



Promoting Access to Voting
REV-UP Georgia response to NIST Request for Information
July 16, 2021

[Rev Up GA](#) is a statewide nonpartisan network of individuals and groups dedicated to increasing voter participation among over 650,000 Georgia citizens with disabilities by making the electoral process more accessible. We provide supports to: Navigate the registration and voting process; assure that we are able to cast our vote; engage in all forms of the political process; and educate the public and candidates about disability justice.

Rev Up Georgia’s grassroots organizing during the 2020 general election and January 5, 2021 senate runoffs contributed significantly to the dramatic increase in voter turnout, notably in southern rural Georgia. We are heartened by the increased disability household turnout across the US. We attribute this disability vote surge to the galvanized disability advocacy communities and to the more inclusive voting changes that occurred in 2020.

Rev Up Georgia’s response to the NIST Request for Information (RFI) reflects voter access recommendations from over 400 people with disabilities. Our lived experiences and recommendations will help inform the implementation of the President’s Executive Order 14019 of March 2021 to promote access to voting. It is our aim to provide the President with actionable recommendations to ensure equal access for voters with disabilities across the nation while making registering and voting easier for all eligible voters.

Response Summary. We are pleased to offer a summary of our recommendations followed by a spreadsheet of our individual responses.

These responses, collected specifically for this RFI, offer over 400 lived experiences that validate the President’s understanding of the barriers to voting identified in the Executive Order. That is, despite theoretical ADA protections, we frequently experience “barriers to private and independent voting, including access to voter registration, voting technology, voting by mail, limited polling locations and poor poll worker training”.

Our specific recommendations embrace universal design principles. In decades past, the “curb cut” was designed to accommodate wheelchairs yet it also eases accessibility for baby strollers

and bikers. This demonstrates how improving accessibility for people with disabilities can serve as benchmarks for improving accessibility for everyone.

Summary Recommendations:

1. **Prioritize and enhance the governments' role in making voter access fully inclusive.** The authority to improve voter access exists but is not fully implemented, as witnessed by the 400 + lived experiences of the disability community in Georgia (see spreadsheet, attached).

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 authorizes “Federal, State and local governments to promote the exercise of the fundamental right to vote.” This law requires governments at all levels to “eliminate discrimination and other barriers to voting and expand access to voter registration and accurate election information.”

We recommend that the President fully implement this law, in collaboration with the Office of Electronic Government/OMB, the GSA, the Election Assistance Commission, other agencies as appropriate, the states and the disability community.

Specifically,

- Modernize Vote.gov (or equivalent Federal digital resource) to make it a secure, responsive and fully accessible set of digital tools with which all Americans can register, vote and learn what they need know to vote with confidence.
 - Extend affordable broadband to all communities.
 - Make Vote.gov easily accessible and usable for people with the full range of physical and cognitive disabilities.
 - Vote.gov's accessibility and usability should be driven by:
 - Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and
 - Usability testing results, based on feedback from people with the full range of physical and cognitive disabilities.
 - Offer Vote.gov as an alternative registration and voting toolset for voters who live in states/districts that do not have 504/508 compliant registration and voting tools.
2. **Make the design of registration and voting processes inclusive and user driven.** Involve people with disabilities in improving registration, voting and voter education processes to

ensure the following solutions are universally designed and user-driven:

- early voting
- shorter waiting lines
- ramps at all voting places
- private voting assistance
- free, accessible transportation to the polls, and
- user friendly voter information and education.

Voting in the disability community is on the rise. But our dream of full disability voting justice will not be realized unless inclusive voter tools and practices are assessable for everyone.

We respectfully offer our experiences and recommendations and stand ready to assist in their implementation.

Gaylon Tootle and Stacey Ramirez, Co-Chairs, REV-UP Georgia

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