

NYSILC

New York State Independent Living Council, Inc.

"Empowering New Yorkers with disabilities"

2016 PRESIDENTIAL POST-ELECTION POLL

This year the New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) conducted its third Presidential post-election poll to assess the voting habits and practices of New Yorkers with disabilities. Between November 9th and 22nd, New Yorkers who voted in the recent election were encouraged to respond via Survey Monkey. Eight-hundred and fifty-six individuals randomly participated in the confidential, non-partisan poll to analyze the voting trends of New Yorkers with disabilities compared to those without disabilities.

The poll examined the influence of demographics and disability status on voter concerns and presidential candidate choice. Individuals responded to the control question, "Do you have a disability or medical condition that impacts your mobility, hearing, sight, cognitive, or mental abilities?" 54% (447) said "No" (New Yorkers without disabilities) and 48% (409) replied "Yes" (New Yorkers with disabilities). Participants then responded to a series of seventeen questions. New York State participation was verified by a mandatory zip code question.

New Yorkers with Disabilities and their Presidential Voting Choice (Two Major Candidates)

The clear majority of New Yorkers with disabilities in this poll voted for **Hillary Clinton** (266 out of the 409 New Yorkers with disabilities or 66%). They were mostly female, White/Caucasian, Gen-X and Baby-Boomers, tended to be distributed at the middle to higher end of education levels (peaking between Bachelor's and Master's degrees), from large cities and suburbs, were renters/leasers (versus homeowners), and operated motor vehicles, but clearly used public transportation more frequently than the participants who voted for Trump. While most of the Clinton voters polled were white females, ethnic and gender diversity was greater in this group than amongst the participants who voted for Trump.

The party affiliation of New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Hillary Clinton is as follows: 76% Democrats, 4% Republicans, 8% Independents, 2% a combination of Green and Libertarian, 8% had no party affiliation, and 2% other. Strong support from the Democratic base in New York helped Clinton to win the state. While the effort to attract non-party cross over voters was good, it was more effective in Donald Trump's campaign.

The top five issues identified by New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Hillary Clinton:¹ 1) health care/cost of medications (52%), 2) human and civil rights (45%), 3) affordable, accessible housing (43%), 4) addressing poverty, homelessness and hunger (40%), and 5) support for various groups and issues (disability, LBGTQ, minority, veterans, and women) (35%). Under: "Other," the top comments were for "reproductive freedom/abortion rights" and "affordable education" (college).

Out of the 409 New Yorkers with disabilities in this poll, 19% or (75) voted for **Donald Trump**.² New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Donald Trump were mostly males (with an almost equal level of support from females), White/Caucasian, Gen-X and Baby-Boomers, at a more balanced education level (peaking at a Bachelor's degree), from the suburbs and rural areas, tended be homeowners (versus renters/leasers), and operated motor vehicles more, using public transportation less.

¹ Select five amongst multiple issues.

² The remaining 15% (68) of New Yorkers with disabilities voted for other candidates. See first chart in comparison of New Yorkers with and without disabilities below.

The party affiliation of New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Donald Trump is as follows: 45% Republicans, 23% Democrats, 13% Independents, and 19% had no party affiliation. This reflects a reduced endorsement from the President-elect’s nominating party base and increased support from cross over voters. This had less bearing in the State of New York, but had greater impact in other states.

The top five issues identified by New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Donald Trump were as follows: 1) the economy (59%), 2) health care/cost of medications (53%), 3) Federal budget, budget, deficit and debt issues (48%), 4) employment, jobs, integrated and competitive employment (35%), and 5) Medicaid/Medicare (29%). Under “Other,” the top comments were for “immigration reform/closing boarders.”

In the convergence of priority issues, the only common item between New Yorkers with disabilities who voted for Clinton versus Trump was “health care/cost of medications.” Otherwise, Trump voters tended to identify more with national issues, while Clinton voters identified more with issues that directly impact their lives.

See Attachment I for the specific breakdown on each candidate based on the voting trends of New Yorkers with disabilities.

Comparison of New Yorkers With and Without Disabilities

When asked which Presidential candidate they voted for, there were only slight variations between the two groups.

Presidential Candidates	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Clinton	66%	67%
Trump	19%	20%
Johnson	3%	4%
Stein	5%	3%
None	1%	1%
Other	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%

Those responding “None” had no party affiliation. The majority of “Other” comments casted write in ballots for Bernie Sanders.

By party affiliation, New Yorkers with disabilities demonstrated slightly more affiliation with Democrats and with alternative parties like Green, Libertarian and none, and identified less with Republicans.

Party Affiliation	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Democrat	60%	56%
Republican	13%	21%
Independent	10%	10%
Green	2%	0.5%
Libertarian	1%	0.5%
None	11%	9%
Other	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%

According to priority issues (select five amongst multiple issues), there was greater convergence between these two groups. There was agreement on four of the issues. Only “affordable, accessible housing” and the “environment, addressing pollution and global warming” were different, along with “Medicaid/Medicare” which tied for fifth for New Yorkers with disabilities.

Priority Issues	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
1	Healthcare/cost of medications (51%)	Healthcare/cost of medications (57%)
2	Affordable & accessible housing (38%)	Economy (44%)
3	Human and civil rights (37%)	Human and civil rights (44%)
4	Addressing poverty, homelessness and hunger (35%)	Addressing poverty, homelessness and hunger (36%)
5	Economy (tied) (34%)	Environment, addressing pollution and global warming (31%)
	Medicaid/Medicare (tied) (34%)	

Some differences emerge between the two groups related to voting practices. When asked what method they used to vote, New Yorkers with disabilities voted at a robust 67% on the scanner, which is 19% below individuals without disabilities. This helps to dispel the myth that New Yorkers with disabilities have to vote on the “disabled” voting machine, the Ballot Marking Device (BMD). 18% of New Yorkers with disabilities did vote on the BMD predictably above individuals without disabilities. Nine percent (9%) of New Yorkers with disabilities voted by absentee ballot, which is double that of non-disabled citizens. Every effort should be made to encourage accessible, integrated voting options. Absentee ballots should be seen as a last resort. They are counted far beyond Election Day decisions in the final vote tallies. People with disabilities should not have to “settle” for a method of voting that adds to their segregation.

Method of Voting	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Scanner	67%	86%
Ballot Marking Device (BMD)	18%	7%
Absentee Ballot	9%	4%
Emergency/Provisional Ballot	1%	2%
Other	5%	1%
Total	100%	100%

Under “Other,” some of the comments included:

- Had partner help me mark the ballot in the booth, then we brought it to the scanner. I was offered the ballot marking device, but was more comfortable with help.
- Had to have a staff from my group home mark the sheet for me, then submit in the regular machine. Was very frustrated that I could not be independent with this.
- My County provides an oversized ballot in LARGE print. This gives me an opportunity to review it before submitting my ballot
- I normally use the BMD and used it this time, but that ballot wasn't accepted by the machine that officially registers my vote. So a poll worker filled out an emergency ballot.
- I tried to use a BMD but the machine at my polling location did not work (the stylus did not work, and after I was shown how to use the arrows to select candidates, the BMD would not print my selections), so I ended up having to use a scanner.

When asked, if you did not use the Ballot Marking Device (BMD), please tell us why (select all that apply), it was clear that New Yorkers without disabilities were not aware that the BMD machines were available (or given the choice) or where they were located. For New Yorkers with disabilities, a different awareness emerged. Some preferred and used other methods. Some were not aware and not given the choice. For others, it was a training issue or time factor.

Why not BMD	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
I prefer an alternative method of voting	26%	9%
The polling place did not have a BMD available	23%	55%
I was not given the option to use the BMD	25%	33%
The poll workers were not knowledgeable (not able to assist with the BMD)	7%	0%
I did not have enough time to use the BMD	7%	1%
I received assistance from another individual to mark my ballot because of issues with the BMD	3%	0%
Other	29%	17%

Under “Other,” some of the comments included:

- I was unaware of Ballot Marking Devices (BMD's), but it sounds like it would have helped me, because filling in those little circles in the cubicle was a big hardship for me.
- Machine was not working.
- A BMD is not necessary for my needs. I am ok to use a regular ballot. I just have to take my time and check it very, very carefully. I'm confident about this.
- BMD equipment was not operable during the period of time I had to vote.
- I use a magnifier, and I'm fine.
- I was not sure my local polling place had BMDs. I found out later it did and will start using that for the next election.

When asked, do you feel the poll workers were adequately trained and knowledgeable about voting technologies and your needs, New Yorkers without disabilities felt more confident that poll workers were trained on the technology to meet their needs than individuals with disabilities. Most telling was the gap between the yes/no response. New Yorkers without disabilities had a 56% gap versus a 31% gap for individuals with disabilities. Both groups were equally “not sure.”

Poll workers trained	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Yes	51%	65%
No	20%	9%
Not Sure	29%	26%
Total	100%	100%

Under, if you responded “No,” some of the comments were:

- Slow, disorganized.
- When the machine “spit” the ballot back out, it landed on the ground and the attendant picked it up, looked at it and put it back in the machine upside down.
- Wheelchair height booth hidden in dim corner, opposite end of gym from the row of standing booths. No signs. No directions given to find it. No pen there when I found it. No mention of BMD.
- ...the wait was horrible and it was unorganized.
- They never offered to use the device. The device looked unplugged.

- I attended same training as poll site coordinator and after 4 years at this polling site this woman had no idea what to do to use the BMD.
- Would love to have interpreters at polling places to tell me what to do and where to go. Frustrating.
- This is the 4th time I voted on the BMD and the poll workers have always had problems. On election day I had to wait for 2 hours to get an inoperable machine to work. Poll worker acknowledged that she discourages use of the machine by telling potential voters it will take at least 20 minutes.
- The poll workers were swamped but trying their best to accommodate each person.
- Poll workers were unsure how to communicate with me while we were waiting for an ASL interpreter to finish up with a different person before coming to assist me.
- I had difficulty reading the small print on the ballot. One poll worker "assisted" me by misidentifying the party affiliation of libertarian candidates as green candidates. I informed a "Coordinator" who said he would speak to the individual poll worker about this.
- Poll workers were trained and knowledgeable about voting - but the entrance was not accessible and they did not have knowledge about how to get to the accessible entrance.
- My poll workers were having a hard enough time just reading the list and figuring out what district people were in. They also had a hard time just navigating the signature booklet. I can't even imagine if they had to guide anyone through something more difficult than that.

When asked, were you able to vote privately without someone seeing your vote choices, both groups indicated somewhat similar results. However, New Yorkers with disabilities still do perceive and experience slightly greater issues related to voting privacy.

Vote privately	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Yes	82%	89%
No	11%	6%
Not Sure	7%	5%
Total	100%	100%

Under, if you responded “No,” some of the comments were:

- I am the only one in my county that uses the ballot marking device. The machine malfunctioned and would not print. After an hour I starting fill out a paper ballot. Then they came to me with my ballot printed (not in a sleeve) and asked me to review it to see if it was correct. They said no one looked at it. But, after the 75-min plus voting, I just wanted to leave. They did do everything they could to resolve the machine issue, including having techs come. They figured out the tab on the ballot needed to be torn off before being placed in the printer. That's what was wrong.
- I filled out my ballot privately in a booth, but a poll worker looked at my ballot without my permission before I cast it. What happened was: The ballot scanner was broken. They were using an emergency low tech ballot box. As we were waiting in line, - poll worker gave us instructions that I didn't understand. I think she was telling us something about how to double check our ballots. I asked her to explain. She made an assumption about who I wanted to vote for, looked at my ballot without permission, and then told me I'd filled it out correctly. I didn't object in the moment because she was right about who I wanted to vote for. But after the fact, I'm finding it very disturbing.
- The table was exposed to anyone in the waiting area. There was no real privacy at all.
- There was a line behind me and a woman in line looked over my shoulder and scoffed at my selection.
- There was one older male poll worker who kept hovering over me as if I were stupid and I had to keep insisting that I could use the BMD by myself and to leave me alone. Finally, another poll worker who knew me, ordered him to give me my privacy. It was extremely annoying.

- The polling place was so crowded that I could hardly move in my wheelchair. I couldn't easily get to the wheelchair-accessible booths to fill in my ballot. So I did it in the middle of the aisle.
- I used a BMD - the poll workers around me kept on talking about private matters/food/joking, - I was invisible! Making it hard for me to concentrate on my vote. Since the poll workers are hired just for Election Day. The low pay/long day job? They are not adequately knowledgeable of any decorum. They are there only to fulfill a "day-need" for the city! You get what you pay for!

When asked, did you encounter any issues with polling place access, New Yorkers with disabilities are still encountering polling place access issues (8% difference) compared to non-disabled citizens.

Access issues	New Yorkers with disabilities	New Yorkers without disabilities
Yes	14%	6%
No	83%	92
Not Sure	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%

Under, if you responded “Yes,” some of the comments were:

- Signs to accessible door pointing in wrong direction. NO curb cut or spot for Access-a-ride. Lip of doorway too high and wide for my motorized wheelchair to cross. Entrance on complete other end of building from voting place.
- As an observant Jew, having my polling place be inside a church made it impossible to show up to the polling place and cast a ballot without violating my religion.
- The polling station was not set up to optimize traffic flow.
- No ASL interpreter available.
- Sidewalk curbs. Ramp quite a distance from main doors.
- Parking.
- There was not a disabled line or seating for those having difficulty standing while they waited.
- Several ASL users showed up at once when there was only one ASL interpreter. Confusion as to where I was supposed to be.
- Locked accessible entrance, with over 1.5-inch lip w/out threshold.
- Steep and narrow ramp, narrow door, crowded, BMD broken.
- The door marked "polling place" was only accessible by climbing up a curb step. There was no curb cut allowing for anyone with a mobility impairment to get to the door. There were no signs directing voters to an alternate accessible entrance. I did find a door on the opposite side of the building marked with the universal access sign. It was locked with a keypad lock. There was a doorbell so I rang it. After waiting for 3 minutes, I sent my Personal Assistant inside via the inaccessible door to request help. The poll worker had responded to the doorbell, but did not know where the accessible door was so she was wandering around through the fire station looking for the way to let me in. If I didn't have a PA with me, and if it had been raining, I would not have been able to vote at my polling station.

See Attachment II for demographic breakdowns of New Yorkers with and without disabilities.

Attachment I

Breakdowns: New Yorkers with disabilities and their Presidential voting choice (two major candidates)

Hillary Clinton

- For respondents with disabilities who voted for Hillary Clinton (266):
 - By party affiliation, 76% were Democrats, 4% Republicans, 8% Independents, 2% a combination of Green and Libertarian, and 8% had no party affiliation, 2% other.
 - The top five priority issues were (select 5 amongst multiple issues): healthcare/cost of medications (52%), human and civil rights (45%), affordable, accessible housing (43), addressing poverty, homelessness and hunger (40%), and support for various groups and issues (disability, LGBTQ minority, veterans, women) (35%).
 - By gender, 63% were females, 33% males, 2% non-binary/agender, 1% non-binary/trans male/man, and a combination of 1% preferred not to answer and other.
 - By age, 12% (18-29), 33% (30-49), 47% (50-69), 8% (70 and above).
 - By race/ethnicity, 78% White/Caucasian, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Black/African American, 1% Asian, 1% Native American or Alaskan Native, 4% multiracial, and 3% a combination of unknown, preferred not to answer, and other.
 - By education, 2% completed some high school, 10% high school graduate/GED, 14% completed some college 8% associate's degree, 26% bachelor's degree, 9% completed some post-graduate work, 23% master's degree, 6% professional/advanced degree, 2% other.
 - By geographic area, 32% large city, 19% small city, 32% suburbs, 13% rural, 4% other.
 - By living situation, 35% homeowner, 43% rent of lease, 14% live with family, a combination 3% live in group setting and live in assisted living/seniors or adult community, and 5% other.
 - By transportation (select all that apply), 60% motor vehicle, 27% fixed route bus, 23% paratransit, 18% subway, 15% train, 14% accessible, modified motor vehicle, 14% taxicab, 5% accessible taxicab, 4% private car service, 2% bicycle, 1% ferry, 7% other.

Donald Trump

- For respondents with disabilities who voted for Donald Trump (75):
 - By party affiliation, 45% were Republicans, 23% Democrats, 13% Independents, and 19% had no party affiliation.
 - The top five priority issues were (select 5 amongst multiple issues): the economy (59%), healthcare/cost of medications (53%), Federal budget, budget, deficit and debt issues (48%), employment, jobs, integrated and competitive employment (35%), and Medicaid/Medicare (29%).
 - By gender, 45% were females, 49% males, 1% non-binary/agender, 4 preferred not to answer, 1% other.
 - By age, 12% (18-29), 28% (30-49), 46% (50-69), 14% (70 and above).
 - By race/ethnicity, 77% White/Caucasian, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Black/African American, 5% multiracial, 5% preferred not to answer, 4% other.
 - By education, 1% completed some high school, 13% high school graduate/GED, 13% completed some college 13% associate's degree, 26% bachelor's degree, 8% completed some post-graduate work, 19% master's degree, 3% professional/advanced degree, 4% other.
 - By geographic area, 15% large city, 21% small city, 33% suburbs, 28% rural, 3% other.
 - By living situation, 47% homeowner, 33% rent of lease, 15% live with family, 4% live in group setting, 1% other.
 - By transportation (select all that apply), 77% motor vehicle, 13% fixed route bus, 11% paratransit, 9% train, 7% accessible, modified motor vehicle, 7% train, 5% taxicab, 3% accessible taxicab, 3% private car service, 1% bicycle, 4% other.

Attachment II

Demographic Breakdown: New Yorkers with and without disabilities

The demographic make-up of New Yorkers with disabilities:

- By gender, 57% were females, 37% males, 1% non-binary/agender, 1% non-binary/genderqueer/gender non-conforming, 1% non-binary/trans man/male, 2% preferred not to answer, 1% other.
- By age, 11% (18-29), 33% (30-49), 48% (50-69), 8% (70 and above).
- By race/ethnicity, 76% White/Caucasian, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 7% Black/African American, 1% Asian, 1% Native American/Alaskan Native, 4% multiracial, and 6% preferred not to answer, unknown and other.
- By education, 2% completed some high school, 11% high school graduate/GED, 14% completed some college, 9% associate's degree, 25% bachelor's degree, 9% completed some post-graduate work, 22% master's degree, 5% professional/advanced degree, 3% other.
- By geographic area, 28% large city, 20% small city, 33% suburbs, 15% rural, 4% other.
- By living situation, 37% homeowner, 41% rent of lease, 14% live with family, 2% live in group setting, 2% Live in assisted living/seniors or adult community and Live in nursing home/institutional setting, and 4% other.
- By transportation (select all that apply), 62% motor vehicle, 24% fixed route bus, 20% paratransit, 15% subway, 13% train, 12% accessible, modified motor vehicle, 12% taxicab, 4% accessible taxicab, 3% private car service, 3% bicycle, 1% ferry, 7% other. Most "Other" responses were walk or use wheelchair.

The demographic make-up of New Yorkers without disabilities:

- By gender, 72% were females, 26% males, 0.5% non-binary/genderqueer/gender non-conforming, 1% preferred not to answer, 0.5% other.
- By age, 14% (18-29), 32% (30-49), 49% (50-69), 5% (70 and above).
- By race/ethnicity, 78% White/Caucasian, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 9% Black/African American, 1% Asian, 1% Native American/Alaskan Native, 2% multiracial, and 5% preferred not to answer, unknown and other.
- By education, 0.5% completed some high school, 6% high school graduate/GED, 14% completed some college, 14% associate's degree, 29% bachelor's degree, 6.5% completed some post-graduate work, 24% master's degree, 5% professional/advanced degree, 1% other.
- By geographic area, 15% large city, 23% small city, 36% suburbs, 24% rural, 2% other.
- By living situation, 67% homeowner, 25.5% rent of lease, 6% live with family, 0.5% Live in assisted living/seniors and homeless, and 1% other.
- By transportation (select all that apply), 92% motor vehicle, 7% fixed route bus, 1% paratransit, 8.5% subway, 6.5% train, 1% accessible, modified motor vehicle, 2% taxicab, 0.5% accessible taxicab, 1% private car service, 4% bicycle, 1% ferry, 2.5% other. Most other responses are walk.