

Rasheta Bunting

Good afternoon, I hope that this submission is not too late. My name is Rasheta Bunting and I am a visually impaired registered voter in Kings County. I have been voting religiously for over 25 years, and I think that it is time to tell you of my experience. This is a common occurrence for persons with disabilities who are reliant upon the ballot marking device machines to cast our votes. Last Tuesday I went to vote in the primary local election and district 18. I went into my voting site and was severely overlooked by the POLL workers. Nobody addressed me at all. Upon walking around, I eventually ran into someone who tried to help me. After checking in, I was given two ballots and was instructed to fill it out. I said I am blind I need some assistance. The worker said, "how can we help? How am I supposed to do this?" She then looked at my teenage daughter who was there with me and told her to "fill it out for Mommy". I exclaimed, ".she is a minor! She is only 16! she Is not supposed to help an adult with this ballot!" I then said, "Do you have a BMD machine in here?" The worker said "what is that?" I told her that it is the electronica machine that helps people who are unable to write vote. She then said "oh that! That is right there in the corner" we then proceeded to walked to the machine and she asked me "do you know how to use this?" She had no idea where the headphones were located. After searching she soon found the headphones and handed them to me. I could not hear anything through the headphones. After jiggling the wire I told her that they had a short in it. She did not have a back up pair of headphones. Luckily, my daughter landed me hers and I was able to cast my vote. When I finished I asked her for the scanner, but she walked away. My daughter and I walked around the poll site until we saw the scanner. My daughter asked how is this supposed to be used and she was ignored. Thank God, I am an experienced voter and know how this is all supposed to work. Time and time again, These experiences keep occurring with people with disabilities. This needs to change. I understand that poll workers get some amount of sensitivity training to our population But if this is not systemized voter suppression against the disability population, then the training has to get better. We deserve to have our voices heard just like the rest of society. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share this experience.