

Nicole Yearwood

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the Voter Assistance Advisory Committee.

Thank you for hosting this hearing regarding the June 23 primary and for always hosting hearings after each election and listening to the people's experiences. As someone who shares information on civic engagement and participation and a partner with NYC Votes, I am extremely upset about my experience working to assist my recently disabled father with voting absentee. My 85 year old father was disenfranchised by this absentee ballot process and his voting record will now reflect that he missed an election. Missing an election can lead to being purged from the rolls and will change his super-prime voter status. After a week of receiving campaign calls from candidates, political parties, and elected officials and more than 20 mailers from candidates, he was unable to do his civic duty.

We applied for an absentee ballot online. On Friday, June 19, I realized he had not received his absentee ballot. Saturday, June 20, the Saturday before the Primary, I called the Bronx County Board of Elections. I spoke with the person responsible for absentee ballots. I was told that the absentee ballot was mailed on June 15. When I explained that he had not received his absentee ballot and is physically unable to go to the polls, he said they would send another absentee ballot via overnight mail. Monday, June 22, I looked for the ballot to arrive. Tuesday, June 23, the morning of the Primary, I called the Bronx County Board of Elections and was directed to the same person. I left a message. All day Tuesday, I waited for the mail to arrive at my father's home, hoping it would arrive and we could quickly complete it and hand it back to the mail carrier. The mail carrier never came that day. I waited until 7:30pm before going to cast my own ballot in Manhattan. To date, he has not received an absentee ballot - the one mailed June 15 or the one allegedly sent overnight mail.

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