



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD RESOLUTION
REGARDING EARLY VOTING, SAME-DAY REGISTRATION, AND
NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING IN NEW YORK CITY**

WHEREAS, in the November 2010 elections, turnout in the city was significantly lower (28 percent) than in the rest of the state (53 percent) and nation (46 percent); and

WHEREAS, New York City also had lower voter turnout in the presidential elections in 2008 than any other major U.S. city; and

WHEREAS, according to preliminary data from the New York City Board of Elections, the number of ballots cast for President in 2012 decreased by 14 percent from 2008;

WHEREAS, 32 other states already offer early voting, which allows citizens to exercise their right to vote from 4 to 45 days prior to Election Day; and

WHEREAS, New York closes voter registration nearly a month before primary and general elections, while 10 states plus the District of Columbia offer same-day registration, allowing citizens to register to vote when they cast their ballot; and

WHEREAS, New York continues to require an excuse to access an absentee ballot, despite the fact that 27 other states permit no-excuse absentee voting; and

WHEREAS, New York law does not allow citizens who are either displaced by natural disasters, cannot afford to take time off work to wait in line to vote, or find it difficult to get to the polling place on Election Day; to secure absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, voters on the Upper East Side reported waiting over three hours to cast a ballot on East 74th Street, in part because election officials were not sufficiently prepared to process people efficiently; and

WHEREAS, voters at a polling site near Gramercy Park were told that the electronic ballot scanners were all broken and that the site did not have an emergency ballot box; and

WHEREAS, all three scanners jammed at Riverside Church in Manhattan not long after voting began at 6 A.M.; and

WHEREAS, on the Upper West Side, voters at Public School 163 spent over an hour navigating four lines — to determine which election district they lived in, to get a ballot, to fill out the ballot, and to get the ballot scanned; and

WHEREAS, voters waited in line for one hour at P.S. 234 Independence School on Greenwich Street, only to be turned away because the site had run out of ballots. Voters were then directed to 111 Centre St., only to have that polling run out of provisional ballots around 8 p.m., an hour before polls closed; and

WHEREAS, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund told the *New York Times* that election workers in Chinatown and elsewhere had refused to give out affidavit ballots in accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order; and

WHEREAS, early voting and no-excuse absentee voting would have abated these problems by reducing the number of people at polling sites on Election Day; and

WHEREAS, states that combine early voting with same-day registration—such as Vermont and North Carolina—have enjoyed turnout 5-6 points higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, studies, like that published by the American Political Science Association, have shown that no-excuse absentee voting has a positive effect on voter turnout;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State of New York should pass legislation embracing early voting for the 2014 elections, like Senate Bill S1556-2011 introduced by Senator Joseph Addabbo and co-sponsored by his colleagues Senators Dilan, Hassell, Thompson, Krueger, Montgomery, Oppenheimer, and Stavisky; and Assembly Bill A293-2011, sponsored by Assemblymember Rory Lancman and co-sponsored by his colleagues Assemblymembers Glick, Magee, Weisenberg, Brennan, Hooper, Pheffer, Lupardo, Gottfried, Perry, Lifton, Reilly, Jacobs, Paulin, Lavine, and Kellner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of New York should pass legislation like Senate Bill S1978-2011, introduced by State Senator Michael Gianaris and Assembly Bill A1686-2011, sponsored by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh and cosponsored by Assemblymembers Boyland, Brennan, Cahill, Clark, Cook, Dinowitz, Glick, Lifton, Lupardo, Markey, Perry, Scarborough, Thiele, Englebright, Farrell, Galef, Gottfried, Kellner, Meng, Ortiz, Paulin, Rivera (P.), and Quart, to eliminate the 10-day advance voter registration requirement in Article II, Section 5 of the State Constitution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of New York should pass legislation allowing same-day voter registration, which would apply not only on Election Day, but on any day eligible voters could cast a ballot.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of New York should take immediate steps—including a possible constitutional amendment to Article II, Section 2 of the New York State Constitution—to enact no-excuse absentee voting.