

STATE BOARD RELEASES LATEST ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

ALBANY, NY--(4/19/99)--The number of registered voters has decreased slightly since November of 1998, according to statistics released by the New York State Board of Elections. County Boards of Elections reported a total of 10,677,713 registered voters as of April 1, 1999, a decrease of 63,075 voters.

This small decline can be attributed to the annual purge of voter rolls by county boards, which drops voters' names from the rolls who have not voted in two successive federal elections after their names have been placed on the inactive list. Voters appear on the inactive list if mail sent to them by the county boards is returned with no forwarding address. County boards go through this mail check, utilizing the National Change of Address program and other means, every year as mandated by the National Voter Registration Act. Since the Act took affect on January 1, 1995, this is the first purge of inactive voters from the county board rolls. A total of 1,205,385 new voters have been added to the rolls during this time.

"The small decrease in total registration after the first purge shows, I feel, the success of the NVRA program," said Thomas Wilkey, Executive Director of the State Board. "One of the strengths of the NVRA is that it was designed to not only register new voters, but to keep voters on the rolls who move to a new address. In previous years, when there was no change of address updating provisions, purging accounted for much larger reductions in registered voters," said Wilkey.

The new enrollment figures reflect the loss of party status of the Freedom Party, which did not run a candidate for Governor in 1998, and the addition of two new parties who did have candidates for governor and attained at least 50,000 votes in the November 1998 election. The Green and the Working Families Parties can now enroll voters in their parties for the first time.

Voters interested in registering to vote may call the New York State Board of Elections hotline at 1-800 FOR- VOTE(1-800-367-8683) or may call their local county board. Residents may also register at Motor Vehicle offices, state public assistance agencies and other state agencies providing services to people with disabilities and other needs.