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## Monroe County Board of Elections PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dear Monroe County Media Outlets,

The news and information you provide not only inform voters but also help to ensure transparency and accountability in the electoral process. We recognize the hard work, dedication, and professionalism that goes into reporting on elections, and we want to extend our sincere thanks for your invaluable contributions to our democracy.

Please be reminded about the rules and guidelines for reporting from polling locations in Monroe County. We urge all reporters to respect these rules to ensure the integrity of the election process and the privacy of all voters.

Firstly, please note that you must be as far back as possible from the voting equipment and ballots. This is to ensure the integrity of the election and to prevent any interference with the voting process. Poll workers are instructed to keep the media away from the equipment and in a position where you are unable to inadvertently violate a voter's privacy. Please do not put the poll workers in a position to question whether your outlets' behavior is appropriate or not.

Secondly, we strictly prohibit any video or photos of marked ballots to be taken for voter privacy. This is to protect the privacy of voters and to prevent any potential vote manipulation or coercion. We strongly advise all reporters to abide by this rule to avoid any legal issues.

Furthermore, we do not allow interviews to be conducted within 100 feet of our polling site. Only voters who consent to be interviewed can be interviewed outside 100 feet of our polling site. This is to ensure the privacy and comfort of all voters and to prevent any potential disruption to the voting process. A major concern when conducting interviews inside the protected space of a polling site is electioneering.

Electioneering is anything that directly comments on a candidate or ballot proposition within 100 feet of a polling site. If a voter were to speak about who they supported on the ballot they would be violating election law.

“Electioneering” Election Law § 17-130(4) has been defined by the court to mean conduct that is meant to “convince voters to cast ballots for or against particular candidates, parties or issues.” *People v. Maldonado*, 63Mic.3d 716 (Nassau Co. Dist. Ct. 2019). Under the Election Law, no such conduct is permitted “a one hundred foot radial measured from the entrances to a building . . . where the election . . . is being held.” Note that this includes all entrances, not just the “front” entrance.

For the Presidential Primary this year on April 2<sup>nd</sup> the approved Election Days sites for the media to film at are:

- Empire State University - 680 Westfall Rd, Rochester, NY 14620
- Gates Town Hall Annex Meeting Room - 1605 Buffalo Rd, Rochester, NY 14624

Early Voting for the Presidential Primary will run from this Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> through Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup>. The approved Early Voting sites for the media to film at are:

- Empire State University - 680 Westfall Rd, Rochester, NY 14620
- Monroe County Office Building - 39 W. Main St, Rochester, NY 14612

Before going to film at any of these locations, please reach out to us in advance so we can arrange for staff to meet you there. Please note that if you wish to be there when the polls open, you will be asked to wait outside until the poll site has opened to the public. If you wish to be at a site after they close on Election Day for election night reporting, you must be in the site before the polls close for the day.

We hope that all media outlets will respect these rules and guidelines and contribute to a fair and peaceful election process in Monroe County. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these rules, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you once again for your essential work, and we look forward to working with you to ensure a successful and transparent election.

Sincerely,

Monroe County Elections Board