



Common Cause/NY's VOTER BILL OF RIGHTS: YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE!

Registration. You have the right to vote on November 4, so long as you registered by October 10, 2008. You do not have to re-register unless you have moved since the last time you voted.

Students, Homeless & Ex-Offenders. Students and the homeless have the right to vote. Students can register at either their school or home address, whichever they consider their primary residence. The homeless can register, by identifying a place of residence (park, shelter, etc.) and providing a mailing address. Ex-offenders who have been convicted of a felony may still vote so long as they are not currently on parole. Those convicted of a misdemeanor or violation are also entitled to vote.

Identification. If you are a first-time voter, you may be asked to present identification if you registered by mail and didn't provide confirming information on the registration form. Acceptable forms of identification include a current picture ID (might be, but does not have to be, a driver's license), a current utility bill or bank statement that shows your current address.

Secrecy. You have the right to cast a confidential and secret ballot, free from any coercion.

Accessibility. Everyone is entitled to non-discriminatory equal access to voting. This includes the elderly, disabled and language minority voters.

Common Cause/NY runs a voter hotline on Election Day. If you encounter or see any problems at your polling place REPORT IT. Even if the problem was resolved, we tally problems and can identify patterns of problems that need to be brought to the attention of the Board of Elections either on Election Day or after.

**VOTER HOTLINE NUMBER: (212) 822-0282
in New York City or (800) 300-8707
statewide.**

Absentee Ballot. If you will be out of your county of residence (or New York City) on Election Day, or are unable to go to your polling place because of illness or physical disability, you are entitled to cast an absentee ballot, which you must request from your county Board of Elections. You can apply up to seven days before the election by mail or the day before if you apply in person at the Board of Elections.

Ballot Marking Devices. Anyone has the right to use the new Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs). You do not need a reason or disability to use one to mark your ballot. You are also entitled to privacy when you use a BMD.

Children permitted. You have the right to bring your child or ward under the age of 16 with you into the voting booth. (In fact, CC/NY encourages you to do so – see our article about Take Your Kids 2 Vote on page 5.)

Polls Closing. The polls are open from 6 am to 9 pm on November 4. If you are in line at the polling place any time during these hours, you are entitled to vote, even if it is past 9 pm once you get to the front of the line.

Alternative Ballots. If there is a problem with the voting equipment at your polling place on Election Day, you are entitled to vote on an Emergency Ballot, a paper ballot that will be counted that evening. If your name is not in the

voter roll book or you don't provide ID when requested, you are entitled to an Affidavit Ballot, which is a paper ballot and envelope which will only be counted once your eligibility to vote has been verified. After marking the Affidavit Ballot, be sure to fill out and sign the envelope, and place the ballot in it.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU TO THE POLLS



PROBLEMS YOU MIGHT ENCOUNTER AT THE POLLS

**Hotline Number (212) 822-0282 (NYC)
or (800) 300-8707 (statewide)**

I'm not in the voter roll book.* This year, the Boards of Elections are trying to weed out duplicates and incorrect registrations. Unfortunately, this may result in some voters being removed from the voter rolls improperly. First, determine whether you are at the correct polling place and have approached the right table for your Election District. If you're at the right place, ask the poll worker to double check your card and write your name down for them to be sure the spelling is right. Ask the poll worker to call the Board of Elections to verify your status. If none of this is successful, be sure to request and fill out an Affidavit Ballot.

The machines aren't working and I can't stay around until they fix them. Be sure to request and fill out an Emergency Ballot. You do not sign the ballot and there is nothing else to fill in. The poll workers should assemble a ballot box that the Emergency Ballots can be placed in.

I'm disabled and it's difficult or impossible for me to get into my polling place. If you can get into the polling place, point out the problem to the poll workers and ask them to fix it. Note the name of the poll worker you talk to. Call the Common Cause/NY Voter Hotline, (212) 822-0282 in New York City or (800) 300-8707 statewide, and provide us with the address of your polling place, the nature of the access problem (furniture or objects in the way, handicapped-accessible entrance very far from polling place, handicapped-accessible entrance locked, etc.), and the name of the poll worker you reported the problem to, if you did so.

The poll worker is discouraging me from using the Ballot Marking Device. You are entitled to use the Ballot Marking Device (BMD) for any reason or no reason at all. Be polite, but firm, that you want to use the BMD. If it hasn't been set up, be prepared to be patient. Write down the name of the poll worker who is reluctant to let you use the BMD and call the Common Cause/NY Voter Hotline, (212) 822-0282 in New York City or (800) 300-8707 statewide, and provide us with the address of your polling place, what happened, and the name of the poll worker involved.

I or someone I know wants voting materials in a language other than English. Some counties are required to provide voter materials and information in Spanish, Chinese or Korean. Call your county Board of Elections to find out if your county is one of them. The materials should be easily visible at your polling site. If they are not out or available, ask a poll worker for materials and a ballot in the language that you need. If they do not have them, ask that they call the Board of Elections to have the materials sent to the polling place. Note down the address of the polling place and name of the poll worker who is not helpful and call the Common Cause/NY Voter Hotline, (212) 822-0282 in New York City or (800) 300-8707 statewide, and provide us with the address of your polling place, the language you need materials in, what happened when you asked for them at the polling place, and the name of the poll worker involved.

Other problems or concerns. Call the Common Cause/NY Voter Hotline, (212) 822-0282 in New York City or (800) 300-8707 statewide if you encounter other problems or have questions or concerns on Election Day. Our hotline is staffed from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Election Day, November 4.

* To avoid this problem entirely, call your local Board of Elections or go to the state Board of Elections website, www.elections.state.ny.us (click on voter registration) before Election Day to check that you are registered. If you are properly registered, be sure to note down the Election District and New York Assembly District you are assigned to and bring that information with you to your polling place.