

Laura Stein

Good evening Committee,

I have two points I would like to speak on and hope that the requests are met.

It was a blessing to have the option to vote by mail for the June primary. Unfortunately, it took a global pandemic to force this. I believe that everyone on this advisory committee understands why having the vote by mail option for everyone is necessary. If we want true democracy then we should want higher turnout and it is proven that this method involves more people in making decisions for their own governance. I urge you to take a look at Colorado. They instituted this policy in 2014, have a high turnout rate, and it does not negatively affect either party.

My second ask may be solved if universal vote by mail is instituted in New York. My concern is how people get information about who is running, what positions are open, and what each different name on the ballot represents. Let me tell you what my experience was this past June. First of all, early voting was another blessing and I see the need for that alongside universal vote by mail. I, personally, did not receive my ballot by mail even though I requested it at least twice, so I needed to go to the polls. I am, by no means, closely following local politics, and while that may be a shame, it is true of most people. I got a call from a couple of campaigns, I saw signs for one or two people, but I had no idea what was going to be on my ballot. There are third party sites that purport to show you the ballot ahead of time - Ballotpedia, vote411.org, whosontheballot.org, and more. These sites were inaccurate.

I give great thanks that the CFB website does have accurate information. There do need to be slight changes to make it more effective. One, this site needs to be widely promoted to the people. Connect with community boards, schools, and libraries to get the word out Two, a person should be able to quickly find your senate and assembly district from that page. Three, there needs to be information on each candidate, whether they have a "complete profile" or not. A link to their campaign website may be enough, but candidates should be frequently encouraged to complete their profile for higher visibility. Of course, vote by mail allows people to see their choices ahead of time, do the research if they so desire, vote for the person they want.

Some people in power do not want an educated voter base, but it is this committee's mission to combat that suppression.

Respectfully,
Laura Stein