

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Electronic Poll Books A05547 (Cusick) / S2788 (Akshar)

The New York Democratic Lawyers Council (NYDLC) strongly supports the enactment of **A5547 / S2788**, which will modernize the Election Law to permit the use of computer generated registration lists to check-in Election Day voters via Electronic Poll Books.

Modernizing election administration with technology like electronic poll books benefits voters and poll workers. This would allow voters to check-in at the polls electronically on a tablet, laptop, or e-sign pad saving time, resources, and improving accuracy.¹

Allowing boards of elections to replace paper voting lists with electronic poll books will make it much easier to ensure that up-to-date information is available for voters and poll workers, especially as New York continues to modernize our elections. Administrators will be better able to track votes cast previously in the same election through early voting or absentee ballots.

The current paper-based voter check-in process is not eliminated by this legislation (and paper provides an important safeguard when technology goes down). Instead, this bill paves the way for streamlining of our voting process on Election Day by updating limiting language in the law to permit the use of electronic voter lists, so that technology can be integrated when and where appropriate to improve administration. The bill also updates masculine references with gender-neutral language.

27 states across the US (as of 2017) use electronic poll books in all or part of their state. In 2011 an electronic poll book pilot program in Orange County found faster check-in times, fewer calls to the Board of Elections from poll workers, better access to countywide voter lists, and faster uploads of voter history and registration updates.² A 2014 pilot program in Onondaga County received favorable reviews from leadership.³

Because this bill will make it more feasible for New York to modernize and streamline election administration processes and will make it easier for New Yorkers to exercise their voting rights, **NYDLC strongly urges the New York State to enact of A05547 / S2788.**

¹ Erin Ferns Lee and Marissa Liebling, *How Electronic Poll Books Improve Elections*, Project Vote, Nov. 23, 2015, www.projectvote.org/blog/how-electronic-poll-books-improve-elections/

² The League of Women Voters NYS, *Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2017-2018 Executive Budget Proposal Public Protection, Testimony to the Joint Fiscal Committees of the NYS Senate and Assembly 3-4* Jan. 31, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2rCBaJB> (visited May 20, 2017).

³ Brittany Stephanis, *Onondaga County Introduced Some Voters to New Technology for this Year's General Election*, Syracuse NCC News, Nov. 17, 2014, <https://bcfought.expressions.syr.edu/bdj204/archives/13629>.