



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Oppenheimer and the Westchester Independent Living Center Remind Voters of the Availability of Ballot Marking Devices

SUZI OPPENHEIMER October 26, 2011

As you know, last year marked the introduction of new paper ballots that are fed into a scanner to be counted. Many voters may have had difficulties reading the small print on those ballots. Senator Oppenheimer and the Westchester Independent Living Center wish to alert voters to the availability of Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) at each polling site that can help in the voting process.

Here is how they work: When you put your paper ballot into a BMD, it enlarges the print and allows you to make your selections using a touch screen, similar to the ones found on ATM machines. *Although the BMD was designed to assist voters with physical or visual disabilities to use a paper ballot, these machines are not limited to individuals with disabilities.*

Use of the BMD has other potential benefits, including:

- It will not permit you to select more than the allowable candidates for a particular position, preventing you from inadvertently invalidating your vote;
- It will alert you if you skip a race and give you the option to go back and vote on that race or allow you to skip it;
- It presents the voter with one race at a time, which can be less confusing.

The BMD also features headphones for voters who are visually impaired and prefer to listen to the ballot, a handheld controller and a sip and puff device, which may be helpful to voters with mobility impairments.

Poll workers at each polling location are trained to help you use a BMD. Don't let the small print deter you from voting. Please remember to vote this November 8th, and take advantage of these technologies if you need them!