



WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

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THOMAS J. ABINANTI
Legislator, 12th District

Chairman
Committee on the Environment & Energy
Member
Committee on Budget & Appropriations
Committee on Legislation
Committee on Family, Health
and Human Services

October 27, 2009

I commend New York City Councilmember Helen Foster for introducing a resolution to keep the lever voting machines in New York City.

Lever voting machines now used in Westchester County and throughout New York State have proved reliable, user-friendly and cost effective. They were first introduced in New York as a reform of a paper ballot system. Replacing lever machines will be costly, and will return us to a paper ballot system that is fraught with danger. The proposed computerized counting systems will enhance the danger that the integrity of our elections could be compromised.

Using a combination of lever voting machines and ballot marking devices to accommodate voters with special needs comprises a fully HAVA-compliant voting system with a small enough number of paper ballots to permit the necessary scrutiny to maintain the integrity of our elections.

I enclose a letter of support for retaining voting machines signed by a supermajority of the Westchester legislators.

I urge support for Councilmember Foster's resolution.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Abinanti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.



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June 11, 2009

Governor David A. Paterson
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

We urge you to take all actions necessary, to permit counties to continue to use mechanical lever voting machines.

Our democracy is founded on free and fair elections. Public confidence in our electoral system is crucial. Fair elections and public confidence are founded on reliable and secure processes for casting and counting ballots.

In October 2002, the United States Government enacted the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to require states to replace antiquated and unreliable voting systems and to insure that voting is accessible to all voters, including those with disabilities.

Mechanical lever voting machines now in use in Westchester County and elsewhere in New York State have long proved reliable, user-friendly and cost-effective. Replacing lever voting machines is very costly and will unduly burden county taxpayers. It has proved to create voter confusion and, in some cases, may result in the use of machines that could compromise the integrity of future elections.

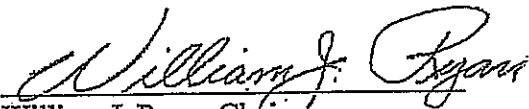
When used in conjunction with optical scanners (with ballot-marking devices to accommodate voters with disabilities) to count paper ballots by precinct, lever voting machines can be part of a voting system which is HAVA compliant and is in the best interest of the public.

We note that while preferable to touch screens, optical scan voting machines have malfunctioned in many counties throughout the United States including Upshur County, West Virginia; Palm Beach County, Florida; Oakland County, Michigan as well as Washington, D.C.

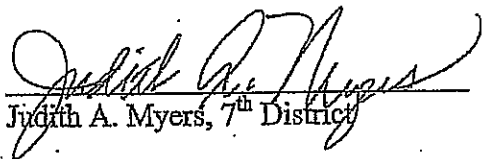
Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to take all actions necessary, including the amendment of the Election Reform and Modernization Act (ERMA), to permit counties to use lever voting machines in combination with paper ballots counted by precinct on optical scanning machines in future elections.



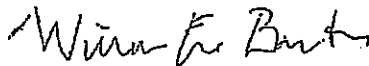
George Oros, Minority Leader
1st District



William J. Ryan, Chairman
5th District



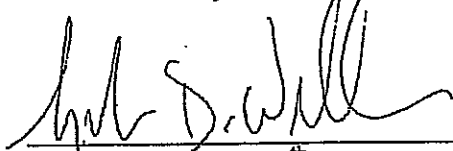
Judith A. Myers, 7th District



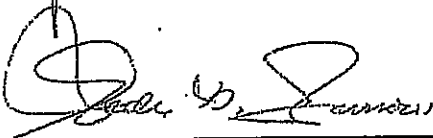
William E. Burton, 9th District



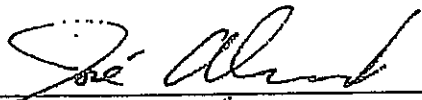
James Maisano, 11th District



Lyndon Williams, 13th District



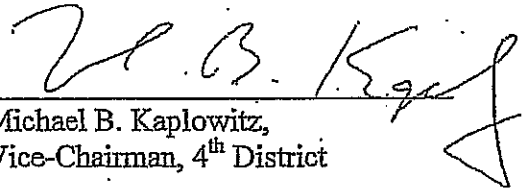
Gordon A. Burrows, 15th District



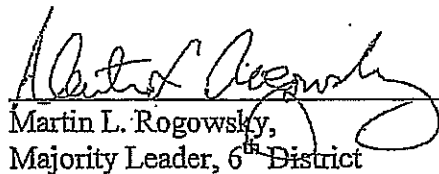
José L. Alvarado, 17th District



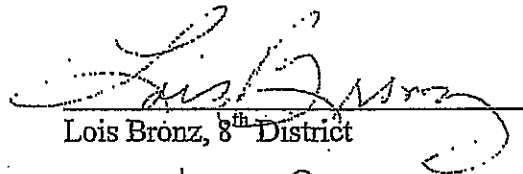
Peter Harckham, 2nd District



Michael B. Kaplowitz,
Vice-Chairman, 4th District




Martin L. Rogowsky,
Majority Leader, 6th District



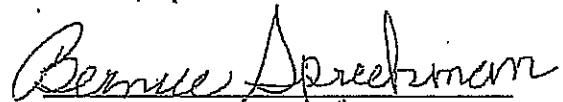
Lois Bronz, 8th District



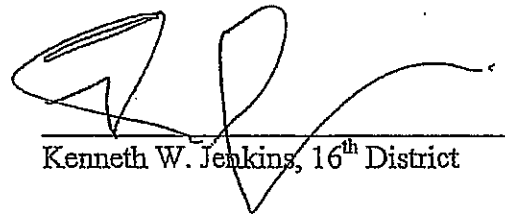
Vito J. Pinto, 10th District



Thomas J. Albanti, 12th District



Bernice Spreckman, 14th District



Kenneth W. Jenkins, 16th District