

# Audio file

[Independent Perspective #1823 \(Todd Vaarwerk\).mp3](#)

## Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living (WNYIL). Our guest today is Todd Vaarwerk, chief public policy officer of WNYIL. And I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell, welcome back to the program, Todd.

00:00:16 Speaker 2

Always great to be here.

00:00:17 Speaker 1

And it's our pleasure to have you.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

We've stressed in previous shows the importance of people with disabilities participating in the electoral process.

00:00:28 Speaker 1

And although we always encourage people, if they are able to so do to make it down to their local polling place. There are some other options that certain individuals with disabilities can avail themselves of. Can you tell us just what the array of options they have is?

00:00:48 Speaker 2

Well, we always want to talk about all your options to be able to cast your ballot, because casting your ballot is really, really important, especially in a year like this one, where it's federal and state election year, right?

00:00:59 Speaker 2

So, there's always the classic version of go of going to vote right on Election Day, November 5th. You can go to the polling place listed on your voter registration card.

00:01:12 Speaker 2

Right. They're going to ask you to sign your name or, you know, indicate that you've come to vote. They're going to give you a ballot, and you're going to cast your ballot.

00:01:21 Speaker 2

Right. But you also have a couple of other options, you can do early voting, which are the the days before Election Day starting in our region on October 26th, and going until that following Sunday, November 3rd.

00:01:42 Speaker 2

As a reminder, nobody votes on Monday, November 4th, even though it is before Election Day, right? But you can go to a special early voting polling place to cast your ballots, so you don't have to try and figure out how to do it on the day that you go to vote.

00:02:01 Speaker 2

Regardless of which way you do it, there's going to be an accessible ballot marking device at your polling location to help you cast your ballot. If filling in those little circles on that ballot drives you crazy, all of our polling places in the region have something you can use that will fill the help you fill out the ballot for you based on your choices.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

They're called the accessible BMD's or Ballot Marking Devices. In Erie County It's something called the Automark. And in all of our other counties, it's a ballot marking device, Dominion. On the other side of the thing that you stick your vote in to make it count right now if for some reason you can't do either of those, you can request an absentee ballot.

00:02:50 Speaker 2

I always want to do a little rumor busting about absentee ballots. Absentee ballots are always counted, always counted. They don't sit in a closet and not get counted if they think that the race is a is going away.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

They're always going to count the ballots. The only difference is if you do an absentee ballot, your ballot's not going to be included in the running counts on election night that they send to the media stations to figure out, like who's winning, right? Your ballot will get counted at the end.

00:03:21 Speaker 1

Oh, and if you're in person using the ballot marking device and you want your vote to be included in those initial counts, then you have to choose the option to have the machine spit out your ballot so you can put it into the reader in the machine yourself.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

Otherwise those are going to be counted like absentee ballots.

00:03:45 Speaker 1

Yeah, because they'll just be putting the storage bin until they get to them.

00:03:51 Speaker 2

And we also know that transportation is a problem in terms of getting to the polling place. WNYIL, as we do every election year, if you call our transportation department 716-836-0822 ext. 150.

00:04:07 Speaker 2

And talk to Independence Express, we'll help get you a ride to the polling place, either for early voting or on Election Day. We are going to encourage you to use early voting because then there's more options for us to be able to arrange to transport you. But if transportation is an issue, remember there's an option for us at the Independent Living Center.

00:04:27 Speaker 1

Todd, we're totally out of time. I'm sure some people will have questions. How can they reach you?

00:04:32 Speaker 2

They can give me a call at 716-836-0822 ext. 101 or email [tvaarwerk@wnyil.org](mailto:tvaarwerk@wnyil.org)

00:04:43 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for being with us Todd. You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of WNYIL. Our guest today has been Todd Vaarwerk, chief public policy officer of WNYIL. And I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:04:45 Speaker 2

Always a pleasure.