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Senator Myrie and NYS Senate Committee on Elections

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the committee. I have been a resident of Yonkers for 21 years and am a regular voter---usually in person, sometimes absentee if I am traveling for work. I am not registered with a political party.

I would like to bring two related election issues to your attention.

1. In 2017 and 2020, I wanted to be an Election worker in the general election. When I expressed interest, my name was forwarded to the Republican Election Inspection Coordinator who informed me that in Westchester County, anyone who is not registered with the Democratic Party functions as a Republican inspector. I am interested in serving my community on election day, but I do not believe it is right to be forced into a party I have chosen to not be in, especially on election day. Therefore, I have not served on election day. This policy seems not only wrong, but inefficient—you are shutting out willing volunteers. There are around 3 Million unaffiliated New York State voters, I imagine I am not the only one who would like to serve the community on election day but is not able to do so without being forced to take sides.
2. The second item I would like to discuss is the exclusivity of primary elections---specifically the inability of unaffiliated voters to participate. If political parties are independent organizations that are able to decide who does and does not have a voice in their nomination process, then why do all NYS taxpayers pay for primary elections? If, on the other hand, primary elections are part of the civic process for the whole state, then why are unaffiliated voters excluded? There are approximately 6.7M registered Democrats and 2.9M Republicans in NYS—leaving 9.9M residents 18 or older who foot the bill for primary elections they are excluded from participating in. To resolve this problem, I would either like to be able to vote in the primaries or to have my state and/or local taxes reduced by the cost of the primary elections divided by the number of residents who are excluded from voting in the primaries they are paying for.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Jack Mehler