



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Advances Additional Election Reforms

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR April 7, 2010

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New York State Senate Member

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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ADDABBO ADVANCES ADDITIONAL ELECTION REFORMS

Queens, NY, April 6, 2010 -- Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., in his capacity as Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, is keeping up a busy pace of moving election reform legislation through his committee and closer to passage, and has succeeded in securing passage of election modernization and voter protection legislation in the Senate.

In March, the Senate passed legislation sponsored by Senator Addabbo to modernize the election law and administration practices by clarifying how voters can cast a write-in vote when their favored candidate is not on the ballot (S6908), giving boards of elections the flexibility to provide whatever writing instruments will work best with the new paper ballots instead of lead pencils (S6907), and eliminating references to obsolete punch card ballot use, which caused so much trouble in Florida in the 2000 presidential election (S6906). “As we move into a new era of voting with paper ballots and an optical scan machine, it is important that we give our dedicated boards of election the tools and flexibility they need to make the voters’ experience at the polling place as easy as possible,” said Senator Addabbo.

That same day, the Senate also passed an election law bill approved by the Elections Committee, which protects domestic violence victims and their right to vote. It enables them to obtain a court order to have their voter registration records kept confidential and out of the hands of their abusers. “As the law is currently written, voter registration records and information is available under state law through a FOIL request,” said Senator Addabbo, “So it is essential that those who suffer so much should be able to vote with peace of mind, knowing that their exercise of this right will not come back to haunt them by exposing them to further abuse. I am proud that we were able to move this bill out of the committee and that it passed unanimously in the Senate.”

Senator Addabbo stated that he “...was also gratified that at its meeting on March 23, the committee took another step toward moving our boards of elections into the Internet age by unanimously approving my bill (S3252) to allow voters to provide their email address when they register to vote, and then receive notice of upcoming elections from the boards of elections by both first-class mail and email.” The Senator further noted, “For many young voters and for an increasing number of older ones as well, email is not only a primary form of communication that gets more attention than paper, but it is also connected with calendars they maintain on their computers and in their cell phones, which keep them aware of their intended daily activities.”

“These bills just represent the start of the changes I plan to make, so that it’s easier for our citizens to vote while their participation in the electoral process is increased, their confidence that their votes matter, and our elections are fair and not controlled by powerful, monied interests is restored,” concluded Senator Addabbo. “Soon, I also plan to hold open hearings on campaign finance reform and the public funding of campaigns.”

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