV) fully supports providing the highest level of accessibility to voters with disabilities. Voting systems must provide reliability, accuracy, transparency, security, verifiability, and auditability.

**DO VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE INDEPENDENCE WITH BALLOT MARKERS?**

- **There is no perfect solution.** The National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (now the National Disability Rights Network) says that no one voting machine is accessible to persons with all types of disabilities.
- **Ballot markers rank high in evaluations by voters with disabilities.** The AutoMARK ballot marker gained the highest overall weighted score (77.25) in the survey taken at the Oregon “Accessible Voting Systems Fair” in April 2005.
- **Polling Place Procedures Minimize the Need for Manual Ballot Handling.** Some states using optical ballot scanners have adopted polling place procedures where a poll worker places the ballots into the scanners for all voters.
- **Privacy of paper ballots is protected by ballot design.** Some markers use special ballots, which have no visible text printed on the ballot. When the ballot is marked, it contains no visible text but only the marks on a blank page.

**DO DRES PROVIDE INDEPENDENT VOTING FOR VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES?**

Consider all of the interactions required of voters with disabilities and the machine: *Will they need assistance in adjusting the DREs for their use? Do they need assistance in lowering them to an accessible height? Do they need assistance placing Voter Access Cards in slots? Do they need assistance in attaching any assistive devices? Do they need assistance in verifying their vote?*

- **For many voters with disabilities, DREs do not provide independence.** Comparative studies in August 2005 showed that the AutoMARK ballot marker provided complete accessibility for more kinds of disabilities than DREs.
- **Touchscreen DREs require voters to insert a small card prior to voting, which is difficult for voters with a variety of impairments.** Voter Access Cards (VAC), used in touchscreen DREs are used to determine which ballot to display to the voter. These must be inserted by the voter into a small reader slot as the first step in voting.
- **Voters using DREs may need poll worker help while their ballots are visible.** Whenever a screens freeze up, votes displayed are not intended, VAC cards jam, or printers fail, poll workers must enter the DRE booth while selections are still displayed.

Polling places with ballot markers and scanners comply with HAVA and eliminate lines and delays for all voters. Elections go smoothly as each voter is invited to take the paper ballot to either the privacy booth to mark with a pen or to the ballot marker. When the ballot is ready, processing by the scanner is instantaneous. *Most voters with disabilities report that carrying the ballot to the scanner quite manageable.*

**IN CONCLUSION:** A voting system based on paper ballots, ballot markers, and ballot scanners provides the most accessible, auditable, secure, practical and economical choice among currently available voting systems. While all voters must be assured access to voting, we must have confidence that our votes will be counted.

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1 This is a summary. See full document with references at [http://www.nyvv.org/reports/AccessibilityPB.pdf](http://www.nyvv.org/reports/AccessibilityPB.pdf)