



**Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle**  
(an Indivisible Group)  
[bmvhuddle.org](http://bmvhuddle.org)

**Supporting VIVA NY**  
(Voting Integrity and Verification Act of New York)

[A6287 \(Cunningham\)](#) / [S7116 \(Cleare\)](#)

Let's protect our right to use  
hand-marked paper ballots

The VIVA NY bill:

- Guarantees to voters the *right to choose* either to fill out a paper ballot with a pen or using a ballot marking device (BMD\*). This method has been used successfully in NY since [2010](#).
- Gives voters control of their ballot from the time the ballot is issued until the voter inserts it in a ballot scanner for tabulation.
- Ensures that voter intent is recorded on paper ballots *marked by the voters themselves* (whether by hand or using a BMD).
- Prevents the purchase of wildly expensive voting machines such as the ExpressVote XL, whose price, as of 2025, is more than [\\$12,000 per machine](#). Most polling places would need multiple machines.
- Stops all voting machines that record votes in barcodes or QR codes from being introduced into our state.

**Why it's important to use hand-marked paper ballots:** In the November 2025 election, in Rensselaer County, a ballot proposition relating to funding for the Stephentown Memorial Library was "defeated," according to the initial machine count of votes. However, Stephentown library supporters called for a recount, the Rensselaer County BOE agreed, and a hand recount of the hand-marked paper ballots reversed the election results. The fact that the BOE used and retained hand-marked paper ballots -- *not* ballots marked by a machine -- led to high confidence in the accuracy of the recount. See the Dec. 30, 2025, editorial in the Albany *Times Union* ([gift link](#)).

**A reason for greater urgency in 2026:** On March 25, President Trump issued [Executive Order 14248](#) "banning" machines that "use a ballot in which a vote is contained within a barcode." And, [Article I, Section 5 of the U.S. Constitution](#) gives Congress the power to *judge the elections of its members*. VIVA NY would help prevent this Federal interference in NY elections by preventing use of any voting machine that encodes votes as barcodes, thus cutting off such attacks on our elections.

\* A ballot marking device (also called a BMD) is an electronic voting machine that enables voters who cannot hand-mark their own paper ballot to mark their paper ballot, after which they insert their ballot in a ballot scanner for tabulation.

***Please pass this bill promptly so that counties have time to return to trusted hand-marked paper ballots, as we have done statewide since [2010](#).***