News Release

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For Release: **IMMEDIATELY**

The New York State Board of Elections Unveils Accessible Absentee Ballot Application.

ALBANY, NY (06/03/2020) - The State Board of Elections is proud to unveil a fully accessible absentee ballot application and absentee ballot delivery system that allows voters with accessibility needs to vote by absentee ballot independently and without assistance. It is hoped that as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the expansion of the use of absentee ballots this will help to minimize the number of people coming to poll sites.

The application is posted on the SBOE website (www.elections.ny.gov) and can be accessed from the homepage, the "Absentee Voting" page and the "Meeting Voter Access Needs" page.

"We are pleased to be able to provide this service just in time for the June 23rd Primary," said Co-Executive Director Robert A. Brehm.

For the first time, New Yorkers with disabilities can vote in the privacy of their own homes with assistive technologies that will enable them to cast their ballots without the help of a family member or other person intruding on their right to a secret ballot.

"With the continual development of new technologies, we were able to combine some existing functions with new advancements to offer features that New York voters have never been able to utilize before," said Co-Executive Director Todd D. Valentine.

Voters are required to file the new application as soon as possible, but no later than June 16th for the June 23rd Primary. The accessible ballot would be emailed to the voter who would use their own assistive technologies such as a screen reader, a software program that enables a blind or visually impaired user to read and interact with the text that is displayed on their computer screen with a speech synthesizer, to independently mark their ballot.

The SBOE worked with Disability Rights New York, Disability Rights Advocates, the American Council of the Blind—New York, Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York and the National Federation of the Blind of New York State to create this new functionality.

New York joins only a handful of states that offer accessible absentee ballots including Michigan and Maryland.

If you have questions about this press release, please contact John Conklin or Cheryl Couser at the Public Information Office at 518-474-1953 or INFO@elections.ny.gov.

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