

The Andrew Goodman Foundation's Statement on Bard College Polling Location Win

October 30, 2020

Democracy prevailed in Dutchess County, NY. Today's settlement, which addresses decades of blatant student voter discrimination, will finally bring an on-campus polling location to Bard College in time for the 2020 Presidential Election. The ruling expands access to the ballot for nearly 70% of District 5 voters by removing the need for the Bard community to travel off campus to cast their ballots, and it provides an ADA compliant polling place for voters in the district.

For decades, Bard College students have had to jump through hoops to exercise their constitutional right to vote. The Board of Elections' irresponsible decision not to address this matter sooner not only ignored the needs of its constituents but put their lives at risk. In her October 13 and 16 rulings, Judge Rosa found that we stated "good cause for fair consideration to be given to moving the polling place," and recognized that the church is unsafe for voters and poll workers in light of the pandemic.

As we are witnessing all around New York, people are energized to vote and willing to brave long lines to make their voices heard. Bard College has been careful and deliberate in its approach to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all District 5 voters. The College has already pledged to meet and exceed health and safety guidelines on campus so students and the surrounding community can vote with peace of mind.

The leadership of Bard College students and generations of Andrew Goodman Foundation student Ambassadors, bolstered with the unparalleled support of the Bard Administration, is exemplary of what can be accomplished with persistent organizing, advocacy, and when necessary, litigation. It continues the legacy of Andrew Goodman, a native New Yorker and twenty-year-old college student, who lost his life while advocating for the right to vote. This win should send a message across New York and the country—student voters should be able to vote where they study and live. These on-campus locations can serve all populations: students, non-students, and voters in need of ADA accessibility.

We thank our Legal Team Michael Volpe, Joshua Rothman, Hilary Atzrott, Megan Hynes, and John Walsh of Venable LLP, Douglas B. Mishkin, and Yael Bromberg, Chief Counsel for Voting Rights for The Andrew Goodman Foundation and Principal of Bromberg Law LLC.

We thank our partners at Bard College—President Leon Botstein, Vice President Jonathan Becker, Vice President Erin Cannan, AGF Campus Champion Sarah deVeer, and generations of Bard students and Andrew Goodman Student Ambassadors including but not limited to Sadia Saba, Ava Mazzye, Kathy Gaweda, Eva Quinones, and Jonian Rafti—for their commitment to ensuring every voter in District 5 has fair and equal access to the ballot box.