

Testimony re:
Voter Assistance Advisory Committee Post-Election Hearing

Submitted to
NYC Campaign Finance Board

Submitted by
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Good evening. My name is Emely Paez and I am the Director of Government Affairs and Civic Engagement for Hispanic Federation.

Headquartered in New York City, Hispanic Federation is a nationwide Latino membership organization founded to advance and empower the Latino community socially, politically, economically and academically. The Federation does that by supporting and strengthening Latino nonprofits, conducting public policy research and advocacy and providing Latino community members with programs in the areas of civic engagement, education, immigration, health, economic empowerment and disaster relief.

The Federation's civic engagement work is guided by the belief that when informed Latinos go out to vote, everyone wins. In light of recent events, we've doubled down on our commitment to ensure that Latinos can easily and safely participate in elections. In preparation for the New York State Primary held on June 23, 2020, our team engaged 200,000 registered Latino voters in New York City to get out the vote for the upcoming election. Our work focused on providing information to voters which included Absentee Ballot deadlines, how to find Early Voting polling places and Election Day reminders.

Through these one-on-one communications, HF gathered key feedback regarding voting experiences:

- **Voting by Mail:** Several community residents expressed deep concerns about their absentee ballots. Many of them did not receive their absentee ballot on time and ultimately missed the primary election ballot submission deadline. This swayed many voters away from casting their ballot, particularly when they had challenges attending an in-person poll site due to personal or family health concerns.
- **Early Voting:** Many voters shared their ability to ease through the lines and cast their ballot during an early voting day, but had issues distinguishing their early voting poll site location from their primary election day poll site location. Having one central location for both early voting and

election day was preferred. Voters also expressed their dismay when they learned that early voting sites closed at an earlier time than on election day.

- **Election Day:** There were several issues at various poll sites on election day, including long lines, broken scanners, failure to identify names (despite voting at the same site for several years), and lack of operational systems at poll sites. We also found that many Spanish translators had trouble giving clear instructions to Spanish speaking voters.

We thank you in advance for taking our feedback into consideration for the general election. We expect and hope for a large voter turnout in November and are committed to working on ensuring that the voting experience goes as smooth as possible. Hispanic Federation welcomes any working group discussions to help improve education, language, and access during the elections to ensure voter turnout and participation.