

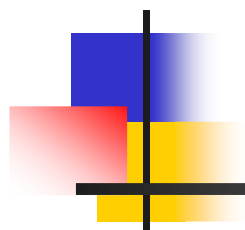
ASSISTING VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES ON ELECTION DAY



Who We Are

- A coalition of organizations that advocate for the rights of people with disabilities including:
 - **ARISE Center for Independent Living**
 - **AURORA of Central New York, Inc.**
 - **Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse**
 - **Enable**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ON ELECTION DAY



**To Help Voters with
Disabilities Exercise Their
Right to Cast a Private
Ballot and Do It With
Dignity and Respect.**

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

- **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires the Board of Elections to make polling sites and the voting process accessible to people with disabilities. This includes insuring that the BMD's are turned on when the polls open so that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to vote on Election Day.**



HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT (HAVA) OF 2002

- **Federal law passed after controversy over Bush/Gore election**
- **Replaced punch card and older lever-operated voting machines**
- **Provided funds for states to purchase new voting machines which everyone can use including voters with disabilities – REQUIRED ACCESSIBILITY**



PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- **Person with a Disability**
- **Individual who is Blind**
- **Someone who uses a Wheelchair**
- **Person with a Developmental Disability**
- **Individual who is Deaf**
- **VOTER WHO HAS A DISABILITY!**



Words You Should Try To Avoid: These Words Hurt!

- **The Handicapped**
- **The Disabled**
- **Crippled**
- **The Blind**
- **Retard**
- **Suffers from a disability**
- **Victim**
- **Wheelchair Bound or
Confined to a Wheelchair**
- **Deaf and Dumb**
- **Deaf mute**



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- **EVERY PERSON IS UNIQUE!**
- **People with the same disability have different needs & abilities**
- **A person with a disability may have good days & bad days.**
- **They may have different levels of need or ability on different days**



Some Physical Disabilities May Include:

- **Cerebral Palsy**
- **Muscular Dystrophy**
- **Multiple Sclerosis**
- **Post Polio Syndrome**
- **Spinal Cord Injury**
- **Spina Biffida**
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**

**Again, Degree of effect can vary person
to person, over time, day to day**

People Who Have Sensory Impairments May Be:

- **Deaf:** May Not Be Able to Hear At All
 - May use American Sign Language (ASL) as their First and Primary Language
 - May not write clearly in English but could be considered a poet in ASL
- **Hard-of-Hearing:** People Who Lose Their Hearing, Usually Later In Life
 - Have Partial or Minimal Hearing
 - May Use Hearing Aids or Other Devices to Amplify Sound to Some Extent



People Who Have Sensory Impairments May Be:

- **Blind:** Cannot See Anything
- **Visually Impaired:** Includes People Who Have Some Usable Vision
 - Can't See Clearly in front or to side
 - Can't Read Without Magnification
 - May be considered "Legally Blind"
 - May need to get very close to text
- **Deaf/Blind:** Unable See or Hear Well



Cognitive Impairments May Include

- **Alzheimer's Disease**
- **Head Injury**
- **Dementia**
- **Developmental Disabilities
(Including but not limited to
Autism & Downs Syndrome)**



Hidden Disabilities May Include:

- **Epilepsy**
- **Arthritis**
- **Pain Syndrome**
- **Asthma**
- **Cancer**
- **HIV/AIDS**
- **Heart Disease**
- **Environmental Illness**
- **Mental Health Issues
(May Include Depression
& Anxiety Disorders)**

**LOOK AROUND.
CAN YOU TELL
WHO MAY BE
A PERSON WITH
A DISABILITY?**

**NO, OF COURSE
YOU CAN'T**



What YOU Can Do To Make Voters With Disabilities Feel Comfortable and Welcome

- **Never** assume that you know what the individual with a disability needs or wants.
- **Always** ask “Do you need assistance”? Don’t be offended if answer is “No”. If the person says “yes”, ask “How can I help you”?
 - Respect the fact that they know their own needs !
- **Never** condescend or talk down to a person with a disability
- **Avoid** using terms like “honey” or “dear”.
- **Always** call the individual by their name, i.e. Mr. Jones or Ms. Smith.



What YOU Can Do To Make Voters With Disabilities Feel Comfortable and Welcome

- **Always** Speak directly to the person with a disability, even if they are accompanied by a family member or friend.
- **Always** Try to establish eye contact. If you are speaking to someone who uses a wheelchair, sit down to be at eye level.
- **Never** raise your voice. If someone doesn't appear to understand you. Try to rephrase what you're saying.



What YOU Can Do To Make Voters With Disabilities Feel Comfortable and Welcome

- **Never** make the voter with a disability feel rushed. They should take as much time as they need.
- **Never** assume that every person with a disability WANTS to use the Ballot Marking Device. Give them the choice.
- **Never** draw the public's attention to a voter with a disability. They just want to vote and leave, just like everyone else.



What YOU Can Do To Make Voters With Disabilities Feel Comfortable and Welcome

- **Never** pet, talk to, feed or otherwise distract a service animal. They are working.
- **Always** have an extra chair or two handy in case there is someone who cannot stand in line for any length of time. Keep it Nearby.
- **Note:** Voters with visual impairments may have difficulty marking the ballot or seeing where to sign their name in the pollbook.
 - You can put your fingers or a piece of paper above the line where they need to sign
 - Do mention that a magnifying glass is available



What YOU Can Do To Make Voters With Disabilities Feel Comfortable and Welcome

- **The Most Important Thing for You to Remember on Election Day When You Come Face to Face with A Voter Who Has a Disability Is to Ask Yourself ... “If I Were In This Person’s Place, How Would I Want To Be Treated?”. If the Answer is “With Dignity and Respect”, that Voter With A Disability Will Have a GREAT Voting Experience!**