

**The Voter Assistance Advisory Committee Public Hearing  
100 Church Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> 2014  
At 5:30pm**

**RE: TO EXTEND BENGALI LANGUAGE IN OTHER  
BOROUGHES**

**Dear Voter Assistance Advisory Committee,**

My name is Mazeda A. Uddin and I am the National Women's Chair of the Alliance of the Alliance of South Asian American Labor (ASAAL). I'd like to thank the Board of Election Commission and Advisory Assistance Committee for the opportunity to speak about my observation and experience on Election Days. I'd also like to thank the Board of Elections for an overall job well done despite some need for Corrections. Thank you for your continued efforts to preserve the civil rights of all Americans, especially for your commitment to defend the right to vote.

- 1) We asked the NYC Board of Elections to voluntarily provide Bengali interpreters at specific poll sites in the Bronx City Council District 18 (Parkchester area ) and Brooklyn City Council District 39 (Church/McDonald ) area even though they are not federally required to do so.

The Board just recently responded that they are not federally required to do so and would only provide language assistance to targeted poll sites that are covered under Section 203 in Queens –  
**DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE INFORMED THEM  
THAT THERE IS A DEMONSTRATED NEED.**

The Board should provide interpreters at specific sites when the community informs them of a demonstrated need, even if they are not required Federally to do so.

- 2) Required language assistance must be better.

**Please see AALDEF's observation letters to the Board dated  
December 3, 2013.**

All interpreters and signers must be present – there have been serious issues in the past. AALDEF will again monitor the elections this fall, as well as the primary elections. ASAAL and other partners will be trained and participate in the poll monitoring.

3) Poll workers cannot require ID for voters that are not first time voters. At Thomas Edison HS, the door clerk has done this in the past to South Asian voters.

4) Machine breakdowns in the past in areas with South Asian voters took too long to fix.

5) ALL POLL WORKERS NEED TO KNOW THAT VOTERS CAN BE ASSISTED BY A PERSON OF THEIR CHOICE (EXCEPT THEIR BOSS OR UNION REP), INCLUDING INSIDE THE VOTING BOOTH. MOST POLL WORKERS DO NOT KNOW THIS (WE HAVE OBSERVED THIS).

6) TRANSLATION ERRORS MUST BE CAUGHT IN ADVANCE AND CORRECTED, INCLUDING IN THE CANDIDATE GUIDE. IN THE LAST ELECTION, THE CHINESE TRANSLATION ON 2 BALLOT INITIATIVES WERE “CUT AND PASTED” AND HAD THE EXACT SAME TRANSLATED LANGUAGE FOR TWO DIFFERENT INITIATIVES. THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN.