

October 15, 2020

Monmouth County Board of Elections
300 Halls Mill Road
Freehold, NJ 07728

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing on behalf of Disability Rights New Jersey (DRNJ), the state designated protection and advocacy agency which advocates for the human, civil, and legal rights of individuals with disabilities. In addition to the many programs we operate for the benefit of the disability community, one of these programs, the Protection & Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA), is intended to advocate for improved access to the electoral process by individuals with disabilities.

DRNJ is urging county boards of elections to update their websites with specific information about accessibility for disabled voters. The goal is to ensure that those disabled voters have a full and equal opportunity to vote as required by Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

We are urging your county board of elections to include a webpage, on your county board of election website, which provides the following information:

- Describing the location of each polling site and ensuring that each site is accessible for voters who have disabilities.
- Providing and ensuring that all voting machines can be lowered or otherwise made accessible to accommodate those who ambulate in wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
- Providing and ensuring that voting machines are equipped with audio kits for the hearing-impaired. In addition, ensuring that the text on voting machine screens can be magnified for the visually-impaired.
- Ensuring that voters who ambulate with wheelchairs or use other mobility devices are able to access and move within polling sites to cast their ballot. Include a list of ADA compliant paths and entrances for each site.
- Providing information about voting by mail, obtaining vote by mail ballots, and locations of county board of elections, polling sites or secured “drop boxes” where vote by mail ballots can be deposited.

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- *Providing information about obtaining an accessible vote by mail ballot (i.e., for individuals who are blind, visually-impaired, dexterity issues, etc.) through the internet with instructions for its completion and delivery to election personnel.*
- Providing a list of instructions about how to properly complete an ordinary vote by mail ballot.
- Including contact information on the webpage with an identifiable person(s) whom voters with disabilities can communicate with to obtain the above described information, as well as links on the webpage to provide the same information.

An example of a county board of election website that provides the types of information described above is the Union County Board of Elections located at: <https://www.unioncountyvotes.com/accessibility-information/> . There are also additional webpages linked on this website that may be useful.

We understand that given the Covid-19 pandemic and other current events, ensuring ADA compliance may be overlooked; however, federal law still requires and imposes a duty upon those operating our elections to comply with the ADA and ensure voters with disabilities will have full access to voting.

If your county board of elections has any questions about how to comply with accessibility under the ADA, please feel free to contact me at (609) 777-0955. Thank you for your time and anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,



Mary Ciccone, Esq.
Director of Policy/PAVA Coordinator

MC/yc