

LWVNYS ELECTION SURVEY RESULTS FOR NEW YORK CITY

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The majority of our respondents had a positive experience at the polls on November 6th.

More than 76% reported that the poll workers were courteous and helpful and 87% found the poll site easily accessible.

62% responded that they were given adequate instructions on how to use the voting machines and 72% found the privacy booths adequate.

While 57% felt the instructions to complete the ballot easy to understand and in large enough print, 43% found too few instructions or no sample ballots in the poll site

62% reported that the races and candidates names were in large enough print while 25% thought the print was too small and 14% didn't know that a magnifier was available in the privacy booth.

62% thought the ballot layout was clear but 37% thought the print was too small or the oval was too small.

68% used the privacy sleeve.

92% said the scanner accepted their ballots with only 1 voter reporting that the ballot was rejected at first but accepted after help from the poll worker. 81% said there was no problem with using the scanner.

56% of respondents reported lines of 10 or more voters waiting to use the scanner

Comments

While 20% of the respondents commented that their voting experience went smoothly, 37% of survey respondents complained about incompetent poll workers and inoperable scanners.

The most complaints were about poll workers and were accompanied by descriptions such as: incompetent, slow, confused, impatient, poorly trained, inept, rude, could not read, didn't know the alphabet, and didn't know what they were doing, disorganized. Many complained that the poll workers didn't know how to use the alphabetical poll books and couldn't find their names. Some poll workers asked for ID and when

challenged by voters said it was only to see the spelling to look up the name. Even where the voter books were divided A-L, M-Z respondents reported that the poll worker on one line took much longer to find the names than did the other poll worker.

There were also significant complaints relating to long lines and overcrowded poll sites. 21% reported long lines, with at least 10 people waiting more than an hour to vote. The greatest delays were at the sign-in tables where poll workers had to write each voter's name on a white card, which the voter took with the ballot and the privacy sleeve. After filling out the ballot the voter handed the card to the poll worker at the scanner. We understand this card system is only used in New York City and is a holdover from the lever machines. When we had the lever machines, the voter gave the card to the poll worker at the lever machine. The number of cards was checked against the public counter number on the lever machine. With voters from each election district using multiple scanners the card can no longer be used this way.

The voters also complained that there were long lines at some and tables and no lines at others. They didn't understand why voters could not be directed to another table or workers re-deployed to help where there were long lines. Respondents expressed great frustration with standing on a long line while watching workers at other tables doing nothing.

We had a number of reports of broken or jammed scanners. In two cases all of the scanners were broken at the same time and poll workers were unclear as to what to do with the unscanned ballots.

Some voters commented on the problem of large numbers of people using affidavit ballots in their poll site because they were displaced by Hurricane Sandy or were taking advantage of the Governor's last minute Executive Order allowing voters in any of the 9 affected counties to vote anywhere in the state. As a result of these unanticipated voters poll sites ran out of affidavit ballots and affidavit ballot envelopes causing confusion and more delays. We cannot really measure how this situation added to the lines and confusion at the polls.

A number of voters commented that the poll sites were poorly laid out with scanners and privacy booths at opposite ends of the room or lines intermingling. They also complained of poor lighting.

We had several comments regarding access to the poll site, particularly about narrow hallways where voters were standing in line to enter while other voters were trying to exit. Voters standing on the lines would likely interfere with disabled voters entering or exiting in wheelchairs or with walkers.