



Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations

RE: Oversight –Agency Based Voter Registration

Thursday, October 23, 2014

Good morning. My name is Kate Doran. I serve on the Board of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York. As a multi-issue, non-partisan political organization we encourage informed and active citizen participation in government, work to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through advocacy and education.

For over 95 years, voter education, voter service, and voter registration have been priorities for the League of Women Voters in New York. Accordingly we appreciate this opportunity to comment today.

Assuming that it is fully consistent with all state and federal laws designed to protect the privacy of citizens registering to vote, we would be in support of Int. No 356 a local law to amend the NYC Charter in relation to improving compliance with the city's pro-voter law. The use of coded voter registration forms can be viewed as reasonable and necessary for the collection of data in order to determine compliance with related sections of the NYC Charter. We are pleased to see the additional requirement that the Board of Elections in the city of New York provide a listing of the number of coded registration forms distributed and returned.

We support Int. 493 a local law in relation to expanding agency based voter registration to additional city agencies, assuming it can be done through a local law. We endorse the mandating language of "shall," replacing "may," in connection with providing assistance to applicants, and transmitting forms. However we believe that these proposed local laws could be better, and do more.

The League of Women Voters has previously testified before this committee (Dec. 18, 2013) that we strongly support Online Voter Registration. It is more accurate, more secure, and less expensive than paper registration. We know that the Board of Elections in NYC no longer receives any paper voter registrations from the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, and we believe that the board is comfortable with this 100% electronic system. We suggest that the laws under discussion here be further amended to include a provision for collaboration between agencies, and the Board of Elections, to transition from paper to electronic registration within a reasonable period of time.

We thank the Governmental Operations Committee for its continuing commitment to expanding the franchise and to serving the voters of the City of New York.