

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATOR GRANT**

RE: Encouraging Increased Voter Participation through Voter Education and Outreach

WHEREAS, exercising the right to vote is one of our most cherished rights as citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, across the country, a number of states and communities are grappling with complex, sometimes controversial, changes in election law; and

WHEREAS, our neighboring state of Pennsylvania is one such example, where just last week a Commonwealth Court Judge ruled that Pennsylvania's new voter ID requirement cannot take effect this election as the state had not – to the judge's satisfaction – eased the process for voters to obtain identification prior to Election Day, November 6, 2012; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, media attention surrounding various changes in election laws – particularly those changes that could result in voter suppression – may be a source of consternation to voters in New York State and Erie County who are not sure if these rule changes apply to them; and

WHEREAS, New York State has promulgated its own set of laws that govern balloting and elections, and constituents often call the offices of county legislators with very specific, and sometimes technical, questions about voting; and

WHEREAS, these questions seek clarification on the rules governing voting by absentee ballot – whether by mail or in-person prior to Election Day; overseas ballots, particularly those filled out by our deployed military; the circumstances that constitute the need for an affidavit ballot or an emergency ballot; changes in polling places, especially due to the consolidation of some election districts; handicapped accessibility, and other matters of concern or interest to Erie County voters; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Erie County and their elected representatives in the Erie County Legislature would benefit from a joint presentation by both Elections Commissioners to describe the education and outreach efforts employed by the Erie County Board of Elections to clarify the aforementioned situations in order to maximize voter participation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that both the Democratic Commissioner and the Republican Commissioner of the Erie County Board of Elections be invited to the next meeting of the Government Affairs Committee to speak on the aforementioned topics; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature is hereby authorized to forward certified copies of this resolution to Commissioner Dennis Ward, Commissioner Ralph Mohr, County Executive Poloncarz, and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.