

New York State Senate Member Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. 15th District

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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ADDABBO: LET'S ELIMINATE RUN-OFF ELECTIONS

Queens, NY, October 5, 2009 – – State Senator **Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** today announced that he plans to initiate the legislative process which would eliminate run-off elections in New York State .

“As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Elections, I plan to research the process by which run-off elections can be eliminated entirely,” stated Senator Addabbo. “The recent run-off election in New York City cost the city upwards of \$15 million. This runoff cost the taxpayers up to \$72 per vote cast, although in both cases, the winners of the run-off elections were the same as the September primary winners,” he said. The Senator intends to research the means necessary to abolish run-off elections and then either draft legislation for the state government or seek a New York City Charter change.

The current run-off system was created after a mayoral primary in 1969 in which conservative Democrat Mario Procaccino won with just 32.8% of the vote in a five-way race and then lost the general election. Legislators then added a requirement that citywide candidates must receive at least 40% of the vote or else the top two vote getters advance to a runoff. “This is an old and antiquated process that needs to be re-examined. Although it seems impossible that voter turnout could drop below the record low turnout of the September 15th primary of 11%, less than roughly 8% of registered voters voted in the run-off election,” explained Addabbo.

Senator Addabbo expressed that his goal as the Chair of the Elections Committee is to increase voter turnout while making the voting process more accessible and efficient. Addabbo also mentioned his concern for military personnel overseas that are disenfranchised under the current

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system because there is not enough time for ballots to make their way through the mail and to the Boards of Elections in a run-off election.

“Spending \$15 million to hold an election the voters do not wish to participate in is a waste of taxpayer dollars in a time of economic difficulty. That money could have instead been spent more wisely, like on our seniors or school children,” the Senator concluded.

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