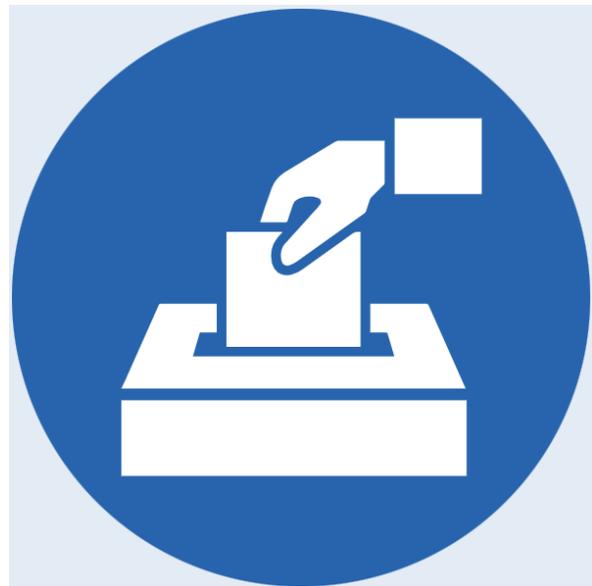


Election Integrity and U.S. Performance

Joint Stakeholder Summary Report



Submitted for the 36th Session of the
Universal Periodic Review



UNA★USA
Southern New York State Division



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**
Westchester Chapter

Presentation to Civil Society Consultations with UN Missions on UPR Shadow report on the topic of “Election Integrity and U.S. Performance”

The Southern New York State Division and the Westchester (NY) Chapter of UNA-USA, and Citizens for Voting Integrity, prepared a Universal Periodic Review Shadow Report on the topic of “Election Integrity and U.S. Performance” for submission to the U.S. State Department and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Through a consultative community process, our UNA-USA Division and Chapter facilitated a session with 27 local experts and interested citizens on 5 September 2019.

- The report was submitted on 27 September 2019 to OHCHR and is available online at: <https://unausa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Joint-UPR-Shadow-Report-Elections.pdf>.

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “everyone has the right to take part in the government of one’s country, directly or through freely chosen representatives; that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; and that this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.” The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that every citizen shall have the right to vote and seek election as well as the opportunity to do so without unreasonable restrictions. The U.S. has ratified the ICCPR.

Specifically, the consultation and the report address three main issues:

1. Flawed Election Administration

The phenomenon of gerrymandering, which redraws voting districts along party lines and effectively reduces the voting power of various groups, is widespread in the U.S. Moreover, minority parties and candidates face heavy obstacles to entering primaries due to stringent ballot qualifications, the closed ballot system, unfair campaign finance laws, and the structural institutionalization of a two-party system.

2. Disenfranchisement of vulnerable populations

Disenfranchisement of millions of U.S. citizens is unacceptable and a violation of their human rights. Among disenfranchised citizens being prevented from voting or unable to vote are: those people currently or previously incarcerated; immigrant naturalized citizens and citizens of Hispanic heritage; and many visually impaired or otherwise disabled people. There have been widespread recent incidences of people being turned away from the polls for various minor and inconsistent application of election rules and protocols. This demonstrates a failure of the U.S. to uphold the Civil Rights Act.

Contact: Marcia M. Brewster, President UNA-Westchester, mmbrewsterny@gmail.com

For full report please visit : http://bit.ly/UNA_UPR-Election-Integrity

3. Security of voting methods

There is currently a lack of transparency and oversight regarding the security of electronic voting machines in the U.S. It is paramount that there be effective and comprehensive oversight regarding the methods of counting votes and the security of votes once cast. Any vulnerabilities in these electronic voting systems could potentially allow hackers to distort votes and the election results. This would effectively prevent citizens from exercising their right to vote and participate in representative governance. Paper ballots are essential to ensuring election security.

The Shadow Report recommends that the U.S. prioritize the following at its UPR, among others:

- Enhance measures to ensure a more accurate 2020 Census count in order to ensure accurate redistricting and address the issue of gerrymandering;
- Immediately end the disenfranchisement of currently or previously incarcerated people, naturalized citizens and disabled people;
- Uphold the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to combat voter suppression by states and localities with records of voting rights violations;
- Promote the use of paper ballots to ensure security; establish national standards for voting machines; and introduce procedures for tight and publicly-guarded chain-of-custody of ballots. These standards should include the right of voters to hand mark their own durable paper ballots and review the final copy of one's vote; and
- Increase funding for voting security measures such as ensuring machine safety, training of election personnel, and monitoring voting centers

“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of one’s country, directly or through freely chosen representatives; that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; and that this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights