

**To The Members of Voter Assistance Advisory Committee.
NYS A/Member A.Brook-Krasny Testimony.
The public discussion panel. Dec 12 2011**

As one of the sponsors of Chapter 244, No. 7 of the New York State election law requiring that voting materials in New York City (and all municipalities with a population of a million or more) are translated into Russian, I am writing to express my outrage due to the Board of Election's failure to implement this law though it supposed to be in effect as of the January, 2010.

During the signing ceremony in September 2009 Governor Paterson said: "The right to vote is at the foundation of our democracy. Today, we are taking a major step to strengthen that foundation. This bill will require New York City to translate all voting materials into Russian so that our vibrant Russian-American community will have the same opportunities as the rest of us to vote. In so doing, they join a list of other languages like Spanish, Chinese and Korean that we use for voting materials anywhere there is a significant population of these speakers."

According to the legislation, anything on the Board of Election's website that is presented in a language other than English must also be translated into Russian. Unfortunately the NYC Board of Election failed to comply with the law's specification to translate all election materials into Russian that was added to the list of mandated languages: Spanish, Chinese and Korean.

Despite the fact that the law took to effect on January 1, 2010, the BOE had not provided translation into Russian on its website of the poll site locator, "2011 *dates to remember*" as well as none on its "Quick Links", *Voter Registration, Join the Poll Workers Program, Election Results & Statistics, List of Candidates*, etc

Vast majority of the Russian-American elderly New Yorkers need interpreters at the polls, information about candidates and translation of a registration form, absentee ballot application and affidavit ballot in Russian in printed form. NYC Board of Election failed to provide them with this significant information as well as The Bill of Voters' Rights and enlarged instructions how to vote on the new machines.

According to the 2000 and 2010 New York State Census data, several hundreds of thousands of New York City's 7.5 million residents age 5 and older speak Russian at home. There are a number of legislative districts with the Russian-speaking population over 20% "who have been unfairly disenfranchised from the democratic process", and the new law was supposed "bringing a powerful constituency - regardless of their fluency in English - into the electoral process from which they have long felt excluded."

It is the expectation of the both: members of the Russian-American community of New York and I that the BOE promptly acts to correct these failures so that thoughts of the Russian-American New Yorkers will be able to make the same informed decisions that the rest of the New York City registered voters have.

Thank you very much in advance for your quick action to this vital to the entire immigrant's community of New York matter.

Alec Brook-Krasny
NYS Assembly.
46 A.D.