



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins' Legislation Critical to Upcoming Village Elections

JACK M. MARTINS February 18, 2011

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Due to the efforts of State Senator Jack M. Martins , the Democratic process can go forward on March 15 when residents of villages head to the polls to vote in village elections. The New York State Senate recently passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Martins that allows village governments to continue to use lever voting machines for elections until December 31, 2012.

When the state election law was written requiring elections to be held using new scan machines, the law didn't take into account village elections. Although current New York State Law requires the use of electronic voting machines (scanner machines), they are not yet available for many villages. This is extremely problematic due to upcoming village elections, most of which are held in March and June. Here in Nassau County, many villages are holding their elections on March 15th. Without the scanner machines, villages would be forced to use paper ballots, which would cost villages 55 cents for every ballot.

The legislation allows villages to continue to use the lever machines as they have in the past.

"At a time when people are struggling, it is our responsible to alleviate burdens placed on our taxpayers. This legislation will prevent local villages from having to incur the expense of

renting scanner machines and having election workers trained on them or purchasing ballots. Voters will continue to use lever machines. People should be able to vote in village election this March in the manner they are unaccustomed to without having the cost or burden of using the scanning machines,” said Senator Martins, the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Local Governments. “As the former mayor of a village, I am sensitive to the issues facing our local governments. We should allow them to use the process they have been using for years until the scanning machines become available.”

Under this measure, villages are granted the same convenience as school districts, which are already authorized to use lever voting machines through 2012.

The measure was passed in the Assembly and sponsored by Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel.

Peter Baynes, the Executive Director of the New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), said, “Thanks to the concerted efforts of Senator Jack Martins and Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, villages throughout New York will continue to enjoy the benefits of efficient and affordable elections. Extending to villages the same authority school districts possess to utilize traditional lever-style voting machines makes sense for village voters and taxpayers. NYCOM greatly appreciates the swift response of the Assembly and Senate to this time-sensitive issue.”

“The Village of Great Neck Plaza appreciates the responsive efforts of our elected state representatives, Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel and Senator Jack Martins, in passing this election reform legislation so quickly so we can utilize the lever machines that are trustworthy and our constituents are used to for our upcoming March election, as we were notified that the newer electronic systems would not be available to villages through the Nassau County Board of Elections. We would have had to contract with an out-of-state vendor in Nebraska at a significant increased cost for paper ballots and optical scanners

rather than the mechanical lever machines. Passage of these bills in the Assembly and Senate has enabled us to make our local elections more affordable. We urge Governor Cuomo to approve of this legislation,” said Mayor Jean Celender from the Village of Great Neck Plaza.