



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Elections Committee Chair, Secures Passage of Election Reform Legislation to Assure a Smooth Transition to New Voting Systes

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 29, 2010

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS, GENERAL, HAVA (HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT)**

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr., Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, having exercised its oversight powers to hold hearings throughout the state on the transition to paper ballot based optical scan systems, as well November's pilot program for their use in much of the state, has now secured passage of election law reforms (S8151, S8152, S8153) designed to assure that election day operations proceed smoothly and that the results of our elections are accurate and inspire the confidence of the public.

"To most voters, the lever voting machines are like old familiar friends that they have grown up and become comfortable with", said Senator Addabbo, "and I understand that voters and poll workers alike have reservations about giving them up for something new. Change never comes easily, but I have been determined from the start of my tenure as committee chair to make sure that this change makes it easier for people to vote, increases their participation in the electoral process, and leaves them feeling more confident than ever that their votes matter and are being accurately counted. It is essential to the health of our democracy that our voters believe in the legitimacy of their

elected representatives.”

Voters for the first time will fill out a paper ballot which will be fed into a scanning election machine. This new way of voting creates a paper trail and documentation that was not available with the lever machines. “Voters should also be assured that although we are eliminating the lever machines, we are instituting the use of paper ballots that are a permanent record, and can be used for an audit of the machine results,” said Addabbo. “This record can then be used for a recount in a close or suspect race, if necessary, which was not possible with the lever machines.”

The bills that Addabbo introduced, which have been passed by both houses of the legislature and sent to the governor for his signature, are designed to establish new procedures for the secure handling of a large volume of paper ballots, as well as the operation of poll sites in a manner that will not just fulfill that function, but will also protect the privacy of voters and the secrecy of their votes as they carry their marked ballots from a privacy booth to the ballot scanner where it is counted.

These bills also provide for securing the ballots and the record of the vote after the polls close, so they are available and can be reviewed in the event that there is a recount. Addabbo added, “As we prepare for this change, I want to assure all voters of the reliability of our new voting machines. The State Board of Elections has engaged in a long and meticulous process over a period of almost three years, during which they have examined every aspect of the programming and operation of these voting machines, including reviewing millions of lines of code, to make sure that they are trustworthy and accurate.”

According to the Senator, the machines have been more rigorously tested and subjected to more requirements than any system in the nation, and the voters of the State of New York should feel confident that they will produce accurate and reliable results.

###