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Promoting Access To Voting

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Submitter Information

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General Comment

Easterseals New Jersey is encouraged to see the current administration taking the issues of access to voting for Americans living with disabilities seriously. Voting is a fundamental right for all Americans, regardless of ability. There are several laws that require election officials to make voting as accessible as possible, sadly these rules are not always enforced, and considerations are not taken as technologies evolve.

One area of particular concern is accessibility of the voting site. There are still locations in New Jersey where physical accessibility issues are ongoing. Additionally, lack of training on how poll workers can assist disabled voters remains lacking. Additionally, websites with voting information are not always accessible to individuals who may be blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing. These are simple things to fix, there just needs to be the training and resources made available to address these problems.

New Jersey is relatively forward thinking about making voting accessible, but there are still areas that require improvement. Not all of our counties who oversee elections and towns that administer elections are properly trained or equipped to address some of the accessibility issues that arise. These include requests for large print or accessible ballots, use of accessible voting machines, and training for poll workers on how they can assist disabled voters. Another complaint we sometimes hear about are simple things like the availability of handicap parking spaces at voting sites.

We believe more can be done to educate disabled voters on their rights. There are private organizations such as our own or RevUp who take on this task, but more centralized support and funding for such campaigns would go a long way to helping disabled voters exercise their franchise. We have come a long way since the passage of the ADA and Help America Vote Act, but there remains work to do. E.O. 14019 is a good first step, and we are glad to submit these comments. Easterseals New Jersey looks forward to seeing what comes of this effort and learning of what additional steps can be taken to protect the voting rights of Americans living with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Jacob Caplan
Advocacy Manager
Easterseals New Jersey

Attachments

Easterseals NJ NIST Voting Comments