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The Independent View

The Internet has made this the age of the instant political movement. Like-minded people (and even unlike-minded people) can find one another and quickly create a kind of critical mass. The hope, often the expectation, is that these new aggregations can bring positive change to the body politic. This includes seizing new opportunities for democratizing communication and communicating democracy, both of which are urgently needed.

About Me



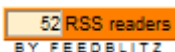
MHDRUCKER

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES
 Former Member, New York State Committee of the Independence Party (73rd AD - Eastside Manhattan) and Former Member, New York City Independence Party Organizations - Manhattan Executive Committee and County Committee, representing the 73rd AD.
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THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017

The Politics of Electoral Reform in NYC Then and Now

On April 5th I attended a Panel discussion sponsored by The Gotham Center For New York City History at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY).

The Title of the Panel was Fixing Elections: The Politics of Electoral Reform in NYC, Then and Now

Voter Turnout was the lowest ever recorded in New York City in 2013. Now, after many years of Litigation and Civic pressure, there is a major effort underway to reverse the trend, and overhaul the Electoral system, with Legislative support from City and State officials. Some are even pushing for Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), to increase not only turnout but Representation and Choice. The Panel asks how we got here, and how we might improve our Local Democracy.

The Panel

Moderator - **Brigid Bergin**, the City Hall Reporter for WNYC.

Gerald Benjamin - Distinguished Expert in Constitutional and Charter Reform, Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement and Director of the Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz, and former Director of the Center for New York State and Local Government Studies. He provided a history of the City's Electoral Administration and discussed the process for New York's Constitutional Convention, that will ask the voters if they want one on the 2017 Ballot, and if Yes, to Vote in November 2019 on each amendment proposed by the Convention.

DeNora Getachew - New York Executive Director of Generation Citizen Program (GC). She works to ensure that every Student in the United States receives an effective Action Civics Education, which provides them with the Knowledge and Skills necessary to participate in our Democracy as Active Citizens.

Susan Lerner - Executive Director of Common Cause New York, discussed the steep decline of Voter Turnout in New York City in recent decades, and the major push underway to overhaul the Electoral system

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this year. She spoke about Automatic and Same-Day Voter Registration, Consolidated Primaries, Early Voting, and No-Excuse Absentee Ballots.

Rob Richie - Executive Director of FairVote, he spoke about ways to increase Voter Participation by moving beyond the Winner-Take-All model, including the push to replace New York City's Run-Off Elections with RCV, and Proportional Representation through a similar Fair Representation Act of Texas. Under this method, Candidates would be Elected Proportionally within each District using RCV. You would Elect the same number of Representatives, and each would represent an Equal number of Voters. In Three-Seat District, the winners would need more than 25% of the votes. In Five-Seat Districts, the winners would need more than 17% of the votes.



Register to Vote



NYC Wins When Everyone Can Vote! Michael H. Drucker

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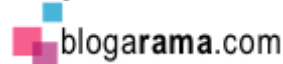
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