



STATEMENT OF POSITION “State Implementation of Help America Vote Act”

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) promises to disburse millions of dollars in funds to aid state governments in reforming the way elections are conducted. Citizens Union is concerned about how the State will implement the federal law and hopes that the State will use this rare opportunity to reform the election process in New York so that the election system will be more accurate, efficient, and ensure voters that their votes do count.

I. ID REQUIREMENTS: HAVA requires first-time voters who register by mail may be subjected to ID checks at the polls.

Citizens Union urges that the State:

- Establish a clear, broad, and inclusive list of acceptable forms of identification.
- Clearly define and establish terms under HAVA, specifically acceptable forms of “photo identification”, forms of public documentation (utility bills, bank statements, etc.), and registrants who register “By Mail”.
- Provide Poll Workers with the proper training on identification requirements.

II. NEW VOTING MACHINES: HAVA requires states to replace lever machines and paper ballots with new machines.

Citizens Union advises the State to:

- Establish a single, statewide voting machine to ensure uniformity.
- Repeal the “Full Face Ballot” requirement. Repeal of the full-face ballot will open up the State to more diverse and less costly machines that better address the needs of all voters across the state.
- Provide a voter-verified paper audit trail to be retained by the machine to ensure the accuracy of the machine and allow voters to ensure their vote accurately counts.
- Ensure that the new machines will be flexible to changes in the voting system.
- Ensure a public and independent selection process for new machines.
- Ensure that the new machines are verified by an independent panel that will review the hardware, software, and source code in order to assess system integrity.
- Allow for multiple language capabilities.
- Provide full accessibility to voters with disabilities.

III. STATEWIDE VOTER DATABASE: HAVA requires states to implement a Statewide Voter database. Citizens Union urges the State to:

- Mandate the responsibility of the voter list to the State rather than the individual counties.
- Allow for integration with other statewide databases to update the voter list to keep it current.
- Enable local access to the database on Election Day to allow for proper voter verification.
- Properly notify voters of changes to their information in the voter database, especially when purging names.
- Put up proper precautions to ensure protection of the voter list.

IV. POLL WORKER TRAINING: HAVA provides federal funds for better poll worker training. Citizens Union urges the State to:

- Adopt statewide minimum standards for poll worker training.
- Accurately test the poll workers to ensure qualification.
- Update training videos.
- Adequately staff language interpreters at the polls.

V. VOTER EDUCATION: The new changes to the voting system as a result of HAVA must allow for adequate voter education. Citizens Union urges the state to:

- Adopt and establish demonstrations across the state to educate voters on the new machines.
- Educate voters on the new ID requirements in a clear manner.
- Ensure that the Voters Bill of Rights is clearly posted at each polling location in order to protect voters and inform them of their rights.