

We Must Make Our Votes Count

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In our April column we shared a message with the City's 2021 Mayoral candidates. We even shared an open letter on our website about the importance of accessible campaigns – all campaigns. If you are eligible to vote, you should be able to vote. People with disabilities cannot be excluded from the process.

But why do we vote?

In our experience, we've found that people with disabilities are often among the last invited to discussions and the first to be left out. Whenever election season comes around we are all inundated with messages from and about the candidates.

It's up to us to make sure we look into what candidates align with our own needs and who will help advance legislation that includes people with disabilities. Not only nationally or statewide, but locally.

Those who are elected to office represent us. But if we don't vote, they don't truly represent us. The New York State budget is a prime example. Some good things were passed, but many were underfunded or simply left out. Other state budget matters that have a bigger negative impact on people with disabilities were allowed to remain. We need to make sure that our elected officials fight for every New Yorker, including people with disabilities.

Voting, by itself won't magically or immediately change the policies that affect us. Elected officials need to be educated and held accountable once elected.

But, we vote because it's one of the best ways to create change. We need to use all of the tools available to us to create change.

CIDNY has worked to help make voting more accessible in N.Y. and we urge you to take advantage of your right to vote. The June 22 Mayoral election is an important one.

If you need to register to vote, you can do so at <https://vote.nyc/page/register-vote>. The deadline to register for the primary election was May 28, but if you're not registered yet, register now so you can vote in future elections. If you need to request an absentee ballot, you can do so at <https://nycabsentee.com>. The deadline to request an absentee ballot online or through email is June 15, 2021.

We vote to make sure that not only are we heard, but that actions are taken. Make sure your voice is heard and your vote counts, not only in the upcoming primary, but all elections, national and local. We'll keep on saying it; nothing about us with us!

What issues matter most to you? You can email us at info@cidny.org to let us know. We always want to hear from you.