



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Governor Signs Village Lever Voting Bill Co-sponsored by Senator Oppenheimer

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On February 28, 2011, Governor Cuomo signed into law legislation (A.3093B/S.3216), which will permit villages that administer their own elections to continue to use lever voting machines in the upcoming March elections. Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) co-sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

As villages throughout Westchester County prepare for local elections on March 15th, government officials expressed concerns about shifting over to the new technology. "Many of the villages in my Senate district came to me because they did not think they would have access to the new voting machines and did not have the time or funds to train their staff and test the machines properly before the upcoming elections," said the Senator.

The federal Help America Vote Act (“HAVA”) mandates the use of optically scanned ballots for all elections, including village elections. Designed to ensure that people with disabilities have the same access and opportunities to participate in the election process, HAVA further mandates that all voting machines be auditable and produce a permanent paper record for manual recounts. At present, only electronic voting systems have been certified by the State Board of Elections as being compliant with HAVA.

“Delaying implementation of current law for locally administered elections will result in significant cost savings for villages,” said Senator Oppenheimer. “This legislation allows a reasonable period of time for villages to budget and plan for an orderly transition to the new voting systems.”

“I am pleased that the Governor and the Legislature acted quickly to meet the needs of our villages in time for this month’s elections,” concluded the Senator. Last year, the Legislature passed similar legislation to permit school districts to use lever voting machines in school district elections. The new law allows villages to use the lever machines through 2012.