



NEWS RELEASE

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NYS Election Helpline Finds Some Confusion, Fewer Problems

NYPIRG Helpline Focuses on Student Voters Across New York State

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) reported that fewer students encountered serious problems in voting on Election Day in New York compared to prior years based upon calls to the group's statewide helpline. The helpline, focused on New York State college students, found some confusion about where to vote on the part of students displaced from their campus addresses by the pandemic.

"The long lines we had during early voting and the increased use of absentee ballots resulted in good news for today's voters. It meant quicker lines and fewer problems at poll sites," said Neal Rosenstein, NYPIRG's Government Reform Coordinator. "We've been doing this helpline for more than 30 years and Election Day has never seemed to be smoother. Hats off to New York's voters who acted early and to poll workers across the state," he added.

The helpline focused on college students, many of whom the student-led organization registered to vote. Volunteer students and NYPIRG staff also reported on their polling place experiences from sites across the state. While some reported early morning lines and possible electioneering issues, voting machines were working and no voter harassment was reported to the helpline. Questions about where to vote dominated the calls.

"Many students are first time voters. Providing them with information on where they vote and their voting rights is vital," said Megan Ahearn, NYPIRG's Program Director. Ahearn reported many calls from students who moved since registering and needed to know where they were supposed to vote. "The pandemic has simply made it harder for everyone to figure out where to go on Election Day, with campus closedowns only making it more confusing," she added.

NYPIRG repeated its call for long term reforms to the way elections are administered in New York State. "Every election day, voters face too many problems trying to vote. Our outdated local Boards of Elections sent out misprinted ballots, caused long lines and even prevented college students from having an on-campus site in Dutchess County," said Rosenstein. "It's time for the Governor and Albany to propose replacements for New York State's voting system," he added.

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