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Charter changes are approved

Permanent status for Giuliani agencies

By RALPH R. ORTEGA and LISA L. COLANGELO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Voters embraced ballot proposals to make several agencies created by Mayor Giuliani a permanent part of the city's bureaucracy.

As a result, the Administration for Children's Services, the child welfare agency, will continue to be independent of the city's Human Resources Administration. The mayor's Office of Emergency Management, which Giuliani said has been vital to city operations after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, will remain in place.

"It's one of the few that exists in the country, and it's one of the reasons that New York City was able to respond as effectively as it did to this terrible attack on the United States," Giuliani said yesterday.

In all, voters approved five changes to the New York City Charter:

- Making the ACS a permanent agency.
- Creating gun-free school safety zones within 1,000 feet of every school; banning the sale of any type of gun to people younger than 21, and requiring Board of Education employees to report immediately to the Police Department suspected crimes, including sex offenses and violent crimes, that occur in public schools.
- Making the Human Rights Commission and the Office of Immigrant Affairs and Language Services permanent agencies.
- Merging the city's Health and Mental Health departments into one Department of Public Health and expanding the Board of Health.
- Making the Office of Emergency Management, the Organized Crime Control Commission and the Office to Combat Domestic Violence permanent agencies.

Running roughshod

Critics had complained that Giuliani and his Charter Revision Commission ran roughshod over the City Council by placing the proposals on the ballot instead of letting elected officials hash them out.

In another development, a statewide measure to change language in the New York State Constitution to make it gender-neutral appeared to receive the support of voters.

Meanwhile, a printing error on some ballots used in the Bronx caused some confusion.

People trying to cast a vote on whether to make the ACS a permanent agency instead were directed to a lever that read "gun violence" — referring to the second Charter revision question; thus, "gun violence" appeared next to two levers.

Poll workers tried to point out the snafu to voters before they entered the booths. Board of Elections officials said they didn't expect the problem to affect the final vote tally.

With Celeste Katz and Jennifer Weil



TODD MAISEL DAILY NEWS

THE PEOPLE CHOOSE Voters check in at Williamsburg, Brooklyn, polling place yesterday.

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