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Subject: pva-eo Voting Access Comments
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To: pva-eo@list.nist.gov

VP

I am legally blind. I am a member of the National Federation for the Blind
I don't think my vote got counted in the 2014 election because I am blind
I normally bring a magnifier with me when I go to vote. It is a small hand held device that is about the size of a human hand. Due to the fact that I am legally blind, I cannot drive. When voting I always carry an identification card issued by the Virginia department of motor vehicles. In 2014 I waited in line gave the election worker my name and address and handed her my DMV issued ID card, She let me into the polls, and another election worker handed me a ballot. Just prior to filling out the ballot I pulled out my magnifying glass, and I was immediately confronted by a Republican party poll watcher. He told me to stop voting and go him to election officials.. He told the election officer he thought it was suspicious that I brought my own magnifier with me. Perhaps, something was written on it (actually nothing was written on it). He also said I should not be able to vote because i did not present a drivers license. I told them that an ID card was the only thing I could get from DMV because I am legally blind and have 20/200 visual acuity. Due to the Republican party poll workers objections, I had to cast a provisional ballot. I have no idea if my vote actually counted. A DMV issued ID is definitely a valid form of ID in terms of election law. The only problem is that people with disabilities tend to vote for Democrats. Keeping people with disabilities from voting is a partisan sham.

I try to learn from my experiences. I learned that carrying my own magnifier with me to vote and using a DMV ID card was suspicious. To avoid that problem I now always present the pollworker my passport, and I have my DMV issued ID in my wallet just in case they want to see it. In 2018, I voted at the Fairfax county government center early. There are about 1000 employees who work in the building Since I did not have my magnifier I could not read the ballot, because the print was small and used grey letters. I need large print and bold black letters. A strong black and white contrast is very important. I suffer from glaucoma and anaridia. The board of elections said they did not have a magnifying glass anywhere in the building. I buy about one magnifier about every month, and I usually pay about \$6. This is NOT a very high tech device. Fairfax County is the richest if not not one of the richest counties in the United States but they can't spend \$6 to buy one magnifier that would be useful for 1000 employees and thousands of voters every year. I told the poll worker I could read the ballot and asked for a magnifier she said that they did not have one in the building. She did not give me any alternative should as audio format or large print because they also were not available. As a result, I could not read the letters on the ballot. I knew who was running though. Based on Although I could not read the letters I could make a rough gessimate about how many characters were in the list of names. I did not see the box to check, but I guess at where to check. I don't know whether I successfully guessed the candidates I was trying to vote for.. If I did not check the right area, I don't know if my vote even counted. If you are going to punish people for carrying their own magnifier that's OK but then the election officials need to have their own magnifier on hand.

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