

July 24, 2021

My name is Marianne Barcellona. I have worked as a Seasonal Poll Worker for the NYC Board of Elections since 2008. Currently I am an Early Voting Coordinator, a Trainer of Poll Workers, and an Assembly District Monitor for AD 69 on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

To my experience, Early Voting went well, but Primary Day had multiple, pervasive problems and failures. I wish to testify to what I witnessed as an AD Monitor on June 22, in earnest hopes that these issues can be addressed. Many of these issues are ongoing, but on this particular Primary Day they seemed worse than usual.

1. **BASIC TRAINING** of Poll Workers has been inadequate.
  - IN -PERSON BASIC TRAINING CLASSES were curtailed this year because of Covid, but even before that the classes have been *too short* to adequately train poll workers for three separate, complex positions (Table Inspector, Scanner Inspector and Ballot Marking Device Inspector). A four-hour class is really 3 hours and 10 minutes because there is an introductory 20-minute "Welcome" video and a test at the end for which we are required to reserve 30 minutes.
  - ZOOM BASIC TRAINING or ZOOM REFRESHER CLASS has huge drawbacks. Poll workers who were trained or refreshed via Zoom had absolutely *no chance* to have hands-on experience with e-poll books, scanners and ballot marking devices (*all of which are complicated*), no chance to ask questions, and no way to receive a printed, bound Pollworker Basic Manual, which is important for reference during the class, reviewing preparatory to election day, and reference on Election Day.
  - RESULTS I witnessed:
    - Confusion, **workers overwhelmed**, couldn't remember or didn't know setup procedures
    - Ballot verification (correct ballots for that table and number of ballots at start of day) didn't happen at most tables – created inability to reconcile totals from scanners at end of day
    - ED Tables and carts in disarray; ballots left in unprotected positions
    - Cradle point and BMD's not plugged in correctly - not placed at ADA-mandated distances
    - Confusion over procedures that were taught one way and changed at the last minute with no special instructions on the changes (e.g. 2-page ballot packages and procedure for giving them out and for tracking the different style numbers).
    - Confusion over keeping tally sheets on ballots given to voters.
    - Affidavit procedures not followed (illegible, not filled out correctly). Voters may have lost votes.
    - As AD Monitors we had to give individual basic training refreshers to a huge number of ED Tables
2. **POLLWORKER PAY SCALE IS TOO LOW** for hours spent (5am-11pm=17 hours, one site was 5am-1am=20 hours) for only \$250! This is way below minimum wage.
  - Hard to attract and keep good reliable competent workers who will show up.
  - Poll workers exhausted and unhappy about ever-more complex procedures and long hours for not enough pay.

3. **SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF POLL WORKERS** – not enough poll workers to cover every mandated station with one poll worker, much less a bi-partisan team.
  - Huge percentage of no-shows. As AD Monitor, I kept hearing 30-50% of assigned workers didn't show up. WHY???
  - Some sites forced to use Interpreters as Information Clerks. I heard that one site asked the policeman to serve as Information Clerk.
  - *Emergency Coordinators* were assigned at the very last minute, many of whom had a flimsy grasp of basic procedures and had *inadequate or no Coordinator training* – they were confused, overwhelmed, angry. As AD Monitors we had to give them very basic training on the spot.
  - Many poll workers were exhausted by end of day and made mistakes on final reconciliations
  
4. **SUPPORT MATERIALS** at Poll Sites need improvements.
  - **ED TABLES NEED BASIC LAMINATED STEP-BY-STEP “Cheat Sheets”** - Quick essential references for Opening, Serving the Voter, Issuing Affidavits, and Closing Procedures. In panic, many ED Table Inspectors dragged everything out of the carts, and chaos ensued.
  - **“SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS”** needed for A.D. Monitors, Coordinators and/or each cart to explain any last-minute changes in procedures: In the past, ED's were combined without notifying workers, this time ballots were packed differently and this affected distribution to voters; and there were no instructions for reconciling ballots with scanner tapes when two different style numbers were involved for single ballot.
  - **FLOOR PLANS have become unreadable**– printed equipment icons are tiny and digitally smashed so they can't be easily deciphered, resulting in wrong setups and ADA equipment being improperly placed (not conforming to Court Orders)
  - **BALLOT TRANSMITTAL SHEETS (forms listing how many ballots have been given to an ED Table, important for accountability and day's end reconciliations)** – currently they are *flimsy sheets that look like throwaway packing slips*, and pollworkers disregarded them or even lost them. They need to be redesigned to catch poll workers' attention.
  - **STEP-BY-STEP LAMINATED CARDS** for Opening and Closing of Scanners have always been difficult to read (graphics design issue)
  
5. **LAX CONCERN FOR SANITATION during Covid**
  - Many poll workers had to be constantly reminded to pull their masks up.
  - At least one Upper West Side poll site never even received *any ppe items* (masks, hand wipes, alcohol wipes, sneeze guards) despite several requests to Varick Street
  - Visiting NYC Commissioner came to one site to give a “pep talk” and didn't wear mask while talking to poll workers (although Coordinator requested 3 times)
  
6. **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN POLLING SITES and SUPPORT STAFF DOWNTOWN**
  - Tablets are OK for AD Monitors to report major issues (creating tickets to notify of missing supplies, poll worker issues, broken scanners) but not practical to create and resolve tickets for the *hundreds* of issues that are the result of training shortcomings and that can be resolved on the spot by AD Monitors, so BOE is never really fully aware of the extent of the problems.
  - Coordinators calling BOE Support spend frustrating time just trying to reach someone. Phone lines often don't answer (overload?)

