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November 15, 2012

The Board of Elections in the City of New York would like to express its sincere gratitude to the multiple Federal, State, and City agencies for their immense and invaluable assistance in preparation for the General Election in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. We have many to thank for helping us achieve the seemingly impossible.

The Board faced a share of challenges due to the damage inflicted by the storm throughout all five boroughs. Beyond purely operational challenges such as loss of electricity and damage to sites, the Board also faced: gas shortages, which affected our sizable transportation responsibilities to move voting equipment and supplies to poll sites in time for Election Day; the loss of our mainframe computers up until two days before the election; the loss of our call center until one day before the election; and the last minute announcement by the Governor that allowed residents to vote by affidavit ballot at any poll site, which required a larger supply of provisional ballots to every poll site as well as informing all poll site coordinators of this significant procedural change. The assistance of these groups was instrumental to a successful Election Day.

First, thank you to the City agencies, including the Governor's and Mayor's Offices, and the Department of Education, who aided the Board's efforts to determine the usability and accessibility of each poll site in advance of the election. With their help, the Board was able to temporarily relocate or combine poll sites across all five boroughs to ensure that all voters were given the opportunity to exercise their right to vote on Election Day.

Thank you to the utility workers, who worked around the clock to as best they could restore power to our poll sites and throughout the City.

Thank you to the DOITT and Verizon for their dedicated work to restore the BOE website, so updates could be posted on the 60 new poll sites, training sites and Borough Offices' hours of operations.

Thank you to the Department of Homeland Security, who in advance of the storm, who allowed the use of their Armory on Staten Island to house our voting equipment.. These machines were undamaged and operational on Election Day.

Thank you to local newspapers and community newspapers that graciously accepted our last minute advertisements that communicated the altered poll site locations.

Thank you to the good government and community groups who were instrumental in communicating Election Day changes. Thank you also to the Campaign Finance Board for their assistance communicating all operational changes made prior to Election Day.

Thank you to our amazing Board of Elections staff for all their hard work leading up to, through, and after the storm. As the storm rolled in, we kept our offices open on Sunday and Monday so we could meet requests for absentee ballots and continue our Election Day preparations, and continue our important poll worker training program. Those staff who weren't displaced or lost their own homes were back in borough offices on Wednesday morning after the storm.

Finally, thank you to the indefatigable New Yorkers who would not let anything stand in the way of their right to cast their vote.

Numerous organizations contributed to these efforts and each did their part to ensure that the General Election transpired as smoothly as possible given the trying circumstances. The Board extends its heartfelt appreciation to all of these organizations and to the individuals that volunteered during the election preparation.

Sincerely,
The Board of Elections in the City of New York