

Eric Dinowitz

I'd like to submit the following testimony for the July 1 public hearing regarding the June 2020 primary:

In the recent election cycle, the Board of Elections worked to fulfill a record number of mail ballot applications, all while putting in place measures to ensure the safety of voters and poll workers during early voting and the June 23rd election. It was a daunting task as we faced a pandemic and increased demand, but the Board of Elections did not rise to the occasion.

Many mail ballots were not received by voters, and those that eventually were received were sometimes wrong or missing items. Some voters who did not receive their absentee ballot were forced to go to the polls, choosing to risk their health in order to exercise their constitutional right to vote. After waiting a significant time for my absentee ballot to arrive, I voted early in-person. Like many of my neighbors, I was concerned by the long waiting time and wanted to ensure my vote was counted.

Without even addressing the issues on Election Day, our vote by mail system struggled and its shortcomings prevented people from voting, caused unnecessary stress for voters in an already difficult time, and led to a logistical nightmare. This isn't a partisan issue, and it shouldn't be a political issue either, as voting should be easy for everyone, from first-time voters to seniors. We can, and must, do better. We need to address these hurdles for future elections and I am including some solutions below:

- > Start the application process for COVID-19 excuses immediately in July
- > Build out an online tracker that shows each voter their ballot's status and validity, as many other states have
- > Provide additional funding for dedicated, unionized staff to ensure proper printing and mailing of ballots
- > Increase number of hours and locations for early voting
- > Implement dedicated days for seniors and immunocompromised voters during the early voting period

Our democracy works best when everyone can make their voice heard and we must continue to empower New Yorkers to exercise their right to vote. I look forward to working with the Board of Elections during this process to improve our elections. Thank you for your time and consideration.