



DOMINICANOS USA'S TESTIMONY BEFORE NEW YORK CITY VOTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VAAC)

Good afternoon. My name is Abel Peralta and I am the Civic Engagement Coordinator for Dominicanos USA.

Dominicanos USA (DUSA) is a nonprofit and non-partisan organization founded in 2013 with the mission to educate and empower the Dominican-American community and give them a voice in the American political process by encouraging civic, social, and economic integration.

DUSA organized the Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign in New York City for the primary elections of June 23rd, 2020. COVID-19 impeded us to go to the field and provide New Yorkers with face-to-face interaction, but we were able to mobilize and encourage New Yorkers to vote by mail, and as the last resource to go out and vote. Our canvassers made over **13,000** calls and sent over **125,000** text messages. We also sent 7 email blasts and 3,000 postcards, thus using multiple ways to reach out to New Yorkers, spread the message and motivate them to vote. With our efforts we motivated a total of **2612** New Yorkers to vote by mail, early voting or on election day. **1267** New Yorkers mailed in their ballot, **764** went to Early Voting, while **581** decided to vote on Election Day.

After the elections we reached out to those that pledge to vote and asked about their voting experience. And here is the feedback:

- 1) Absentee ballot never arrived:** A large majority of the 581 New Yorkers that decided to vote on Election Day did so because the Absentee Ballot never arrived. They were forced to vote in person in order to exercise their right.
- 2) Political affiliation was changed:** Three New Yorkers called us to let us know that they were unable to vote because their political affiliation was changed.
- 3) Lack of organization:** Voting was ineffective on election day because of how disorganized some polling sites were. Some New Yorkers were unable to vote because the lines were moving too slow, and the lack of poll workers did not help. Our Executive Director, Eddie Cuesta, visited various polling sites on Election Day and his main

takeaway was disorganization, lack of communication, and electrical problems with scanners.

- 4) **Absentee ballot were not accepted at polling site:** The board of Election stated that Absentee Ballots could be dropped off but this was not the case for many New Yorkers like Alejandro Lopez who tweeted the Board of Elections:

Alejandro Lopez @ALopez101110

Can I drop off my absentee ballot at my poll site today ? @BOENYC @NYCVotes

8:56 AM · Jun 23, 2020 · Twitter for Android

View Tweet activity

NYCBoardOfElections @BOENYC · Jun 23
Replying to @ALopez101110 and @NYCVotes
Yes! Thank you for voting!

Alejandro Lopez @ALopez101110 · Jun 23
Can you explain to me then why my absentee ballot wasn't accepted when I was on site? I spoke to the coordinator onsite and informed that I couldn't. We even called the board of elections and I was told "no" and was forced to get a new ballot on the spot.

NYCBoardOfElections @BOENYC · Jun 23
Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We apologize for any inconvenience. We will address the issue ASAP!

Thank you again for the opportunity to present this testimony. We know you share our goal of a fair and more accessible voting process that allows all New Yorkers a meaningful opportunity to participate, and exercise their right of voting. This testimony's purpose is to make the process easier come November elections. Additionally, easing the process also helps our communities to have their voices heard especially during these crucial times. We look forward to working with you to achieve this important goal.