

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK COUNCIL MEMBER GALE A. BREWER

CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: 212-788-6975
FAX: 212-513-7717
www.council.nyc.gov

STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Will Colegrove (CM Brewer)
347-461-4329 / wcolegrove@council.nyc.gov

Anna Pycior (Assemblymember Kavanagh)
914-330-1103 / pressoffice.ad74@gmail.com

BREWER ISSUES STATEMENT ON LEVER VOTING MACHINES

Council Member Gale A. Brewer released the following statement today regarding the potential use of lever voting machines for the 2013 election cycle:

“The use of lever voting machines for the 2013 elections would be a disaster of the first magnitude. The antiquated machines have high breakdown rates, are inaccessible for the disabled, and provide no auditable paper trail. The Board of Elections is rightfully concerned about their ability to conduct a successful runoff election in the two week period currently proscribed on the election calendar. However, the answer to this problem is not a reversion to old technology, but rather to pass legislation in Albany to extend the run-off by an additional week, and to work with the State Board of Elections on streamlining testing and preparatory procedures. I am committed to working with the City and State BOE, my colleagues in government, and the advocacy community to make sure we can conduct an accurate, technologically sound election cycle in 2013. New York City can and will meet these challenges, but we must do so by moving forwards in our election administration, not backwards.”

Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh said: “As I've said before, bringing back lever machines would be a big step backwards, especially in citywide elections. In light of the concerns that have been raised about the election schedule this fall, I am prepared to work with my colleagues in the legislature, the City, and the Board of Elections - and of course Gale Brewer, who has shown great leadership in her oversight of the Board of Elections - to streamline procedures between elections and allow for three weeks between the primary and the run-off rather than two. If we take these steps, I am confident that New York City can meet the challenge of holding primary and run-off elections with the paper ballot system that has been in place here for several years and has become standard throughout the state and across the country.”

Susan Dooha, Executive Director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York said: “Going back to the old lever machines will disenfranchise many voters with disabilities and others who find the type size, levers and voting information impossible to access. This step backward will only serve to increase voters' confusion about their options for voting, it will keep us from moving toward fully inclusive democratic elections and discourage people from getting used to the new machines. This is wrong headed and a bad precedent for New York.”