News Release

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The New York State Board of Elections Creates One-Stop Absentee Ballot Web Portal

Redesigns Accessible Absentee Application Process

ALBANY, NY (09/02/2020) – The New York State Board of Elections has created a one-stop absentee ballot web portal that will allow all registered voters to apply for an absentee ballot simply and at the click of a mouse, pursuant to new legislation. The web portal is live at https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html.

"The portal will make it easier for New Yorkers to apply for an absentee ballot and it will also make it easier for our boards to process the applications," said Todd D. Valentine, Co-Executive Director of the Board.

"Voters from every corner of the state can go to one location to complete an online absentee ballot application and submit it," said Robert A. Brehm, the other Co-Executive Director.

"The system will record each entry so if a voter forgets and they re-apply it will tell them the date of their original application and how to follow-up," said Peter S. Kosinski, Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Board.

The State Board also enhanced the accessible absentee ballot application process used in the June primary to now also include an accessible web portal. The redesigned system will provide a fully accessible absentee ballot application and absentee ballot delivery system at the click of a mouse.

"New Yorkers with disabilities will be able to vote in the privacy of their own homes with assistive technologies that will enable them to cast their vote without the help of a family member or other person ensuring their right to a secret ballot," said Commissioner Andrew Spano.

The accessible ballot will be emailed to voters who affirm they need the accommodation. They will 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 without assistance. The accessible absentee application and web portal are 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.

"Utilization of the web portals makes the administrative process for both the voter and the Boards of Election more efficient by eliminating the 2 to 5 day mail service delivery that ordinarily would take place. Having daily data files processed by the Board also streamlines the application intake process," said Commissioner Douglas A. Kellner.

"With the continual development of new technologies, we were able to start this program in June and are able to continue it with some enhancements learned from the primary and with more time for county boards to train their staffs on the program," said Mr. Valentine.

The deadline to apply through both web portals is seven days before the general election (October 27th), but the post office has warned voters that they cannot guaranty delivery of absentee ballots applied for less than 15 days before the general election.

Once the voter receives their absentee ballot, they may return it in any of the following ways:

1. Put it in the mail ensuring it receives a postmark no later than November 3rd.
2. Bringing it to the County Board of Elections Office during regular business hours, on or before November 3rd.
3. Bringing it to an early voting poll site between October 24th and November 1st
4. Bringing it to a poll site on November 3rd by 9pm.

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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