

Regaining New Yorkers' Trust After Board of Elections June Results Blunder

The most recent blunder by the New York City Board of Elections, the latest in a long line of fiascos, has damaged the public's confidence in this election. The June 29 reporting error was a result of a human error. The Board of Elections failed to remove "dummy ballots" used to test the system from the records, and initiated the vote count with those test ballots included. The Board has since issued corrected vote counts. The Board publicly apologized for the error and admitted that it must now "regain the trust of New Yorkers." What should be done to regain New Yorker's trust?

1. **Be transparent about the vote count**

The entire country is watching. In the days ahead, the NYC Board of Elections needs to be as accurate and transparent as possible. It should clearly detail, in every result page for every race, the number of votes that have been counted, the number of outstanding ballots including a breakdown of their source (absentee, affidavit, etc.), and the votes every candidate has received. The Board should make public the expected timeline of publishing the preliminary Ranked Choice Voting round by round elimination report for all races, not just citywide races.

2. **Accelerate the release of raw data**

As soon as possible and certainly prior to any certification of the vote, the NYC Board of Elections should make public the anonymous, electronic records of every voter's ballot selections, to allow for public scrutiny. Voting machines create anonymous, electronic records of every voter's ballot selections. These computer-readable files, known as Cast-Vote Records, are used to tabulate votes and produce results. The Board had previously said it would not release them until primary results are certified. However, it was an erroneous count of the Board's own Cast-Vote



Records—the inclusion of test ballots in those records—which caused the June 29 data discrepancy. That mistake was only discovered thanks to close attention from the public, the media, and campaigns. Publishing the records early, as supported by advocates and some state election officials, would provide an added layer of accountability.

3. Agree to an independent inquiry

The NYC Board of Elections should publicly commit to an independent fact-finding inquiry into exactly what has caused the release of erroneous results. The findings of such an inquiry made public.

4. Advance legislative solutions to remove partisan affiliation

The state legislature should finally bring forward meaningful reform that would create a more effective and independent board, accountable to the public – not party leaders. The foremost priority should be to remove the constitutional provision that assures a bipartisan structure of election administration. Amending the New York constitution takes a long time. In the meantime, creative legislative action should occur.