



STATE OF NEW YORK  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER  
ALBANY 12224

## V E T O #60

TO THE ASSEMBLY:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Assembly Bill Number 584-A, entitled:

“AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to requiring polling places to be accessible to physically disabled voters”

### N O T A P P R O V E D

This bill would require that all polling places in the State be accessible to citizens with disabilities, and comply with the accessibility guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (the ADA). At present, many such places have received waivers from ADA compliance. Under this bill, compliance must be achieved within six months after a study of all polling sites.

Through this bill, the Legislature has sought to address an issue of extraordinary importance to this State: ensuring that the franchise, the most basic right of our democracy, can be exercised by all of our citizens without hindrance. I wholeheartedly support this idea, and commend the sponsors for bringing it to the fore, and the advocates who have pressed for it so long and hard.

But even the best of ideas must be accomplished in a way that is consistent with practical realities, and with recognition of the financial straits in which the State and local governments presently find themselves. The time frame that would be imposed by this bill is simply too onerous. It is not possible, consistent with this State's rules for construction, contracting and competitive bidding that it be achieved in the period contemplated by the legislation, and any effort to do so would impose significant costs, particularly on the City of New York. On that ground alone, I must reluctantly veto this bill.

The disapproval of this legislation, however, does not mean the end of the important goals the sponsors seek to achieve. I have been in communication with the Mayor of New York City on this issue, and we have agreed that New York City and the State will establish a working group to ensure that full access for individuals with disabilities to New York City's polling places will be implemented. The Mayor has pledged his full support to this approach. If, by May of next year, I do not see satisfactory progress toward this goal, I will submit and seek enactment of legislation that would achieve this result.

The bill is disapproved.

SEP 16 2009