



ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 7, 2007

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Ulster County Legislature Convenes Committee To Study “Vote By Mail”

The Efficiency, Reform and Intergovernmental Committee of the Ulster County Legislature authorized a subcommittee to study ‘Vote by Mail’. In 2000 the state of Oregon formally adopted vote by mail as the method for conducting all elections after several trials in the late 1990s where citizens voted by mail. According to Gary Bischoff, Chairman of the Efficiency, Reform Committee, “The impact of the unique voting system in Oregon over several federal, state and local elections has been very positive. According to papers and reports that I read, the costs are lower than other states, there is greatly increased voter participation, and there is widespread support among Oregonians for this new type of electoral format. We should explore the possibility of ‘Vote by Mail’ in Ulster County and New York State.”

By a unanimous vote, the Efficiency, Reform and Intergovernmental Committee set up a Subcommittee to study the aspects of voting by mail. Legislator Susan Zimet will Chair the Subcommittee, which also consists of Legislators Tracey Bartels of Gardiner and Susan Cummings from Wawarsing, Election Commissioner Tom Turco, Deputy Election Commissioner

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Stuart Fraser, Beth Murphy of Saugerties and a representative of the League of Women Voters to be named later.

Susan Zimet commented, “The inability of the New York State Legislature to approve new voting machines has created a unique opportunity for us to explore a completely different alternative to the way we vote. I am very concerned about fair elections, and I feel it is important that voters have complete confidence that their vote was counted accurately. This committee will look at all aspects of this alternative to voting machines, and we will investigate the advantages and disadvantages of voting by mail as an alternative to buying new voting machines. We will also look into state and federal laws pertaining to voting by mail. We are prepared to lobby for changes to election law if needed. I look forward to working on this, and exploring this exciting concept.”

Bischoff added, “I am pleased that Legislators, Board of Election employees and interested citizens will be working together to look into all aspects of voting by mail. There are significant advantages to voting by mail including convenience, increased participation and considerable cost savings. I look forward to their report.”