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Minor vote glitches in Bx., Manhattan Council Dist.

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Misprints in polling machines left some Bronx voters scratching their heads, but Board of Elections officials said that overall, yesterday's voting brought no more problems than usual.

Some machines in areas that included Riverdale, Fordham and the South Bronx had a variety of errors in the printing of proposals on gun safety and children's services.

"Injustice has been done because people could not vote rightly. The Board of Elections should have made sure that everything was proper and correct," said Janice Whitley, a teacher who voted at Public School 33 in the Fordham section of the Bronx.

Some voters, including Babette Low of Riverdale, said the lengthy propositions made the setup of the machines confusing — even without any printing goofs.

"It's hard enough to make a decision on the issue — no less having to worry about finding the button to complement the proposal you support," said Low, a psychotherapist.

Board lawyer Steve Richman said such screwups wouldn't affect the way votes on the proposals will be counted.

Few woes elsewhere

Voting was apparently more idyllic elsewhere: At Hillcrest High School in Jamaica Hills, Queens, voting coordinator Carol Garofalo said that while only 98 voters showed up for the primary, 123 had appeared by 9 a.m. yesterday.

"One woman came out in an ambulette to vote, so she was real determined," Garofalo said.

Among the typical Election Day hitches, board officials said, were machine breakdowns that necessitated voting on paper ballots, and confusion about the rules on the part of some poll workers.

In Manhattan, 97 people on the lower East Side cast votes at one polling place before someone noticed that the machine had the names of the wrong City Council candidates, said Board Commissioner Douglas Kellner, a Democrat.

"They lose their vote for City Council — although I would add that that's not a close City Council race," Kellner said.

Board Deputy Executive Director Joseph Gentili said some mistakes were inevitable, given the tight timetable for preparing complex ballot cards for 6,900 machines at more than 1,300 polling sites.

"Did I predict that if we didn't have enough time, we were going have problems? Well, if we had problems, it's because we didn't have enough time," Gentili said. "I think we did a very good job. We obviously didn't do a perfect one."

It was the fourth time city voters headed to the polling booths in two months: The terror attacks on the World Trade Center disrupted the Sept. 11 primary, which was rescheduled for Sept. 25. They lined up again for an Oct. 11 runoff.

State Board of Elections Executive Director Thomas Wilkey, who came to the city to supervise Election Day proceedings, said he thought the local board handled the day well.

"To hold four elections in eight weeks — I don't think there's a jurisdiction in the country that does that," Wilkey said.

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